

Act acquiring water for the purpose of such railways. Railways required a certain supply, and there were certain rights existing to-day, and to interfere with those rights would be an absolute injustice. He referred chiefly to the Midland Railway Company whose representative claimed that the clause did not protect them to the extent they should be protected. The matter had been inquired into closely by the representative of the company, the Parliamentary draftsman and himself, and a compromise had been arrived at in the form of the amendment.

Amendment put and passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 63 to 76—agreed to.

Clause 77—Proof of ownership or occupancy:

Mr. GEORGE: In the Bill submitted to the conference last year there was a schedule, but as it did not appear in this Bill he presumed it had been abandoned.

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Clause put and passed.

New clause—Exceptions:

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved —

That the following be added to stand as Clause 26:—"Notwithstanding anything in this part of this Act contained to the contrary:—(a.) The bed of any lake, lagoon, swamp, or marsh situated on land heretofore or hereafter alienated by the Crown, and declared by this Act to be deemed to have remained or to remain the property of the Crown, shall not exceed in width the width of the watercourse at its inlet to or outlet from such lake, lagoon, swamp, or marsh; and (b.) This part of this Act shall not apply to the bed of any lake, lagoon, swamp, or marsh situated on land heretofore or hereafter alienated by the Crown, and cultivated either wholly or in part at any time during the year, or capable of being drained and cultivated."

The Minister, he understood, had an explanation to make in regard to it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No objection would be offered to the proposed new clause, although he contended that provision was already made to prevent the Government or the Minister from taking

anything except the channel. He did not want any misconception, and while the Parliamentary draftsman considered that the amendment was not altogether necessary, it made the clause clearer. However, he moved an amendment to the proposed new clause—

That at the beginning of paragraph (b) the words, "Except to such extent" be inserted.

Amendment passed; the new clause as amended agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 10.41 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 20th August, 1913.

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

QUESTION — MARGARET RIVER-FLINDERS BAY RAILWAY, PRICE.

Hon. J. MITCHELL asked the Premier: 1, What price is to be paid for the Margaret River-Flinders Bay Railway purchased from Millars' Timber and Trading Co.? 2, Have the company's

freehold properties in the locality also been purchased by the Government, and at what price? 3, Is payment to be made in cash?

The PREMIER replied: The agreement has not yet been finally signed owing to the fact that a survey has to be made. When the agreement is signed it will be immediately placed upon the Table of the House.

BILL — FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister) and read a first time.

MOTIONS, POSTPONEMENT.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There are three motions on the Notice Paper standing in the name of the Hon. Frank Wilson, and I would like to explain that the hon. member is not well enough to be present at the House to-day. The motions might, therefore, be permitted to stand over until another day.

Mr. SPEAKER: In connection with motions of this character, the usual practice is that if a motion is not moved by an hon. member in person it lapses. Still, there is a provision that a motion may be moved by another hon. member in the absence of the hon. member who gave notice of the motion, provided that the hon. member has permission of the mover, and that the House agrees to that course.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have not the permission of the leader of the Opposition, neither am I ready to go on with the motions.

Mr. SPEAKER: I only make these remarks as a suggestion that in the future, if an hon. member has secured permission to move the adjournment of the consideration of a motion, standing in the name of another hon. member, that course may be followed.

Hon. J. Mitchell: May I move in that direction?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member says that he has not the permission of

the leader of the Opposition, but I am throwing out a hint which may be accepted by hon. members in the future.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The leader of the Opposition asked me to explain to the House that he was not well enough to attend this afternoon, and I take it that that would give me permission to move the postponement of the consideration of the motion. It was never understood that another member would not be permitted to follow that course.

Mr. SPEAKER: In the absence of the hon. member who has given notice of a motion, another hon. member may move the motion, provided he has the permission of the hon. member who gave notice. This, however, does not apply to subjects of a controversial character, except for the purpose of the postponement of the motion.

Hon. J. Mitchell: May I move the postponement of the motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, if the House is agreeable to that course.

