

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 16th December, 1914.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Honorary Minister: 1, By-laws of the Municipality of Geraldton under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906. 2, By-laws of the roads boards of Denmark, Melville, and Murray under the Roads Act, 1911. 3, Plans of the proposed railways—Esperance Northwards, Katanning-Nyabing, Boyanup-Busselton, Yilliminning-Kondinin Extension, Wagin-Kukerin, Pinjarra-Dwarda Extension. 4, Reports and Papers, Esperance-Northwards Railway.

QUESTION—LAND SELECTION BY ENEMY ALIENS.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has any restriction been placed on the selection of Crown lands by enemy aliens since the war commenced? 2, If not, will the Government take immediate steps in this direction? 3, Since immigrants from foreign countries cannot be naturalised until they have been two years in Australia, does the Government intend to amend the Land Act in order to provide that European aliens who select Crown

lands must secure naturalisation papers within three years of the approval of their applications? 4, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes; in cases where the Department has reason to believe the applicant is an enemy alien, the application will be refused. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, The matter will be given consideration. 4, Answered by No. 3.

QUESTION—LANDS TRANSFER TO ENEMY ALIENS.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Attorney General: 1, Does the Government intend to prevent the transfer of further freehold lands in Western Australia to enemy aliens? 2, If not, why not?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes. But the Government is not aware of any such transfers having been made; the matter will, however, be inquired into. As far as practicable, any applications for such transfers will be objected to. 2, See Answer No. 1.

QUESTION—LANDS HELD BY ASIATICS.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Attorney General: 1, Is he aware that under Regulation 13 dealing with the leasing of suburban lands no Asiatic is permitted to acquire an interest in such land? 2, Is he aware that recently two Chinese obtained a verdict in the Pinjarra Court against one Ulrich for trespass? 3, Will he, as head of the Crown Law Department, inquire why the magistrate gave such a decision in view of such regulation?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes; if an Asiatic alien. 2, Yes. 3, The plaintiffs alleged that they were sub-lessees, and claim to have been born in Melbourne; but the lease will be forfeited for breach of covenant not to sublet without the license of the Minister.

QUESTION—EDUCATION INSPECTORS.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Minister for Education: 1, How many inspectors were engaged in the Education Department in June, 1911? 2, How many are there at present, including advisory teachers, assistant inspectors, and temporary inspectors? 3, How many inspectors were engaged in the metropolitan district in 1911? 4, How many are there at present, including those engaged in the office? 5, Is it true that a number of inspectors have received substantial increases in salary during the last year or two?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Eight inspectors and two advisory teachers. 2, Ten inspectors and three advisory teachers. The increase in the inspectorial staff has been necessitated by the increase in the number of schools. In June, 1911, there were 460 schools; at the present time there are 587, showing an increase of 127 schools. The teachers in June, 1911, numbered 1,150; there are now 1,514. The scholars in June, 1911, totalled 34,990, and the present enrolment is 44,869. 3, Five. 4, Five. 5, The salaries of the inspectors were re-adjusted by the Public Service Commissioner in order to remove the anomalies of some head teachers receiving more salary than senior inspectors.

QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVANTS' SALARIES, INCREASES.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Premier: 1, Has the Government considered the question of disallowing all increases in salaries of public servants, including the increases recommended by the Appeal Board? 2, What are the Government's intentions in regard to the matter?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Increases becoming due after the 31st December next are being stopped except for officers in receipt of salaries under £156 per annum. Payment for overtime is also being stopped. It is uncertain whether under the Public Service

Act the increases awarded by the Appeal Board can be withheld. The question is under consideration.

QUESTION — IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT AND SECRETARY OF PATRIOTIC FUND.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Premier: 1, What were the conditions under which Mr. Neville, of the Immigration Department, was allowed to carry out the secretarial duties of the Patriotic and Distress Fund Committees? 2, Is the whole of his time occupied in carrying out those duties? 3, What other Government officers are assisting him? 4, Is it true Mr. Neville is being paid 30s. per week by the War and Unemployment Distress Relief Fund Committee for work in connection with that fund? 5, Are any other Government officers being paid by any of the committees? 6, What salary does Mr. Neville receive from the Government? 7, Has the Public Service Commissioner given permission to Mr. Neville to receive this extra remuneration? 8, Is he aware there are many men out of employment quite capable of performing the work in connection with the different "funds" to whom 30s. a week would mean a great deal during the present depressed times?

The PREMIER replied: 1, A temporary loan of his services in and out of office hours, provided he continued to supervise his official duties. 2, No. 3, Mr. Craweour, from the staff of the department, and a clerk engaged and paid by the War Distress Committee. 4, No. 5, No. 6, £285 per annum. 7, No, but he has expressed his willingness to recommend the Governor to allow Mr. Neville to accept any honorarium which the Committee might wish to offer him. 8, No.

QUESTION — SEWERAGE RATES AND VACANT LAND.

Mr. MALE (for Mr. Robinson) asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Whether sewerage rates are being collected from

vacant land? 2, Does the Department interpret the words "Provided that no land shall be rateable under this section unless such land is capable, in the opinion of the Minister, of being connected with such sewer," in Section 91 of "The Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act, 1909," to mean that vacant land shall be exempt from sewerage rate? 3, Does he consider it right that the rate should be levied in cases where there is no possible need for sewerage connections?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, Yes. The value of the land is enhanced owing to the fact that sewerage facilities are available in the same manner as the value of the land increases when a water supply is available.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Dividend Duties Act Amendment.
 - 2, Stamp Act Amendment.
 - 3, Government Electric Works.
 - 4, Industries Assistance Board.
- Introduced by the Premier.

BILL—GRAIN AND FOODSTUFF.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [4.43]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Grain and Foodstuff Bill to be passed through its remaining stages in one sitting.

Question passed.

Report Stage, etcetera.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [4.47] in moving the second reading said: The Bill has been introduced at the re-

quest of the municipalities of Perth, Leederville and North Perth. For some time past there has been under consideration a scheme for the creation of a Greater Perth. A Bill was prepared by certain private individuals for this purpose, but it has not yet been submitted, and the municipalities named in this measure are of opinion that they can come together before the Greater Perth scheme is approved of. They have been dealing with the question for some time, and at their request a machinery Bill has been introduced to enable them to carry out their ideas of amalgamation. Everything they requested is embodied in the Bill, with the exception of a minor matter in regard to North Perth, dealing with representation. It was considered unnecessary to divide North Perth into three districts for the purpose of the election of representatives to the city council. The existing Act gives full powers for uniting various municipal districts, but if carried into effect in regard to Perth, North Perth and Leederville, it would be very unwieldy, and would put Perth in a very awkward position until the end of next year, because North Perth and Leederville would have a majority at the council table. Therefore, they requested that Leederville and North Perth should be regarded as two new wards. The city of Perth to-day is divided into five wards, and the two new divisions will increase the number to seven. Each ward will return three councillors. We have not in the Bill named the wards, because we thought that could better be done subsequently by the Governor-in-Council. There is already a north ward in Perth and it will be necessary to adjust the nomenclature. To save expense in regard to the preparation of rolls it has been decided that the mayor's roll in each of the municipalities shall be the roll for the election of the three new councillors for each ward, with this alteration, that the number of votes allowed for the election of a councillor shall be added to the mayor's roll. That roll provides for a larger number of votes for the election of mayor than for that of a councillor. Provision is also made

for the retiring councillors on the same lines as the election of a municipal councillor in the first instance. Thus, the councillor who obtains the largest number of votes will be elected for three years, while those having the lesser number will be elected only until next year. Provision is also made for the city of Perth striking a rate and making up the rate book, to bring the wards now proposed to be united into line with the city of Perth. Under the Municipalities Act, December is the last month for the approval of the rate book, and it is therefore necessary to have a clause enabling the city council to strike the rates and submit the rate book for approval. That is all that the Bill proposes, and all that is requested by the municipalities concerned. Further arrangements can be made between themselves, and consequently on the passing of the Bill and its approval by the Governor, the municipalities of Leederville and North Perth will cease to exist as separate bodies. The title is to be amended for the purpose of inserting "the city of Perth" instead of "the mayor and councillors of the city of Perth." This has been done, I understand, with a view to adding to the dignity of the City. The Bill has had the approval of the three municipalities concerned, who are anxious that it should go through as early as possible to enable them to deal with the electric lighting scheme without entering into a separate agreement. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [4.53]: I have pleasure in supporting the Bill. It intimately concerns the electorate which I represent. I take this opportunity of thanking the Minister for his prompt action in acceding to the wishes of the combined councillors, and introducing the Bill. It is important that the Bill should be passed early, for the reasons the Minister has given. The scheme for a Greater Perth has been in the air for a number of years. I may explain that that scheme contemplates the union with the Perth municipality of all the adjoining municipalities within the metropoli-

tan area, and also certain parts of the Perth Roads Board District. As the Minister has mentioned, that is rather a complicated and controversial scheme and therefore, if introduced, it is not likely that it would pass in one session. This is only the first step in that direction. I am glad the first step has been taken, because, while we heartily agree with the Greater Perth scheme, we must agree also that it is a very big undertaking, and we know it is always well to tackle these large undertakings step by step. As the Minister has explained, the Bill is of a non-controversial character, for the reason that the three municipalities concerned are in accord in regard to it. They could have been united under the Municipal Institutions Act of 1906, but a rather complicated proceeding was involved and the Minister has been good enough to accede to the request of the deputation and introduce the Bill to facilitate the amalgamation. The only fault I find with the Bill is that it does not go far enough.

The Premier: What Bill does?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Some of yours do. I would like the Bill to absorb Subiaco.

The Premier: Of course; the most important part of the metropolitan area.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It certainly should embrace, in addition to the three municipalities mentioned, Subiaco, South Perth, Victoria Park, Mount Lawley, and Maylands.

The Premier: No. you cannot get Mount Lawley.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: While provision is being made to unite the three municipalities concerned, the door ought to be left open for others to come in in the same convenient way. I would suggest to the Minister that he should give an opportunity of discussing a small amendment, devised to leave the door open for others. The amendment will provide that Subiaco, if it is so desired, may take advantage of this measure and join the city of Perth without going through the formalities laid down in the Municipal Institutions Act, or without the introduction of a special Act.

The Minister for Works: The deputation wanted only the Bill.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That is so. I am not going to force the amendment on the Minister if he does not think it desirable, for I do not wish to introduce any controversial matter. It would not be quite so simple a matter to leave the door open for Mount Lawley and Maylands for the reason that they are not municipalities, but portions of the roads board district, and therefore a larger amendment would be necessary. I have an amendment which has been drafted at the request of the mayor of Perth. I am not prepared to move it to-day, but if the Bill does not go entirely through Committee this afternoon I will ask the Minister to furnish an opportunity for discussing the proposal.

The Minister for Works: I want it to go right through to-day.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Some six years ago a petition was signed under the provisions of the Municipal Institutions Act, praying that Mount Lawley and Maylands should be formed into a Municipality. That petition was presented to me as Minister controlling the municipalities at the time, but I advised Executive Council to refuse the petition, because the Greater Perth scheme was then in the air. I mentioned this as an argument that room ought to be left for Mt. Lawley and Maylands to join a Greater Perth if they desire because they, in the year I have mentioned, expressed a strong desire to become a municipality. About that time, or a little prior to that time, a portion of that district petitioned—I am referring now to Maylands—to join the municipality of Perth. They failed in their endeavour for the reason that the Municipalities Act of 1896 provided that there must be a majority of owners signing the petition. In Maylands a great number of the landowners are absenteees living in Melbourne and other places, and it was found impossible to obtain the signatures of a majority to the petition. I mention that because the question may be raised afterwards that any district outside a municipality, by a majority petition, whether part of a roads board

district or not, can become annexed to a municipality. It would be a wise provision if a further clause were attached to the Bill, leaving the door open so that, if a majority of the ratepayers in a district desired they can join the municipality of the city of Perth. When in Committee I shall ask the Minister to allow this amendment to be made. It will not delay the measure very much.

The Premier: We put the Bill up on the distinct understanding that it would not be discussed.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Premier ought to be reasonable.

The Premier: A lot of other Bills have had to be withheld because there is not time for them.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: This Bill has gone so far and we ought not to spoil a good thing. Cabinet has been good enough to accede to the wishes of the bodies concerned, and it is worth a few minutes' discussion to see if we cannot go a little farther. I suggest to the Minister that he take the Bill into Committee as far as the last clause and then report progress, then my amendment can be placed on the Notice Paper. It will only mean a delay of 24 hours at most. I support the second reading.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [5.4]: I am indeed pleased to be in a position this afternoon to support this measure. Let me first congratulate the Minister for Works and the Attorney General on their prompt action in bringing down this measure at the request of a very influential deputation. Also let me say I am pleased that they have not broken faith with that deputation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are they in the habit of doing that?

