

# Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 17th November, 1910.

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

## QUESTIONS FOR FRIDAY SITTINGS.

Mr. SPEAKER: Hon. members have given notice of questions for to-morrow morning. I would point out that there is scarcely time enough to have the answers ready by to-morrow morning, and if it will suit the convenience of hon. members they should give notice to ask their questions on Tuesday next.

Mr. HORAN: I am afraid that unless an answer is available to my question to-morrow I will have to move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: It seems impossible to have the answers ready for to-morrow.

## PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Return showing lands applied for and granted under the Civil Service Land Settlement Scheme (ordered on motion by Mr. Angwin).

## PAPERS REMOVED FROM TABLE.

Mr. HEITMANN: Some time ago a motion was moved by the member for Subiaco asking for certain papers in connection with Mr. Jolly's appointment to the Secondary school. I believe that these papers were placed on the Table, but I looked for them recently and found that they had been returned to the Education Department. I do not desire to inconvenience the department, but I would like to know if I am allowed to see that file.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Certainly. These papers were required to deal with the fresh applicants. They will be returned to the House.

[Later.]

Mr. HOLMAN: I would like to ask whether the papers referred to just now, and which have been taken away, were removed with your knowledge?

Mr. SPEAKER: I forgot for the moment. I intended to explain that it is customary for a department requiring a file of papers, which have been laid on the Table of the House, to receive those papers back on the understanding that they are to be returned to the House if they are needed. The papers in question were asked for by the Education Department. I have just instructed a messenger to inform the department that the House requires the file at once. If the hon. member desires it, it will be brought immediately.

Mr. HEITMANN: If the department desires the file they might be allowed to keep it; I do not desire to inconvenience them. If the file is placed here on another day it will suit me, or I can see it at the department.

## QUESTION — CIVIL SERVANTS' LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME.

### Retiring Allowances for Railway Officers

Mr. SCADDAN: I intended to give notice of a question for to-morrow, but in accordance with your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I will ask it without notice. Is the Premier aware that retired civil servants who went on the land some time last year have not yet received their retiring allowances in accordance with the promise given by the late Premier (Sir Newton Moore) to Mr. Bath? Is he also aware that one of these civil servants has on six occasions since Tuesday last attempted to get an interview with the Minister for Railways? Will the Premier cause that gentleman to be seen in order that he will not be occasioned any further loss of money?

The PREMIER: I am not aware of the circumstances referred to by the leader of the Opposition, but I understand that the matter of civil servants who retired

from the Railway Department is a question for Cabinet decision and will be dealt with in due course. So far as I know there is no promise given that has not been carried out.

Mr. SCADDAN: There was a promise made to Mr. Bath that they would be all treated alike in every department. Why does not the Minister for Railways reply to this gentleman's correspondence? I would like some satisfaction on this question. Do I understand from the Premier that nothing can be done in connection with these applications until Cabinet has made a decision?

The Premier: What applications?

Mr. SCADDAN: There are a number of them from retired civil servants who were employed in the Railway Department. They can get no satisfaction from the department or the Minister or the Commissioner although they have written continuously on the subject. The particular individual I have mentioned wrote on the 16th September last and got a reply on the 26th, but a very unsatisfactory one. He wrote again twice in October, and then again on the 10th November, and no reply came. So he came to Perth on Tuesday last, and twice a day he has attended at the Minister's office, making in all six occasions, and he has been put off on each occasion. The Premier tells us it is a matter for Cabinet to decide. If it is, why does not the Minister for Railways bring it before Cabinet and let this gentleman know his position exactly? When Mr. Bath asked the question of Sir Newton Moore, the late Premier distinctly stated that all the civil servants who retired from the various departments would be placed on the same footing, yet the men who retired from the Railway Department have not been treated the same as other civil servants retiring from other departments.

Mr. Horan: I have two or three similar cases.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member will give particulars of his questions I will be able to get the information and reply to them, but I really cannot elicit information at a moment's notice on a general statement such as the hon. member

has made to the House. I cannot understand what he is driving at.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Cannot the Minister for Railways say?

The PREMIER: No; he knows there are a number of civil servants who have left and gone on the land, and that there is certain discontent. But there is always discontent. However, the matter will be dealt with. Why did not the hon. member see the Minister in his office and point out the names of the specific individuals?

Mr. Scaddan: The gentleman only came to see me half an hour ago.

The PREMIER: Then the hon. member might give the Minister time, and see him to-morrow.

Mr. O'Loughlen: (Give the man his rights.

The PREMIER: We do not know what his rights are.

Mr. Scaddan: He is one of the retired civil servants who went on the land. There are others concerned.

The PREMIER: Who are they?

Mr. SCADDAN: I will give this gentleman's name. It is Mr. Pope. He has been here since Tuesday, and he wants to get home to his farm. He wants to see the Minister.

The PREMIER: That does not say he has a just claim. However, the Minister will inquire into it now he knows to whom the hon. member is referring, and he will get the papers to-morrow morning.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: The matter under discussion is a question of policy, but I would like to say in connection with the civil servants' land settlement scheme certain suggestions and promises were made by the Minister for Lands which applied throughout the departments of the public service generally. There was not to that time any retrenchment in progress in these departments. On the other hand, for a considerable period prior to that time the Railway Department had been making a large number of retrenchments; and when some of the railway officers desired to enter into the land settlement scheme, they were advised that if any of them desired to retire for the purpose of taking up land they would receive no

compensation on leaving, because if they left the department it would be necessary to employ other officers to fill their places. Thus they were distinctly given to understand that if they retired no compensation would be given to them. This officer, Mr. Pope, left the department and made no claim from the day he left until last September, when he wrote to me and asked if I would see that the promise made by the ex-Premier was carried out, that is, that he should receive two weeks' pay for each year's service on retiring as a retiring allowance, and any long service leave that was accruing to him. I looked up *Hansard* to see the promise made by the Premier, and to my mind it did not apply. Further applications have been made, and I have been going into the whole question with a view to submitting it to Cabinet to see whether we should pay this extra money or not. We cannot deal with individuals, it is a question of policy, a question of the view that Cabinet should take of the whole of the circumstances, seeing that the Commissioner gave this officer and other officers distinctly to understand that if they retired no compensation would be paid to them, and seeing that for twelve months no application was made by this officer. I propose to submit all the details to Cabinet. I had sent a reply to this gentleman, and when he called at the office I informed him that I could not see him with regard to the matter.

Mr. SCADDAN: On the 5th October, 1909, Mr. Bath asked the then Premier several questions with regard to public servants' retiring allowances. This is a matter of vital importance, not only to the particular gentleman in question, but to others. This gentleman showed me correspondence to the effect that unless his arrears in rent were paid up to the end of November the land that he occupies would be forfeited. He considers he is entitled to certain compensation, and if he can get that he will be able to pay his rent.

The Premier: According to the Minister he did not ask for any compensation until nearly 12 months afterwards.

Mr. SCADDAN: Let me read the questions that Mr. Bath asked the Minister for Lands last year. Mr. Bath asked (1) whether the Minister for Lands, in his address to the civil servants, promised that retiring allowances would be paid to those who were included in the scheme at Kodj Kodjin, and (2) whether the retiring allowance had been provided in regard to all civil servants included in the scheme, and (3) if not, why had any discrimination been made? The answers given by the then Premier were—

1. Some of those selected might be entitled to retiring allowances, and those who were would get them in some shape or form. He did not know that they would be given cheques, but satisfactory arrangements could be made. Those selected would get what they were entitled to, but they would not have an opportunity of getting retiring allowances unless they were to become settlers. It is proposed to pay any retiring allowance that is due at the rate of one-half at the end of 12 months and the other half at the end of two years. 2. Answered by No. 1. 3. The officers who are applying to be allowed to retire, in order that they may take advantage of the settlement scheme, are being treated alike.

The Premier: Those who were entitled to the allowance.

Mr. SCADDAN: This man has written three times to the department and he cannot get any acknowledgment.

#### QUESTION—MINERS' PHTHISIS.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Premier: In view of the report of the Royal Commission showing an extraordinary number of cases of lung trouble amongst miners, does the Government not think it necessary to immediately take remedial measures. If not, will the Premier inform the House of the intentions of the Government?

The PREMIER replied: The Government propose awaiting the further report from Dr. Cumpston on his return from the Eastern States before taking action for the prevention or minimising

of tuberculosis, and in regard to fibrosis it is proposed to make further investigations by Royal Commission, with a view to recommending the adoption of regulations for the provision, if possible, of more efficient working conditions. I may add that I have already communicated with the State Premiers, asking them to agree to a conference of State medical officers, in accordance with the motion adopted in the Legislative Assembly on the 19th October.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY ADVISORY BOARD, NORSEMAN-ESPERANCE.

Mr. HUDSON asked the Premier: 1, Why was the *personnel* of the Advisory Board appointed to report on the Norseman-Esperance railway changed for the second inspection? 2, Was the Engineer-in-Chief appointed for the purpose of reporting on the land in the district to be served by the railway? 3, In view of the permanent survey of the line having been made, what was the reason for his appointment? 4, Was Professor Lowrie asked to accompany the board on the occasion of the second inspection? 5 (a), If he was so asked, what were the grounds of his refusal? (b), If he was not asked, why was he not asked? 6, Does the Minister expect to have the report of the board laid upon the table of the House before the close of this session?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Professor Lowrie asked to be relieved of his duties on the Advisory Board on the 6th October in consequence of his having resigned his position as Director of Agriculture, and this was agreed to. 2, The Engineer-in-Chief is not a member of the board now reporting on the land in the Norseman-Esperance district. 3, Answered by No. 2. 4, No. 5, Answered by Nos. 1 and 4. 6, I hope so.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY PLATFORM, NORSEMAN.

Mr. HUDSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it the intention of the Railway Department to construct a platform at the Norseman railway station

similar to those at Sandstone and Meekatharra? 2, If so, when? If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The Government policy is not to construct platforms on district railways, though an exception was made in connection with the two places named. The advisability of granting a similar privilege at Norseman is now under consideration. 2, Answered by No. 1.

#### QUESTION—HOPETOUN JETTY, LABOUR EMPLOYED.

Mr. HUDSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has it been the practice of the Railway Department to employ two men to each truck in the discharge of coke from vessels at the jetty at Hopetoun? 2, If so, what is the reason for reducing the number of men so employed from two to one in such a port as that of Hopetoun? 3, Is the Railway Department employing officers, stewards, cooks, and pantrymen from vessels in port to do the lumpers' work of discharging coke? 4, If so (a), Does the Minister consider the men so employed capable of doing the work as economically and expeditiously as the lumpers usually employed at such work? (b), Is the department paying such officers, stewards, cooks, and pantrymen the same rate of wages as that usually paid to lumpers? 5, Has the department any other reason for the non-employment of the lumpers than that of assisting the shipping company to break up the Hopetoun Waterside Workers' Union?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, It was the practice formerly to employ two men in truck when discharging coke at the Hopetoun Jetty. 2, One man was found to be sufficient for the work performed. 3, When the lumpers refused to receive cargo or slings from the steamer, some of the officers and stewards volunteered their assistance. 4 (a), Yes, on the particular occasion referred to they have so proved themselves. (b), Yes, they were paid lumpers' wages. 5, The department is in no way concerned in an alleged attempt to break up the

Hopetonn Waterside Workers' Union, and is only actuated by a desire to handle the traffic of the port expeditiously.

**BILL—SOUTHERN CROSS-BULLFINCH RAILWAY.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 15th November.

Mr. PRICE (Albany): I would not have addressed myself to the Bill now before the House had it not been for the fact that a desire for extreme expedition has been shown in connection with the proposal. Only a few weeks ago the Bullfinch mine was practically unknown, and yet almost simultaneously with the opening up of that mine, we find the Government bringing forward a Bill to provide for the construction of a railway at a cost of anything up to £50,000. And we find the Minister for Works introducing the Bill, and stating that if nothing else, it is a good business proposition, a good business risk; in other words, that the resources of this State are to be used in a risk which is somewhat problematical in view of the fact that there have been in this State many mines which have given equal promise with the Bullfinch. One could not help noticing that the Minister for Works in introducing this Bill did not have his usual flow of speech. The Minister was somewhat hesitating in his utterances, and one cannot help wondering whether he feared that the ghost of his past actions, in connection with a measure of this character, would rise in judgment against him on the present occasion. It certainly is somewhat interesting to read some of that hon. member's remarks in connection with a proposal of a somewhat similar nature, which had previously been introduced in this Chamber. I find in 1907 a Bill to authorise the construction of the Mount Magnet-Black Range railway was introduced into this Chamber and the present Minister for Works at that time urged the House to be cautious, and to move carefully in authorising the expenditure of Loan Funds. He went on to say—

I contend the present system of voting on and discussing these public

works is entirely wrong, and it is in the interests of the country that we should adopt some new method so that the Government, in regard to the loan proposals and the public works to be constructed out of loan, should adopt a particular method enabling every member of the House to know what it is proposed the country is committed to and the way the increased borrowing will work out. We have now no knowledge of what the country is to be committed to.

Are we not now in exactly the same position as we were then? We already have on the Notice Paper proposals for the construction of certain railways, and I understand from the statement made by the Premier a few days ago that there are other railway proposals to be brought forward in addition to those which appear on the Notice Paper; yet we find that a special effort is to be made, and that the whole business of the country is to be suspended to secure the passage of this Bill, a Bill which, according to the Minister's own admission, will serve one mine and one mine only. However, let us follow through the hon. member's comments in connection with the haste to which I have already referred. Continuing his speech in connection with the Mount Magnet-Black Range railway he said—

We are rushing headlong with a policy of railway construction in the direction of adding to our working expenses, and in the direction of adding to our indebtedness, and we are doing it blindfold. The Black Range railway may possibly be a railway deserving construction; but I would like members to bear in mind that any goldfields railway—if it be a purely goldfields railway—is a proposition that will have to be very carefully considered indeed, the result of which has to be very closely thought over, for the reason that a goldfield after all has but a limited life, and if there be no agricultural country and no pastoral country which may be expected to keep alive the traffic when the life of the goldfield passes away, the country is saddling itself for all time with

a heavy indebtedness in order that it may gain a temporary advantage, or that the persons resident and following the industry in a certain part may have a temporary advantage.

Could I, myself, give any better condemnation of this present proposal than the condemnation contained in the Minister's own words in connection with the Mount Magnet-Black Range railway? And I am reminded that on that occasion the hon. member was referring to an old established goldfield, to a goldfield producing hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of gold; not one mine, but many mines, not a mere handful of floating population but a settled population, and a town which had been in existence for some considerable time. But let us follow the hon. member further—and I regret that every hon. member had not in his hands a copy of this interesting speech when the Minister, a few nights ago, was endeavouring to induce us to vote for the proposal. The hon. member said—

Members will fail in their duty if they continually vote for these new authorisations, these new public works, without considering them on the whole and the effect on the finance of the day and of the future. I believe in a public works committee or a committee of finance, but if there is to be no committee at all the Government of the day should bring down their finance proposals as a whole for the consideration of the House in bulk, and then the House could authorise a specific amount to be expended from Loan Fund.

Now we are asked at this juncture to authorise the expenditure of from £40,000 to £50,000 for a railway to one mine. Not for the purpose of linking up with our railway system an old established town, but in order to bring into existence a town, for the purpose, as the Minister himself told us, of aiding in the carrying of material which may be necessary to build up the town that may or may not come into existence at Bullfinch. One member says it is extraordinary, but that is not the most extraordinary part about it—I am just

coming to it. The hon. member goes still further and says—

I can quite understand that the passage of a railway Bill looks well on a company's prospectus.

The Minister for Works told us in 1907 he could quite understand that the passage of a railway Bill looks very well on a company's prospectus. At the present moment there is a number of prospectuses being issued in connection with the Bullfinch mining propositions. Let us follow him a little further—

I do not think it is altogether justification for the construction of a railway that a mine may be floated. I admit that working costs of mining must be considerably reduced by the construction of a railway and that to that extent the industry may be stimulated. But the State has not only to consider, when launching out on expenditure, the reduction of working costs; it has also to consider whether the State will get sufficient on the outlay to warrant the expenditure.

And he winds up this splendid condemnation of a proposal similar to that under review with these words—

I hope the House will follow a policy of consideration and caution before launching into new works on Loan Account.

Now, lest it may be that owing to the lapse of time the hon. member is justified in having altered his opinion, let us see what he had to say no later than last year, less than 12 months ago. On the 7th of December last the hon. member, speaking in connection with railway proposals, again urged caution, again urged that they should receive consideration, again urged that it was the duty of the Government to place before the House all the details in connection with proposed railways. We find him in December of last year making use of these remarks—

I have urged in this House time after time, when I was in office and since I have been out of office, that no railway proposition should come before this House unless it had been reported upon by a competent board; and I still hold the opinion that the adoption of

such a procedure would immensely facilitate the work of hon. members, and would enable them to arrive at a more accurate decision than they can possibly hope to under existing conditions.

The Minister for Works: What was that on?

Mr. PRICE: That was in December last, when it was suggested to refer certain railway proposals to a select committee.

The Minister for Works: What were the proposals?

Mr. PRICE: A line in the South-West; the Boyup Brook-Kojonup railway proposal.

The Minister for Works: How did the Opposition vote on it?

Mr. PRICE: They voted in favour. It was on a motion by the member for Brown Hill that the proposal should be referred to a select committee.

The Minister for Works: Then they voted in favour of my opinion.