On motion by Hon. J. Mitchell the consideration of motions 2, 3, and 4, standing in the name of the Hon. Frank Wilson, was postponed.

PAPERS—LAND TRANSFERS REGISTRATION, CONDITIONAL PURCHASE.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) moved—

That the file containing the instructions issued by the Minister for Lands forbidding the registration of transfers of conditional purchase land except under certain conditions be laid upon the table of the House.

He said: This is a matter which is well worthy of the serious attention of hon. members. I do not believe that the Minister for Lands had any intention of doing anyone any harm when he issued these instructions. It was said before the last general elections, and I daresay it was believed also, that speculation was rife in connection with land settlement, and that I had encouraged the speculator. After getting into office the Minister had the opportunity to inquire and ascertain what had happened, and

having done that he issued certain instructions which could only be justified if the country had suffered by reason of these transfers arising out of the sale and purchase of land. Unfortunately, the Minister for Lands is not here to-day, but as he is usually represented by the Honorary Minister, I desire to ask him, through that hon. gentleman, whether he now considers that the instructions were necessary, and whether he has found any speculators, and if so, who they are. The Premier made speeches which distinctly set out that speculation in land settlement was rife. There may have been some, but I still declare that I did not have any knowledge of it, nor of the existence of speculators, men who merely took up land with the object of selling it at an increased price. Of course, there were sellers and buyers of land, and there were applicants for land. No one can say that he at some time or another did not wish to secure a block of land for some friend of his, who probably would have been a good settler. If it is contended that buyers and sellers are speculators, I venture to say that all our settlers are speculators. Often a sale is rendered necessary by reason of the position in which the man who has applied for the land finds himself. Our selectors during recent years have responded magnificently to their responsibilities. That is shown by the fact that land has been improved at a greater rate than before. It will be remembered that a few years ago a little over 300,000 acres were under crop, and that over a million acres were improved. Now we have over a million acres under crop, and over five million acres improved. It will thus be realised that the people who have taken up land have done their best to improve it. There can be no doubt about that. If, because of the transfer of the land less money would be paid to the State by the person who had selected the land, if the State suffered by reason of the improvements to be done, if the improvement conditions had not to be passed on, then harm might be done. Harm might be done if the buyer exhausted all his resources in paying the seller and so had no means of carrying out the necessary improvements. Still, the Minister was

not justified in making regulations against transfers merely on the strength of hearsay, or indeed on the strength of a few cases of sale and purchase. I would like to know if the Minister can state a single instance in which the buyer exhausted himself financially by his purchase—of course the seller is left to take care of himself—in which the buyer of a block of land gave all he possessed for it and so found himself left on the land without any resources. I do not know of a case of land being bought to the injury of the buyer. Whether it be land recently taken up and improved, or land which has become freehold, the very fact of the land being sold provides opportunities for a greater number to acquire land than would be the case if there was absolutely no buying and selling of land except through the department. In considering this question we want to know, first, has any injury been done to the State and, secondly, has any injury been suffered by the buyer. Can it be contended by the Minister that under the system of survey before sale and allotment of blocks by the land board the speculator has been helped? Is it not a fact that under free selection the whole country was open to those who wished to select? Is it not a fact that under the old system the man who could afford to spend most in making a search was the man who secured the best block? Our policy was to set up a close classification of the land by our surveyors. Having acquired information through the surveyors, we had maps struck off which were exposed to all who desired to acquire land. No one had any advantage under the system of survey before selection, because all knew the quality and the position of the land, knew what the surveyor thought of it, what was the price to be paid and what amount the Agricultural Bank was prepared to advance. Having supplied this information, and notified the public that on a fixed date—generally a few weeks after the issue of these plans—the blocks would be allotted, we would receive applications for those blocks. We all know what happened. There was a tremendous rush for land. In this Chamber members complained that