Mr. TAYLOR: That deputation desired the amendment to be brought down, and this measure is exactly what the deputation required other than a request from the North Perth municipality that they should have special representation for a special ward. I opposed that at the deputation, as the Minister will remember, and the request was not pressed. The reason it was not pressed was the urgency of

the measure and the shortness of the session, and the deputation were prepared to forego that request if the Government saw that they would be able to get the Bill through without delay. I am sorry the member for Perth, who introduced the deputation, is in some measure introducing a controversial subject. I know the Government have foregone an opportunity of giving this Parliament a chance of discussing important measures by allowing this Bill to come down, and I, as one of the deputation and a councillor of Leederville, am not going to break faith with the Ministers or the people I represent in Leederville. This Bill is exactly what the ratepayers of the whole of the areas interested desire. The member for Perth desires something for some other people who were not represented on the deputation. He wants the door left open so that other people can come in, but when you do that then you raise a controversial matter. The deputation told the Government that this Bill would suit them. We outlined the measure to the Minister and we believed it would go through the House in a few minutes. Had the member for Perth not raised the point he has done I would not have felt it incumbent on me to make any remarks on the measure. As one of the deputation who urged the Government to bring the measure down I may say the Government have not broken faith with the deputation, and I hope the members of the deputation sitting in this House will not break faith with the Government. I hope the Bill will go through this afternoon. In a Greater Perth scheme there are great principles involved, and I say this Parliament would not pass a Bill for a Greater Perth scheme in three months or in one session, because there are principles involved which individual members hold near and dear and in municipal questions members fight principles to the last ditch. This Bill has no such principle, but it accepts two municipalities into the city of Perth as wards with equal representation and the rates struck by the municipalities for the first year. There is no necessity for argument. I hope the member for Perth will not press his amendment. I speak as a councillor of Leederville who was selected by that council to represent

them on the deputation to urge the Bill, and I have some knowledge of their desires. The object of the Bill is to enable the North Perth council and the Leederville council to become wards of the municipality of the city of Perth without inconveniencing the sitting members of the various wards of the city of Perth. If this Bill is not passed the only condition under which these municipalities can come into the City Council is under the Municipalities Act, and Leederville would be entitled to 12 councillors and North Perth 9, being 21 in all, while at present there are only 15 councillors in the city of Perth. I am justified in conveying to the House the fairness of the measure and the fairness of the desires of the people concerned. When these municipalities desire not to place any hardship on the municipality accepting them, that is a guarantee that this House should accept the measure. I fail to see anything in the measure which is controversial in any way. The only controversial matter mentioned by the deputation was that North Perth desired representation for a special ward, but there was a tacit understanding that unless the Minister thought the Bill would go through without discussion that matter should be dropped. The Minister has kept faith with the deputation, and I do not think it is fair that we should ask the Minister to extend the measure so as to allow Subiaco or any other municipality to come in if they should so desire. There is plenty of time for Subiaco or Victoria Park or any other place to come in when they see the advantages that Leederville and North Perth have derived by becoming wards of the city of Perth. I am prepared to assist the passage of the measure and to depend on the advantages shown. We have not gone into this matter without some consideration. The municipalities are not giving up any of their rights, and we have not entered into a compact with any desire of getting any advantage from those we are joining. It is to the interests of all concerned and the council of the city of Perth realise that, hence the unanimity of opinion and the action which has brought the Bill here to-day. I hope the Bill will pass through all stages to-day and speedily become law.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [5.11]: I think the Bill before the House is an admirable representation of the wishes of the people of Perth, North Perth, and Leederville. It carries out what they want in a few short words without raising any controversial issues, as the Greater Perth Bill, which I had the pleasure of handing to the Attorney General three years ago must do.

The Attorney General: Nearly.

Mr. ROBINSON: And which he keeps in a special pigeon-hole devoted to that very illustrious matter. I quite admit that the Greater Perth Bill in itself is a thing all are wanting, but I admit at the same time there is, as the member for Mt. Margaret said, a great deal of matter in it that would honestly provide scope for discussion in this Parliament or any other assemblage of this size for months and months. I remember when the deputation from the various municipalities were considering it, I think there were about 30 of us, and we sat one or two nights a week, and the work extended over two years before the Bill reached the shape that it was finally placed in when it was handed to the Attorney General. Therefore, I cannot expect a Bill of that description to come before the House and be passed in a session such as the present or in any session except the Government viewed it differently from the way in which I think they do. With reference to leaving the door open to others to come in, there is one principle, an integral principle of the Greater Perth Bill and this Bill that the members of the Government are quite in accord with the views I hold, and that is that only those will come in under a Bill of this description whose finances are on the same footing. That is to say, if the general rate of Perth is 1s. 6d. in the pound, and if North Perth and Leederville have a loan rate of 1s. 5d. and 1s. 2d. we would not expect those people to come in on the same footing as the municipality with the loan rate of 1s. 6d. Here, however, these three municipalities we know are on the same footing. Their loans, in comparison to their population or annual value, are very much on a par. Therefore Leeder-

ville, we will say, will neither be worse off nor better off by joining the city of Perth, and will probably be better off.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: There is only a chance of his being better off.

Mr. ROBINSON: He is taking a risk, but he has joined a good partner. Suppose there was one municipality which had no loan rate at all, and it came in under this Bill, its inhabitants would instantly be subjected to a loan rate of 1s. in the pound, and it would be most inequitable and foolish of the people of that municipality to come in under such an arrangement. But under a differential system of loan rate, however, I do not think that this will form one of the contentious parts of the Bill. It will be realised by the Government benches that where a municipality comes under a general Bill of this description, and it has no money at all and pays no loan rate, or which has a general rate which is a very small one, that that is one of the principles which is quite different from the Greater Perth scheme. When this is understood it is realised at once that the leaving of the door open or ajar can only be for those who are on the same footing. I would not for a moment suggest that South Perth or Victoria Park or Queen's Park were on the same financial footing as North Perth or Leederville.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: It would be entirely in their own hands.

Mr. ROBINSON: That is so, but I do not see any object in leaving the door ajar for people to come in who do not belong to the same category. I would be prepared to support the Bill as it stands and wait until the question is mutually agreed upon by the various municipalities, or until the Government think fit to bring down a Greater Perth Bill for the whole of the metropolitan area to be amalgamated into the scheme, as they should be, and, as I firmly believe, will be in the future.

Mr. VERYARD (Leederville) [5.18]: I wish to congratulate the Minister for Works for the promptness with which he has brought this Bill before the House. The ratepayers of Leederville and North Perth have long looked forward to their being united under a Greater Perth

scheme. If a lengthy discussion as to the Bill is to be gone into, and the passage of the Bill is in any way delayed, the ratepayers generally, not only in North Perth and Leederville, but in the City, will be disappointed. I think the member for Perth will be well advised not to press the amendment which he suggests should be incorporated in the Bill. The hon. member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) has already discussed that particular question. The ratepayers in Leederville and North Perth and the City generally will appreciate the action of the Minister for Works in bringing in this Bill so promptly. The Bill, I think, will meet the wishes of all concerned, and it will be to the advantage of the whole of the bodies which are proposed to be incorporated under it. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [5.22]: As a member for portion of the municipal councils concerned in the Bill I desire to add my congratulations to the Government for their expedition in bringing this Bill forward. I trust that the House will exercise the same expedition in connection with the Bill. We have looked forward to this Bill for a considerable time now, and I am sure it will be a great disappointment to the ratepayers and municipalities concerned if the Bill is delayed any longer. There is a good deal to be said in favour of the amendment suggested by the member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly). I hope, however, that he will see fit to withdraw the suggested amendment and allow the Bill to go through without any further delay. As the member for Mt. Margaret pointed out, provision can be made at any future date for any other municipality that wishes to join with the Greater Perth scheme. I think we are all unanimous as to the benefits to be derived from the Bill, and I do not propose to waste the time of the House in pointing them out. The Bill has been introduced by the special request of the councils concerned, and I presume that they have seen that all their desires have been included in it. I hope that country mem-

bers will join with City members and enable us to get this Bill through as early as possible.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth) [5.20]: I have no intention of taking up the time of the House on this question. As one of the members representing portion of the district of Perth, I wish to offer my congratulations and my thanks to the Minister for having brought this Bill down so quickly. Although we received a favourable and sympathetic reception at the hands of the Minister, he could not promise definitely that what we asked would be placed in the programme for this short session. But the Government have been able to do so, and the municipalities interested appreciate the effort they have put forward in this matter. Seeing that the Bill contains all that was asked for by the deputation which waited on the Minister, I intend to support it as it is. An undertaking was given that no controversial matters would be introduced. We simply asked for those things which the Bill now contains, and I may say that the measure contains really all that we expected to be brought down. I support the Bill, and again desire to thank the Minister.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco) [5.23]: As representing a municipality which I know the city of Perth is longing to throw their enfolding arms around, I may say that as soon as ever the Perth Municipal Council can convince the people of Subiaco that they have anything to gain by becoming members of Greater Perth, they will be just as ready to come in as are the people to-day of North Perth and Leederville. We believe, however, that at present there are no advantages to be gained while there may be disadvantages by entering into the scheme. The people or the councillors of the two municipalities of North Perth and Leederville have doubtless given careful consideration to the scheme. Still, there is one point which I believe has been overlooked, and that is the fact that unless the Government are prepared to alter the regulations which govern the subsidies, these districts containing the two muni-

cipalities will have a great deal less money to spend upon themselves than they have had for some years.

The Premier: That is one reason of course for our introducing it.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: That is all very well from the Premier's point of view. I believe that a large number of people did not have that point placed before them, nor did they realise that when they decided to enter into the scheme.

The Premier: Then you do not want to introduce it now.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: I want to say that this may be a disadvantage. Then the ratepayers of these two portions of the metropolitan area may find their selection of representatives greatly restricted unless the Greater Perth council, when it is constituted, agrees to an alteration in the times of meetings, and agrees to make the meetings at night time. Unless this alteration is effected, practically no one at present in the North Perth or Leederville councils will be able to take advantage of the meetings of the Greater Perth council.

Mr. Robinson: Do not call it a Greater Perth.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Then I will call it the City of Perth.

The Minister for Works: They meet at night very often.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: They have no night meetings. A large number of the representatives of both North Perth and Leederville are engaged in various avocations, and will find it impossible to get away in the afternoon, in order to attend meetings. Unless the new council are agreeable to altering the time of the meetings, then the selection by the ratepayers of their representatives will be greatly restricted. The Premier suggested that they should select civil servants to represent them. I do not know what he means, whether they could get away more easily than other people. I have no intention of opposing the Bill in any way. It is purely a matter for the councils concerned, and seeing that they have agreed amongst themselves, it is not for us to oppose it. We should have no objection therefore. I want to assure the member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) that if Subiaco can be convinced that

there are any advantages to be gained they will be prepared to come in under the scheme.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [5.26]: As one who is a great believer in local government, I wish to say that I welcome the amalgamation of these municipalities in the metropolitan area. One metropolitan member after another has eulogised the Government for introducing the measure, has endorsed it, and given his approval to it, and this must carry weight with members like myself who represent a country constituency. I understand that some time back the ratepayers of the metropolitan area decided by a very large majority of five to one to support the Greater Perth scheme. That being so, I look upon this proposed amalgamation between the municipalities of Perth, North Perth, and Leederville, as a step towards that desired result.

The Premier: I am not so certain that it will not have the reverse effect.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of retarding it? If it proves beneficial it will be a step towards the extension of the scheme, and the realisation of the ambitions of Mr. Robinson in the Greater Perth proposal which he advocated so forcibly three years ago. I hope that the question, when it comes to be thrashed out, will not be thrashed out on the grounds suggested by the member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs), namely, as to the time of the meetings of the council. It seems to me that the councillors will be quite able to settle this important matter amongst themselves when they are duly affected by it. The fact as to whether they meet in the morning or the afternoon or the evening, does not influence my decision so far as the scheme is concerned.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You get very excited about the hours of meeting here.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I sometimes show excitement, not often, when I feel we are unjustly worked, and when we do not observe the eight hours day prin-

ciple which is advocated so strongly by my hon. friends opposite. I have always contended that we are too hard worked and do not live up to our principles.

The Premier: That was your own fault.

Hon. FRANK WILSON. The sitting last night bears me out in this contention.

The Premier: It was of your own making; you entered into an agreement to sit.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I admit that I entered into an understanding to pass the Bill through all stages yesterday, but, as a matter of fact, we only finished passing it to-day. The suggestion of the member for Perth that an amendment should be moved to let other municipalities come in appealed to me as being reasonable, and it is one that I shall certainly support. It is a fair thing that we should leave the door open to some extent to other municipalities to come in if they consider it desirable to do so. But I am not wedded to an amendment of that sort, and in deference to the expressed opinion of members representing the metropolitan constituencies that it is likely to retard the passage of the measure, I shall be prepared to allow the Bill to go through in its present form. The point that does appeal to me is that the municipalities themselves have asked for this measure; they have agreed to it, and therefore we have to bow to that request and give them the legislation they want. The matter of the subsidies is one that will appeal to the Treasurer. I do not know that it will appeal quite so much to the Minister for Works. I noticed in an interview with some representatives of municipalities in connection with this all important question of subsidies, the Minister stated that he was the treasurer of the municipality which he represents in this House, and he hoped that the Government would be able to do something in the direction of subsidising that municipality. There is one thing we can hope for and it is the powerful assistance of the Minister for Works, and it is just possible if that be given, that the municipalities may derive some measure of help even in these hard financial times. I do not intend

to raise any objection to the passage of the measure.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [5.33]: I am pleased with the support which has been accorded the Bill. The suggestion which was made in the direction of amending the measure is one that could hardly be included in this Bill because there are terms that other outside bodies might want to make with the City Council before they could become part of the city, which would prevent the City Council from carrying out the provisions contained in the measure. There are many questions that I would like to deal with so far as municipal councils are concerned, but when the Bill was asked for I put my wishes on one side so that the measure might be got through speedily and without any difficulty, and as it was submitted I thought it would be acceptable to all members.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Registration of Transfers of Land:

Mr. ROBINSON: Will the Minister in charge of the Bill explain the reason for the inclusion of paragraph (b)?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This paragraph was inserted at the request of the city of Perth. Until the Bill was placed in my hands I was not aware that it was intended to include the paragraph. I have been assured that it does not make any difference so far as the title is concerned because the whole of the area will become portion of the city of Perth.