Mr. PRICE: Yes; we were with you then, but you were not sitting where you are now. May I suggest to the hon. member that he seems to be undergoing a process of evolution. As he evolved from the seat over here to the one he is now in, so his opinions evolved also.

The Minister for Works: But you are voting against me on this.

Mr. PRICE: We have not evolved with the same rapidity as the hon. member.

The Minister for Works: You are voting against me on this.

Mr. PRICE: I have not yet told the hon. member how we are voting; I am merely saying we have not evolved with the extraordinary rapidity of the hon. member. I contend members are being asked to vote upon the Bill without one single reason having been put forward by the Minister who introduced it. He knew at the time he was introducing it he was doing a thing he had condemned ever since his entry into the House. We are asked on this occasion to vote away £50,000 of the public funds to serve, as I have already stated, one

mine. But we are told also, "suppose this speculative business risk does not turn out a good one, you can pull up the line and use it elsewhere." Why, such an argument would justify the building of lines in any portion of the State. But we find the same Government who are hanging up the whole business of the State so that they may pass a Bill authorising the construction of a railway to Bullfinch—

The Premier: You are against it then.

Mr. PRICE: Will the Premier kindly use a little patience, and in a few moments I will let him know how I am going to vote. When the division bells ring I shall not ask the hon. member to exercise any further patience. What I desire to point out is that the same Government who are using every power they possess to force the authorisation of the construction of a railway to this one-man mine are continually telling us they have no funds for the construction of roads for our settlers. All over the country settlers are clamouring for roads. The member for Katanning knows full well there are settlers in his district who are clamouring at him, and I undertake to say that scarce a day passes on which he does not receive some requests in this connection. I know I do, and I think every member representing an agricultural constituency is faced with the same difficulty.

Mr. Walker: In respect to roads it is even worse in the mining constituencies.

Mr. PRICE: But in this case we are told the Government do not propose to have a road at all; they propose a railway, a steel road. These people of Bullfinch who, according to the Minister for Works, have got hold of such a splendid proposition, are to be still further assisted, not by the construction of ordinary roads such as the settler has to use, but by a railway.

Mr. Holman: They have cut the wages down to 10s. a week.

Mr. PRICE: Perhaps that is to help them pay the dividend duty, which will come later. We know the Government

cannot find money for the construction of roads to convenience our settlers, and we find them putting off day after day those very necessary works; yet the moment Mr. Doolette, who has been extremely fortunate, the moment this fortunate individual approaches the Government they say, "Oh, yes, it is all right."

The Minister for Works: Did he approach the Government?

Mr. PRICE: I am speaking figuratively.

Mr. Collier: Yes: according to the Press reports he was a member of the deputation which asked for the railway.

Mr. PRICE: I was speaking of Mr. Doolette figuratively, as I was not aware of the fact that he was a member of the deputation referred to. But if not Mr. Doolette directly, then it was those directly concerned with Mr. Doolette; and, after all, he is the one most concerned in the building of the railway, inasmuch as he has the largest interest in the district and is the person who will secure the greatest benefit from the railway as the chief shareholder in the Bullfinch mine. Why should Mr. Doolette, or the shareholders of the Bullfinch, receive any special consideration from the House which we are not prepared to give to the settlers—because there are hundreds of settlers who are finding it almost impossible to make ends meet while waiting for the construction not of railways, but of roads. They would be satisfied if the Government would only clear a road for them—but they will not do it.

The Premier: Oh, yes, we are doing that.

Mr. PRICE: Not with the same extraordinary rapidity with which you are endeavouring to build the Bullfinch railway.

The Premier: We constructed 300 miles of roads last year.

Mr. PRICE: Fancy! Three hundred miles of ordinary bush tracks have been cleared for the thousands of settlers in the State, and we are to have a railway at a cost of £50,000 for one mine. The

Premier, I notice, did not state how much the 300 miles of road cost, nor did he tell us what portion of it was constructed purely for the assistance of settlers, and what portion for the assistance of those already within easy reach of the various towns.

Mr. Brown: Some of these roads are costing £800 a mile.

Mr. PRICE: Very likely. I think for one on Swanbourne-terrace, Cottesloe, we voted £500. It should be called "Swindlebourne-terrace." The same Ministers who are now tumbling over each other in their overwhelming desire to build this railway, told us within the last 12 months that the finances of the State would not permit of them providing for the sick and suffering. The Bullfinch is of more consideration to the Members of the Ministry than the support of the sick and suffering and the building of roads for our settlers; and these are the Ministers who are continually preaching of their desire to aid the poor unfortunate farmer. We here have a spectacle of the kind of farmer they are prepared to aid, the sharebroking farmer.

Mr. Underwood: The "wild cat" farmer.

Mr. PRICE: Yes, gentlemen who farm "wild cats." I do regret exceedingly that the Government in bringing down this Bill did not supply the House with some definite information as to the prospects of this district, because this is not a new district; it is one which has been in existence for a great number of years. It is a district almost as old as the gold-fields. Over 20 years ago this particular district was prospected, and the mention of prospecting calls to my mind the fact that the Minister for Works stated that this railway would be of great assistance to the prospectors. I wonder how the prospectors out on the Murchison get on. Do they get railway lines? Are the men who are prospecting Lake Way and Wiluna getting railways built for them? No, they cannot even get water. Less than four years ago I travelled through portion of that district, and, if the conditions to-day are anything like what they were then, it is not roads or



railways that the prospectors want, but water; yet, here at Bullfinch, the prospectors are to have a railway.

Mr. Holman: They are motor car prospectors whom the Government are referring to.

Mr. PRICE: Yes, they may be St. George's-terrace and Hay-street prospectors. I do not think that the bona fide prospector is worried about the construction of a railway, and I certainly should not be induced to vote for this line because of any statement that it is going to assist prospecting. We are also told that there is a very large quantity of timber which may be carried over this railway. Where to? To the Bullfinch? No, to Kalgoorlie. We are not asked to believe that the railway will receive any benefit from the carriage of goods to Bullfinch, but we are asked to believe that it will be a profitable proposition because of the timber which will be carted to Kalgoorlie. If that is one of the reasons why this railway should be built, that reason could with a thousandfold more force be pleaded for the construction of a railway from Norseman to Esperance. If it is timber that Kalgoorlie requires, let us get into the timber belt there: but, as a matter of fact, the timber is not required. The railways already connecting Kalgoorlie with the timber belt are quite sufficient to supply the field with timber for several years to come; hence this particular plea for the construction of the line is one which cannot be seriously considered.

Mr. Collier: We are also told that the Bullfinch district has agricultural prospects.

Mr. PRICE: Yes; one member in speaking on this matter stated that Mr. Muir, the Inspector of Engineering Surveys, had pointed out that there was considerable land along the route which might be used for agricultural purposes. Now, whilst I am quite prepared to accept Mr. Muir as an authority on railway surveys, I am certainly not prepared to accept him as an authority on the prospects of an agricultural line. and, speaking as one who has some personal knowledge of this

district, I certainly do not expect it to develop into an agricultural district, for the simple reason that it has not the rainfall which will induce men to engage in agriculture to any extent. There may be experimental blocks, as there have been for the last 14 or 15 years. Sixteen years ago there were experimental blocks in existence at Southern Cross, but they have never got beyond that stage, for the reason that there is not rainfall there sufficient to warrant their being extended. Certainly they are not likely to be extended along the route of the Bullfinch line. I sincerely hope that the Government, who are so solicitous for the welfare of the shareholders of the Bullfinch mine, will prove that they are equally solicitous for the welfare of the settlers throughout the agricultural areas, and that they will at all times show the same expedition in connection with any other railway proposal which may be placed before them where the possibilities of a fair return are even more pronounced than they are in connection with the present proposal. I call to mind districts where there are hundreds of settlers who have been clamouring for years past for a railway. Application after application, and appeal after appeal, have been made to the Government of the day for a railway to be constructed, and the Government have continually put them off with the statement that they are engaged on a certain definite railway policy from which they do not intend to depart. Yet, because Mr. Doolette discovers what is said to be a remarkably rich mine, he and his co-shareholders are to be assisted to the extent of forty or fifty thousand pounds of the public funds in the construction of a railway to the locality where his mine is situated. I do not intend to further discuss this matter. In conclusion, I again express my sincere regret that the Minister for Works on this occasion did not carry out those ideas which he always has expressed in connection with proposals of this character. I regret to find that with his removal from one portion of the Chamber to another he has so very materially altered his ideas and opinions as to be a party to the fore-

ing through this Chamber of a Bill of this character without providing members with that information which they should certainly receive before being called upon to vote for the expenditure of such a large sum of money as is proposed to be expended in the provision of this line.

The Premier: You have not told us how you are going to vote.

Mr. PRICE: You will find that out on the division.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I have very little to say in regard to this Bill. If the Premier is feeling any anxiety about the vote of the hon. member for Albany, I will relieve his mind so far as I am concerned by saying at the outset that my vote is going to be in favour of the line. I would not have troubled to tell the House that, but that I deem it the duty of members to caution the people against the large number of absolute scoundrels who are infesting the Bullfinch district at the present time, and have been so doing for the last month. And having risen to speak I may be permitted to say a few words about what has previously been said in the discussion of this Bill. I must say that after hearing the Minister for Works introduce the Bill, I am perfectly satisfied as to how he earned the title of the "mark-time Premier." I have never heard a proposition of this sort introduced in such a hesitating manner. If the Bill was not a good one, and if the proposal was not absolutely sound, then the Minister's introduction would have condemned it to the lowest depths of the waste-paper basket. We find that the Minister to a very great extent endeavoured to persuade us that this was an agricultural railway.

Mr. Collier: It was also a sandalwood railway, or any other old thing: a sort of mixed proposition.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is so, but the Minister for Works should know that this is not an agricultural country, and is never likely to be until we have very different methods from what obtain at the present time, for the simple reason that the rainfall is not regular. There may of course be good seasons, and in such this is a patch of the best pastoral coun-

try in Western Australia, but it has been known for over 40 years that they get cycles of droughts in this district, and no doubt, Mr. Lukin, an old settler, can tell you all about Golden Valley from an agricultural point of view. I do protest against this attempt to tell us that we have agricultural country where we have it not and where people starting in that line would be doomed to failure. Another extraordinary argument used by the Minister was in regard to the roads. He said that if this railway was not built it would take £26,000 to make a road there. There has not been a road of that description, I mean an ordinary macadamised road, made in any part of Western Australia, and I would like to point out that if we are going into roads of that sort there are districts very much more entitled to have them than is Southern Cross. The nature of that district makes road carriage quite easy compared with many difficult parts which we have in this State and when we find men carting through sand patches to Davyhurst, to Mount Ida, and to Mount Sir Samuel—

Mr. Troy: And through 30 miles of spinifex and sand to Lake Way.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, to Lake Way, Peak Hill, Mount Edgerton, and several other mining centres in Western Australia. I would like to say that they carted practically all the material to Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie before a railway came, which is a very different proposition to carting it merely from Southern Cross. I do not know why the Minister for Works should use these fallacious arguments in introducing what is really a thorough business proposition and one that any man knows the Government should undertake, and undertake in the manner they have.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: But I strongly object to the attempt of the Government to force the Bill through the House without full consideration. I hold that if a member of the House asks for the adjournment of a second reading, he should get it. Two or three days will not make any great difference. Any member of the House is entitled to discuss the measure.

The Premier: You got the adjournment.

Mr. Holman: At 11 o'clock.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We did not get it. A division was taken on the motion.

Mr. Holman: The Premier would not give me an adjournment.

The Premier: Not at 9 o'clock.

Mr. Holman: There was other business.

The Premier: You got it at 11 o'clock.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, and we will get a lot of other things in due time. There is a lot of time yet. We are only in the beginning of this century. Looking at the proposition to build this railway, we must admit that if we are going to build it at all it is best to build it at once.

If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well

It were done quickly.

The Premier: Hear, hear. My sentiments exactly.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. member agrees with me every time, and therefore the Government have undoubtedly taken the proper steps in this matter. It has been stated by one or two members—and no doubt they believe it—that a railway is not warranted until a mining district is thoroughly proved; but I want to say that where there is an assurance of one reasonably good mine, one reasonably good mine would warrant the construction of 30, 40, or 50 miles of railway. I have heard it said in the debate that there was almost as good a prospect to justify the construction of a railway to Peak Hill in the early days.

Mr. Holman: Better.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I totally disagree with the hon. member when he says "better"; because we have at Bullfinch the best prospects we have had, to my knowledge, in—

The Premier: Western Australia.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No, in the world. There has never been a gold mine showing so well on the surface as the Bullfinch, and that being so, 20 or 50 miles of railway are warranted.

Mr. Collier: There are scores of mines in the Mount Margaret district where they only get two or three trains a week.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is because the mines are not much good. Now, take the Peak Hill mine. Though it cut out to all intents and purposes at 130 feet, I believe that had a railway been constructed there straight through from Cue at the time the Cue railway was built, that railway would have been a paying proposition, and would be paying now. I say that even if the line were continued on to Peak Hill now, it would still be a payable proposition, though the big mine has petered out, because there are many small mines about the Peak Hill district which would undoubtedly pay for working if the conveniences were greater than they are at present. However, that is not the point to which I wish to draw attention. We have at Bullfinch perhaps one of the best prospects that have ever been discovered in the world, but we have to bear in mind that the gold-bearing ore is not likely to extend over a very great area. We know perfectly well that the characteristic of Western Australian gold mines is that the chutes are short; and we have to bear in mind also that the Bullfinch Proprietary Mine own a half a mile along the lode, so that it would be no wonder if there were not a single mine outside the Bullfinch.

Mr. Troy: If she is a good mine it will not matter much.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: She may be easily the best mine in the world and still there may be no other mine in the vicinity. But what I want to point out to the people of Australia—

Mr. Troy: Australia will not listen.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Australia will listen before I have finished.

Mr. Troy: I must look at the Bullfinch Boom in the papers to-morrow, because it may affect the stocks in Adelaide.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. member has somewhat broken the thread of my argument.

Mr. Carson: Never mind! Australia will know.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: But I will pick it up again. As I was saying, the Bullfinch Proprietary have half a mile along the lode, and also block claims taken in. No doubt Mr. Jones, who is a fairly good

prospector, has some idea which way the lode is dipping, and which way it is running. Altogether the company have 125 acres, and we have to bear in mind that, if the pegging was done properly, that 125 acres would take in the whole of the Kalgoorlie belt. Therefore, these people who are buying mines outside the Bullfinch without seeing a trace of gold in them, are to a great extent buying absolute rubbish; and it is the duty of this Parliament, and the duty of the Government, in fact the duty of every honest man knowing these things, to caution people against buying these properties. There is no possible doubt that there are going to be in connection with this Bullfinch boom some of the most gigantic mining swindles that have ever taken place; and it is our duty, the duty of the State, to do all we can to prevent them. I am just reminded of an interview I saw with one gentleman. The Press are always prepared to give interviews to important men. Mr. Aarons has bought some mines—somewhat off the line of the lode I should say. If we look at the plan we find that Mr. Jones pegged his leases north-west and south-east, and we have to bear in mind that Jones and party know something about mining, and also that they were there some days or weeks—

Mr. Collier: Months.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Months before they pegged at all. They made absolutely sure, as far as it was possible to make sure, what was the direction of that lode.

Mr. Collier: Hear, hear! They know.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I should say they know; and Mr. Aarons comes along and tells us, through the Press, that the lode is running east and west. He comes to this conclusion because he has traced a quartz reef running from a well in the Bullfinch lode east and west. This sort of stuff is only thrown out to absolutely deceive those who are unacquainted with mining or geological features. As a matter of positive fact, anyone who has been through the country at all knows that a quartz reef running through a lode or dyke has nothing whatever to do with the direction of the lode or dyke. He also must know that even if it were running

through it is highly probable there will be no gold in the quartz reef, no matter where it runs through the lode. We have seen repeatedly where a dyke will come up right through a quartz reef, and where the reef will run on both sides of it, and this happens: if the quartz reef carries gold, then where the dyke clashes through it also will contain gold; on the other hand, if the dyke contains gold, then where it goes through the quartz reef the quartz will also carry gold; but the quartz away from the dyke, or the dyke away from the reef, as the case may be, contains no gold. Yet Mr. Aarons comes along and tells the public that he is pretty sure the Bullfinch lode is running through the ground he has bought to the east and west, because there is a quartz reef running into his ground. This is the sort of thing I wish to protest against, and I contend it is our duty to do so. I trust the railway will be built, I am absolutely convinced it will be a payable proposition, because I am certain, from the reports I have seen published, and have received privately, there is an enormous amount of gold above the 100ft. level, that is above the ground already opened up in the Bullfinch mine, and that there is sufficient there to pay for the construction of this railway, and to return a profit to the Government. But I say again that the people of Australia are going to be robbed of hundreds of thousands of pounds for mines that do not contain a trace of gold, and never have contained a trace of gold. They would not be as good a proposition as if one pegged out Parliament House grounds as a gold mine. I hold it is the duty of the Minister for Mines to come forward and make some effort to condemn those mines which on the surface show clearly they have no gold, and no possible earthly hope of having any, except what the shareholders put into them. I trust the Government will make some effort to prevent swindling taking place.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson): It is somewhat amusing to listen to the strenuous opposition to this railway put up by hon. members opposite with the full knowledge that these hon. mem-

bers do not intend to cast their votes against the measure.

Mr. Holman: We can object to the method of introducing it and be in favour of it.

The PREMIER: It is not the method of introducing.

Mr. Holman: It was the worst introducing we have ever had.