people were unable to get land quickly enough under that system, and demanded that I should survey more land than my staff of surveyors were capable of dealing with. A debate took place in the House in which I was accused of failing in my duty because I had not enough land ready to satisfy everyone. Is it likely that before a land board of responsible officers, speculators would be encouraged? It was a thousand times more likely to happen under the system of free selection, which enabled one to go to the richest bit of swamp land or wheat land in a district, make his selection and get the price fixed at 10s. an acre. That was the system I found in operation when I went to the Lands Department, and to some extent it is the system to-day, because we never altogether set aside the system of free selection. The country, to a certain extent, lends itself to free selection. But wherever we contemplated building a railway we set aside the land in order that it might be subdivided. Subdivision is going on to-day the same as in those days. Many members say that too much was charged for land in my time, for land which was surveyed before selection. Before my time a similar system existed, and since my time the system which was adopted by me is being followed by the present Minister. The people who said I charged too much for the land said also that I was encouraging the speculator. Is it possible that I could have done both these things, that the man who wished to speculate would pay more than the land was worth? Of course the contention is ridiculous. Land to-day is worth very much less than it was two years ago, because the country is less prosperous and, owing to these regulations, farming pursuits have received a check. The effect of these regulations was to reduce the value of land, and so there is an outcry made by some hon. members, and by the people more directly concerned, that too much was paid for the land under the system of survey before selection. Yet it is a fact that the system is in operation to-day, notwithstanding the attacks made upon it. I say unhesitatingly that we charged a fair price for the land, and that under my regime

speculation was checked to an extent never previously attained. It is strange that the very highest-priced blocks of land are those most eagerly sought. I have a vivid recollection of the troubles of the land board. Sometimes they had as many as forty applications for one block, and it was always the highest-priced block within the area. Men came before the land board full of excitement and eager to get the particular blocks they were after. A good many were disappointed, and no doubt some of these circulated the idea that the man who was fortunate enough to secure a good block immediately became a speculator. I do not contend that the average man will not sell anything he purchases so long as he can make a profit on it. I do not know any member in the House who would hesitate to sell anything he bought if he could make a profit on the bargain; and I believe that under Section 56 of the Act, the sale of a block of land in the circumstances would be perfectly legitimate. I agree with the Minister that speculators who prey upon the generous selector should be stopped. However, I entirely disagree with the methods adopted by the Minister in his endeavour to stop those speculators. It is because I do differ in this respect that I am moving for these papers, in order that when we get them we may Table a further motion in connection with the matter. There is a more serious aspect of the case than I have mentioned thus far. The Minister knows that his instructions reduced the value of conditional purchase security. As soon as these instructions were issued it became evident to financial institutions, banks and merchants that they could no longer advance in safety, because there was no certainty that they would realise their security if the customer failed. Being by no means new to politics, the Minister must have known that this would happen. when he issued his instructions. By way of excuse, it is urged that he thought the Agricultural Bank would be able to do all the work the other banks had been doing. But he should have inquired carefully before determining that no land should be sold except under

certain conditions of improvement; conditions which were almost impossible for the poor man to carry out. Of course the man who has money can effect his improvements, but to the man of limited means these improvements were almost impossible, and it is the man of limited means who has been most seriously injured as the result of the Minister's instructions. The banks have refused to help, and many men have had to leave their holdings because they could not get the assistance which they probably would have got if the Minister's instructions had not been issued. The Minister's idea that the Agricultural Bank could do the work has apparently been exploded, because the Minister himself recently admitted that the money advanced by the Agricultural Bank should be used more or less for the purpose of effecting improvements, and not to assist the settler beyond the stage to which he had been carried by previous advances made exclusively for the purpose of improvements.