Clause put and passed.

Title:

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I desire to remind the Minister that when a Bill is brought in without any time being stated as to when it shall become an Act, it becomes an Act immediately it receives assent. It is usual, as the Minister knows,

to sometimes insert a paragraph stating that the Act shall come into operation by proclamation on a certain date. I do not know that it is necessary to do that in this case. The Minister might agree to let the town clerk of Perth know when it is intended that the measure shall receive the assent of the Governor, because certain arrangements have to be made to take over the combined municipalities. It is desired that the Bill should become an Act as quickly as possible.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The measure will come into force immediately it is assented to by the Governor. No time is to be lost because we must enter into the agreement, and also prepare for striking the rates for next year. I will give the notification as soon as I can.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

BILL—WAGIN-KUKERIN RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The Minister for Works laid on the Table the plans of the proposed railway.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [5.41] in moving the second reading said: Hon. members will be aware that the Railway Bills which are being introduced this session are Bills which have already passed this House in a previous Parliament. In fact one or two have passed this House on more than one occasion, so that it is hardly necessary for me to take up very much time in dealing with the question so far as the districts are concerned. I shall merely content myself with giving a few facts. The line in question will follow the survey outlined in the Railway Surveys Bill, 1913,

and which was assented to on the 30th September last. The maps with the routes marked on them which are hanging on the walls of the Chamber will enable hon. members to see for themselves the directions the proposed lines will take. By the construction of this line the Wagin-Dumbleyung railway will be extended a distance of 25½ miles to the Lake Grace area, where a deserving number of settlers, a great number of them comparatively new arrivals in Western Australia, are settled. Although I have not had an opportunity of visiting this district I have been informed that the settlers who have taken up areas there are men of whom the State should be proud. They have in the past few years been obliged to undergo great hardships and they claim that when they selected land there, they were definitely promised that the railway extension would be carried out at an early date. At that time, however, a large number of railways had to be built and it was not possible to fulfil the promise which had been made to these people. The land to be served by the construction of this railway within a 12½ miles radius consists of 378,000 acres of which 58,000 acres are first class, 120,000 second class, and 208,000 third class. The rainfall in this area has averaged 12 inches. The resident occupiers total 113 and there is an estimated population of 500. The land under cultivation totals 17,000 acres, an increase of 11,000 acres since the Railways Survey Bill was passed, and the average yield for the area cropped has up to the present season been 12 bushels. This year is rather an unfortunate one in which to introduce agricultural railway measures, because of the exceptionally dry season. It was estimated when the previous Bill was introduced that there would be an increase of 7,000 acres of fallowed and cleared land, but in regard to this matter the member for the district will have something to say, because the drought experienced over the greater portion of the State has caused a temporary setback in this district. The estimated cost of the construction of 25½ miles of railway is

£40,000, and rails and fastenings will amount to £20,000, making a total of £60,000 for the line. The increase has been principally brought about on account of the ruling grade, which is one in 60. There is no doubt in my mind, from the information which I have received in regard to this district, that this measure is one which we can honestly recommend hon. members to approve. It is necessary that we should pass one or two of these railway proposals through Parliament as early as possible. Within the next few weeks we will be completing three of the longest lines which have been constructed during the past year or two, and consequently several hundred men now engaged in railway work will be thrown out of employment. It is essential that something should be done, not only to assist the agriculturists, but to provide work for these men. There are only two railways now under construction which will employ but a fair number of men, the Wagin-Bowelling and the Mount Marshall railways. These two lines represent the only ones under construction and unless I can get one or two Bills passed at an early date, there will be some difficulty in connection with the railway construction employees. There is no need to say anything more in respect to this proposal. The area is well known to a large number of members and the whole position was previously placed before hon. members. I have pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin) [5.48]: During the last session of the late Parliament this Bill was before the Chamber, and owing to the outbreak of the war was set aside for the time being. I am glad the Government have again introduced the measure. I should like to give hon. members a little information concerning the settlement at Lake Grace. The majority of the settlers are men who have come out from the old country with their families. They had had considerable experience of farming in the old land and they were so satisfied with the land and the prospects ahead, not-

withstanding that they were 68 miles from the nearest railway town, Dumbleyung, and notwithstanding the hardships and disabilities they have had to overcome during the last 4½ years, that thousands of acres of land have been cleared and cultivated, and the produce has been carried many miles across very bad roads. These facts supply sufficient evidence of the pluck and enterprise of these men and the necessity for giving them facilities to enable them to remain on their holdings. There is no hon. member who will contend that a man can cart wheat the distance they have to, and do it profitably. Parliament three years ago gave the settlers some relief by extending the line from Dumbleyung to Kukerin, and it is from Kukerin to Lake Grace, a distance of about 30 miles, that this proposed railway will traverse. I can assure the House that the line will pay. I am quite with the hon. member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) when he said it would be impossible for Parliament to expect any agricultural railway to pay immediately. Nearly the whole length of the line from Wagin to Kukerin has paid almost since the first train ran across it, and this will serve to prove that the quality of the soil along that belt east of Wagin is a good one for growing cereals.

Mr. James Gardiner: What is the rainfall?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Fourteen inches.

Mr. James Gardiner: Over what period has that been taken?

Mr. S. STUBBS: That is the average for 20 years. This year the rainfall has fallen short of the average.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: But this year does not count.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Even at the present time there is scarcely a failure at Lake Grace, notwithstanding the dry season. Almost every farmer will have seed and something to spare. This shows conclusively that this locality has a very favoured rainfall. It is within 70 miles of the coast and very often gets rain which does not extend to Wagin. I think Lake Grace has had more rain this year than Wagin. If this Bill is passed, as I be-

lieve it will be, the Government will have another duty to perform. The settlers in the district now cannot till sufficient soil to enable interest and sinking fund to be paid on the line, but there are tens of thousands of acres of similar land to that now under cultivation which have not been surveyed, and I would warn the Government of the serious position they will find themselves in when the line is built. The survey work must precede settlement and if the Government do not send surveyors out to cut up these tracts of valuable land, what will be the position of the line? From the south-east side of the lake to midway between the Lake Grace terminus and the present terminus, Kukerin, there is a large tract of first class wheat land which can and will be served, and will be within a reasonable distance of this proposed line. I regret the Minister for Lands is not in his seat, but I hope he will send an officer to inspect this land and have it made available for selection immediately.

Mr. James Gardiner: What kind of timber does it carry?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Morrell and salmon.

Mr. Foley: Did I understand you to say that surveyors should go out and cut up more land in order to increase the holdings of present settlers?

Mr. S. STUBBS: No; the population in the Lake Grace district could be trebled in a very short time if the land were made available, and it should be made available if we want this line to pay. The land is there and enormous quantities of grain could be grown, but with the present population at Lake Grace it would be impossible for the line to pay interest and sinking fund. Therefore, more land should be made available and more settlers should be sent out to the district. Settlers cannot go out at present because there is no land surveyed. Plenty of men would apply for land tomorrow if it were available. As member for the district, it is my duty to bring before the House and the country the fact that there are large tracts of land in the district which only require to be cut up and made available for selection.

Mr. James Gardiner: Have you any idea of the area?

Mr. S. STUBBS: There is between 25,000 and 30,000 acres of land within 10 or 12 miles of the route of the railway, whence wheat could be carried and made to show a good profit. Not only are there English settlers in the district, but there are a number of sons of Western Australian farmers, who have had experience in farming all their lives, and are satisfied that they can grow anything from 12 to 20 bushels to the acre when they have the facilities. At present they have to cart a distance of 30 miles, but even with this disadvantage scores of wagons of grain were carted last season at a cost of half a crown a bag. How can any farmer make cereal growing pay under such conditions? The wagons had to go in for stores and it was better to take in wheat than to go in empty. If the Government regard my warning to get a move on and make more land available, this particular district will add an immense quantity of grain to the Western Australian output. Other lines are required including some in the Midland district and when these are built they will serve to prove to the world that we in Western Australia have the very best State in Australasia for wheat growing. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill. If any hon. member visits the district when the line is being constructed, I will be able to prove to his satisfaction that I have said nothing but what is absolutely true, that this is a first class belt of wheat-growing land.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [5.58]: As I pointed out during the last session of last Parliament I welcome the introduction of this measure because I think it conclusively justifies the policy which we adopted when in power in 1906, that was the policy of land settlement and agricultural railway construction. I can remember well visiting this district. I did not go so far east as the railway now extends, or as it is proposed to further extend it, but I did examine the country as far as we then proposed to carry the line and that was in the Dumbleyung area. I was very much

impressed with the possibilities of that portion of our agricultural belt, and I am glad to hear from the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) to-day that my impression then formed has been fully justified by the subsequent results—the number of settlers, the wheat which has been produced, and the fact, as he has stated, that the traffic on the railway, as at present constructed, has proved satisfactory. This is a continuation of the policy we fought for at that time and which I think hon. members who were in the House nine years ago will admit received opposition from some sections then in Parliament.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I never heard it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member was not in existence at that time. I am referring to hon. members who were in existence. The objection raised was that the railways would not pay; that we were expending loan moneys on works which were not productive. I am glad to think that that sort of argument has now disappeared, and that the principle of building railways, even in anticipation of settlement, has been freely recognised by all sections of the community as represented in this Chamber.

Mr. Foley: I hope you will repeat that on the Esperance Railway Bill.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In due time I shall give my reasons for objecting to the construction of the Esperance railway.

Mr. Foley: Give it the amount of consideration that you are giving this railway.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I could not possibly support the construction of a railway to the moon, for example, though I believe other hon. members would. I have good grounds for opposing the construction of the Esperance railway, and I shall oppose it unless the member for the district can bring forward better reasons for its construction than have been presented in this Chamber up to the present time. However, we are not now discussing the Esperance Railway Bill. I agree with the Minister that the fact that we are suffer-

ing under an abnormally bad season at the present juncture—the worst season, possibly, that we have known in this State of Western Australia—should not deter us, if our finances will permit it, from still prosecuting the policy of railway construction. Undoubtedly, the future of Western Australia in a very large measure depends upon the extension of our railway system, the wise extension of our railway system; and the Minister need have no fear, so far as the unemployed are concerned, or as the work of his department which he has mentioned, is concerned, but that he will encounter no opposition but, on the contrary, will receive support, from this side of the House if he can finance these agricultural railway propositions, with the exception of the Esperance railway.

Mr. Foley: Why except Esperance?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member, if he reads *Hansard*, ought to know the reasons against the construction of that line.

The Attorney General: Because it is in my constituency, that is the objection.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have no objection to the Attorney General, who knows that I admire and respect him; and I have no objection to the Attorney General's constituency. With respect to the appeal of the Minister for Works to the Chamber that the Government are in the position of needing work for the unemployed, and more especially for 200 or 300 men who will shortly be out of work owing, I presume, to the completion of railways which the Minister says are now drawing near to completion—railways which I may point out, have taken some three years to complete, or about double the time that was necessary—

The Minister for Works: You brought in sufficient for three years.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We did, but the hon. gentleman did not construct them rapidly enough when he had the means at his disposal. However, he is not likely to meet with any opposition, so far as we are concerned, to the passing of any measures which will enable him

to continue the employment of those people. We do not want—I presume that no one wants—to see any men out of employment if they can possibly be kept on and earn their wages. In any case, these being necessary works, it appeals to us to give the Minister the power that he asks to proceed forthwith to the construction of the railways. I wish to say at this point that I believe that we shall have a much better season, a very much better season, in the coming year than we experienced during the past year.

Member: God help us if we do not!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think we are all agreed that we can afford to speculate upon a much better season. We must, indeed, speculate upon it in every way. I do not care what it costs the State to assist our settlers in every direction, not only by the construction of railways which are necessary, but also in every other respect needful. According to the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs), this railway is necessary because the farmers at present settled in the country to be served cannot possibly cart their wheat and deliver it at the nearest railway siding as a payable proposition. Parliament must supply the farmers not only with railway facilities but with all assistance necessary to enable the settlers to retain their holdings and put in their crops for next year. Parliament will endorse any expenditure incurred by the Government in that behalf. The whole of Western Australia depends upon what can be done in this direction, in land settlement, and upon what we can produce from the soil. It is idle to put men on the land to produce without giving them the facilities required for production. Having regard to that particular principle, I endorse what has been said up to the present in favour of this small extension of about 25½ miles, so long as it is not going too far east. I presume the Minister has satisfied himself on that point.