The PREMIER: The Bill was introduced by the Minister in the ordinary way and ample time was given to members to consider it.

Mr. Collier: Was ample time given on Tuesday when you forced on the second reading?

The PREMIER: How can it be said the Bill was forced when we are only discussing the second reading now?

Mr. Collier: It was forced so far as some members were concerned, because they were forced to speak on Tuesday night.

The PREMIER: It is passing strange that hon. members will get up in their places and condemn a railway of this description simply out of opposition to the Government, knowing full well that when they come to a division they are going to vote for the measure. and although they know it is a business proposition. If they believe it is a good business proposition it does not require much debate; and if they have made up their minds that it is a good business proposition, and that they are going to vote in support of the line, they need not take any exception to the way the Bill was introduced. The Minister gave all the information that was available on the matter, barring information with regard to some of the mines perhaps that he did not have, but he gave all the departmental information. It is unnecessary. I maintain, to go into details as to the tons that can be mined or crushed, because we know full well that the whole of the auriferous belt between Southern Cross and Golden Valley at any rate, and beyond to Mount Jackson, is a good mining district, and has been in existence for the last 20 years.

Mr. Troy: Why did you not take some steps to develop it?

The PREMIER: Because it wanted the fillip this discovery has given to it. I say without fear of contradiction that there is more justification for the construction of this 22 miles of railway to Bullfinch than there ever was to construct the 100 miles of railway from Mount Magnet to Sandstone. Sandstone was not a district that promised fairly well. From time to time it went up a little bit and it went back, and it had an established centre for which the material of course had already been carried about 100 miles to erect the bulidings in the town and the plants on the mines. I believe there are only two mines at Sandstone itself which are doing any good at the present time. On the other hand, here we have a proposition where we have not only the best mine, so far as it goes, that Western Australia, or Australia, has known—and that is proved beyond a doubt—

Mr. Holman: No.

The PREMIER: But we think we have something beyond the average of anything that has been discovered in the world, and the extent of the discovery has been proved over some very considerable area. Take what has been done in the Bullfinch mine during the few short months they have been at work there. On the No. 1 lode I understand there has been a shaft sunk to a depth of 100 feet which means a considerable amount of work, and they have driven at that level. There is another shaft down 60 feet and they are crosscutting there. They have blocked out 14,000 tons of ore which has been proved by assays to be worth at least 7ozs. per ton.

Mr. Holman: You cannot take an assay beyond the point of a pick.

The PREMIER: They can form a very correct idea. I admit they cannot tell the exact value in the centre of a block, but by cross-cutting, driving, and measuring they can form a fairly accurate idea of the value of the ore. In addition to that large body of ore there are others existing, there are ore bodies running anything between 6 feet and 100 feet in width.

Mr. Collier: There are six lodes there, are there not?

The PREMIER: Everything points to the fact that a phenomenally rich deposit has been struck in this district and points to this fact also that if anything further is discovered at a depth it is almost a certainty, as far as man can judge, that there will be an enormous area to be developed and the property will require a huge plant and it will take many years to treat the ores. It is probable that on this mine in the near future that anything between 50 and 100 head of stamps will be required and the employment of labour will be considerable. We might safely say that between 500 and 600 hands will be employed on that mine alone.

Mr. Collier: Not unless it goes down; if it goes down that number will be employed, but at the present time it is all nonsense.

The PREMIER: I would point out to the hon. member that there is every probability of the mine going down. I do not think it is going to stop at 100 feet. That is not usual in the history of gold mining. I remember very well when the Great Boulder mine of which we have all been so proud, was designated "Brookman's paddock."

Mr. Johnson: When it was floated it was not developed to any extent and they did not think it was a good proposition.

The PREMIER: Exactly, but here we have something which has been fairly well developed and has proved itself so far as they have gone to be one of the most valuable shows discovered in Western Australia, or in the world. Besides, this is not the only lease that the railway is going to serve.

Mr. Johnson: Has the Government Geologist stated that it is going to be the greatest mine in the world?

The PREMIER: I do not know whether the Government Geologist has said so; I am giving my opinion, which has been formed from information that I have collected.

Mr. Johnson: From Doolette.

The PREMIER: I have obtained my information from those who have worked on the mine. Hon. members talk about wild cats and of mining swindles in con-

nection with the flotations. I do not care whether it is Doolette or Jones or Johnson or Holman who makes a discovery of this sort, but what I want to know is why members are condemning a discovery and a district and are refusing to take advantage of it because it is Holman or anyone else who owns it? I say that Mr. Doolette and his co-partners have not worked a swindle in connection with the flotation of this mine; indeed, they have done something that redounds to their credit, for, instead of attempting to float it on a fictitious value, they put the value on it that it is estimated to be worth to-day, and they have taken the whole of their interest in shares and have provided for £100,000 to be used as working capital as it may be required.

Mr. Holman: That is a wonderfully clever move.

The PREMIER: At any rate, it is a clean move and will bring more profit than any other. These gentlemen have said "We have pinned our faith to this mine and we will take our interest in shares."

Mr. Holman: Have you any evidence that they will not sell their interest within the next six months?

The PREMIER: They cannot do so. I sincerely hope that their faith in the mine will be justified and that in consequence they will get much more than what its cash value may be to-day. At the present time the promoters' scrip is locked up.

Mr. Collier: It is being traded on the market now.

The PREMIER: No, only 50,000 shares are on the market at present.

Mr. Holman: The promoters' shares are locked up for six months.

The PREMIER: There are only 50,000 shares on the market at present and I am glad to say that I was able to get 100 of them. I only wish it had been 1,000.

Mr. Angwin: Then you cannot vote on this Bill.

The PREMIER: Oh yes I can.

Mr. Holman: Can you tell us how many of the Ministers are interested in it?

The PREMIER: I believe someone mentioned last night that a Minister had an interest worth £20,000 in the mine. I have not the slightest knowledge of what interest Ministers have in these things, I understand, however, that there is a syndicate possessing interests on the goldfields and that this syndicate have an interest in the Bullfinch mines; that is, they have an interest in Mr. Shallcross' share in the Bullfinch.

Mr. Collier: It is a small syndicate with a big interest.

The PREMIER: It is a large syndicate with a small interest.

Mr. Collier: No, the other way about.

The PREMIER: The interest in Mr. Shallcross' share is not great. If it is the honorary Minister to whom the reference was made. I think he is a very fortunate man and I congratulate him upon having an interest in a syndicate which has through their manager, Mr. Shallcross, obtained an interest in the Bullfinch mine.

Mr. Holman: This is the information that should be given to the House.

Mr. Jacoby: It has nothing to do with the House.

The PREMIER: If, as I say, the hon. member referred to Mr. McKenzie, the honorary Minister, who I understand has an interest in this syndicate, I would like to remind the hon. member that the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, which some people take as their gospel and which runs with the Esperance league, has pointed out that the honorary Minister, Mr. McKenzie, the Colonial Secretary, and my colleague the Minister for Mines are all opposed to this railway and that they have done nothing to bring about its construction and that it was the coastal members of the Government who forced their colleagues into constructing it.

Mr. Holman: I never saw the *Kalgoorlie Miner*: I do not know what it said.

The Minister for Works: It appeared in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*.

The PREMIER: I should be very sorry if any man who had the opportunity of improving his financial position did not take advantage of that opportunity when it was offered to him to

invest his money. The more we invest our money in these districts the better it will be for all of us. I want to see local money invested rather than have London capital and London control. Mr. Shallcross, as hon. members know, had a half interest in this discovery originally and got rid of it for £1,000, and lately he bought back a one-sixteenth interest for £10,000. Anyhow, let us encourage our own people to invest capital in our own mines and industries. I am glad indeed if Mr. McKenzie had the necessary capital to back up an industry of this description. In addition to the parent mine, the Bullfinch, there are a number of leases which belong to the same company, 125 acres in all, and all these or some of them are being sold or are being floated into other companies. The Bull Ant has just been floated with a working capital of £75,000. The indications of this mine show that it will require a large plant to be erected on it; at any rate the people have had sufficient confidence to raise £75,000 working capital for the mine.

Mr. Collier: Where was it raised?

The PREMIER: In London. If we cannot get it all here we must take London capital. It is reasonable to suppose that this £75,000 working capital is going to be utilised.

Mr. Collier: They will not want the whole of the £75,000; they may prove the mine by spending £5,000.

Mr. SPEAKER: Hon. members must allow the Premier to continue his speech without so much interruption.

The PREMIER: It is reasonable to suppose that this working capital or the greater portion of it will be spent on this lease. It is reasonable to argue also that we will get a large amount of traffic from this mine; plant and machinery will have to be carried as well as stores, and it is reasonable, I hope, to suppose and anticipate that at any rate some of these mines will be found to be payable propositions after they have been developed. There are no fewer than 60 companies and syndicates float-

ed with an aggregate capital of something like a quarter of a million sterling, in the immediate vicinity of the Bullfinch and between the Bullfinch and out as far as the old mining centre I know so well, the Golden Valley. I admit at once that some of these companies and syndicates will go down. There is no law in the world and no Government and no Parliament or Press that can prevent these people having their gamble in these shows.

Mr. Angwin: The Government should not assist in the gamble.

The PREMIER: The Government are not assisting.

Mr. Angwin: They are with this railway.

The PREMIER: We are assisting in the development of a mineral belt, and if there is to be gambling done in consequence, the Government cannot be blamed. We are aware that in the North there are some shows which have been proved to be barren and that people have lost their money, but the same thing will apply to any industry. Whether it be a business or any other venture, it will be found that one will prove successful and return a handsome profit to those who have invested their capital in it; whilst the one next door might lead those connected with it into the bankruptcy court. It will be found in many industries that the management may be inferior and that for one reason or another people will lose their money. There is very little room for doubt I think that this money, several hundreds of thousands of pounds, will be expended in that district, in following the geological indications of the belt I have referred to. And it must, I think, be conceded that the expenditure of this money will result in the discovery of lodes of a payable grade. I will not go beyond that and say "of a fabulous richness," although this Bullfinch in itself is fabulous. But certainly the expenditure of the capital being raised must prove some lodes which are payable, and, consequently, we will have the erection of treatment plants and the em-

ployment of labour going on in that district to a very considerable extent. Then I may mention that about half way between Southern Cross and Bullfinch we have proved mines, the Corinthian and the Corinthian North.

Mr. Holman: You cannot call them proved.

The PREMIER: They are so far proved that I understand the option of purchase held over the Corinthian North is to be exercised. They have been going on with the development, have seen what is in the mine, and now they say, "It is good enough for us to exercise our option, and complete the purchase." I think it is good enough for the Government to help them with the railway. As I say, I am advised the option is to be exercised on the Corinthian North on January 19th next. It is probably one of the largest low-grade propositions Western Australia has ever seen, and the operations above the 100ft. level have blocked out 300,000 tons of ore of a value of about 32s. per ton. Seeing that this is so, surely we would be foolish if we sat back and said, "We are not going to get the traffic out of this railway." Not only have they got this huge quantity of ore blocked out in the Corinthian North, but I am informed the later developments in the Corinthian go towards showing a very much higher grade of ore.

Mr. Collier: How many shafts are there in the Corinthian North?

The PREMIER: Five. One is down to 120ft., three to 100ft., and the others to a lesser depth. At any rate, I am sure the managers and engineers, Messrs. Bewick, Moreing & Co., on whose advice the option is to be exercised, are pretty cute business and mining men. I think they have satisfied themselves that they have a fair business proposition, something they can safely advise investors to place capital in.

Mr. Holman: The prospects at the Ora Banda are just as good as at the Corinthian, but they cannot even get water there.

The PREMIER: It is a sound argument that because a certain centre has not been



served expeditiously in the past we should perpetuate the mistake elsewhere, and allow outback centres at which there is an immense amount of wealth to be produced to be hampered for want of communication? Are we to go on perpetuating the mistake for ever?

Mr. Holman: In the one case it is a big company, and in the other a number of mere prospectors.

The PREMIER: However that may be, my object is that the State shall derive a benefit. I do not care twopence about the individual. When I see a good business proposition, when I know that, if I had the chance to build the railway privately I would build it to-morrow and make a good thing out of it, I would not be worthy of my position if I did not seize the opportunity for the State's benefit. The Corinthian mine, which has not been so energetically developed as the Corinthian North, shows good indications, and the work done, particularly cross-cutting and driving at the 50ft. and 100ft. levels, discloses that the mine possesses ore reserves almost equal to those on the Corinthian North. A company has been formed in London for the purpose of purchasing this property also, and a sum of £25,000 is to be paid for it. The business will probably be completed within a short time, and operations will be started on this proposition forthwith.

Mr. Collier: Has this information been supplied by officers of the department or by the owners?

The PREMIER: This is outside information. The Mines Department knows nothing about the selling of properties.

Mr. Collier: But as to the development of the mines?

The PREMIER: No, this information is supplied by those best in a position to know, by the owners, and the Minister for Mines tells me the development is exactly as I have stated.

Mr. Holman: It is a pity he did not tell us all about it when he spoke on the second reading.

The PREMIER: I am satisfied the building of the line will open up a very big district, and that it is a district which will carry a considerable population. I

know of my own personal knowledge that the Golden Valley beyond is a district well worth developing. It has been prospected and worked in the early days—

Mr. Collier: You were one of the pioneers there I think.

The PREMIER: I worked the Corinthian mine for 18 months or two years.

Mr. Holman: And knocked the end out of it.

The PREMIER: It knocked the end out of me. We were working on 17dwts. stuff and produced something like 2,000 tons. In addition to that we crushed 500 tons from the Waterhall, and it gave a return of 574 ounces. However, we had not the capital, and I could not get it. I tried to get £20,000 in order to go right down, but I failed in getting that capital, and, consequently, I had to leave the proposition alone and let someone else take it up. The district, to a great extent, became deserted owing to discoveries elsewhere attracting people in other directions. There was Cue, there was Kalgoorlie and there were Morgans and other places all drawing miners away from the Golden Valley district, and ultimately it closed down, and for many years the whole place was lying idle. I believe prospectors have been specking around that part off and on for the whole of the 17 years that have passed. Some of them did well, and others very badly indeed. It is only the systematic prospecting done by Mr. Jones, representing Mr. Doolette and his friends, that has eventually brought them this rich reward for their persistent efforts. I want to point out that there has been a large number of leases granted and applications have been put in for many more. To the north of Bullfinch, and including Golden Valley, 188 applications have been made for leases embracing over 4,000 acres, and in the vicinity of Golden Valley 51 applications for 976 acres have been made. Exclusive of the Golden Valley group of leases, there are other groups such as Rowan's, the Hungarian, Hughes's Find, and Giles's Find. Gold has been found at several of these groups. Of course I admit very little development has been done so far, and, I suppose, we have not

got any very authentic information seeing that there has not been time to allow of official inspection and report.

Mr. Holman: It looks a bit sick in to-day's paper.

The PREMIER: Anyhow, indications, so far as Golden Valley is concerned, have been good enough to warrant the Government in assisting to erect a five-head mill at that place, and although it was necessary until recently to cart water for all purposes, 357 tons have been crushed for 303 ounces of gold. These crushings were from eight different shows and I think, taking everything into consideration, we might be satisfied that in this district, this belt, running from Southern Cross to the Golden Valley, and, I hope, even further North, we have one of the richest deposits Western Australia has ever seen. I hope, and I anticipate it will extend much further than the present indications go. I think we may hope, that with the assistance of the well which have been put down and are being put down by the Mines Department, we shall get, here and there, very payable centres right through to Youanme, and probably beyond that place. Certainly, as a railway proposition, I believe it is one of the most promising any Government could introduce into Parliament; because we have not only got the outward freightage—the hon. member treated with scorn the idea that we would get anything back from the mine in the way of carriage—but we have this back traffic of ore until they get their plant. They are to-day sending large quantities of ore for treatment to Kalgoorlie, and the sooner we build our line the sooner we will get that traffic. And surely it is reasonable for the Government to have confidence when we find the outside people responding so enthusiastically at the sale of town blocks. For some 60 blocks put up we obtained over £25,000 as purchase money.

Mr. Holman: You got 10 per cent. of it.

The PREMIER: We have 10 per cent. deposit, and another payment due in January. The very fact that people are prepared to pay those prices must be

taken into consideration as evidence that they, at any rate, as business men who are going to engage in business and trade at that centre, have confidence in its permanency.

Mr. Angwin: They might have been led away by this proposal.

The PREMIER: No. Would the hon. member suggest we should hold back for fear the district does not turn out well? Did we hold back in the case of Meekatharra, and in the case of Sandstone?

Mr. Holman: It took four years to get it.

The PREMIER: It took too long, I admit, and we are not going to repeat the mistake. I remember well when the Forrest Government passed the measure to construct a railway from Northam to Southern Cross, a distance of 175 miles. I had the contract for supplying sleepers for that railway, and I know there was very little inducement, very little to warrant its construction. However, it turned out right; the railway had not reached Southern Cross before Coolgardie was discovered. Away they went straight on with the line to Coolgardie, and before Coolgardie was reached Kalgoorlie was discovered, whereupon the line followed up. Surely we are entitled to take the same active steps as were taken in the early days. And are we not better justified in asking the House to build 22 miles of a line than to build these other hundreds of miles to Norseman and Sandstone and Marble Bar? Certainly there is here far more to show for it.

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

The PREMIER: I was emphasising the fact that the proposal to construct this railway is, to my mind, one of the best commercial propositions that has been put before this House of recent years, and I feel satisfied that if hon. members will agree to the passage of this measure we will be able to get the construction of the railway put in hand forthwith, and within three months we will have that line completed and carrying traffic to the gold-fields north of Southern Cross. The estimate which has been made by the depart-

ment is, as hon. members will see, a very conservative one. Although it is not £50,000, as mentioned by the member for Albany, from the figures that the Minister for Works gave to the House hon. members will see that the engineers are certainly not under-estimating the cost of this line. They have made a very safe estimate so far as they are concerned, and I hope when the line is constructed we will find that it has been done for a considerably less cost than £40,000. I can see items in this estimate which I think can be reduced, for I see no necessity for making an expensive railway. What is wanted is a line put down quickly and in a sufficiently substantial manner to carry the traffic; we do not want expensive station buildings, nor do we want a large amount of ballasting. We want a line put down in the same manner as the agricultural spur lines have been put down, merely sufficiently substantial to carry the traffic. The matter of the traffic is one which I think the House may feel assured will very quickly be established. I have mentioned that we will receive certain back traffic in the form of ore from the Bullfinch mine itself, which will be sent to Southern Cross, and thence to Kalgoorlie for treatment. We will get that as the construction of the railway goes on, and will certainly get what we have never been able to get yet, namely, the carriage of building material to the township, which is bound to be constructed very quickly on the land which has recently been subdivided and sold.

Mr. Angwin: A very small quantity.

Mr. Horan: No; a large quantity.

The PREMIER: A large quantity of timber and galvanised iron must of necessity be taken up on that line. The mere fact that people have paid prices of £600 and £700 for town allotments goes to show that they have confidence and are going to establish business buildings on that townsite.

Mr. Collier: The same price was paid for lots on goldfields now dead.

The PREMIER: It stands to reason that people who are engaged in mining

operations on the new field will also require material.

Mr. Taylor: Your revenue for the first 18 months should nearly construct the line.

The PREMIER: I am perfectly satisfied that it will do so. I would not hesitate a moment, if I was outside this House and the Government would grant me the power, to construct a railway myself privately and commence it right away. It is a good business risk which has every possibility of turning out a sound paying proposition. The very fact that people have paid over £25,000 for town lots shows what we may expect.

Mr. Collier: Only £2,500 of it has yet been paid.

The PREMIER: That is only one sale, but I am satisfied that the next will be also successful. We may not get the same prices, but we will find plenty of buyers.

Mr. Collier: Not at that price.

The PREMIER: Well, at a price very near to it. All this goes to show that the public outside—the people who know the value of the discovery and the value of the operations that have been going on for some time past, and the prospects for the future—have confidence in the district and the discoveries which have been made there.

Mr. Angwin: I suppose your Inspector of Mines would know?

The PREMIER: Yes; he would.

Mr. Angwin: Then why did he advise the Minister differently?

The PREMIER: When? I know that the Chief Inspector of Engineering Surveys had no hesitation in recommending that the work should be undertaken forthwith.

Mr. Collier: What does he know about it?

The PREMIER: I would be surprised if he did not know more than members of this House in regard to this matter: it is his business.

Mr. Collier: What! a railway surveyor?

The PREMIER: Yes; certainly. It is his business training.

Mr. Collier: His business training to know the value of a goldfield?

The PREMIER: It is his business training to know the traffic that will probably come from the centre and to advise the Government as to the construction of the line. His opinion is worthy of consideration. The Government want to undertake this line right away and catch the early traffic from the jump. They propose to make the line pay and to charge rates which will ensure it paying, and the people are quite prepared to pay those rates. There is also the prospect of trade in sandalwood at which some hon. members have laughed.

Mr. HURAN: One hundred thousand tons, I am assured.

The PREMIER: It is a well known fact that there are large areas of sandalwood at Golden Valley and beyond. Sandalwood was carted from that district many years ago into Northam in small quantities, but the fact of the railway being constructed there will surely give an impetus to that traffic. I hope that we as legislators will always have confidence in our own country, and that we shall not hesitate, as we have not hesitated in the past to open up our agricultural districts. As we have not hesitated to pledge the credit of this country to raise the necessary funds for the construction of railways to serve those people settled on our lands, so we shall not hesitate also to open up our mineral areas. When fortune has favoured us to this extent that we have mines such as I have described, known to possess great values, and giving excellent prospects of a large employment of labour, we shall not hesitate to spend the necessary money, of course in the most economical manner, in providing those railway facilities that mean so much for such centres. In doing this we shall be only carrying out a duty which the people of Western Australia expect us to perform faithfully and without hesitation. I have no doubt about this proposal, and I hope that the House will pass the measure, and not say that the Government are trying to rush this line through. I say we are not rushing it through, but in pushing on with it promptly we are doing so in the interests of the State and not in the interests of any individual. I care

not who owns the mine, I care not who has money invested in it; the more of our local people who are interested in that district the better I shall be pleased. I have very much pleasure in supporting the motion for the second reading of this measure, and I hope that it will be carried with an almost unanimous vote.

Mr. HEITMANN: And a good many more.

The PREMIER: Yes, I hope so.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet): No matter what the Premier may say to the contrary, there is an inclination on the part of the Government to rush any measure through the House, whether it be a railway Bill or any other measure. The Premier stated that if the line was pushed through it was in the interests of the country. Surely the country does not demand that this Bill is such an urgent matter that it should be pushed through on the very night that it was introduced, or at any rate the very night on which the first opportunity was given to discuss it.

The Premier: Are you going to oppose it?

Mr. TROY: Had it not been for the remarks made by the Premier to-night, when he made numerous assertions regarding the justification for building this railway, we would not have heard one word from the Government side of the House which would lead us to vote for the Bill, because the Minister for Works when he introduced it made a very dreary, weary, and lackadaisical speech.

The Premier: A very excellent speech it was.

Mr. TROY: The Minister said, "Here is the Bill," and in a very reluctant and unwilling manner gave us a small amount of information.

The Minister for Works: We are not all as able as you are.

Mr. TROY: At any rate if the Minister has not the ability he should have some degree of energy. He told us some extraordinary things when he introduced the Bill. He told us it was better to build a railway at £40,000, than to build a road costing £26,000. Can the Minister tell us any 21 miles of road that has cost £26,000 on the fields or elsewhere? There

have been numerous discoveries on the goldfields, and many of them have supported much larger populations than is now to be found at the Bullfinch, and I guarantee that not £5,000 has been spent on any of the roads to those fields. Take Sandstone which was supporting a population when the rush took place of nearly £3,000 people. All the produce had to be carried over 100 miles, and all the time the district was waiting for a railway the Government did not spend a thousand pounds on the road. Yet we are told the Bullfinch is of so much importance that £26,000 would need to be spent on building a road. If that is likely then I say by all means spend £40,000 on building the railway. The Premier and his colleagues have been telling the country that they deprecate a boom at Bullfinch, that they want the place developed on legitimate lines, that they want the field to prove itself. Yet while deprecating a boom they have been advertising it and encouraging it. They have surveyed a townsite, and engaged a special train for the sale of the blocks, and promised water supplies which I do not object to. Then, when they hold a sale of the township blocks, they introduced a Bill for the purpose of building a railway there. The Premier says there is no doubt that many of the mines surrounding the Bullfinch will be unpayable mines, yet he does not hesitate to mislead the people by the introduction of this Bill, to mislead them as to the field being probably better than it really is. He leads the people to believe that the Government have so much faith in the field, and in every mine there, that they are building this railway; and naturally if the Government have confidence no one would go wrong in following them. I admit the Bullfinch is a very good mine so far as I can learn, and I hope it will turn out the very best mine in the State, but the Minister makes some very extraordinary comparisons when he says that a railway is more justified to Bullfinch than was the railway to Black Range.

The Premier: It is 22 miles against 100.

Mr. TROY: If the Premier wants to encourage mining development, he will not

encourage it to the same extent by building a railway to serve the richest proposition in Western Australia as he would by building a railway 100 miles to serve mines not so rich, and which cannot pay the cost of carting as the Bullfinch can. We are told the Bullfinch gives returns in some cases of 20ozs. to the ton. It is the richest mine in Western Australia, yet we are told the case is so urgent that the Government must build a railway to develop this mine. In the Black Range case it was entirely different. There, we have not the richest mines in Western Australia. The Premier said there were only two mines there. There are four good mines, and there are numbers of minds held by prospectors.

The Premier: I only saw two when I opened the railway.

Mr. TROY: The Premier was so busy pluming himself like a bird that he did not look around the district. When he was at Sandstone there were four mines, but the Premier did not see them.

Mr. Scaddan: How many mines?

Mr. TROY: Four mines manned and employing men. This field had to struggle on for nearly four years before it got railway communication.

The Premier: We saved it for you.

Mr. Horan: Why did you not get it?

Mr. TROY: We cannot all be Horans. We do our best, but there are limits to our capacity. I hold that if the mining industry is to be developed it can be best developed by water supplies, batteries, and railways. I have given my support to every measure introduced for the benefit of the industry. I am not opposing the Bullfinch railway, but there are dozens of other communities in the State more entitled to railway communication than the Bullfinch area, localities where the ore is not of that high-grade character that it is in the Bullfinch area. For instance Lawlers has had to struggle nine or ten years without a railway, and its development has been severely handicapped, yet the Premier would lead us to believe by his arguments that it is far more advisable and justifiable to build a railway to Bullfinch where they have only twenty miles to cart from a high-grade proposition, than to build a line to Lawlers where

there is a large number of low-grade propositions which cannot be developed without a railway.

Mr. Gourley: And the field has produced over three million pounds worth of gold.

Mr. TROY: Yes, Lawlers has produced over three million pounds worth of gold. But the Premier's argument is that we can best develop the industry by building railways to mines which are very rich, and which have only the disadvantage of a short road to cart over, in preference to building lines to localities further out which have been handicapped for years by high rates and heavy cartage charges.

The Premier: According to your argument you would not have built the line to Kalgoorlie.

Mr. TROY: That line was not built until the district had improved very considerably. I am not objecting to the line to Bullfinch; I am merely taking exception to many of the remarks of the Premier when he spoke in support of it. He said also that the Corinthian mine was one which demanded a railway; but, strange to say there was no effort made to give the Corinthian mine a railway until the Bullfinch was discovered. In fact I find that the Premier made no reference to it in his Budget speech.

Mr. Horan: I drew attention to it 12 months ago in the House.

Mr. TROY: There you are again. I admit that you have done more than most of us. The Corinthian mine is only eight miles from Southern Cross, and it is a poor proposition indeed which will not stand the cost of carting eight miles.

Mr. Horan: It is 11 miles, and it is an excellent proposition.

Mr. TROY: I believe it is an excellent proposition. Bewick, Moreing & Co. would not have taken over the mine unless there was some good reason for doing so. To-day mines are not taken over to the same extent as they were years ago, unless of course we exempt mines exclusively in the Bullfinch area which have been floated within the last two or three weeks. But, if the Corinthian is a good mine, as I believe it is, it would be developed easily enough

without a railway. So we can pass over the Corinthian mine in connection with this railway because the railway would not have been built on that justification.

The Premier: We pass it with the railway.

Mr. TROY: It is an extraordinary thing that such haste is made by the Government in constructing this line, particularly when the Minister for Mines only a few weeks ago uttered a few words of caution in regard to the district.

Mr. Collier: Only a week ago.

Mr. TROY: The Minister said the railway could very well stand over until more development work had been done.

The Minister for Mines: I explained that last night.

Mr. TROY: Mining representative as I am, and one who has an undoubted desire to develop the mining industry, I agree with the Minister in that statement. I think it is only a fair thing that we should wait a few months at any rate in order to satisfy ourselves before we spend a large sum of money upon the line. The Premier knows perfectly well that outside the Bullfinch there is no development work done on any of the leases.

The Premier: Oh yes, there is!

Mr. Horan: The hon. member is not right.

Mr. TROY: The Minister for Mines made the statement, if he was reported correctly, that no development work was done except on the Bullfinch.

The Minister for Mines: The principal development work.

Mr. TROY: Even the Southern Cross newspaper has done its utmost to expose the hoodling being carried on, and the desire to float mines without there being any legitimate reason for it. Many people have taken up areas there and have not worked them; they are only holding the areas for the purpose of floating them; and numbers of syndicates hold land there which no one would be justified in investing in because there is no development done to warrant investment in them. The construction of this railway at once will undoubtedly lead

to the belief that the Government are perfectly satisfied in regard to these properties being decent properties, and worthy of investment in. That is the only thing I fear, that there is a possibility of misleading investors; and the action of the Government in selling town blocks at inflated prices and booming the field, unless the field turns out well—and no one knows whether it will or not, because it is all speculation—must undoubtedly prove to the disadvantage of the State later on.

The Premier: Would you have refused the prices the people offered for the land?

Mr. TROY: I will answer that by saying that I would not give the prices the people paid for the land there.

The Premier: You would have refused them?

Mr. TROY: I would not give the prices which the people gave for the land there. I would prefer to give £300 for a town block at Youanme than £700 for a block at Bullfinch.

Mr. Horan: Of course you would; it is in your own electorate.

Mr. TROY: No, I have this to guide me. I know that at Youanme there is a big lode developed and proved to a depth of 200 feet, and my experience in goldmining gives me some guide as to where I would invest.

The Premier: It is a free country; you can invest where you like.

Mr. TROY: But I disagree with the Government with regard to the inflated values.

The Premier: We did not inflate the values. If the values were inflated the buyers were responsible.

Mr. Scaddan: You introduced the Bill the day before the sale.

Mr. TROY: I shall not oppose the Bill to construct the railway, although I feel there is no necessity for this great haste. There may be something in the Premier's contention that the Government will get the profit for all goods and machinery carted there, but I do not think that any person will erect large buildings there until such time as

they are assured that the field is going to be a permanent one.

Mr. Horan: The Western Australian Bank started operations there to-day.

Mr. TROY: I have seen banks opened in hessian humpies. I will admit that after all probably the speculation may be a reasonable one, and the risk worth taking. It is only 20 miles of railway, and, as the Minister who introduced the Bill said, if it turns out badly he can pull up the rails. At the same time I want to point out there are other places in this State which are more entitled to railway facilities. Wiluna and Lawlers are two goldfields that are entitled to railway facilities, and in these localities the people are labouring under great disadvantages and hardships; they have struggled for years and yet the Government, who are prepared to support a district when there is a boom, have been absolutely deaf to their requests for railway communication.

The Premier: What about Sandstone and Norseman, was there a boom at those places when the railways were built?

Mr. TROY: Sandstone is a district which demanded a railway. Before the railway was constructed to Sandstone the field had turned out no less than three-quarters of a million pounds worth of gold, and in this connection I want to refute the statement made by the Premier that the place has boomed and has gone down again.

The Premier: I did not say that.

Mr. TROY: There has been permanent progress at Sandstone ever since the place has been discovered. The population is far greater now than it was at any previous time in the history of the field, and mining is in a sounder condition. I can only deplore the fact that while the Government are so willing to lend their aid in the direction of building a railway such as this one, the mining industry is not being encouraged as it should be encouraged in the back country. I am willing to take the risk in connection with this railway, at the same time it may turn out a good thing, and if the construction of the railway line further north is warranted we

should do that and not wait until a boom sets in. It may go through to Youanme some day, but I am not giving that possibility any consideration just now because Youanme is only 30 miles from the railway at the present time. But there is a large area of country there which might be developed, and the development of which might be assisted by the Government, but this will not be done until a boom sets in, when the Government will rush in in hot haste and take the credit for it.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): I do not know that I should have had any remarks to pass with regard to the construction of this railway because on every occasion when any railway Bill has been introduced to the House I have always supported it, in fact the only complaint I have had to make has been because the Ministry have not gone ahead quickly enough. I must say, however, with regard to this proposed railway that I regret very much that the Government did not take the advice given by the Minister for Mines. We cannot get away from the fact that two weeks ago the Minister for Mines, accompanied by some of his officers, visited this field, and after due inspection he stated that he was of opinion that the construction of the railway could await the further development of the mines, and that Cabinet should wait before embarking on a railway policy to this centre.

The Minister for Mines: By way of explanation may I point out at this stage that last night I thought I made the position clear with regard to my statement at Southern Cross a few days ago. I spoke definitely at Southern Cross with regard to the water supply, but with regard to the railway I said that the people would have to push on with developmental work in order to enable us to provide railway communication to the field. Hon. members can recognise that this was a Cabinet matter and that all I could say at Southern Cross was very little indeed, and that was what I pointed out to the people of Southern Cross.

Mr. ANGWIN: I think it is due to us that the Minister should say whether or

not he was misreported. If the Minister was misreported of course it makes a great difference, but I think even the Minister himself will realise that when he is away on an official visit, accompanied by his officers, any statements he may make directly after such a visit should carry a certain amount of weight with his colleagues in Cabinet.

The Minister for Mines: You must understand this is entirely a Cabinet matter.

Mr. ANGWIN: I admit that while it is a Cabinet matter we cannot get away from the fact that the Minister for Mines is in charge of the Mines Department, and before his colleagues would consider a proposal for the construction of the railway at a cost of £46,000, due weight should be given to the advice tendered to Cabinet by the Mines Department. The Premier, in dealing with this question, referred to the action in the past of continuing the railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie. He first referred to the construction of the railway from Northam to Southern Cross; at the present time, however, we must look at things from a different point of view. At that time Southern Cross was almost exiled from any part of the State and there were possibilities of development there; it was a long distance to carry material for the purpose of assisting mining development, but in the present case we have, according to reports, a mine which is one of the wonders of the world, and it is situated only 20 miles from the railway, and out of the handsome returns which are resulting from operations at the present time they could easily afford to pay the cost of carting to the nearest railway point, at any rate until further development has taken place. I maintain, as other members have done, that the Government in this instance will be the means of removing to a large extent that word of caution which has been sent to various parts already by the words of the Minister for Mines, and also the member for Yilgarn, with regard to the flotation of what are commonly called "wild cats." These members' advised that the people should exercise extreme caution before venturing their money into this field.