Mr. S. Stubbs: The rainfall is good in that country, no matter how far east you go.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: So long as we have an assured rainfall, we are right. I

recognise that the belt within the assured rainfall rapidly runs out east as one gets south of Wickiepin. There is plenty of rainfall. For that matter, the rainfall at Esperance is good enough for wheat growing, if only the land were good sure, as I supported this and other measures on the last occasion when they were introduced. I hope they will pass this time, and not be abandoned. Further, I hope that the Treasurer will be able to find the necessary funds to complete the railways, and complete them expeditiously.

Mr. FOLEY (Mt. Leonora) [6.7]: In rising to support the second reading of this Bill, I desire to express my intention to be brief. I have had an opportunity of visiting the country this proposed railway traverses, though I have no hesitation in saying—contrary to what I have heard some hon. members say in this Chamber—that the line will not be a paying concern as soon as constructed. Hon. members would do well to disabuse their minds altogether of such an idea. To my knowledge, many a line has been spoken of in such terms; but the next thing we hear is that the line cannot pay, and then the onus is thrown upon Parliament of justifying the construction of a railway which is not proving a profitable asset to the State. Undoubtedly, all lines are useful assets to the State if they traverse country which will grow wheat. As regards the railway now under consideration, I believe that the belt of country it crosses is one of the best in Western Australia. Travelling northward from Gnowangerup one traverses a stretch of country which not only should produce wheat, but also should prove one of the best mixed farming districts in the whole of the State, with the possible exception of the country to which the leader of the Opposition is always so kind and considerate, namely, the Esperance country, and other similar districts. The line, if constructed right out to Lake Grace, will, I believe, open up country possessing an assured rainfall.

The Minister for Works: It will average 12 inches.

Mr. FOLEY: It will average 12 inches, but the point is this: There may be a

rainfall of 12 inches at many of those places, but that is no criterion to show that the rainfall will be as good as a 10-inch fall at other times. Let us assume, for argument's sake, that there has been during a greater period a 7-inch rainfall. That 7-inch rainfall may have done a great deal of good to the land. As we know, in several places they have lately had a rainfall of four or five inches within a short space of time, and those four or five inches have not done as much good as would have resulted had the rainfall been an average one. The country to be served by this line, however, has an average rainfall, I understand. Moreover, having seen many of the men on the land there, I believe that the district contains some of the best settlers Western Australia owns at the present time. When this railway was under discussion last session, I spoke in favour of the State doing something more than keeping in employment the men then in that district, in favour of the State doing more than opening up the land for the friends of the people then settled there. I believe that the line which the Government ask this House to support will be the means, provided the Government avail themselves of it, of placing on good land men now struggling in another portion of this State. I refer to the settlers on the poison areas west of Katanning. Those men are battling at the present time where it is almost impossible to make a living, and the opening up of country by the railway now under discussion will give the State the opportunity of placing those men, or some of their number, who are well fitted to be settlers, on farming land under conditions which may be encountered and overcome. When these men are taken off the poison areas right through to Dinninup and Coben Soak and placed on the land to be opened by this railway, the Government will have done those men a good turn and will also have done the State a good turn. The line has my entire support, and I am glad that on this occasion the leader of the Opposition did not bring the Trades Hall into the discussion as he did last time, when he said that because we

on this side represented only the industries we had no care for agricultural lines or for the men who were opening up the agricultural areas of this State. I wish to tell the hon. member that goldfields members on this side, although directly representing only the goldfields, still indirectly represent as big a portion of the State as is represented by any member sitting in Opposition.

Hon. Frank Wilson: As big a portion in area, yes.

Mr. FOLEY: In that area there is just as much wealth produced for the State as anywhere else in Western Australia; and in that area there are men who are just as well able to protect the interests of Western Australia, and just as earnest in their desire to advance Western Australia, as any gentleman in the district represented by the leader of the Opposition. I trust that the measure will go through, and that the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) will have one of his ideals made manifest—that he will see this railway pushed right through to Lake Grace, through one of the best of our agricultural areas. Having known many of the settlers for a number of years on the goldfields, I am able to state positively that they are a class of men who will push the good work on. If any new country can be opened up by the surveys which have been spoken of, I am quite certain that this will prove to be for the benefit of the State generally.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER (Irwin) [7.30]: I think it will save time in the discussion of all these Bills if we make our position and the attitude we intend to take up on the Bills suggested here, very clear. One of the planks of our platform is the extension of railways to already settled districts, and consequently we have to support these lines. But when we look at the number of them we have to see to what we are committing ourselves, and how necessary in the future it is that land thrown open for settlement shall be thrown open with judgment, and shall not be thrown open in

districts isolated from any other productive land. When the Government throw land open for selection there is an implication that at some time or other they are going to give those settlers communication to enable them to profitably produce crops. Indeed, if I remember rightly, settlers have been invited to take up land on the assurance that ultimately they are not going to be more than 12 miles from a railway. These Bills bring home to us how necessary it is that wisdom shall be shown in our Lands Department in selecting land for sale; otherwise means that we have to construct railways to serve the settlers on those lands with the distinct knowledge that some of the lines cannot possibly pay. But we feel bound to do it, because the corporate honour of the people, represented by the Government, is behind the action. I do not care which Government it is, if they throw open land for selection the people honestly believe that the Government are going to give them communication to enable them to produce at a profit; consequently we are faced with the position that we have to carry through that obligation. In the light of more mature knowledge, I maintain that it would be an infinitely better proposition for the State, and for many of those people, if we were to take them off the land and compensate them, rather than build a railway to a district where it is very doubtful if they can ever make a living. In many of these instances there have been something more than implications; there have been direct promises that railways shall be given to the people settled there.

Mr. HEITMANN: The very fact of throwing open the land carries with it the obligation to give the settlers facilities.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Exactly. We have to look into it and see whether it is a wise thing. I hope that in the future another plank of our platform shall be followed out, namely, that railways shall precede settlement. Then, when a Government bring in a railway Bill they will be able to justify it to the House on the score that not only is the land suitable and in a good rainfall, but that the whole outlay of those settlers

who took up the land is going to be saved to them; and every man of them knows what this means. Fortunately for this railway, it has advantages that commend it to the people of the State. It is in a 14-inch rainfall, and this has to be taken into consideration in any future settlement. However, we might let our enthusiasm for land settlement take hold of us, for goodness' sake do not let us lure a man by our specious advertisements or specious promises into districts where the rainfall is not guaranteed so that the people may know they can make a living there. These things have been done in the past, and to-day some of our finest settlers are in localities where they themselves, in the light of fuller experience, are saying unhesitatingly that they cannot make a living.

The Premier: And they will have to be taken out of it.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Yes, as I have said, it would be an infinitely better proposition in many instances to take those people right out and put them on land where they can be sure of making a living rather than to build a railway for them in a district where the rainfall is questionable.

Mr. HEITMANN: Some of them are cursing Millions Mitchell for having sent them out.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Before I came here I made up my mind that I would not be concerned in apportioning blame. I am concerned, however, with the fact—

Mr. HEITMANN: The Liberals to-day are advocating the policy which has been the ruination of hundreds.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And the Labour party are carrying it out. They are going further east every day.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: In regard to these lines, if the Government are satisfied that they have sufficient funds to go on with them, then in common justice there should be a priority of construction. Where the people have been longest on the land and have been waiting longest for the redemption of the promises of the Government to give these lines they should, as a matter of com-

mon fairness, be entitled to priority of construction. I agree with the remarks of the leader of the Opposition—and they have been used also by the Premier—that in production we can afford to take a risk, and that we do not require to stand still because we have this bad harvest facing us. Other parts of the British dominions are realising that the one big asset which they can afford to cultivate at the present juncture is the production of cereals. The Canadian Government are by every means in their power encouraging the farmers to put in every possible acre they can. Doubtless hon. members saw the other day where a million acres had been taken up to be put into wheat. I am more concerned about the protection of the men who go out on these lands, to see that they are not in any way misled, to see that we have a clear conscience, and to know that where we settle these men they are going to make a living. That is one thing, and another is to lose no courage, but to go ahead building up the big industry of production.

The Premier: Not building up figures alone, but actual production.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: That is so. Production is what we are after. Therefore when I get a Bill buttressed by the recommendations of the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) I am going to support it. But there is also an obligation thrown on to members in that regard. Every member who comes into the House is liable, in the interests of the people of his district, to rather exaggerate the advantages of the land his line is to serve. I do not think, however, from what the member for Wagin has said, that he could exaggerate.

The Premier: On one occasion, I remember, a debate on railway Bills disclosed the fact that five separate districts had the best record in the State.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The member for Wagin says he has a 13-inch rainfall, that the land is salmon gum and morrell—which represents the very best—and he further says there is an aggregate area of some 25,000 acres not surveyed which will build up the traffic on this

line. That becomes a big question when we are going to build lines to isolated places because of the mistakes of a Government. If those lines do not pay, the charges become a general tax on the community, and the whole of the people are called upon to pay for the benefit of that isolated section. In these circumstances any Treasurer is going to have deficits. In the building of these railways we have the right to see that the land is good, that the rainfall is good and that there is sufficient good land along the course of the railway to eventually make it pay interest and sinking fund.

Mr. S. Stubbs: But it must be settled properly.

The Premier: And cultivated properly.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: And in addition I will say that if a man is 30 miles from a railway it is of no use his taking much trouble to cultivate properly, because he knows the cartage of his product will prevent it being worth his while; but when we give him a railway we have the right to insist that his land shall be cultivated properly, and that all land along that railway shall be put to its best use. Probably I have seen more of land settlement and its good and evil points than most hon. members, for I have been in very close contact with it. Where the land is in a good rainfall we are desirous of seeing that every acre of that land is put to its best possible use. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [7.45]: This matter not only interests the primary producers in the agricultural industries but also interests those throughout the State of Western Australia. If the farmers in the out-back country have no railway communication they cannot carry on their business at a profit. If they have no railway communication that means they cannot go in for that further development which the leader of the Country party has just alluded to. It is only at a distance of from 12 to 15 miles from the railway that they can successfully carry on their industry. If numerous farmers, however, are carrying their products for over that distance of railway it

means a loss to the State because their energies and the work of their teams would be far better utilised in the cultivation of the soil than in the carting of the products. I know the district referred to. I know the quality of the soil and that the statement in regard to the rainfall is absolutely correct. I wish to point out that the Government should not look for the extension of these agricultural railways to prove reproductive and provide interest and sinking fund from the outset.

The Premier: We do not.

Mr. Allen: We should be very disappointed if we did.

Mr. HARRISON: This is the point to be considered. The railways now in existence will reap the benefit of the traffic that goes over this extension to the markets or to the port and reap the benefit of the train mileage of this product. This is of course bringing in revenue to the State. I may mention in regard to the Greenhills railway that it was unfortunate when that line was constructed some years ago that it was taken over a steep bank at Mt. Hardy when it might have been carried around and deviated instead of having to meet with that difficulty. That sort of thing has retarded agricultural railway extension for a considerable period. I trust that in all agricultural railways in the future the money will be spent to the best advantage of the State and to the farmers generally. If we go over obstacles which bring about an extra cost in construction it means that the line as a profit producer is retarded. It must be remembered too in connection with these extensions that not only will there be the traffic over them, but that there will also be the increased freightage over the other lines of the State.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [7.45]: As I said in introducing the Bill I placed it before Parliament at an early date for the purpose of ensuring an early commencement of the work as we have rails available which have been removed from the Great Southern railway. I am very

pleased to hear the remarks from the leader of the Country party in regard to the necessity for action being taken for the purpose of seeing that the land along these railways is utilised. This throws my mind back to the time when my late colleague (Mr. Bath) made an endeavour to carry out the desires of the hon. members. It was his endeavour when dealing with those who hold land that they should hold it for the purpose of producing cereals for the benefit of the State, and he tried to ensure if possible that those persons who held land for speculative purposes only should be removed from the positions they held in order to give those who were engaged in cultivating the soil an opportunity to do so. I am pleased to see that the Country party supports such action for the purpose of bringing our soils under cultivation. I do not know that I can say any more in regard to this line. I believe it is a line that is required. It certainly is a line that has been promised. I may tell hon. members that every line we propose to ask Parliament to agree to during this session is a line in regard to which a promise has already been given and where settlement has already taken place. I hope hon. members will carry this Bill through Committee for the purpose of enabling us to push this line on at an early date.

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—YILLIMINING-KONDININ RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The Minister for Works laid on the table the plans of the proposed railway.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [7.50] in moving the second reading said: This line is an extension of the Yillimining-Kondinin line. The survey of the proposed line was completed under the

Railway Surveys Act in November of this year. At the time the survey was introduced the necessity of the continuation of the line was explained to hon. members. I am not going to promise that this line will be constructed immediately it is approved of by Parliament. There may be a little time elapse before we are able to commence the extension of the line, but it is necessary that Parliament should give its approval for it. The Yillimining-Kondinin line is just being completed, and it is hoped before the end of the present month that the working railways will take control of it. As a matter of fact, a number of men employed on the construction of this line will leave the work early next week, the work having been completed, and the line will be handed over to the working railways at the earliest possible date. With regard to the route which has been decided upon for the line now under consideration and just fixed under the Railway Surveys Bill, I would like to point out for the information of hon. members that full consideration was given at the time to the matter. This line at its widest part is 26½ miles from the Wickepin-Merredin line, while a portion of it is only 16 miles from that railway.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How much of it is 16 miles away?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot say; the shortest distance, however, is 16 miles. When surveying the line the surveyor at the place where the line is junctioning at the northern end took into consideration the townships of Merredin, Carrabin, and Bruce Rock, and after giving the matter full consideration he decided that Merredin was the place at which the junction should be made. Mr. Babington, the engineer who surveyed the line, reports as follows:—

Although this line is the shortest to construct of the various proposals, and also would serve the Arrowsmith, Emu Hill, and Wadderin districts, I cannot recommend its consideration, because a large area of country to the east and north already thrown open for selection would not be benefited, and if this

proposed extension to Bruce Rock were adopted, it would make it difficult at some future date to accommodate this unserved area with railway facilities in a favourable manner from a railway financial point of view.