The Minister for Mines: Undeveloped properties where in many instances they have not even a title.

Mr. ANGWIN: I want to say there could be nothing brought about by any person on that field, or in any part of the world, that would have a greater tendency to attract those who speculated in mining, than the action of the Government in bringing this Bill forward at such an early stage. The Minister for Mines stated that it was a matter which required due consideration and that it was too early for the Government to start building a railway in that centre, and I think that Minister's advice was sound, and if the Cabinet could not agree to that advice I think it is the duty of members to take advice in that direction, and see that the Bullfinch mine is properly developed before any expenditure of money takes place in the direction proposed by the Government. Hon. members have stated that they are not going to vote against the second reading, but if a division is taken I am going to vote against it because I believe it will have a great tendency to do this country far more harm than good. We cannot get away from the fact that Western Australia for some considerable time has been suffering owing to various mining proposals having been placed on the market, proposals which really did not exist, and the same thing is likely to apply here owing to the action of the Government with regard to the railway. The Premier referred to the haste which was taken in connection with the construction of the railway to Coolgardie. If I remember rightly, Coolgardie was discovered somewhere about September, 1892, and I find that the Bill for the construction of the railway from Southern Cross was read a first time in the Assembly on the 7th November, 1894, two years after. The same haste was not exercised at that time as is the case now. I trust that hon. members will realise there is a possibility, if they agree to the construction of this railway, of doing an injury to the State. They should accept the counsel and the good advice offered by the Minister for Mines, and ask the Government to defer the construction of the line.

Mr. Horan: May I be permitted to say just now by way of explanation that what the Minister for Mines has told the House with regard to his statement at Southern Cross is quite true. Very soon after this statement was made I telegraphed to Perth and made a request for the supply of 50 tanks, and the telegram I received in reply referred to the fact that Cabinet had decided to build this railway.

Mr. Collier: What has that to do with the remarks made by the Minister for Mines at Southern Cross?

Mr. KEENAN (Kalgoorlie): If I recorded a vote on this Bill without raising any objection to the very inadequate investigations made as to the merits of the different mines, I feel I should be handicapped in opposing any other Bill in like circumstances. Personally I believe there is a possibility of a great mining field at Bullfinch; but we have nothing before the House in any concrete form to show that possibility. There is no record to show that anything more has taken place than the discovery of a single mine on a single lease. All the rest is purely speculative. And we must bear in mind that the present position in regard to the Bullfinch stocks is a purely artificial one, that there has been on the part of the newspapers of the State an almost hysterical attitude in regard to these stocks. And having a personal acquaintance with a number of practical mining men of repute I have no hesitation in saying that many of the reports in the Press upon which people will be induced to invest are reports to which no weight at all should be attached. Nevertheless, being placed in a most difficult position by the action of the Government, I find I have to determine whether I shall vote for the Bill or against it. I cannot reconcile myself to voting against the Bill merely because it has been prematurely introduced. It is merely a matter of voting on what we hope exists. I hope we are to have a great goldfield at Bullfinch and, further than that, I believe we shall have it; but there is nothing before the House to show the possibilities. If we were to go upon the speech made by the Minister

in introducing the measure the Bill would be summarily rejected; because in all my experience I have never heard weaker reasons for the passing of any measure, indeed they were quite ridiculous to anyone with goldfields experience. For instance, we were told that the railway was to be a substitute for a macadamised road. Such a road does not exist in any part of the goldfields, except at Kalgoorlie and Boulder. And I call to mind the fact that the mines in Boulder and Kalgoorlie had become great producers before a single yard of macadamised road was constructed or before the railway was put through. However, one has to cast his vote on the strength of that which he hopes and is inclined to believe exists. Upon that reason, however inadequate it is, I have on this occasion to undertake the duty of recording my vote. I do so with a great deal of reluctance. I would have much preferred that before the Bill was brought down the Mines Department had sent responsible officers to the field and procured accurate information to guide the House. I feel sure the information so produced would have warranted the construction of the line—at least I feel sure in the sense that one cannot get away from the belief that it would have warranted the line. But we are asked to act without the information we require. I can only regret the Minister for Mines did not see that it was his duty to produce that information.

Mr. HARPER (Beverly): I intend to support the Bill, for I have just as much faith in the goldfields as hon. members opposite. I have put my money into the goldfields and have a pretty large large interest in some of them.

Mr. Holman: So you ought to have.

Mr. HARPER: I have a large interest in the hon. member's district, for I put £10,000 into the Koh-i-noor South and I have let it on tribute. The tributers, I am pleased to say, are getting on very well.

Mr. Scaddan: You must be living on the interest.

Mr. HARPER: I am getting 5 per cent. royalty on that tribute and I have let it for six months. What I want to

point out is that we have not had the trouble there which I have heard mentioned from hon. members on that (Opposition) side of the House. However, I support the Bill because without the railway it will be necessary to make a road through what is really a bad country for road making. There is a great deal of lake country and flat salmon gum stretches, and it certainly would be a very bad road proposition. The railway will obviate all that, and the Government will have the advantage of carrying the machinery necessary for the mining operations. The first equipment of a mine entails much more freight than is subsequently provided. With regard to the Sandstone railway, the Government constructed that line after the machinery had been erected. If the railway had been constructed before the erection of the mining machinery we would have derived a great deal of revenue from its carriage. This Bullfinch railway is only a short line of 20 miles and we have, half way along the distance, the Corinthian leases. From information received I have no doubt the Corinthian leases will require a large plant and will employ a large number of men for a considerable time to come; and that, it must be remembered, is of more importance to the railway, and, in point of view of employment, to the State than the Bullfinch itself. I would not support the railway to Bullfinch were it not that we have these two mines half way which I am quite confident will employ a large number of people.

Mr. Scaddan: Will they be there in six years' time.

Mr. HARPER: I hope so, and indeed I hope they will be there for many more years. I am glad, indeed, this Bullfinch discovery has been made, and I think everyone both in and out of the House ought to be very grateful to the prospectors of that show. A great deal has been said about a member of the Government having a large interest in it. As a matter of fact it is but a very small interest. They formed a company called the Gold Industry of Western Australia. Mr. Shallcross sold out for a small sum on behalf of that syndicate and after-

wards repurchased a one-sixteenth share for £10,000 and subsequently another one-sixteenth.

Mr. Angwin: How many shares?

Mr. HARPER: Not many, seeing that it was only an eighth in all. The railway I think is warranted. I admit it has been pushed on perhaps a little faster than most railways.

Mr. Holman: A little faster?

Mr. HARPER: Well, a great deal faster. The hon. member said the other night that he had supported the Norseman railway. Well, I say it will be a sad thing for Western Australia if this railway does not pay better than the Norseman line. The Norseman railway has a length of 116 miles, and the population there is only 1,200.

Mr. Angwin: It is paying.

Mr. HARPER: No, it is showing a loss. The revenue during the last six months was £7,000, while the upkeep and maintenance amounted to £5,200, leaving only £1,800 to pay interest on £196,000, and, therefore, showing a loss of about £4,000 a year without providing anything for sinking fund or depreciation. These figures are absolutely correct, and the papers are on the Table to-day if hon. members wish to verify them. That is a very high price to pay for so small a population.

Mr. Holman: The Dundas field has returned £60,000 more than the whole of Yilgarn.

Mr. HARPER: It does not matter much how much it has returned; that is the population, and these are the returns from the railway, and I do not think any other Government in Australia would have built that Norseman line. The same thing applies to the Sandstone and the Pilbara railways. I will not say these railways are not wanted, but there are other parts of Western Australia more deserving of railways and in which railways would have paid better. The Sandstone railway has been fortunate in the discovery of Youanme. Without this that line would have been just as big a failure as the Norseman railway.

Mr. Troy: I remember you got only two votes at Sandstone.

Mr. HARPER: It has just been brought under my notice by the Minister for Mines that the loss on the Norseman line for last year was £1,913 after paying interest. But that does not make allowance for the firewood. Of that revenue £3,500 was derived from the carriage of fuel. The Norseman railway does not present half as good a case as this railway under consideration to-night. I have heard a good deal with regard to speculation from hon. members on the Opposition side of the House and a great deal about boodlers. It seems to me that if anyone puts his money into a mine he is a boodler and cannot run straight, but must take somebody down. In my opinion the question of mining speculation ought to be left to those who sell. If people want to get in let them do so. I think sufficient hints were thrown out to the public by the member for Yilgarn and by the Minister for Mines. If the statements made by these gentlemen are not regarded with any respect, well, I say, let the public have a go at it, because nothing will stop them. It is not altogether an unmixed blessing, this gambling element in mining, because even the prospector is a speculator.

Mr. O'Loughlen: So is the wheat grower.

Mr. HARPER: But not in the same sense. A man embarks in mining to make a big haul or to go down. For that reason it must always be regarded as speculative, and I do not think any Government can direct the people as to how they shall speculate or invest their money. I remember that very long ago when I was managing a mine at Southern Cross, it was regarded as the wildest scheme imaginable, especially by the *Bulletin* and other papers in the East.

Mr. Scaddan: Did you not manage the Golden Pole as well?

Mr. HARPER: I did manage four mines in Western Australia.

Mr. Scaddan: Are they still in existence?

Mr. HARPER: They have gone the way of others. I think the Fraser's mine is in existence; in fact, they are all in existence, but in a very poor way.

However, that is what will happen to any mine in the world. Everyone knows that mining is only a very temporary industry at any time. It did not want any very great expert to forecast what was going to happen to most of the mines in Western Australia away from the Kalgoorlie belt.

Mr. Horan: You made a forecast yourself lately.

Mr. HARPER: I made a forecast 12 or 13 years ago, and my opinion has not been altered with regard to the goldfields of Western Australia. What I said a few months ago was more than anything with the object of letting labour members know that they should be reasonable in their demands for the reason that the industry could only afford to pay certain rates, and could only comply with certain conditions.

Member: Do you think that the wages should be reduced?

Mr. HARPER: It is not so much that the mining people at Kalgoorlie would take exception to the wages, as it is that miners in other parts would follow the example, and everyone knows that that would not be fair to the poorer mines. Members on the Opposition side can laugh, because they do not know any more about the matter than, probably, the papers before them. Mines can only afford to pay a certain amount, and if you impose restrictive conditions, which the industry is not capable of bearing, you will certainly reduce employment.

Mr. Holman: It would be very harsh on a 12-ounce proposition.

Mr. HARPER: I am not speaking of exceptions; I am speaking of mines like the Corinthian, the Corinthian North, Frasers, and some mines to the south. When I went to Southern Cross in 1892, and we had to cart material from York, the surface men were getting 8s. 4d. and miners 9s. 6d., and I paid 10s. at Frasers, but to-day they are getting 11s.

Mr. Holman: If they worked for nothing they could not make the Golden Pole pay, could they?

Mr. HARPER: They worked for 12s. 6d. I do not suppose the Golden Pole will pay now. I am speaking in this way

because I think it is just as much in the interests of the working population, more particularly on the goldfields, that they should be reasonable in their demands, so that they can keep the industry going and not close it down. If people have to leave Kalgoorlie they will have to find employment somewhere else.

Mr. Holman: Can you point to one instance where an increase of wages has closed a mine down?

Mr. HARPER: Everyone knows the higher the wages you pay the fewer the men you can employ; 2s. per day will probably make the difference between a mine paying and not paying.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If a mine would not otherwise pay would you reduce wages?

Mr. HARPER: It is not so much the wages as the other conditions. The conditions are so vastly different to what they were 12 or 15 years ago. Nowadays you have to keep a solicitor on the mine in order to conform to the Mines Regulation Act, and also you have to keep a large clerical staff. These conditions work very hard on a small mine, and they should be taken into consideration by members on the Opposition side as much as by members on this side, in order to keep the industry going. There should be a great deal done to reduce the cost of living, but no one seems to take that into account.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Give us your scheme.

Mr. HARPER: There could be co-operative parties if they liked to take an interest to get cheap meat and cheap bread. Then everybody knows that shilling drinks on the goldfields are an exorbitant cost.

Mr. SPEAKER: I wish to call the attention of the hon. member to the fact that the question before the House is the second reading of the Bullfinch railway.

Mr. HARPER: I believe this railway will be a success, and I intend to support the Bill.

Mr. JOHNSON (Guildford): I do not desire to take up much time, but, on the other hand, I do not desire to give a silent vote on this question. I agree with the hon. members who have stated that there is not sufficient data given to the House to justify the construction of this railway.

When the Minister was introducing the Bill he told us that Mr. Muir had visited the district, and as a result of that visit Mr. Muir had submitted a certain report. But I want to point out that Mr. Muir's report is of no value in regard to the possibility of this line becoming a payable proposition. Mr. Muir, it is true, is capable of giving an estimate of the cost of the line, but outside of that his report has no value whatever, and that is shown by the nature of that report, when that gentleman went into details in attempting to emphasise the advisability of the construction. What I would like to have, and what the country is justified in asking for, is a report from the Government Geologist, or the State Mining Engineer. I want the Minister to explain how it is that neither of these competent officers, gentlemen who are capable of giving a report as to the possibility of this particular field, has visited the locality and given the House the advantage of his knowledge.

The Minister for Mines: You should read the paper; if you did you would have seen the report.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am not supposed to read the papers. I am supposed to have expert information placed before me in support of the Bill in this House.

The Minister for Mines: The State Mining Engineer is still in London.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am more concerned about the geologist than I am about the State Mining Engineer, and I would place more reliance on a report by Mr. Gibb-Maitland than on any by the State Mining Engineer.

Mr. Angwin: The Government Geologist was there when the Minister visited the field and stated that the railway would have to wait.

Mr. JOHNSON: Possibly that was the cause of the Minister's cautious remarks when speaking in regard to railway communication. The Minister, on that occasion, said what was absolutely correct, that the first essential in a discovery of this description is water, and I commend the Minister for his prompt action in that direction. I also commend him for his remarks when he said that he wanted to see more development done before the

Government could think of giving railway communication. The grievance I have is, that without further development, or greater information from those whose evidence we should take as reliable, the Minister has changed his view and is recommending to this Chamber the construction of that railway. What evidence have we got as to the possibilities of this field? It is true that most of the authorities who have visited the field have stated that the Bullfinch mine has great possibilities, but, after all, the main evidence is from Mr. Doolette, who is largely interested in this mine. And I want to pay a tribute to Mr. Doolette's business capacity. He is no doubt working this proposition on very sound lines; he commenced well, and he has been going well ever since. There is no doubt that Mr. Doolette was wise in buying a number of blocks on the townsite and paying the money he did for them. It was equally wise on Mr. Doolette's part to entertain Ministers and members of Parliament, and at that function to boom his proposition. It is his business, and I commend him for carrying it out. From a financial point of view he wants to keep this excitement going until he can unload his shares. The Government's duty, I maintain, is not to be carried away by public excitement, but when they find the public excited, as they undoubtedly are by this Bullfinch find, it is for them to steady the public up, instead of being carried away and proposing to construct this line, when there is no need for it at all. The very headlines in the papers show that the public mind is excited. It is referred to in every paper as "The Bullfinch boom;" it is a boom, and it is being boomed by those mostly interested in the concern, principally Mr. Doolette. We want to ask ourselves, apart altogether from the fact that we have got no data from our responsible officers, as to the possibility of the field in the first place. The Minister, in introducing the Bill, did not give us sufficient evidence to justify the construction of this line. It has been said that he gave no information. He certainly did not go into very great details because, evidently, he had not the details

with him. The information that we have got has evidently been supplied by Mr. Doolette and by those others interested in the concern. But apart from that fact we are justified in arguing—is there any need for haste in the construction of this railway; will it injure the field in any shape or form if we do not build the railway for the next six or 12 months? It will not make the slightest difference to the field. After all, it is only a matter of 20 miles from the existing railway; and when we consider the number of farmers in the country who are carting their wheat and produce distances further than that and showing a profit, surely to goodness a proposition such as the Bullfinch can go on a little longer and develop a little further to demonstrate its staying powers before we go into an expense of this description? It has been referred to by several members that there have been other mines in Western Australia that have started out equally as well as, if not better than the Bullfinch. I remember on the goldfields in the early days seeing sackloads of specimens coming in far better than are being produced at the Bullfinch, and those mines from which the specimens were brought, mines that were boomed as jewellers' shops and as being mountains of gold, are non-existent today. They were only pockets, only surface shows, and on being developed at a depth proved that there was nothing beyond possibly the 100ft. level. Consequently, having experience of this description, I think the very fact places responsibility especially on the shoulders of Ministers to go rather cautiously, particularly when it must be recognised that if we do not construct this railway for 12 months it will not make the slightest difference to the field.

Mr. Horan: You will lose all the revenue in the meantime.

Mr. JOHNSON: All the revenue that we will get for the next 12 months for 20 miles of railway will not pay for axle grease. Naturally the hon. member is interested and desirous to see the railway constructed, but we must not be carried away by the hon. member's enthusiasm. We must take a business view of the con-

cern. It has been admitted, even by members on the Government side who are supporting the Bill, that it is a gamble, a speculation, a risk, but that it is a good business risk. How do we know it is a good business risk? There is no evidence that it is a good business risk, and we are not supposed to take a good business risk until we can see that we are going to do some good either directly or indirectly. At the present time we find we have not that guarantee. As to the mines that have been floated and the money that is available for working expenses, the railway will not encourage the expenditure of these funds any faster, because, after all, the funds will go in developing the proposition long before machinery is required. The machinery wanted at the initial stages of developing a mine runs into a few tons, and the cartage of a few tons of machinery over 20 miles of railway is a very small matter indeed. I maintain, therefore, we have not sufficient information even as to the soundness of the Bullfinch proposition. It is a boom at present. I am prepared to admit, on the evidence of several members highly qualified to express an opinion, the proposition seems to be a sound one; but apart from that, we should have a definite inquiry made by the Government Geologist, and a definite report submitted to Parliament on this railway before we incur any expenditure. Hon. members know that if they make an application for a State battery in any given district the Government will not undertake the expenditure for the construction of that battery unless a detailed examination of all the properties in the district is made, and unless the State Mining Engineer or the Government Geologist, or some other qualified person, makes an inquiry into the value of the different shows. Yet in this concern, a matter that will cost over £40,000, we are supposed to rush into it without the slightest investigation being made. For that reason I feel the Bill should not be persevered with at the present juncture, but rather that the mines should be given a longer time for development to show that they do improve as they go down and that there is some guarantee of their permanency. Just now we have not that

guarantee, and consequently I maintain that we are not justified in passing the railway now. Therefore I propose, if there is a division on the proposition, to vote against it, because I have not had sufficient information to justify me in voting for it.

Mr. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): In a very few words I desire to say that I think the House might well pass the second reading of this Bill, and for that matter as soon as possible bring it into law. I agree that the Government ought to assist by every means in their power the opening up of new goldfields as well as new agricultural districts; for, after all, we have to recognise that the mineral resources of Western Australia were really the first advertisement given to the State and that they opened up the possibilities of the agricultural industry; and now that the agricultural industry is being placed on a satisfactory footing, I think it is due to the mineral industry that we should pay some further attention to the mineral resources. I have not visited the Bullfinch district and am not in the position to state what may be its possibilities. Even if I had visited the district I do not think I would be capable of expressing an opinion. I think it would require a geologist to be able to express an opinion that would carry any weight.

The Minister for Mines: Without a long examination you could not state the value.

Mr. SCADDAN: It appears to me, however, there is sufficient warrant for the construction of the line in order to carry the necessary produce to that field and in order to permit of the establishment of a proper township there at the earliest opportunity. Unfortunately in many mining towns, owing to the lack of railway facilities, the provisions in those towns are of such a nature, as tinned dog and other classes of tinned food, that the supply is not the best for the community, and I maintain that in order to get proper provisions to Bullfinch the Government should construct a railway. After all, the question as to whether other towns have asked repeatedly for railway communication and warranted it, should

not have a bearing on the fact that this railway is warranted and should be constructed. No doubt it is a serious indictment against the Government of the day that a line has not been constructed to Lawlers. The question of route could have been settled long ago if the Government were really desirous of building that line. I am not in the position to say whether it should start from Sandstone or Leonora, but surely the Government could long ago have decided whether a line should be constructed to that district in order to assist the opening up of the mines there. The properties are of a lasting character, but they really need the assistance of a railway. The people there have a tremendous distance to carry produce; they have not the mining timber that there is available at Bullfinch; and in other directions they have not the same facilities as Bullfinch has; but at the same time that does not warrant one in opposing the construction of a line to Bullfinch at the earliest opportunity. Another matter that causes members to ask for further information is that when certain people, representative of London capital, get control of any of our mines—I might mention the Bullfinch and the Ravenshorpe field—Ministers are only too anxious to put through Parliament a railway line to connect their mines with the railway system or with the coast, while many local men who own mines, who are struggling and who have put their all into their mines, have been knocking at the door of Cabinet asking for railway facilities and getting no answer. But immediately a Doolette or a Kaufmann comes along, representing London capital, the Government are willing to meet him at the Palace Hotel and give him what he wants. As a matter of fact, these people did not even ask for a railway; they merely gave a dinner, and that was taken as a request for a railway. One must commend Mr. Doolette for the manner in which he went about the business. I do. But I regret that the Ministry of the day, representing as they do a State of this description, should have lent themselves to what took place at the Palace Hotel on Monday night.

Mr. Horan: You missed a very good dinner.

Mr. SCADDAN: I may have done so.

The Minister for Works: Were you not there?

Mr. SCADDAN: I was not. I received an invitation to attend and I promptly tore it up and put it in the waste-paper basket. I probably lost an opportunity of scratching someone's back, which I contend was not warranted from Ministers of the Crown. Let Mr. Doolette be what he may. Probably he has been of some assistance to the State from the standpoint of assisting prospectors, but there are numbers of others who have done the same and not with the same success as Mr. Doolette. I am doubtful if the Minister for Mines, or any other Minister, would take dinner with some of these prospectors at the Alhambra; yet Ministers go to the Palace Hotel and scratch Mr. Doolette's back because he happens to be successful. The member for Yilgarn could have brought down men who had been prospecting in the Yilgarn district ever since it has been a goldfield, but I guarantee that the Minister would not take lunch with them at the Alhambra. Yet when Mr. Doolette appears they make him a hero. I do not know that he did very much prospecting. I think he found a little bit of the money.

The Minister for Mines: He was on the fields before you.

Mr. SCADDAN: I am not in the know like the Minister for Mines.

The Minister for Mines: I met him on the 90-mile in ninety-four.

Mr. SCADDAN: If this railway was constructed from revenue the expenditure would not be very great if the Government used the money derived from the sale of the land at Bullfinch; the district would then be paying for the line, and we could not very well complain; but if the line is to be constructed from loan funds, as it will be, I believe, and is to be a continuous charge on the State, I certainly strongly object. There can be no reason why the result of the land sales, which certainly

would not have gone into revenue this year had the field not been discovered, and had it not been for the boom—there is no reason why the money derived in this way should not be used for building the railway; and then if Bullfinch did not prove a success, there would be no loss on the country through building the railway. I believe that every member of the Opposition who has voiced his opinion in opposition to the railway has done so in the protection of the taxpayers in the future. The Mines Department are not certain that the goldfield is going to be a success for a number of years. There is just the possibility it will be another Wealth of Nations or a Londonderry. Those mines were just as phenomenally rich as the Bullfinch is to-day.

The Minister for Mines: No; they were merely pockets. This has been proved in three shafts and to a depth of 100 feet.

Mr. SCADDAN: That may be so, but I could point to mines on the Golden Mile proved for hundreds of feet in depth and in length, until it was found that the persons who had discovered them had followed chutes all the way. There is just a possibility of such a thing occurring on the Bullfinch. I am endeavouring to show that in order to protect the taxpayers the Government should use the money they have derived from the sale of the land, and the money obtained from the leases, for the purpose of paying for the construction of this railway. If the field proves a failure then the taxpayers will not be continually burdened through the want of foresight on the part of the Government and Parliament. Under such circumstances I contend there is a way out of the difficulty. Members on this side of the House would then raise no further objection to the passing of the Bill and the construction of the railway at the earliest possible moment. In any case I propose to support the second reading of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): Although there has been some



criticism on my introduction of this Bill, I desire to point out that conclusive evidence has been afforded, that the information requisite, to enable hon. members to form a favourable opinion of the measure has been supplied. Hon. members who spoke in criticism of my introduction of this Bill without giving any information themselves, wound up by saying that they intended to support the second reading.

Mr. Holman: What about the member for West Perth?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: With one exception; the hon. member for West Perth did not criticise my speech, but the hon. member for Boulder was one of the sturdiest critics of the introduction of the Bill. Apparently all the information required was supplied on the second reading.

Mr. Collier: I possessed it before you spoke.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member only possessed what other hon. members likewise possessed. If he did not it was his duty to the public, and to the House, to give the other hon. members the information in his possession. Ministers have a duty to perform to the House and to the country, and so have members who chance not to be Ministers equally a duty to perform to the House and the country, to place the members of the House and the people of the State in possession of all the knowledge they may have, and if I have failed in my duty in this respect, if I have neglected to supply information which was necessary to enable hon. members to form an intelligent opinion, and the hon. member possessed that information, it was his bounden duty to supply the deficiency to enable other hon. members equally with him to give an intelligent vote.

Mr. Collier: I am taking the risk in spite of your lack of information.

Mr. Hudson: How does your argument with regard to supplying information apply in connection with the Redistribution of Seats Bill?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hon. members are starting the same tactics that they adopted when I rose to move

the second reading of the Bill. As soon as a member on the Treasury bench attempts to bring up a matter of great public importance, certain hon. members deliberately lay themselves out to ask irrelevant questions across the floor to prevent the Minister fulfilling his duty. That has been the attitude adopted for some time past. Just now several hon. members asked me several different questions, all entirely foreign to the subject under discussion. I contend this is not fair Parliamentary practice. It is absolutely unfair, not to the Ministers alone, but unfair to the House, that Ministers should be prevented from placing a matter like this clearly and properly before the House. I do not intend, as hon. members have been so generally satisfied with the justification for this Bill, to take up the time of the House in repeating the arguments that have already been adduced. I want, however, to reply to an interjection from the member for Forrest with regard to the wages paid in the Public Works Department in connection with railway construction. When I said that the estimate of £40,000 for this railway would allow for the difficulties in obtaining labour, the hon. member said "You do not pay enough; they pay 9s. in South Australia, and only 8s. here." I intend to take no notice of the fact that in the Federal House recently a Minister pointed out that some adults were not worth 8s., but I want to correct the hon. member for Forrest when he states that 8s. only is paid here. I was under the impression he was wrong at the time he spoke, but lacking information I refrained from making any assertion. The information I have is that on the Donnybrook-Boyup railway the labourers at the outset were paid from 8s. 6d. to 9s., a few only were receiving 8s. 6d., and towards the end of the job all were getting 9s. On the other railway works which have been carried on for some time past all the employees have received higher than 9s.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Pinjarra-Marriniup?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: According to the figures I have the wages being paid to labourers there are 10s. a day.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Eight shillings a day until they ceased work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member will give me what information he has I will be very happy to compare figures with him, and to find out why the figures furnished me are incorrect.

Mr. Holman: Who urged the increases on the other lines?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know; I did not ask for that information, I simply asked for information with regard to the wages paid. The information I have is at the disposal of the member for Forrest. I am not going to read it to the House, but if any of it is wrong I shall be very happy to go into the matter with the hon. member and correct the statement I have made.

Mr. Holman: You do not expect to get men at Southern Cross for 9s.?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: While I am in charge of the Public Works Department, I shall be as anxious as any hon. member in this House to see that fair wages are paid for all work done in that particular department.

Mr. Holman: Will you give the same as was paid on the Sandstone line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot of course go into details, but I want to say that I do not think any fair charge can be established against the Public Works Department with regard to wages paid.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I know that over 30 men left for South Australia within four months because they could not get fair wages.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Let the hon. member come and discuss the matter with me in my office, and then there will be no need for him to discuss it in this House. I will, however, welcome a discussion in the House afterwards if he finds it necessary. I am very pleased that hon. members in this House so generally recognise that if we object to private enterprise undertaking the construction of railways, the Government ought to be allowed to show a certain amount of enterprise. Complaint has been made repeatedly that other goldfields have not received railway communication as early

as ought to have been the case. I contend that if the Black Range railway was justified it would have been better for the State to have constructed it three or four years earlier. If we are going to have goldfields railways constructed it is better that they should be constructed at such a time that we might get the early as well as the late traffic. It is better that public enterprise should prevent private enterprise getting in with regard to the profitable carrying that always takes place when goldfields are first opened up.

Mr. Holman: Do you not think it is time that you made a start with Wiluna?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall be glad when the opportunity offers to tell the hon. member what I think about Wiluna.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Authority to construct:

Mr. ANGWIN: With regard to the construction of this line it was understood that it was the intention of the Government to construct a very light railway. Would the Minister give some information with respect to this aspect of the question? After the warning given by the Minister for Mines, it would be a mistake to go to any great expense with regard to this railway.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was intended at the outset to build the railway of the lightest possible character. There would be a certain amount of grading necessary. That could not be avoided. There would be ramps and sidings provided, but it was not intended to ballast the line. It was intended to construct it practically on the lines on which ordinary firewood lines were built. The estimate was a very liberal one, and it was likely that the cost would be, at all events not more than the estimate submitted to the House. Later on, when the field had become thoroughly well established, when its permanency was satisfactorily demonstrated, it would be possible

to standardise the line, but at the outset the cheaper class of line would have to suffice.

**Mr. COLLIER:** From what could be gathered of the nature of the country over which the railway would pass, he understood that a portion of it was very low-lying, and would be under water in winter.

**Mr. Horan:** No it would not.

**Mr. COLLIER:** The Committee had been told the roads would cut up very badly and would be impassable in winter. From that he had gathered that the country was low-lying and very boggy, if not actually under water in winter time. In his opinion it would be false economy to neglect to ballast the railway from the outset. If the country were wet and boggy one winter's traffic over the line would so cripple the rails that they would be utterly useless afterwards, while it would be then too late to think of ballasting the line. Whatever was done he hoped that before the winter rains came, if the Government decided that the field was going to be permanent, they would see the wisdom of ballasting the railway, especially having regard to the fact that ballast in that country would not be nearly so expensive as in the agricultural centres.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Certain provision was made for packing where necessary, and ballasting would be carried on wherever required in order to secure the permanent way. There was no occasion to fear that safeguard would be neglected.

**Mr. JOHNSON:** It was to be borne in mind that although the Public Works Department might consider that sufficient precautions had been taken to render the line suitable for traffic, immediately it was handed over to the Working Railways Department it would be standardised. Surely, then, the Public Works Department should standardise the line in the beginning and not leave it for the Working Railways to start reconstructing the line as soon as it was handed over. That condition of false economy applied to all our agricultural railways. This laying of the proposed line on the contour of the country with little or no ballast, and no

provision for culverts would be false economy, especially in view of the fact that the line would afterwards be standardised.

**The Minister for Works:** There is provision for culverts.

**Mr. JOHNSON:** It was understood that no provision was made for culverts.

**The Minister for Works:** Merely as little as possible.

**Mr. JOHNSON:** If the department were not taking culverts seriously they were looking for trouble in connection with this railway. Members who knew the district had declared that the line would run through low-lying country and across lakes. If so, more than ordinary construction would be required for the line where it crossed those lakes, and provision would have to be made for culverts if the line was to be protected at all. The Minister knew of an experiment made with the construction of the Nannine railway, and he would remember the expense in regard to standardising that line when it was handed over to the Working Railways. If the Minister would give the Committee an assurance that he was going to operate the line through the Public Works Department, he (Mr. Johnson) would have no further objection. He was not prepared to endorse the attitude adopted by the Working Railways in respect to the standardising of lines, for he believed that a number of our agricultural railways, for instance, should be operated without being standardised. He had many times advocated that if we could not get the Working Railways to run certain lines without their being standardised we should operate these particular railways through the Public Works Department. To first build the line as cheaply as possible and then standardise it at a later date was the most costly method conceivable.

**Mr. SCADDAN:** Had the Minister not said that he proposed to construct this line with even less earth formation than was to be found on the light agricultural railways? If so, how had the estimate of the cost of the line been made up? The estimate worked out at about £1,800 a mile. The member for Beverley

had stated that the line would run through flat country and across lakes. If that was the case it was very evident the line would require a great deal of earth works. The Government ought to see that the work was properly constructed. He did not agree with the method of constructing the railway by merely laying it on the surface, for it involved great cost at a later date to put it into proper order. While it would be necessary to standardise this line it ought to be made as substantial as the best of the agricultural lines.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was no occasion to fear the railway would not be constructed in such a fashion as to make it perfectly safe. He had the fullest confidence in the construction branch of the Public Works Department, and in the knowledge and ability of the officers to decide exactly the necessity of the case so far as this or any other railway was concerned.

Mr. Holman: What weight are the rails to be?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The rails would be 45lbs.

Mr. Scaddan: What was your experience with the Pilbara line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In connection with that line it had been found necessary in consequence of certain washaways to materially alter the contour, and to put in a lot more work than was originally intended. But there was no comparison to be made between the two lines and the rainfalls of the respective districts.

Mr. Scaddan: The rains in the Pilbara district were not phenomenal for that region, and the engineer should have provided against them.

Mr. Collier: Has a permanent survey of this line been made?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was now proceeding.

Mr. Collier: Can you tell us the steepest grade and the shortest curve?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The nature of the country made it possible to find an easy grade, in fact it would not be necessary to have any grade worth speaking of.

Mr. Collier: How do you make up the cost to nearly £2,000 a mile?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The details, if the hon. member desired them, were—grading, £3,960; bridges and culverts, etcetera, £330; permanent way, including freight on rails and fastenings, £15,010.

Mr. Keenan: What is the cost of the rails in that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Rails and fastenings, with points and crossings, cost £15,000; station and buildings, rails, etcetera, £2,000; triangle, £400; connection at Southern Cross, £1,000; contingencies, 10 per cent.

Mr. Scaddan: How do you arrive at those figures if you have no permanent survey?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was not necessary to make a permanent survey in order to get out an approximate estimate. The hon. member could accept the assurance that the estimate was likely to prove somewhat high. It was perfectly safe to say that the work would cost something less than the estimate.