So far as the line to Carrabin is concerned the surveyor has taken into account the interest of the settlers and the proposed settlement in the locality in fixing the route of the railway. He goes on to say—

This route coupling up at Carrabin would serve a little more extent of country, but no more subdivided property than No. 1 proposal, and any additional country that would be served is in the dry fringe and doubtful rainfall zone.

In summarising his remarks the surveyor said—

The first thirty-five miles or 40 miles from Kondinin would be common to any of these proposals, and the character of the country affected throughout is very similar in each case, composed of salmon gum and morrel, gimlet wood forests, or mallee and broome and other scrub, over a light, loamy soil, interspersed with sand plain of various quality.

After giving the matter full consideration from all points of view he is of opinion that Merredin is the proper place for the junction and strongly recommends that the extension should be undertaken with the object of coupling up there. Hon. members are, of course, aware that Merredin at the present time is a junction as far as the Wickepin line is concerned, and also of the Goomalling line. The station, therefore, is so situated that from the working point of view it is advantageous to the Railway Department. The land alienated within a 12½ miles radius in the area controlled in the district by the district surveyor at Narrogin is 180,000 acres. The area unalienated is 152,000 acres, consisting of 45,000 acres of first class land, 15,000 of second class land, and 85,000 of third class land.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Has it been classified?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The balance consists of reserves. In reply to the hon. member, this is the information which has been supplied to me by the department. The officers are, no doubt, of the opinion that the land is as it is set out by them.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is that land settled?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not all of it. The average rainfall for this district is 11½ inches, and as hon. members are aware, this year's rainfall has not come up to the average. It is an unfortunate time to deal with railway projects, because we cannot put before members the bright prospects which the various lands hold out, as we were able to do in previous years. We cannot point to the large production of wheat in those areas, as we might have been able to do under different circumstances. The area cropped last year was 4,000 acres, and much of the second and third class land will be brought under cultivation and worked in conjunction with the other when railway facilities are provided. There has been a good deal of discussion in this House in regard to the areas situated where this land is surveyed. It has been pointed out clearly that this area of land is second to none in any part of the State, and when proper railway facilities are provided it will be the means of producing a large quantity of wheat. There is a fair number of settlers already along this proposed route, and an alteration in it has been made to enable those settlers to have better communication than would otherwise have been the case. I have referred hon. members to the land which is in the southern portion. The northern portion is in the Northam district, and under the Northam district surveyor. In that area there are 563,000 acres within a 12½ mile radius of the proposed line. Of this total 116,000 acres has been alienated, and 227,000 acres surveyed and ready for selection. In addition it is estimated that there are 219,000 acres of Crown lands awaiting survey.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have the 227,000 acres been thrown open?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot say. In all probability they have not. There is no doubt that some of this land has been held up because of the absence of railway facilities. The length of this line is 83 miles, and the cost of construction is £135,000; rails and fastenings will represent £70,000, making a total of £205,000. I might add that there have been reports obtained in regard to this railway. Mr. Heuston, one of the inspectors, writes—

The blocks in this locality are only about three years old, and very few inspections have been made. I visited the locality about six months ago (the report is dated 2nd December) and noticed a large number of selected blocks occupied, and that the holders were engaged clearing the land in anticipation of being served by a railway at an early date.

Mr. Lefroy, district surveyor, also reported to the effect that railway facilities would have the effect of bringing about rapid development. It is clearly shown that the land is suitable for settlement. A large number of people have already taken up areas there, and when the line is constructed it will prove of great benefit and will also be conducive to increased settlement. There is no doubt to my mind that this line will be of great service to the State, and the sooner it is constructed the better it will be for the development of that part of the country.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Can you not keep on the men who are now engaged on the Kondinin line?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, I cannot. If the Treasurer had any amount of money it would be possible.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It would be economy, you know.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would not at the present time. The leader of the Country party gave good advice when he said that the first line promised should be the first one to be constructed. As soon as we are in a position financially to start this work, hon. members can rest assured that it will be commenced and pressed on. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Frank Wilson debate adjourned.

BILL—ESPERANCE NORTHWARDS RAILWAY.

The Minister for Works laid on the table the plans of the proposed railway.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [8.10] in moving the second reading said: I do not anticipate very much opposition from hon. members to this measure at the present juncture.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Do not be facetious.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill has already passed this House on one occasion, and another Bill, which had for its object the construction of the railway to Norseman, passed the Assembly on two or three occasions. Hon. members, therefore, are fully aware of the position, so far as the railway is concerned. There was some objection to the proposal when the Bill was first introduced. It was contended that the country which the railway would serve was not suitable for wheat growing, and it was also urged that the land would not hold water.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And the trustees of the bank will not make advances.

The Minister for Mines: Only because it has not railway communication.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh no.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the advisory board first sent in their report two of the three members recommended the construction of this line over a distance of 60 miles. The third, who was not altogether in accord with his colleagues, raised two objections. He wanted to be satisfied that the land was suitable for cereal growing, and also that dams could be constructed to hold water after a fall of rain. Those two objections have been entirely removed. It has been conclusively proved that the land is

suitable for wheat growing, and I have the high authority for that statement, the champion of the Country party, Mr. Sutton, while with regard to the land holding water, my authority is none other than Mr. Canning, who knows every inch of that land. In addition we have the proof of dams already constructed which have been holding water for some time.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have you had Mr. Paterson down there again?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On the 9th July, 1914, Mr. D. C. White, one of our surveyors, reported to the district surveyor of Perth as follows:—

Within the last twelve months settlement has slightly increased and none have left the district. The improvements on most of the alienations in this locality have recently been reported on in detail by me. Taking into consideration the many disabilities under which the settlers generally have been carrying out their improvements, these should be considered well advanced. Several more tanks have been excavated, and increased areas of rolling, clearing, fallowing, and cultivation have been effected. There is a larger area under crop this year than on any previous occasion.

He finishes up his report by saying—

With adequate railway communication a populous and thriving settlement of this district should be assured.

Perhaps some hon. members know Mr. White better than I do. He is a Government surveyor in whom the district surveyor has every confidence in regard to this land. I have here a report from the Agricultural Commissioner of the Wheat Belt, dated 8th July, 1914, as follows:—

My association with the Esperance wheat area extends over a period of about three years—since September, 1911. As the result of several visits I have made there during that period, I find that though the soil is variable in character, there is a considerable area suitable for the production of payable wheat crops with such rainfall as I am informed the district receives in normal seasons. Railway

facilities, however, are essential to enable the wheat to be marketed.

He goes on to say—

The country in its natural state is badly watered, only an occasional soak being met with. Until recently the main water supply was obtained from condensers.

It was at that time that Mr. Paterson, a member of the Advisory Board, was not satisfied with the capacity of the ground for holding water. The report continues—

This tended to create the impression that water could not be conserved in excavated tanks. During the last two years this impression has been shown to have been unfounded, as under the scheme of assistance rendered the settlers by this department 26 tanks ranging from 411 to 2,000 cubic yards have been excavated, or a total capacity of 20,585 cubic yards. Most, if not all, have had water in them and have been reported on by our inspector, Mr. White, to have satisfactory catchment areas and to be of good water holding character.

That shows clearly that the objection made by Mr. Paterson had been disproved, and that his contention was wrong.

Mr. Hudson: He did not say it was no good. He merely said he required proof.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On the 15th November, 1913, Mr. W. Canning, the district surveyor, who knows every inch of the country, and who was in the district for some considerable time, furnished a report. When first I had a conversation with Mr. Canning in regard to the water-holding capacity of this land, he expressed surprise that anyone should ever have doubted it, and said that if the matter had been referred to him at the time he could have removed any wrong impression. Mr. Canning's report reads—

Mr. Brown, one of the surveyors, has been over the greater portion of the country within the last two years, prior to January last, and knows it well. He states there is a very large

area of land of excellent quality in the mallee country.

The report goes on to say—

Mr. Brown is convinced, however, as I am, that in ordinary seasons, and with the advent of railway facilities the Crown has in the Esperance district one of the largest belts of uniformly good wheat lands existing in the State.

Hon. members should bear that in mind. The report continues—

Which with reasonable facilities would be very readily applied for and utilised, thus adding to the general productiveness of the State.

Some members opposite know Mr. Canning well, and will agree that he would not put his name to such a report as this if he were not satisfied with the accuracy of its contents.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He believes what he says, of course.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He is perfectly satisfied, and he should have a knowledge of that country, if any man has. He has travelled over the greater part of the State and has seen the lands. He has been one of the chief officers of the State for many years, and there is no reason whatever to doubt his opinion of the quality of the land in the district. His report continues—

I may mention that it was thought advisable to temporarily reserve a large part of this area, so as not to encourage prospective settlers until facilities for transport were provided. This area has been closed for some considerable time, and during that period hundreds of applications have been refused, thus showing that there was a good deal of anxiety to select the land and risk the possibility of transport facilities being provided at some future time.

It shows there is a large number of people anxious to settle in the district if they can have proper railway facilities. On the 15th July, 1914, Mr. Canning wrote—

In reference to your minute, the only information I can supply in addition to that already given—

Which I have just now read. He goes on—

Since November, 1913, there have been 50 applications for an area of 10,151 acres. These applications, of course, are, generally speaking, for land in the vicinity of Esperance, the land further northward being temporarily reserved from selection. Judging by the report of Mr. White, and the numerous inquiries for land in the reserved area—which could not be satisfied, owing to such reservation—I am confident that even under existing conditions, if the railway Bill were passed, settlement in the country affected by the said railway would be rapid and considerable.

It shows there is no area of land in the State which could attract more applications than has that in the Esperance district. It proves that we are holding up in this district a large area of land which people are anxious to settle, and that the only thing necessary to enable them to successfully carry on the industry is the provision of proper railway facilities. Since the House met, there has been placed in my hands a report signed by Mr. Conway, Assistant to the Under Secretary for Lands. I have had no opportunity of looking closely into it, but I will read it and let hon. members judge for themselves. Dated the 16th December, 1914, it is as follows.—

With reference to your request per telephone that the Hon. the Minister for Public Works should be supplied with certain information with regard to the settlement of the agricultural lands on the route of the proposed Norseman-Esperance railway, I regret to state that I have found it very difficult to obtain reliable up-to-date information. This department has no field officer at work in the district referred to, the surveyors having been withdrawn on account of lack of work due to the reservation from selection of the land in the vicinity of the proposed railway. The only Government officer who could be relied upon to give the information required is Inspector White of the Agricultural De-

partment, to whom I telegraphed, but have just received a reply from his wife to the effect that he is out on an inspection tour and will not reach Esperance till Saturday, so that a reply before Monday cannot be looked for. When it comes to hand it will be sent forward for your information. However, by consultation with the District Surveyor, Surveyor White, formerly employed in the district by this department, the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt and other responsible officers, I have gained certain items of information which I think will be of value. The chief centre of agricultural operations in the locality is what is known as the mallee belt, which runs across the line for an indefinite distance east and west, and for a width—that is along the course of the line—of 33 miles. Operations in this belt for a distance of about 12 miles on each side of the line are being carried out under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture, and from a return furnished to me I find that there are in this area 62 active settlers with holdings aggregating 63,316 acres. Practically all these holders have had crops in during the year and, although the growing season was the driest known for years, they have been in a position to produce, in addition to all requirements, for seedling for the coming harvest, an excess of about 6,000 bushels of wheat, as well as sufficient hay for all the coming season's requirements.

This is in a district which Mr. Paterson was of opinion would not grow wheat. The position there has been that owing to the want of proper railway facilities this land has not been cultivated in the manner it would have been if those facilities had been provided. Yet in face of this, and in an abnormal season, when other parts of the State characterised by the leader of the Opposition as embracing the best land in Western Australia have been unable to turn out any wheat whatever—

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Hon. Frank Wilson: Which land did I say was the best?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Every railway the hon. member was responsible for was to serve the best land in the State. Here we have settlers who have been struggling in this area for some time and have demonstrated that the land is suitable for wheat growing, as was stated by Mr. Sutton, and this year they have an opportunity to export when in a very large portion of the State where the land is considered to be amongst the best, it is necessary to import wheat for seed. The report continues—

The crops in the locality were, in the early stage, of a very promising nature. Unfortunately, owing to the lack of rain during the growing period, the actual results were moderate, wheat averaging about six bushels, and oats and barley a little over seven. In addition to the results of the dry season, the harvest was much affected by the heavy rains which fell in October and November, when the farmers were preparing for harvesting, the result being that many of the crops intended for hay had to be left for stripping, while the fresh growths, induced by the rains, had to be depended upon for hay. It may be mentioned that some of these crops were grown on a rainfall not exceeding $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. In the matter of water supply, the fears which have been expressed in past years that reliable storage could not be provided, owing to the alleged non-holding nature of the ground, have proved in a decided manner to be groundless, as the reports which have recently been received have shown that the dams throughout the district are full to overflowing and that in only one instance has there been any deficiency in the holding capacity. The district inspector, in a recent report, stated that under ordinary conditions there should never again be any shortage of water in the district. In addition to the area referred to above as being under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture, are several other settlers,

some of whom have been established in the locality for a number of years. As an instance of the difficulties under which the settlers in the district labour, I attach an extract from the report furnished to the hon. Minister for Lands when the question of the provision of a flour mill for the district was under consideration some months ago.