Mr. KEENAN: Was this to be a surface or low-level railway, or was it to be banked up?

The Minister for Works: The hon. member can choose his own name.

Mr. KEENAN: It was not only false economy, but waste of money to build those surface lines. If the Minister, since he had assumed office, had looked up the details regarding other light railways he would have noticed what had happened in regard to the Bolgart line. That was a line built on soft soil in low-lying country, and last year it had disappeared into the mud and had had to be absolutely dug out. The working railways had had to excavate the line and put in ballast. The country between Southern Cross and Bullfinch was also of a light and friable nature, so much so that the carts sank in it to the axles. What the Committee desired to know was whether the Government were going to repeat the mistake which had been made in the past. It was a well known

fact outside the House that the Works Department got through their railway construction at a low cost, on which they prided themselves, and left the Working Railways to meet the extra cost of putting the lines in proper order. The Committee were entitled to an assurance that that blunder would not be repeated in the Bullfinch case. They did not want the line built in such a way that when it was handed over to the working railways it would have to be lifted and built up. Did the Minister know the Bolgart railway? And, if so, did he not think that if a surface line was built at Southern Cross the department would have the same experience. It was a well known fact that low level railways could be built if you had a hard bed, either a rock or a cement foundation; but if the line was in friable country, when the first storm of rain came along, down would sink the rails, and a prospecting party would have to be sent out to find them. It was to be hoped that they would not have a repetition of the ridiculous blunders perpetrated by the department in the past.

The PREMIER: The hon. member had answered his own question. If a railway was constructed over soft or rotten ground a foundation must be put in.

Mr. Keenan: Is that the case here?

The PREMIER: That was the case in connection with the proposition before the Committee. A foundation would be put in the same as had been done on the Pilbara line. In connection with that work it had been first intended to carry the railway on the surface, with very little formation, but it had been found that in the North-West the rivers spread out many miles during the rainy season.

Mr. Underwood: Not too many.

The PREMIER: The rivers spread a good many miles; the consequence had been that the engineers had had to reconstruct their lines and put in a firm foundation. So far as the Bullfinch railway was concerned, there were no difficulties of that description.

Mr. Keenan: Are we not told that it is to be laid on the surface?

The PREMIER: If the country was firm a surface railway could be built without any packing at all.

Mr. Keenan: Through salt lakes?

The PREMIER: There was only one salt lake, and that extended for only a short distance, over which, of course, a foundation would have to be put in. The Bolgart railway certainly had some bad patches in which the rails had had to be lifted and packed; but that was the experience in all new railways; they were packed temporarily to start with, and then when the lines settled the rails had to be lifted and packed again. So far as he knew the Bullfinch district was not bad country over which to build a railway.

Mr. Johnson: Have you been up there?

The PREMIER: When mining there many years ago he had been many times to Golden Valley. Of course, if there was a rise in the country, which would present a grade that could not be easily negotiated, a cutting would have to be made, and, similarly, if there were hollows they must be banked, but that had nothing to do with the packing of a line, which depended on the nature of the country, whether hard or soft, and which had to be done after the line settled. The Committee could rest assured that the Engineer-in-Chief would see that the mistakes of the past would be obviated as far as possible, and that the line would be constructed economically, consistent with practical efficiency. There was no necessity for building an expensive line until the field was further developed. The light agricultural railways which had been built had proved quite good enough to carry the traffic. The member for Guildford was correct in saying that the Railway Department had found fault with some of the lighter railways, but reference to the figures would show that the losses on the lines condemned by the late Commissioner of Railways had not been very great, and had amounted only to a few pounds for lifting rails and

packing them where the line had subsided.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Premier had not a very firm grip of that question, and knew practically nothing about the Pilbara railway. In connection with that work, the mistake which had been made had not been in running the railway over the beds of the rivers, which did not extend for miles and miles, as the Minister for Works would have the Committee believe; some of them were possibly half a mile wide. The difficulty was in the approach to the rivers through the soft alluvial soil. The engineers had found—just as an ordinary man not an engineer, but an ordinary prospector or lawyer would imagine—that after the heavy rains the alluvial became quite porous, and if any weight was put on the soil it immediately sank. If the engineers had known anything but engineering they would have expected that that would occur. They were right in saying that they could get over the beds of the rivers, but it was in the light alluvial approaches that the mistake was made. The beds of the rivers in the Pilbara districts were perfectly solid, but where cuttings were made in the alluvial banks, the rains washed away the soil and made new channels, and the rails sank. On level alluvial ground, not alongside a river, as soon as the soil was thoroughly saturated with the rain the railway sank down to bedrock. As a matter of fact, the engine bogged; but it did not require a prospector to find it, because the funnel was above ground. If the country around Southern Cross and Bullfinch was anything like the country in the Pilbara district and other parts of the State over which he had travelled, it would be one of the greatest mistakes engineers could make to lay the line simply on the surface. It was necessary to build these lines with some permanency. The Southern Cross country was lake country. His experience of that country was that we could lose a train and not even have the funnel showing.

Mr. HORAN: It was astonishing this line was to cost so much as £46,000. The railway would travel over comparatively

level country covered with salmon gum, morrell, and gimlet, with soil as good as that in the Dowerin and other districts; and the sleepers could be thrown down just as they were on the Kurrawang line. Over that line three to four million tons of firewood was carried annually at a comparatively high rate of speed on half-converted sleepers and the track was a very reliable one.

Mr. COLLIER: According to the description of the soil given by the hon. member it would be a huge blunder to build the railway without ballasting it. Soil on the goldfields was altogether different from that in the agricultural districts where railways were built without ballasting. It was of a red, loose, friable nature without the same standing characteristics as the soil in the agricultural districts; and after a heavy downfall of rain there was great danger that a railway simply laid on the soil would suffer very severely. No goldfields railway in the State was unballasted, though the wood lines were laid on the surface, but it was a different thing hauling firewood at a moderate rate of speed—certainly not a comparatively high rate, as mentioned by the member for Yilgarn. If it was proposed to construct the line on the surface, how was it going to cost £2,000 a mile, since most of the agricultural railways built in this way cost only £1,100 a mile. The Government were anxious to have the railway constructed in the shortest possible space of time, and we could safely assume that precautions would not be taken to guard against the difficulties pointed out by the member for Kalgoorlie as having taken place in regard to the Bolgart railway. The department must have already decided whether they would follow the contour of the country and lay the rails on the surface, or whether they were going to have an easy gradient and cut down the embankments and fill up the low country.

Mr. HOLMAN: The railway was sprung on the House in a sudden manner with no information having been obtained by the engineers as to the nature of the country. It was simply a slap-dash style, saying it was going to cost

so much. The Minister could give no information.

The Premier: A survey has not been made.

Mr. HOLMAN: According to the Premier, when a railway engineer comes to a hollow he fills it up, and when he comes to a hill he cuts it down. That was all the information members were given; we knew nothing about the nature of the country. No railway was introduced in Parliament without a survey first being made.

The Premier: The Kojonup Bill was introduced without a survey being made, and the Dumbleyung line was being surveyed when the Bill was introduced.

Mr. HOLMAN: And they were two lovely lines.

The Premier: Some of the cheapest ever constructed.

Mr. HOLMAN: Cheapest and dirtiest. The same reasons that brought forward the introduction of those lines—political reasons—spurred the Government on to introduce the Bullfinch line. As no information could be given to the Committee it would be wise to report progress and allow the Minister some opportunity to get some information.

The Premier: We cannot get information.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister could get a sample of the soil. It was a serious question spending £46,000 when, according to the member for Pilbara, there might be a possibility of losing the railway. All that members wanted to know was whether the nature of the country was similar to that of other districts. One said it was a lake country, and another that it was a salmon gum and gimlet, and Mr. Muir in his report said that if the district could only get rain it would be good agricultural country, while, on the other hand, the member for Kalgoorlie said that if the district got rain we would lose the line. Whom were we to believe?

The Premier: I do not think the member for Kalgoorlie has been there.

Mr. Horan: He has never seen it.

Mr. HOLMAN: The very reason why we should get the information the hon. member asked. The information asked for was little indeed. What members

wanted to know was whether the line was going to be built on the principle of the Cue-Nannine railway, or whether the old system which was in force until recent years was to be followed.

Mr. HARPER: There had been a lot of useless discussion in connection with this measure, and one might form the opinion that all members were experts. The matter could very well be left in the hands of the engineers. Western Australia had not fared badly in the past with regard to railway construction. Therefore it was useless for members to waste any further time.

Mr. Holman: Was the hon. member in order in saying that time had been wasted?

The CHAIRMAN: The remark was not in order.

Mr. HARPER: The remark would be withdrawn, but he would say it all the same. The member for Kalgoorlie had facetiously referred to the possibility of the rails sinking in the loamy ground if there was no ballasting done. It might be pointed out, however, that in some cases it was easier to pack a railway after the rails had been laid.

Mr. GILL: Like the member for Beverley, he too was of opinion that there had been a lot of useless discussion on the Bill, and the member for Beverley had contributed to it. This line, judging from the estimate would not be on a very cheap scale, but in any respect he was of opinion that the railway would not cost nearly as much as was estimated by the Minister. Caution should be exercised with regard to putting a certain amount of ballast under the sleepers, because if the country was as was described by the member for Yilgarn undoubtedly the rails would sink. Such country became very dangerous in the wet season. There had been a drawback in the past owing to the neglect of the Public Works Department in constructing culverts, and when wet seasons had come along the rails had sunk considerably. It was to be hoped that provision would be made in the flat country for culverts, otherwise serious damage would ensue, and expense would be entailed by the Working Railways after the

line had been handed over to them by the Works Department.

Mr. ANGWIN: It would be unwise to enter into any heavy expenditure with regard to the construction of this railway. It was realised that even the Ministry had a certain amount of doubt concerning it, and he feared that they had not given it that consideration which was warranted from the advice which the Minister for Mines gave when he visited the locality. If heavy expenditure was incurred, it would be very bad for the State, especially if the country turned out differently from what was expected.

Mr. JOHNSON moved an amendment—

*That a proviso be added as follows: "Provided that the cost of the construction of such railway shall be paid out of such moneys as Parliament shall appropriate for the purpose out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and not otherwise."*

It had been admitted by members and Ministers that the construction of this railway was largely a speculation, and that there was no absolute guarantee of success, consequently we were not justified in using other people's money for the construction, and we were not justified in borrowing money for the purpose of gambling. Then, again, the discovery of the field up to date had brought a pretty considerable amount of money into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and as we had the proceeds of the sale of land, it should be used towards the construction of the line, more especially when it was known that the prices obtained were largely due to the fact that the announcement was made before the land was sold that it was proposed to build the railway. Therefore the £25,000 or £26,000 obtained from the sale of that land should be utilised for the purpose of constructing the railway. If that were done there would be only the rails and fastenings to provide. Then, in the event of the mine not turning out as all hoped it would turn out, the only loss in the gamble would be the cost of the labour. He maintained that although the rails and fixings, being already in hand, had been provided out of Loan Fund the actual construction of the line

should be carried on out of the revenue obtained by the discovery of the field.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment was out of order and could not be accepted. The Bill authorised the construction of a railway: it did not deal with the funds out of which the cost was to be defrayed. The amendment, if accepted, would appropriate money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the purpose of the construction of the railway, and would therefore necessitate a Message from His Excellency.

Mr. JOHNSON: It was difficult to follow the objection to the amendment, because a Message from His Excellency was only required in respect to a tax on the people.

The CHAIRMAN: The ruling was that the amendment was out of order.

Mr. JOHNSON: Surely opportunity would be afforded of pointing out the soundness of the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The course open to the hon. member was perfectly plain. If the hon. member could not accept the ruling it was for him to move to dissent from that ruling. There was no necessity to discuss the question.

Mr. Holman: Well, let us dissent and we will thrash it out then.

#### *Dissent from Chairman's Ruling.*

Mr. Johnson: In the circumstances there appeared to be no alternative to the course suggested. He moved—

*That the ruling of the Chairman be dissented from.*

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

The Chairman reported that the member for Guildford had moved to dissent from a ruling on Clause 2. The hon. member desired to move an amendment providing that the cost of the construction of such railway should be paid out of such monies as Parliament should appropriate for the purpose out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and not otherwise. The ruling had been that the amendment was out of order inasmuch as it would appropriate certain moneys from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and would therefore necessitate a Message from His Excellency.



Mr. Johnson: Before you deal with the question I would respectfully submit that the Bill itself anticipates expenditure, and although it does not specify definitely as to whether the expenditure shall be from loan or from revenue, still the fact remains that the construction is going to cost money. If the Bill directly specified the source from which the expenditure was to come, then I take it one would be justified in moving an amendment; consequently when there is no such specification made, one is equally justified. On the face of it the Bill anticipates expenditure, in fact it provides for expenditure. Thus, if the amendment is out of order because of the fact that there has been no Message, then the Bill itself must be out of order, and therefore I submit we are justified in specifying that the expenditure shall be from revenue and not from loan as evidently desired by the Government.

Mr. Speaker: I must support the ruling of the Chairman. The amendment is anticipating expenditure of revenue, and therefore needs a Message.

Mr. Holman: I would like to ask what is the position of the Bill at the present time? In regard to every other railway Bill brought before the House the expenditure has been anticipated by Message. I would like to know whether, if the amendment is out of order, the Bill itself is not out of order because it was not introduced by Message?

Mr. Speaker: The Bill is in the position of every other Railway Bill introduced.

Mr. Holman: Every other railway Bill has been introduced by Message.

Mr. Horan: No.

Mr. Gill: Does not the Bill itself anticipate expenditure?

The Minister for Works: I would like to point out, if I may be allowed, that this is a Bill empowering the Government to do certain work for which an appropriation will be obtained in due course when the Estimates, either Loan or Revenue, are before the House. The amendment proposed to do something more; it proposed that if the Government act upon the power given in the Bill they

shall take revenue from a certain source to do it; in other words the amendment proposed to make a distinct appropriation—in effect it says this railway shall not be carried out unless an appropriation be made from Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. Underwood: I would like to ask, does the passing of a railway Bill and the authorising of any expenditure naturally and constitutionally infer that it must be from Loan Fund?

Mr. Speaker: The Bill is brought in the ordinary way, as every other railway Bill is. The money has to be found somewhere.

Mr. Heitmann: It is true the money must be found somewhere, and the Bill in itself does not carry with it the obligation of the Government to expend that money unless they have an appropriation. That is what I understand from the Minister for Works. The amendment of the member for Guildford does not carry with it an obligation for an appropriation or for the expenditure of money until we get the appropriation. It is simply a matter of this: it might possibly be that the Government will say we shall have an appropriation from Loan Funds; but if the amendment is carried it states that this appropriation shall be from revenue.

The Premier: And requires a Message accordingly.

Mr. Heitmann: And so does the Bill itself.

The Premier: No it does not.

Mr. Heitmann: Well if this is so, when the Message comes down for the appropriation from Loan Fund the hon. member will be in order in moving that this appropriation be from Revenue.

The Premier: He can strike it out from the Loan Estimates.

Mr. Heitmann: What method can be adopted to have the appropriation made from revenue?

Mr. Scaddan: I wish to draw attention to the ruling on a Bill which contained a subclause almost exactly the same as the words in this amendment. That was a ruling given on the following subclause in the Health Bill last session—

A contribution of one half of the costs and expenses incurred in provid-

ing hospitals under this section, and in the treatment of indigent patients, shall be paid to the local authority out of moneys appropriated by Parliament to that purpose.

Those were the words in the Bill and you ruled that it was not giving power to Parliament to appropriate without an actual authorisation. It was because of the ruling given on that Bill that the present amendment was worded as it is.

The Premier: That does not say from revenue.

Mr. Johnson: The words were exactly the same.

Mr. Gordon: On a point of order. Is the leader of the Opposition disputing your ruling? If so, there is no motion and I think the discussion should be stopped.

Mr. Speaker: I desire to be as polite as possible to every member, but I have given a ruling and it is the duty of the hon. member to move to dissent from my ruling if he wishes to discuss it.

Mr. Price: Two different rulings, one last year and one this.

#### *Committee Resumed.*

Mr. GEORGE: The Committee having decided that the railway should be built, that was not the proper time to discuss the question of funds. The Government might, if they thought it a matter of urgency anticipate the passage of the Bill for the granting of money, but they had to go before the House for funds, and it would then be the province of the House to say where and how those funds should be provided. He would wish no better job than that the Government would allow him to build that line on his own account. If that opportunity were given him he would leave Perth at once.

Mr. Gordon: Hear, hear.

Mr. HOLMAN: As soon as the measure was passed the Government were going to start on the illegal expenditure of money.

The Premier: We are going to anticipate the Estimates.

Mr. HOLMAN: What position would the Government be in if the appropriation were not carried by the House? That more than ever convinced him that the

passing of the Bill was nothing more or less than a "boost for the boodler." More than one member of the Ministry was interested in the Bullfinch proposition, and it had been stated that the Government were going to start the illegal expenditure of money at once. They would not allow, in the first place, a reasonable time for debate, and then absolutely no information had been given to the House when the measure was brought down. The Minister in charge of the Bill could not tell the Committee whether the line was going to climb over a hill or crawl under it; whether the rails were going to be built on tressels or carried on chains, or anything else. The only information given was that if the line was not built a road would have to be constructed for prospectors. In all probability that road would be wanted to prospect for the rails, which the member for Pilbara had said were going to sink. The Committee were entitled to some information, particularly as to where the money was coming from.

The CHAIRMAN: The question of cost did not come under that section.

Mr. HOLMAN: The definition said "authority to construct." That meant power to construct and power to spend the money.

The Premier: No.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Premier had said that as soon as the Bill was passed he was going to take power to spend the money.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not discuss the cost of the construction under that section. The section gave power to the Government to construct and maintain a line, but there was not a word as to where the funds were to come from.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Committee were entitled to ask what the line was going to cost, and what was going to be the cost of maintenance.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was perfectly in order in asking a question.

Mr. HOLMAN: Then the Committee must know where the money was to come from. The Premier had told them that he was going to construct the line whether he had authority to spend the

money or not, and in doing so he would be robbing the country.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not in order in accusing the Premier of attempting to rob the country. The hon. member must withdraw.

Mr. HOLMAN: In withdrawing that statement he would say that the Premier would be illegally using the money, and he did not see much difference in the two.

The CHAIRMAN: When the Appropriation Bill came down the hon. member would be in order in discussing the question of costs.

Mr. HOLMAN: What would be the position of the Committee in questioning the appropriation after the railway had been commenced?

Mr. Seaddan: It is illegal to discuss the actions of the Government; that is what the ruling means.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was an absolute absurdity to say that members could not discuss where the money was coming from. The Committee had not been told when the Estimates were coming down, and he did not think they were going to be passed in less than 25 minutes.

The Premier: I think we will pass them in about half an hour.

Mr. HOLMAN: If more information was not given on the Estimates than was given on that Bill they would not be passed in a good many half-hours. What would be the position in a fortnight or a month's time if the line was started and no money had been made available for it? Surely they should act with that Bill the same as with any other railway that came before them, and require the requisite authority from the Governor to spend the money. The present Bill only involved an expenditure of £40,000, but if the Government could spend without authority in this case they could spend 40 millions. If it was a question of only 40s. it was the duty of the Committee to see that nothing of that sort was done. He emphatically protested against such an expenditure. Money should not be utilised illegally.

Mr. Jacoby: The Railway Bill and the Appropriation Bill are never together.

Mr. HOLMAN: But the Appropriation Bill invariably came down first. If we had the word of the Premier that the line would not be constructed until the appropriation came down it would be all right. Was it in order to move an amendment to provide that the line should be constructed out of revenue?

The CHAIRMAN: No. That point was decided already.

Mr. HOLMAN: In 1902-3 the Revenue Estimates provided £18,000 for the Gooseberry Hill railway and £55,000 for the Laverton railway. Did the Premier propose to carry out this work on the same lines as those, or did he intend to build the railway from loan funds?

The Premier: If the hon. member will sit down I will tell him.

Mr. HOLMAN: Very well.

The PREMIER: Many railways were authorised without the Estimates providing the money for the construction being first submitted. In the majority of instances the Estimates were not passed when the Railway Bills authorising the construction of lines were passed. The Bill now before the Committee said nothing about the funds. The money to pay for the construction would be provided in the ordinary course on the Loan Estimates when they were submitted to Parliament.

Mr. Johnson: You will have the railway finished then and we will not be able to strike it out.

Mr. Seaddan: It would not be tolerated in the House of Commons.

The PREMIER: It was done in every country in the world. In the meantime there was such a thing as the Loan Suspense Account to which expenditure of this nature was debited. The Supply Bills which were passed from time to time granted certain moneys to be spent from Loan Suspense Account, General Loan Fund, and Consolidated Revenue; and if the business of the State was to progress the Government must anticipate the authorisation of expenditure by the House. In fact expenditure for half the year was carried on before the annual Estimates were passed. True, lump

votes were got on account in the shape of Supply Bills, and in this case it would be a lump vote until the Estimates were passed. Members would have an opportunity of opposing the railway on the Loan Estimates and could strike the item out then if they so desired.

Mr. Holman: What would you do then?

The PREMIER: Seriously consider one's position. The Government took responsibility absolutely for its actions. If hon. members said the railway should not be paid for out of loan, although it had already been constructed, the expenditure could not be made out of loan. All the funds of the State were in one common account, loan funds, consolidated revenue, and trust funds, all in one banking account; and the Government spent money as it was required out of this common fund, but had to come to Parliament to get ratification of the expenditure from some specific fund. If Parliament disagreed to that expenditure, then the Government must take the responsibility. The Revenue Estimates were already before members, and in those Estimates every pound of revenue it was anticipated would be received was mopped up.

Mr. Johnson: Did you include the £25,000 from the Bullfinch sales?

The PREMIER: There was a fair amount of increase included for land sales.

Mr. Johnson: Then you were doing a large amount of gambling in your Estimates. You did not know anything about the Bullfinch then.

The PREMIER: There was a considerable increase anticipated from land sales. It was not safe, because there was a good land sale in one portion of the State, to anticipate having good sales of land all over the State. The Estimates provided for the expenditure of every pound it was anticipated to raise from revenue, at least, up to within £1,000 after wiping out the deficit; and there was no revenue to charge this work to, though there might be some available at the end of the year, or there might be a deficit. Would

members refuse the construction of this railway because there was not the revenue with which to construct it? If there was a surplus of £50,000 at the end of the year, the first thing he would do would be to spend it on road construction and leave roads out of the Loan Estimates; and the second thing he would do would be to spend it on buildings and leave buildings out of the Loan Estimates; and the last thing he would do would be to spend it on railways and leave railways out of the Loan Estimates. Railways should come after roads and buildings, but by the time we could remove railway construction from the Loan Estimates the people would be asking for some reduction in taxation, saying that it was not fair to ask them to be saddled with expenditure on railways that would pay for their construction during the course of the loan by providing sinking fund to wipe out the capital. Nothing was being done more than previous Treasurers had done. It was the history of responsible Government in the State. It was a course always taken.

Mr. Johnson: Do not stonewall.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member was satisfied there was no need to say any more.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There was the position that when we were receiving revenue for some commodity which we were absolutely selling, and we were selling the gold that the State possessed, we should not have a debt. When the gold was extracted we had a hole in the ground, but we could not fill that hole with a debt.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the clause.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If the Premier would guarantee that we would not be loading posterity with a huge debt by the construction of this railway it would receive his support.

The Premier: I can assure the hon. member it will not.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Premier has given an assurance that the railway would not be paid for by posterity.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not touch on the financial aspect.

A ruling had already been given that this was out of order. That line of argument must therefore of necessity be out of order.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : If the construction was not to be paid for by the present generation where was the money to come from ?

The CHAIRMAN : No further discussion on that point would be allowed.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : Then it only remained for him to oppose the clause and he would oppose it because an intimation had been given that we were not going to pay for it. When building this railway we should apply the money that was being received from the sale of the land in that district.

The CHAIRMAN : That question had already been discussed and had been ruled out of order. The hon. member could not persist in that line of argument.

Mr. SCADDAN : On a point of order, attention might be drawn to the fact that by the Chairman's ruling which had been upheld by the Speaker, any reference to the appropriation of money in this or in any other Bill would require a Message from the Governor, which was a decision that any Bill which would be a charge against the Consolidated Revenue or Loan funds must be introduced by a responsible Minister. According to Todd it was distinctly stated—

Independently in the first instance of the Committee of Supply there is another mode of initiating proceedings for the grant of public money, namely, by the introduction of bills for the construction of public works, the establishment of new institutions, or for other purposes, which necessitate to a greater or less extent, new charges upon the people.

The Consolidated Fund included Loan Fund and Consolidated Revenue and while there was no mention in the clause of the Bill where the money was to come from, there was an intimation from the Premier that when the Bill was passed he proposed then to take that as tantamount to giving him instructions to proceed to construct this line out of any fund he desired. Under the

circumstances it would be absolutely unwise to prevent a member discussing the fund from which the money should be taken.

The Premier : I did not say that. I said I would take the responsibility of anticipating the vote of the House.

Mr. SCADDAN : The Premier had said that as soon as the Bill was passed he would commence the construction of the line, and would anticipate the appropriation to be made later on.

The Attorney General : The Premier would be acting without Parliamentary authority in so doing and would have to take the risk and the responsibility.

Mr. SCADDAN : The objection was, not to the Premier taking such responsibility, but to the construction of the line out of Loan Fund in view of the fact that so much money had been derived from the sale of the town lots at Bullfinch. The question of the provision of the money appeared to him to be quite in order on Clause 2 which, after all, was the Bill. It was only reasonable that members should be allowed to express an opinion as to whether the money should be taken from Loan Fund or from Consolidated Revenue. For his part he desired to enter the strongest possible protest against the attitude of the Premier in proposing to anticipate Parliamentary authority and proceed with the construction of the line. He was absolutely disgusted with the attitude of the member for Swan, who had so often held that the Government could not expend money until authorised by Parliament, and yet to-night had favoured the Premier's proposal to anticipate such authorisation. If there was one function which belonged to Parliament as against the Government it was the control of public funds, and he would defy the Attorney General to show what authority deprived the representatives of the people in the House of the full control of these funds.

The Premier : The Chairman has ruled the question out of order, and yet you are persisting.

Mr. SCADDAN : Seeing that Parliament was asked to approve of the railway, members ought to have an

opportunity of discussing the sources from which the necessary expenditure was to be made.

The PREMIER: The railway cannot be constructed without expenditure, and when the Estimates come down the member will have an opportunity of discussing whether it shall be charged against loan or revenue.

Mr. SCADDAN: But members had the power to review at any or all times the expenditure of public money.

The Premier: Reject the Bill.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was not desired to reject the Bill. He contended the Government should have Parliamentary authority to expend the money before it was so expended.

Mr. Butcher: They must have the money to construct the railway.

Mr. SCADDAN: If that was the case, and of course it was, the Bill required a Message. Without such Message the Government had no right to expend a penny on the work. The Premier had announced that it was proposed to construct the railway as soon as authority was given for such construction, and had also announced that the money would be taken from Loan Fund. He contended that this was the only opportunity we had of protesting against the Government anticipating Parliamentary authorisation to spend the money.

The Premier: Do you want us to hang up the construction?

Mr. SCADDAN: No. What he desired was that a Bill should be brought down for the appropriation of the money before the money was spent. Then members would have a chance of saying whether the money was to come from Consolidated Revenue or from Loan Fund. The course proposed by the Premier was altogether illegal.

The Premier: Your Government did it.

Mr. SCADDAN: Nevertheless, it was a practice that ought to be stopped, and not encouraged as it had been by the member for Swan this evening.

*Disorder—A Member removed.*

Mr. Jacoby and Mr. Underwood rose.

The Chairman: Mr. Jacoby.

Mr. Underwood: But, Mr. Chairman, I desire to resume at the stage where I was interrupted on a point of order.

Mr. Jacoby: I have risen to a point of order.

Mr. Underwood: I was interrupted on a point of order.

The Chairman: Will the hon. member for Pilbara resume his seat.

Mr. Underwood: No.

The Chairman: I order the hon. member to leave the Chamber. [A pause.] I order the hon. member to leave the Chamber. [Another pause.] I order the hon. member to leave the Chamber.

Mr. Heitmann: I think that is rather harsh.

The Chairman: I will not allow anybody to defy the Chair.

Mr. Underwood: Perhaps I may be allowed to make an explanation.

The Chairman: I have ordered the member to leave the Chamber.

Mr. Underwood: Well, order what you like.

The Chairman: Sergeant at arms!

[Mr. Underwood left the Chamber.]

Mr. Scaddan: For the protection of hon. members on this side of the House I contend that the action adopted by you might have been more lenient than the ordering of the hon. member out of the Chamber.

The Chairman: The hon. member must not dispute the ruling of the Chair. While I am in this position I will not allow the Chair to be defied.

Mr. Scaddan: And while I am leader of the Opposition I am going to protect hon. members sitting on this side of the Chamber.

The Chairman: And I am going to protect the Chair.

Mr. Scaddan: There were two members on their feet together, the member for Swan and the member for Pilbara, and a dispute arose. There was no reason why you should not have called both those hon. members to order, and why they should not have been ordered to resume their seats.

The Chairman: I called upon the member for Swan. I said, "Mr. Jacoby"

two or three times, but the member for Pilbara would persist in speaking.

Mr. Scaddan : The member for Pilbara insisted on you hearing him. He said that he had been interrupted on a point of order. He was absolutely correct on that point. The member for Boulder and myself rose to a point of order as to whether we could discuss the source from which the money was to be drawn. That was the question under discussion when the member for Pilbara rose ; and when the member for Swan rose he stated that he rose to a point of order. I ask the member for Swan if that is not correct.

Mr. Jacoby : I rose to a point of order.

The Chairman : There is no justification for any hon. member defying the Chair. As the Committee knows, I called upon the hon. member to resume his seat, and he defied me. So long as I occupy this position, whether it be for a short period or for a long period, I will not allow any member to defy the Chair. I wish that to be clearly and distinctly understood. My position is in the gift of the House, and if I am not capable of fulfilling the duties to the satisfaction of the House I should be removed ; but while I continue to occupy the position I intend to uphold the dignity of the Chair. There is no justification for the member for Pilbara defying the Chair, and I did not take that step without giving him every opportunity to obey my ruling.

Mr. O'Loughlen : In justification for any action which the member for Pilbara may have taken to-night, I wish to point out that the member for Pilbara was speaking—

The Chairman : There can be no discussion ; there is no justification for defying the Chair.

Mr. O'Loughlen : I am not condoning any offence that was committed, but I desire to say that you distinctly called on the member for Swan to continue—

The Chairman : The hon. member must resume his seat ; there is no discussion.

Mr. Heitmann : With your permission, I want to say a word as to your ruling

The Chairman : It is out of order.

Mr. Heitmann : I do not want to be ruled out of order, but while upholding your view as Chairman that a member has no right to disregard your ruling, I say, with all due respect, that members of this Chamber have also a right to the protection of yourself ; and, as a member respecting your position, I think there is a way of giving your decisions to a member in this Chamber without ordering him. I think with a little forbearance on both sides these scenes would—

The Chairman : I thought the hon. member desired to discuss the clause. I cannot allow the hon. member to proceed.

Mr. Heitmann : What is the action you now propose to take in regard to the member for Pilbara ?

The Chairman : The Standing Orders provide what action is to be taken. The hon. member will see by Standing Order 73.

#### *Committee resumed.*

Mr. SCADDAN : On a matter affecting the expenditure of £40,000 the Committee should possess more particulars in regard to what attitude the Government proposed to take when the Bill was passed. Did the Government propose to immediately proceed with the construction of the railway without asking Parliament to appropriate the necessary money.

The Premier : I said so.

Mr. SCADDAN : The Premier should get the necessary authority from Parliament by introducing an Appropriation Bill.

The Premier : You said you did not want the railway to be hung up.

Mr. SCADDAN : Without desiring the railway to be hung up, he asked that things should be done in a constitutional manner ; but the attitude which the Premier had outlined was illegal and unconstitutional. Could the Attorney General or the Premier give one authority for acting in that manner ?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : There are plenty of authorities for acting in an emergency, and then getting an indemnity from Parliament afterwards.

In such instances the Government take the responsibility.

Mr. JACOBY: It was not proper to discuss the question as to how the money was to be provided when the Bill was in Committee. It would have been relevant on the motion that the Speaker should leave the Chair to go into Committee, but, having got into Committee, members could not discuss the question of ways and means.

The CHAIRMAN: A ruling had already been given that a discussion on the question of ways and means was out of order. The leader of the Opposition had been merely asking the Premier as to when he was going to construct the line and bring down the Appropriation Bill; accordingly the hon. member had been allowed to ask that question.

Mr. SCADDAN: Would the member for Swan explain why he had not raised that question of order when the Premier discussed the whole matter of ways and means.

The Premier: What has that to do with the clause?

Mr. Scaddan: It is a point of order.

The Premier: The Chairman has ruled.

Mr. Jacoby: I did not hear the Premier make any such speech.

Mr. PRICE: Would the Chairman tell hon. members how it would be possible for them to express their opinion on the expenditure of loan funds for that purpose, and, at the same time, support the passage of the Bill?

The CHAIRMAN: When the Premier or the Minister in charge of the Bill brought down his Loan Bill, asking Parliament to give permission for the appropriation of certain funds for the construction of that railway, hon. members would have ample opportunity of discussing the whole question so far as it concerned the Treasury and State finances. There could be no financial discussion on that clause.

Mr. PRICE: Was it to be understood that the Minister was in order in indicating and giving reasons for doing a certain thing, but a private member was not in order in protesting against it?

The CHAIRMAN: The Premier, after being repeatedly asked what it was

intended to do, had given an answer. That answer was permitted, but further discussion in that direction would not be permitted.

Mr. Price: I respectfully submit that if the latter remark was addressed to myself—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not addressed; the Committee generally was addressed. A ruling had already been given on the point and upheld by the Speaker. Members could discuss the clause as to giving the Government power to construct the line, but they could not debate as to where the funds were to come from.

Mr. COLLIER: We were told the line was to be built out of loan funds, and if one objected to its construction out of loan funds and desired that it should be constructed out of revenue—

The CHAIRMAN: You cannot discuss it at this stage.

Mr. COLLIER: Would it not be relevant to one's argument to give the Committee reasons for opposing the clause because the railway was to be built out of loan funds?

The CHAIRMAN: The clause did not indicate where the money was to come from. The Premier merely by way of interjection, and by way of answering a question, had indicated where the expenditure was to come from. Members must deal with the clause as it was printed.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 11.26 p.m.*

PAIRS.

Sir N. J. Moore

| Mr. Bath