Some two years ago the Government were requested to assist some of the settlers in the district to prove that this land was suitable for wheat growing. Acting for the Minister for Lands, who was out of the State, I visited Kalgoorlie to discuss this question, and it was agreed that the Government should purchase the wheat delivered at a certain spot on the main road at a price, in order to carry out the wishes of the manager of the Agricultural Bank, who desired that the area should be tested. It has been tested and not found wanting.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How much wheat have you carried?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On coming back from Kalgoorlie I sent for Mr. Sutton and suggested that he should visit this area and report upon it. He replied that he had been through the district. His report was never brought before hon. members or the public, through the medium of the Press, as Mr. Pater-son's report was.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why was not it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I suppose it was a verbal report. It was not said that Mr. Sutton had visited the district, and it was a surprise to us to learn that he had been there. Mr. Sutton advised that, instead of buying the wheat at a certain point, the Government should erect a flour mill in the district. I emphasise this to show that an expert like Mr. Sutton—a man spoken of highly by almost every farmer in Western Australia, a man who is relied on by a great majority of our farmers, and a man who knows the capabilities of soil—in advising the Government to erect a flour mill must have been sure that the land was suitable for growing wheat in sufficient

quantity and of requisite quality to keep a mill going.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is a mad proposition.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will allow members to decide who is the better expert, the leader of the Opposition or Mr. Sutton.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What, on the establishment of a flour mill?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think Mr. Sutton is the better man. When he advised the Government to erect a flour mill, he was influenced by two reasons. He said—

In my opinion the amount of wheat which will be grown there after the land is properly cultivated will be such that it will be difficult for the Government, without railway facilities, to purchase it. If the wheat were gristed there the by-product would be used in the district and would be advantageous not only to the district but to other parts of the State.

I will read an extract from a report by the Agricultural Commissioner dated the 25th March, 1914. It states—

As the railway Bill has not gone through, there is practically no demand for this wheat, except for milling purposes, which will necessitate it being carried to Esperance—the nearest market. As we have undertaken to purchase this wheat on the basis of railway carriage from the agricultural area to Esperance, the difference between what would be the railway freight and the actual cost of vehicular carriage is a loss to the Department. As the cost of vehicular carriage from Scaddan to Grass Patch (46 and 31 miles) is £5 10s. and £4 10s. per ton respectively, being 3s. and 2s. 5d. per bushel) or an average of 2s. 8½d. per bushel, and the average cost of railway carriage for the same distance in the wheat area would be less than 2¾d. per bushel—

I appeal to the farmers, represented shall I say for the first time in this House—

Hon. J. Mitchell: There is no reason why you should not say anything you like.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is a very rash thing to say.

Hon. J. Mitchell: How much wheat will you grow at Esperance?

Mr. Munsie: More than can be grown in some of the districts you settled.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Can any man afford to grow wheat and pay 3s. and 2s. 5d. a bushel carriage? Yet we hear that the land has not been tested. When it is tested the Opposition are not satisfied and they make some other excuse.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are doing the cartage. You are paying market value on the road.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They have a big distance to carry it to reach the road.

Hon. Frank Wilson: So have other settlers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government cannot go on purchasing their wheat on the road. That was a temporary expedient to give effect to the desires of members of the Opposition. It was the general impression of members on the Government side that immediately it was proved conclusively that this land would grow wheat—

Hon. Frank Wilson: And the Agricultural Bank would make advances on the land.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And that the land would hold water, and that there was sufficient water, their opposition to this measure would be withdrawn. Hence my remarks in opening that I did not expect any opposition to the measure authorising the construction of this railway. The Agricultural Commissioner's report concludes—

It therefore follows that on every bushel of wheat purchased by the State there would be an approximate loss of about 2s. 6d. per bushel, or a gross loss of £300.

If it cost double £300 to satisfy members of the Opposition that the contentions of those who have advocated the construction of this line were sound, it

would be cheap at the price. This money has been expended to test the area, and in an exceptionally dry season the district has turned out more wheat than the wheat growing country that we brag so much about.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, no; not the Katanning district, for instance. We turned out that quantity.

The Minister for Mines: Proportionately per acre.

Mr. Munsie: How would the Dowerin-Merredin district compare with this district this year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The returns for the State compiled by the Government Statistician and published this month contain the following:—

The estimated returns from the Esperance district are as follows:—Hay, 2,157 acres with estimated yield of 968 tons as against actual return of 2,403 acres for yield of 953 tons last year. Wheat, 2,041 acres with estimated yield of 11,805 bushels as against 1,574 acres for 6,551 bushels last year. Oats, 114 acres with estimated return of 816 bushels as compared with actual yield of 452 bushels from 41 acres last year. The statistician's remarks are worth quoting.

The south coastal district gives the same average as last year, but all the others are lower, while of individual sub-districts there are none that exceed the 1913-14 average, while only Wellington, Phillips River, and Esperance reach it.

Consequently, the objections lodged to the construction of this railway have been entirely removed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What was the average?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I gave the figures. It is worth repeating that, seeing it has been proved conclusively that there is sufficient water, and that after the testing of the land at the desire of hon. members opposite, what has been said by the officers is correct, the opposition to the railway should be removed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It has not been proved conclusively. Allow us to give

our views on that aspect. Is the Agricultural Bank advancing money on this land?

The Minister for Mines: The member for Northam prevented the bank from advancing on this land.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I did not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know whether it is necessary to refer to the large area of wheat-growing land in this district. It is opening up almost a new colony and as I have said previously, and which will be proved to be correct, if Parliament objects to an area of land of about 1¼ million acres of good wheat growing country being developed by the provision of proper rail-age facilities, seeing that a large number of settlers have already taken up land there and are developing it, they will be doing almost a criminal action so far as the interests of the State are concerned. It is necessary that every portion of the State should be developed. Here hon. members are saying that we have a large area of country, that it is necessary that there should be settlement in every portion of the State, and yet when we have a district containing some of the best wheat growing country in Western Australia, hon. members object to developing it as it should have been developed years ago.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Could you not have run the line east and west along the mallee country?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That will come afterwards. You must have a port. I think I have shown to hon. members as far as the wheat growing capacity of the land is concerned all that is necessary. I have a report in my hand dealing with the rainfall of the district. It is supplied by Mr. Curlewis and is dated December 14th. I find that during the abnormal season the rainfall at Grasspatch was, up to the 31st October, 8.76 inches, at Gibson's Soak 16.66, at Myrup 15.48, and at Esperance 15.55. This shows that as far as the rainfall is concerned the district compares very favourably with other parts of the State which are utilised for wheat growing.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: This line is going further north than Grass Patch.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The line is going 60 miles. The hon. member ought to know. He has been pledged to support the railway on many occasions.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: You only quote the rainfall up to Grasspatch.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I could quote the rainfall up to Norseman if hon. members desire. At Norseman the rainfall is 5.86, at Dundas 7.47, and at Lake View 8.51. This line is proposed to be constructed over a distance of 60 miles in accordance with the recommendation of two of the members of the Advisory Board which was appointed by our hon. friends opposite. The estimated cost of the construction of the railway is £114,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That does not include rolling stock.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The rails and fastenings will cost £47,000. I want to point out to hon. members that we have never introduced a railway that has included rolling stock.

Hon. Frank Wilson: This is a separate system you are proposing to establish. You must have workshops and so on.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This system is brought about for the purpose of pleasing hon. members opposite who almost pledged themselves to the line. It is believed that some hon. members were willing to approve of it in certain circumstances and to remove any opposition they had.

Hon. Frank Wilson: If it is to please us, then strike it out at once.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That shows the want of consistency on the part of hon. members opposite. If they had made up their minds definitely and conclusively that this railway should not be constructed, then they should not have asked the people to put the land to the test. If they had thought it unnecessary to build a railway to develop the large area of land existing in the district they should not have asked people to reside there and go to the expense of putting down dams and carrying out other developmental works.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We did not do it; you did it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hon. members are fully aware that repeatedly when this Bill has been introduced they have hurled across the Chamber such remarks as "Why do you not test it and prove it? If you can prove that wheat will grow there, that there are proper catchment areas for water and that the dams when built will hold water, we have no objection to the railway."

Mr. Male: Five bushels per acre do not constitute a proof.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have proved it. After doing that the leader of the Opposition comes along and says "Wipe this out altogether and we shall be satisfied." Is that consistent? Is that in the best interest of the State?

Hon. J. Mitchell: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the sort of remark one might expect from the hon. member for Northam. I think it is unnecessary for me to say any more, and I refer hon. members to the report of gentlemen who have nothing to gain as to whether the railway is constructed or not, of men who have been engaged in the service for many years, and who are quite qualified from their past experience to advise the Government so far as the capabilities of the line are concerned. In view of the advice tendered to us by such officers I consider that the opposition given to the railway should cease, that the railway should be constructed, and that the promise that has been given to that district for so many years should be carried into effect. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Frank Wilson, debate adjourned.

BILL — PINJARRA-DWARDA RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The Minister for Works laid on the table the plans of the proposed railway.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [8.55] in moving the second reading said: This line was also placed before hon. members in the Survey Bill and approved of by the previous Parliament. It is a continuation of the Pinjarra-Hotham Railway to Narrogin. At the present this railway finishes with a dead end at Dwarda. For the better working facilities of the railway it is necessary that the line should be continued on to Narrogin, which is also a central depôt as far as the working railways are concerned. This junction, I wish to point out, was recommended by Mr. Babington, who made the survey. Several points on the Great Southern Railway have been suggested as to where this line should junction with that railway. The officers connected with the railway department, after giving the several places due consideration, advised the Government that Narrogin was the best point at which the junction should take place. I may add that the Survey Bill was carried previously for the purpose of making the junction at Narrogin as proposed. At the present time Narrogin itself is 162 miles from Perth, via Spencer's Brook, but by way of Dwarda it is only 143 miles. It will thus be seen that immediately this line is carried through Narrogin as proposed there will be a very large saving to the farmers in the way of the distance they will have to send their products to the port. Hon. members, I think, particularly those representing agricultural districts, will agree with me that the nearer you can bring the products grown by the farmers to the port the better it is for them and for all concerned. I am not going, as I said in connection with another Bill, to give a guarantee that the railway when approved of, and I believe it will be approved of, will be immediately put under construction. It is one of those lines that might have to wait a little while until the financial position is somewhat brighter than it is to-day.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is a very urgent work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All railways are urgent. This Government only introduce matters which are urgent and for the best interest of the State. At the same time we have got to realise the position the State is in to-day owing to the crisis which we all hope will pass away at an early date. We must realise, too, that there are some railways which are necessary and which have been promised, and which it has been said would be immediately constructed, but there will be no great hardship in this case if the Government do not proceed immediately with the line. Mr. Babington, in the course of his report, states as follows:—

The proposed extension of this railway at first looks a simple matter from a local point of view. Three propositions present themselves to my mind, viz., to couple up with existing lines either at Williams, Narrogin, or some other point on the Great Southern Railway, say, at Pingelly, or Popaninning. But outside of parochial influences this matter should be considered in a more comprehensive manner. I think it is to be duly recognised that at some future time the traffic will warrant a trunk line being constructed from Narrogin or Brookton to Armadale, and this contingency must not be lost sight of; and I further desire to point out that in coupling up this line (Hotham Railway), practically no new country will be opened up. The distance from the present terminus (Dampier) to Williams as the crow flies is $21\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and from the same point to the Great Southern Railway is $26\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Considering all the circumstances, I beg to suggest that the opinion of the Working Railways as to the point of linking up of the railway should bear the greatest weight. I have no hesitation in recommending that the Dampier extension should be taken to Narrogin, if it be deemed necessary from a working railways point of view to extend the lines; otherwise I see no urgency for the extension at present, as I have already pointed out it will not practically develop any extra area of

country, and although it will convenience many farms will not add anything more directly to the revenue.

This railway is being carried through there.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Do the working railways recommend it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They recommend Narrogin where we have a central depôt at the present time. Hon. members will realise that it will mean increased costs to the Railway Department to have several depôts. If they can bring their railways to one centre it will facilitate working and bring about decreased cost. There is no doubt to my mind that a railway such as this, and junctioning here, should give the farmers and settlers of the district an opportunity of getting to the port over the least possible distance. Within a 12-mile radius of the proposed line there are 133,000 acres alienated and 45,000 acres not alienated. Of this latter area 6,000 acres are first class, 13,000 acres second class, and 26,000 acres third class land. The land cultivated amounts to 11,000 acres, and the rainfall is from 20 to 23 inches. The estimated cost of constructing the line is £57,000, and rails and fastenings, including those required for the additional siding at Narrogin, will cost £30,000; so that the total expenditure involved will be £87,000. As I have already stated, this railway is proposed for the express purpose of junctioning with the Great Southern line, so as to bring the farmers closer to the port. It is a line which, so far as the Railway Department is concerned, must be worked with every regard for economy. I do not think I need say any more on this Bill, but I wish it to be definitely understood—I desire that there shall be no mistake so far as this point is concerned—that the Government do not guarantee that this line will be put into immediate construction.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [9.3]: I can assure hon. members I am pleased indeed to support the construction of this railway. It will be remembered that a little less than a year

ago the Premier, in opening the Pingelly-Hotham line, gave to a large gathering of people assembled there a promise that this line would be continued to the important centre of Narrogin. The rejoicings of the people at the announcement had hardly died away when the Government, last session, introduced a Bill for the construction of the line; and the proposal would have been authorised last session had it not been for the unfortunate circumstances which compelled the postponement of the public works construction programme. I am glad to observe, however, that the Government have taken this early opportunity of fulfilling the promise made by me on the hustings and confirmed by the Premier. I was authorised to promise that this would be one of the first lines to be authorised during the present session. The length of the railway is 36 miles, and I may state for the information of hon. members that the junction at Narrogin was recommended not only by the authorities whom the Minister for Works has quoted, but also by the Agricultural Railways Advisory Board, which, in a report submitted to Parliament about three years ago, likewise stated that the proper junction, from the agricultural point of view, would be the important town of Narrogin. That report of the Advisory Board recommended a railway over the whole distance from Narrogin to Armadale; and the particular section proposed in this Bill, from Narrogin to Dwarda, is the first section of the main trunk Narrogin-Armadale railway line recommended at that time by the Railway Department and by the Agricultural Railways Advisory Board. To my mind, this Bill might have had a better title. It might more appropriately have been described as authorising the first section of the Narrogin-Armadale railway. But, still, I rejoice in the knowledge that the Government have authorised the permanent survey of the complete railway from Narrogin to Armadale. When the Dwarda-Armadale section is built, in addition to the present section, it will mean a saving of 57 miles of freight to the port of Fremantle, not only for the Narrogin

people, but also for the people east of Narrogin on the Yillimining-Kondinin and Wickepin-Merredin lines, and, further, for all the people south of Narrogin right down to Albany, in approaching the port of Fremantle and the metropolitan area generally. I do submit that no more important work could be considered by this or any other Ministry than the early construction of the complete Narrogin-Armadale railway—a railway which will bring the town of Narrogin within 117 miles of the seaport of Fremantle, whereas to-day Narrogin is distant 174 miles from that great port.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How far is Narrogin from Albany?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is 179 miles from Albany.

Hon. Frank Wilson: One hundred and seventy-nine miles?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Narrogin is the half-way town between Fremantle and Albany, on the Great Southern Railway, via York. It is distant 174 miles from Fremantle, via Spencer's Brook, and a little further from Albany. But when the Narrogin-Armadale railway has been built, Narrogin will be distant only 117 miles from Fremantle, which is geographically the natural port for the Narrogin and Wickepin districts. That will be the position so soon as those districts obtain the direct access which I am now advocating, to Fremantle by that natural and proper route. In regard to the section of this railway which is now being constructed, from Dwarda to Narrogin, I wish to point out that the section saves 33 miles of freight to all the producers in the Narrogin district, and in the districts south and east of Narrogin, in reaching the port of Fremantle. Fremantle, when the Narrogin-Dwarda line has been built, will be 141 miles by rail from Narrogin, as compared with 174 miles by rail to-day. So that it will be seen that in this regard also the construction of the section which the House is now being asked to authorise will mean a great saving of freight to the producers in the districts I have mentioned, not only on their wheat and other exports

from Fremantle, but also on all articles of consumption which they import through Fremantle. I wish to point out, further, that the line now proposed will serve a really good district—a district with a rainfall of between 23 and 26 inches—between Dwarda and Narrogin. There is a great deal of settlement in the district, and I am very pleased to be able to say it is a part of the country that is not suffering from the drought, which less favoured districts are undergoing at the present time. To-day throughout that district most of the settlers have good crops, ranging up to 20 bushels of wheat to the acre, and in some cases up to nearly 2 tons of hay per acre. The Government will recognise, therefore, that they can safely push ahead with the construction of this railway, that it is a work they can embark on with every confidence. The freight is waiting in the district; and, besides, the railway will receive a large amount of through traffic to and from stations south of Narrogin. In these circumstances it may be confidently expected that the railway will pay well from the very start. For my own part, however, I repeat I look upon it merely as part of the larger scheme, as part of the Narrogin-Armadale railway; and I am glad to see that this view is shared by the Government, who propose to spend £87,000 on the construction of those 36 miles of line. That is to say, the Government, as already pointed out by the Minister for Works, intend to build a heavy line, with heavy rails, on easy grades—a railway that will indeed be part of the great trunk railway from Narrogin to Armadale, and capable of carrying heavy engines. As regards the route of this short section, it has been brought under my notice that two surveys, or at any rate two trial surveys, have been made. One of these runs to the north of the other and follows more closely the 14-Mile Brook. As regards these two surveys, I wish to urge the Government to consider the whole question from the point of view of the general taxpayer, and build the line along whichever route may be best in the interests of the whole State. That is all I desire, and it is what

every member of the House should desire. Whilst we do not wish that any battle of the routes should delay the construction of this section, and whilst under the Bill the Government have power to construct the line on either of the two routes, still I do urge the Government in all earnestness to ensure that whichever route is ultimately adopted shall be the one best in the interests both of the settlers concerned and of the people generally. In conclusion, I wish to express the hope that the railway will be constructed soon, that notwithstanding the present financial stress the Government will endeavour to find money as soon as possible for this important work. It will indeed be a red-letter day for the town of Narrogin when this railway from Dwarda to Narrogin is opened. It will be a far more important day in that district—and I feel that the day is not far distant—when the Government will complete this railway by its natural corollary; that is to say, by the prompt construction of the Dwarda-Armadale railway. When that line has been built, the Narrogin-Armadale railway will be the main highway from the metropolitan area and Fremantle to Narrogin, Katanning, Wagin, and Albany. I do urge on the Government that the second section of this great work is required as quickly as possible.

On motion by Hon. J. Mitchell debate adjourned.

BILL—KATANNING-NYABING RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The Minister for Works laid on the Table a plan of proposed railway.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [9.13], in moving the second reading, said: This railway Bill, like the previous one, has been before Parliament already. The line here proposed is almost similarly circumstanced, so far as quality of land and rainfall are concerned, to the Kukerin-Lake Grace railway. The Bill proposes a continuation of the Katanning-Nyabing railway to Pingrup. It is an extension

which has been promised to the settlers in that district, and the promise is one which the Government feel bound to fulfil at the earliest opportunity. I may state that it is the intention of the Government, if the Bill is passed, to make this the second railway in order of construction; the first being the Kukerin-Lake Grace railway.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Where does the Margaret River railway come in? It has been promised for years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have to take the small lines first; and, as regards this particular extension, we are in the fortunate position of having on the site of the line a quantity of rails which can be used for the work. The Margaret River railway will be built too. The length of the extension proposed by this Bill is 21½ miles, making a distance of 60 miles from Katanning; and it will serve an area, within a radius of 12½ miles, of 300,000 acres. Of this area, 70 per cent., or 210,000 acres, is first-class land; 10 per cent., or 30,000 acres, is second-class land, and 20 per cent., or 60,000 acres, is third-class land. When the Bill was before the House previously, the district showed over 4,100 acres under crop, and 4,520 acres of land fallowed. I see that along the route of this proposed railway some development has taken place. That is evident from the number of settlers along the route, and consequently the promise which has been made to provide those people with railway facilities must be carried into effect as early as possible. When we take into account the land that would be cleared it is considered that 6,945 acres will be cropped for next harvest. The yield for the previous year averaged 12 bushels. As in the case of other measures dealing with railways in other districts, there is some difficulty in regard to giving the results of this year's yield, because the quantity produced did not come up to anticipations. The population along this line numbers 114, and the average rainfall is 14 inches. The necessity for the construction of this line is well known to hon. members, and the work should be speedily put into effect. The

estimated cost of construction is £21,000, and the cost of the rails and fastenings is put down at £13,000, a total of £34,000. This is a line which the Government hope to start the construction of at an early date, and it will assist in the way of providing work for the unemployed. The material is available and everything is in readiness to make a start. I trust the Bill will go through quickly so that an early commencement might be made. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Thomson debate adjourned.

BILL — BOYANUP-BUSSELTON RAILWAY.

The Minister for Works laid on the Table the plans of the proposed railway.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [9.20] in moving the second reading said: This project is similar to that which was introduced last session, and passed by this House. In my opinion Western Australia has lost considerably by reason of the fact that this railway was not constructed many years ago. Considerable sums of money have been spent in road construction in this district, money which could have been much better expended in the building of railways. In this district there are not only some of the best lands in the State, but also some of the beauties of Western Australia are to be seen, and which, because of the difficulty of access, are not disclosed to a great number of people. This line will join the present Busselton railway and also the Margaret River railway. Some two years ago arrangements were entered into for the taking over of the private line from Margaret River to Augusta. This line at the present time is not worked economically because it does not junction with the existing railway system, and it is necessary that proper con-

nection should be made as soon as possible. The line will be 38 miles in length, and will link up the railway system of the State with the Flinders Bay railway which has been acquired from Millars' Coy. The land to be served is adapted for closer settlement, the area alienated being 137,500 acres. The land not alienated is 222,500 acres, and of that 22,500 acres is first class land, 80,000 second class land, and 120,000 third class land. There is no doubt that the lands in the South-West should be developed, because they are capable of carrying a big population. Selectors there can make a living from small areas in the cultivation of root crops, the lands there for this purpose being second to none in the State. If in the future we intend to continue the policy of immigration, the South-West is the portion of the State we must devote attention to. As soon as the survey was authorised in 1913, 10 per cent. of the first class land available at that time was selected, showing that selectors were directing their attention to that part of the State. Owing to the partial failure of our crops during the past few years in the drier areas, settlement has not been going on in those parts at the same rate as previously, and it is pleasing to know that so much land is being taken up in the South-West. They are assured there of a good rainfall, and can depend upon getting satisfactory results from their labours. The rainfall ranges from 34 to 44 inches. The resident occupiers number 265, and the population is between 900 and 1,000. I am not going to guarantee that the railway will pay from the start, but it must become a good paying proposition. The acreage under crop is 4,000 acres, and whilst that may not appear large the expenditure involved in bringing that area to a cropping stage is considerable because of the absence of facilities. In any case if the cost of production is higher in this part of the State, the settler can rely on the return per acre being considerably more than in other parts of the State.

Mr. Heitmann: What have they produced in past years?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: What have they produced in other districts where they have no railway communication?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Plenty of men and women in years past.

The Premier: They have produced perpetual youth.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And that is a capital thing too. Perhaps that is why the Premier has taken up land there; he wants to live for ever.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The South-West is an exceedingly healthy part of the State. Ten years ago I visited the Margaret River district, and I came to the conclusion then that it would be advisable to construct a railway to it to give the people an opportunity of seeing the beauties existing there.

Mr. Heitmann: You want to give the people an opportunity of producing before seeing the beauties.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are jealous.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In this district there is land capable of producing crops which would support thousands of settlers, and the railway can assist the settlers, and at the same time enable visitors to admire the beauties of nature. There is a considerable area of land there which is suitable for dairying, an industry which is so much wanted in this State. The cost of the construction of the line is estimated to be £46,000, while the rails and fastenings will amount to £30,000, a total of £76,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Get a contract.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This railway has been previously discussed, and hon. members are fully aware of the quality of the land the line will serve. I have no hesitation whatever in recommending hon. members to approve of the line. It should have been constructed many years ago, and I am surprised that the member for the district has sat quietly for so long without it. Unquestionably the district warrants the railway. In passing I may say that if the Government were of opinion that the railway was not warranted the Bill would not have been introduced. The question has been discussed so often in the House that it is

unnecessary to prolong the debate. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [9.38]: If ever I had a doubt about the desirability of constructing this line, that doubt would have been expelled by the lucid explanation of the Minister in introducing the Bill, and by his enthusiastic advocacy of the immediate construction of the line. The Minister said he wondered how I had sat still in the House during the last three years awaiting the construction of the railway. To tell the truth, I have had the utmost difficulty in keeping my seat, and my temper. On many occasions I have had to restrain my natural indignation at the neglect of the just requirements of my district. However, I am under a debt of gratitude to the Minister for the speech he delivered this evening in introducing the measure. It is not a question of any misrepresentation of that favoured district which is accountable for the unwarrantable delay in the construction of the line; it has been due, unfortunately, to the apathy and want of appreciation of those who have controlled the destinies of the State during the last three years. Undoubtedly the district to be served by the line is one of the best in Western Australia. It is destined to be the garden of the State, to be a land flowing with milk and honey as soon as we get the railway constructed. The Premier has taken all the credit for the introduction of this measure, and for having discovered that we have down there a highly fertile district. For ten years I have had the honour of representing the district in Parliament. During that time I claim to have made the district what it is to-day, to have proved against all opposition that we have there a very wealthy district deserving of attention. I can hardly contain myself when I think of the opposition I have always encountered on suggesting that this was a district deserving the close attention of the Government of the day. I built the railway from Wonnerup to Jarrahwood, and again from Jarrahwood to Nannup. I built the harbour in the

face of the opposition of hon. members opposite who have now to admit that it was the right policy. I have consistently advocated the construction of this line, and had I been in power the line would have been constructed two years ago, if not earlier. The responsibility for the delay in the construction of the railway I pin upon the Premier. As soon as—unfortunately for that district and for the people of Western Australia—the Premier assumed office, we waited upon him in the Council Chamber and pointed out the urgency of this very railway construction. The Premier was then gracious enough to say that he recognised how needful was the railway, and he assured us it would be the first measure introduced to the Parliament then sitting, and that the work would be carried out expeditiously.

The Premier: No, I said the first Bill for consideration.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Unfortunately he forgot that promise. I reminded him of it in the following year.

The Premier: You were a bit nervous about the construction of the line being proceeded with at last election time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Not at all. Three years ago the Premier definitely promised that this Bill would be the first measure introduced.

The Premier: No.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Unfortunately he forgot his promise, and in reminding him of it the following session I urged upon him the necessity for introducing the measure. However, it was inconvenient then; the election was not near enough, and it was postponed. In the following year I again suggested it to the Premier, and we formed deputations to the Minister for Works. However, the Minister was not sympathetic, and the Premier was beginning to be a bit worried about the deficit. In the end he would not introduce the measure at all, did not care a rap what promise he had made. Last session I again suggested that the promise ought to be fulfilled, and he was good enough to bring down the measure. For three long years this requirement to open up what the Premier him-

self describes as the most fertile district of Western Australia has been deferred by my friends opposite. Last session, in view of the elections, and because the Premier wanted to close down promptly in order to get to the country, this measure was sacrificed together with others. I do not want to cast any blame on the Government for that because, after all, it was sacrificed with other measures which also had been promised. If I fastened the blame for the delay on the Government, I appreciate the fact that they have introduced the Bill on this occasion, and that we have the promise of the Minister that the work will be carried on at the earliest opportunity. The Minister promised that the railways will be constructed in the order promised by the Government. I interjected that this was the first; it has been promised for at least four years.

Mr. Foley: The member for Perth promised the Esperance railway 12 years ago. What will you do about that?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I hope this will not be a mere formal passing of the measure.

The Minister for Works: We have no railway passed by Parliament that is not under construction.

The Premier: All railways passed are either completed or under construction.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But every line promised has not been constructed or started.

The Premier: Not all you promised.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: For three solid years the Government have had opportunities to carry out my promises. I promised this particular line and it has not yet been built, and the Premier promised it on three or four occasions.

The Premier: Tell us what you did not promise; it would be much easier.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I could keep the Premier here till midnight recording the good works we did during our six years of office, and could contrast them with his works to the discredit of his Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must keep to the point.

Mr. Foley: Has the necessity for this railway arisen only during the past three years? Was there no necessity for it before?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Certainly; it has existed for the last 10 years.

Mr. Foley: Why did not your party build it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I had to consider other districts and give each a share. We built hundreds of miles of railways and I had to be content with a very small measure of railway facilities in my own district. I was satisfied to move gradually, to open up the timber areas.

Mr. Foley: Have we not been gradual enough for you?

Hon. J. Mitchell: Yes, too much so.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I was prepared to build a harbour and everything I have done in my district has proved a success. The railway I built there is the best paying branch line in the State.

The Premier: What about the one you built out to sea?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Exactly, the Busselton one. The Minister condemned the proposition when I introduced it, but later had to admit that everything I had stated had been borne out by results. He promised to extend the line and did not keep his promise. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the coupling up of Busselton with the Margaret River and the railway line acquired from Millars' Trading Co.—

The Premier: I thought we had done nothing in your district.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is in the Collie district.

The Premier: It used to be in Sussex.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Not since the hon. member has been in office; the hon. member has done nothing in my district. The Government propose to build this line to couple up with the railway acquired from Millars' Trading Co. in order that we might have direct communication to Flinders Bay and Augusta, where the hon. member has acquired a country estate. I emphasise that this will be part of a great scheme for opening up the South-Western corner of the State, a portion of the coun-

try which has been recommended by all experts as most adaptable for closer settlement. This is the portion of the State which will firmly establish in our midst the dairying industry which we have so sadly lacked ever since we began to develop the latent wealth of the State.

The Premier: There are thousands of acres hundreds of miles this side held in large estates which could be opened up.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Why do not the Government acquire them? The biggest estate comprises something like 30,000 acres and is held by the very people from whom the Government have acquired the railway line from Flinders Bay to Margaret River, and I believe that land could be purchased at the Government's own price.

The Premier: I do not want it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is good land. There is timber for hewers sufficient to supply millions of sleepers if this railway were built quickly.

The Minister for Works: We have 22,000 acres near by.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, but not near the railway. This land is better for dairying purposes than that nearer Perth. There is better fodder, better water and better rainfall. Right around from the Leeuwin to Denmark and Busselton is a splendid piece of country which could not be excelled for dairying purposes. There could be no better district for closer settlement, and the area which will be opened up by this line as the commencement of a big scheme to carry the railway around the south coast and couple up with Bridgetown, will support hundreds of thousands of people within our lifetime if we set to work in earnest, open it up, settle it, and provide good facilities of passage. Members have referred on many occasions to the excellences of that portion of the State. I am referring to other districts as well as my own, Collie and Nelson for instance. The timber has to be got off and I hope it will be got off profitably.

The Premier: We are getting it off.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In a way.

Mr. Foley: Do not start on sawmills.

The Premier: A different way from what you adopted, by ringbarking and destroying valuable timber.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier must have had nightmare.

The Premier: No, I have seen it with my own eyes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is a terrible reflection on the officers of the department, if it has occurred.

The Premier: No, it is not.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: All applications are submitted to the officials for report. However, the Premier admits that this is a magnificent district and only needs to be opened up. I agree that this railway should have been constructed years ago. I hope there will be no opposition to it but that it will be put through and that the Treasurer will be able to find the money to build it, and he can send the navvies down as soon as he likes to make a start.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [9.55]: I have very much pleasure in supporting this proposed railway, which I consider is another link in the chain which will eventually extend from Busselton to Margaret and to the Leeuwin, link up with the Manjimup or Big Brook line, and extend through that splendid belt of timber country with an assured rainfall right to Denmark. The line from Busselton to the Margaret will tap a great area of good jarrah country. People have an idea that there is very little marketable timber down there. They are absolutely wrong. There is a large quantity of jarrah which has been reserved and which has never had an axe in it. This timber, I trust, will go a long way towards making this railway a paying proposition. The settlers on the Margaret River are amongst the oldest in the State. Mr. Alfred Bussell settled there when this country was in its infancy and he, amongst other settlers, has battled away there under difficulties which we at the present day would consider to be quite intolerable. They submitted without complaining and it is wrong to state, as some hon. members have, that these people have done nothing during all the years they have been there.

What have they had in the way of encouragement to clear the land and crop it, or put in orchards? They have grown potatoes and have been unable to cart them the 30 miles through heavy sand to the port of Busselton to ship them. It is asking too much of any man to drag his produce over bad roads for 30 miles. There is a large extent of good karri forest, as well as jarrah forest, to the east of this proposed line, and it will be brought within a reasonable distance when the line is constructed to the Margaret River. We have at the Whaling, which is the old name for the port at the mouth of the Blackwood River, one of the best deep water harbours in the State; that is Flinders Bay. How it got its name was that years ago the old whaling ships used to come from America there, and they were a hardy lot of men in those days when they travelled all that way across the ocean in little cockleshells of 90 tons. Since then I have had the pleasure of seeing a 6,000 ton steamer load with timber down to the plimsoll within practically a stone's throw of the shore.

The Premier: That is so.

Mr. WILLMOTT: This harbour is protected in the winter and is absolutely protected from our North-West winter winds. I think it is destined to be a very great harbour in the future.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Flinders Bay?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Flinders Bay.

The Premier: You can get 40 feet of water there.

Mr. WILLMOTT: As a pleasure resort it is second to none. There is fishing, shooting, and the caves, and everything that will interest the tourist. I am quite sure if hon. members will go down there once, they will not be contented until they get a chance to return there with all their friends. Any hon. member having had the pleasure of seeing the country will rush back to the local land agent to secure what land he can, and will do this with the object of settling down there and giving up politics.

The Premier: You did not tell the House about the climate.

Mr. WILLMOTT: It is all that could be desired.

The Premier: It is the most even and temperate climate in the world.

Mr. WILLMOTT: At the Leeuwin its variation of temperature is less than 25 degrees summer or winter, night or day. I do not think that can be said of any other spot in Western Australia.

The Premier: The difference between the mean maximum and the minimum is an average of 13.5 degrees.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Extremes have never been known, I believe, to be greater than 25 degrees.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We ought to have a sanatorium down there.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I have always contended that it would be more to the interest of the State as a whole if the South-West portion of the State had received greater encouragement from previous Governments.

The Premier: You are quite right.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I think myself that the Agricultural Bank would do well, when funds permit, to open its purse strings to the greatest possible extent to assist settlers to clear this land, which is undoubtedly heavy and which will certainly cost a large amount to clear. I contend that the outlay, although it will be great, will be recouped with interest a thousandfold at no distant future by the enormous increase in production. The Minister for Works states that this is good dairying country, and I beg to hear him out in that. We do not reckon our rainfall there by inches. We have heard railways recommended in portions of the country where the rainfall is 11½ inches. In our district, however, we have 4½ feet of rain in a year.

Mr. Male: What does it cost to drain the country?

Mr. WILLMOTT: It is naturally drained by rivers. Everything is in its favour. I think it is very foolish to go on year by year sending out of the State nearly a million pounds in money for dairy produce when this can be produced

in the State, in this corner of the State more especially.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Mr. WILLMOTT: The Agricultural Bank in advancing money down there will be investing its funds securely. I only wish I could think that the funds invested by the bank in the drier areas were as securely invested as its funds will be invested later on down there. I, personally, have the gravest doubts of this, and I trust that the manager of the Agricultural Bank will try to hedge a bit on this productive country on the Margaret River.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: What does it cost to clear per acre?

Mr. WILLMOTT: That depends on who is going to clear it. I contend it is better to settle intending immigrants or settlers in that portion of the State than it is to send them up to the drier areas and let them have the gamble they have had. The dry areas are all right in their way. I am well aware that many men who are used to the goldfields would not take up land in this heavily timbered portion of the State; they prefer to gamble in the drier and lighter-timbered areas. But it would be wise, however, to let all these men know what they are doing when they are going to these dry areas. There are at the same time many men who are anxious to obtain land here and who are used to the Gippsland country, and who could show us what can be done with it. Some of them have already done so in the Nelson district, where they have carved out homes for themselves in the heavily-timbered country.

The Premier: There is any amount of good marketable timber country.

Mr. WILLMOTT: As a rule good marketable timber country is not good country for selection.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Mr. WILLMOTT: It is correct as regards jarrah but not as regards karri.

The Premier: That is right.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I do not want to unduly dwell upon this Bill as the hour is drawing late and everything has been said in its favour by the Minister for Works. I wish to say, however, that

everything he has said, and he has said a good deal in its favour, is absolutely true.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Mr. WILLMOTT: This land will return much to the State in the near future by the number of settlers which we shall be able to place upon it and by the dairy produce which will be produced down there. As a result of this development we shall be able to derive interest and sinking fund on the money expended and much profit from the returns from the timber.

The Premier: Do you not think that it is essential for the purpose of developing the South-West we should amend the Land Act to limit the area that can be selected by any one person?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I think that 300 acres as a maximum in that country is sufficient, otherwise a man would become land poor. I have seen men land poor. I have been in the country for a quarter of a century.

The Premier: That is one of the difficulties we have to face in Western Australia.

Mr. WILLMOTT: This land hunger is worse than the drink habit. When a man obtains a few hundred acres he is not content until he obtains more and still more, until in the end his own land breaks him. The rents that he has to pay and the small amount of money that he has to spread over a large area, and the ringbarking which he does as a rule with the result that in a few years the suckers come up and beat him, create such a position that his last state is worse than the first. I would like in conclusion to recommend to the Minister for Lands that he should have a close classification made of the country between Jalbarragup on the Blackwood River and the Indian Ocean, as has been done on the Gardner and Warren Rivers. Then, when the people come along and select country in this portion of the State we can give them a decided answer within a few weeks at most. Too much delay often occurs as the result of

the Minister for Lands not knowing whether the land is timbered or not, or whether it is suitable for selection, but with a close classification a decision can be arrived at almost immediately. I trust that the Minister will give instructions to have this classification made at the earliest possible date. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES, TEMPORARY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to announce to the House that I have appointed the hon. member for Coolgardie (Mr. McDowall), the hon. member for Kimberley (Mr. Male), and the hon. member for Albany (Mr. Price) to act as Temporary Chairmen of Committees.

House adjourned at 10.10 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday 17th December, 1914.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAY WONGAN HILLS-MULLEWA.

Hon. W. PATRICK asked the Colonial Secretary: On what date will the Wongan Hills to Mullewa railway be handed over to the Railway Department?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: It is expected that this railway can be transferred to the Railway Department about the middle of next month.