Mr. Munsie: The money advanced should be used for improvements and not for the purpose of helping a man to repay what he has borrowed from another bank.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am thankful for the interjection. Under the code of the hon. member it would seem that the man who went to the associated banks with a view to paying off his obligations to the Agricultural Bank, and so relieving that bank is now to be penalised. There is to be a discrimination. I say there should be no discrimination. If the law of the land is of advantage to the community, let it be of advantage to every man in the community. What does it matter whether the settler owes money to the associated banks or to a merchant? He should have equal treatment with others, wherever he may be. It entirely disproves the contention of the Minister. That there should be discrimination, if a man has gone to one of the associated banks—I say it is entirely wrong that when he comes back to the Agricultural Bank, that bank should say, "You have gone somewhere else; remain where you have gone,

notwithstanding that they are pressing you or charging you a higher interest. You have gone from the Agricultural Bank to an ordinary bank, and so we penalise you now." Is that the idea with which we passed the legislation liberalising the Agricultural Bank? Is there a man in the House who will say that there should be discrimination? If there is, he is not fit to occupy a seat here. Let these people be assisted. The regulation forbidding transfers has made it impossible for these people to borrow from the ordinary banks or to get the accommodation they once received from merchants or storekeepers. I am sure the Minister had it in mind that he would help them through the Agricultural Bank. Let him remember this, and let there be no discrimination. There are many men compelled by force of circumstances to sell. I have said time and again to the people of this country, "We have waited long enough for the rich man; let us see what the man without capital can do." Hundreds of men with strictly limited capital were helped by the Agricultural Bank, by a sympathetic Administration. They took the chance, and the great bulk of them have succeeded. If only 40 per cent. of these people who went on the land with limited means, having just enough to get them there—if only 40 per cent. of them succeeded, 40 per cent. that we got out of the rut and took off the labour market, then we did a magnificent work. I believe 80 per cent of these people will succeed. Certainly they will be helped towards success if the Administration be sympathetic, if the Government will see that they do not do foolish things, such as issuing instructions which immediately decrease values and which make it impossible for a man to render that assistance to the struggling selector which he would like to give him. If the Minister can show that these instructions were necessary, if he can show that they were in the best interests of the country, or of the man on the land, I shall be content, but I know he cannot show anything of the sort. Many men have given up their holdings because they realise that if they went on and spent money in improvements, and then failed to bor-

row money with which to complete the improvements required in five years in the case of non-residence, or 10 years in the case of residence, they would be unable to sell and they would lose their all.

Mr. Munsie: Give us an instance.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Is it right that instructions should be issued which make for this result? Is it right that men who take up land should have the conditions under which they think they hold the land changed by a scratch of the pen? Was it wise to do this? I am anxious to discuss this matter without any party bitterness; I want to be absolutely fair, and I want the House to assist me to have the regulations cancelled. There is no feeling of ill-will on my part, and I hope there is none on the part of the Premier, because this is too serious a matter for anything of that kind. Let us do what is right, and let us express what we believe to be best in regard to this matter. I repeat that men gave up their holdings rather than take the risk to which they were subjected under these regulations. Many men on the land to-day are in trouble because of the Minister's instructions. Securities are not as valuable as they were, and naturally the banks have taken special precautions. I daresay members on the Government side, who represent agricultural districts, particularly the member for Albany and the member for Williams-Narrogin, will tell the House that it is not as easy a matter to get a loan against conditional purchase land as it was previous to these instructions being issued.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: But we will tell you it is because of the bad season at the end of 1911 and because of the tightness of money.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The general managers of the banks demand that there shall be special care on the part of their branch managers in connection with these advances.

The Premier: Do you assert that they are not lending as freely as they were previously?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I assert that the banks are not lending as freely on conditional purchase land as they were pre-

viously. The bank managers went to the Minister and pointed out what would be the trouble; the Premier knows that. I am certain that many of the bank managers have spoken to the Premier about this very matter.

The Premier: They denied it when I spoke about the matter.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The banks have lent money freely in the State, and apart from conditional purchase lands have lent more freely than ever because of the circumstances in which the country was placed. The banks were doing their best for the people, but they have not lent against conditional purchase leases anything like as freely as they were doing previously; and the Premier, if he had money to invest, would not lend it against a conditional purchase lease saddled with these instructions. I have already said that I want this question discussed without party feeling or bitterness, and if the hon. members who interject will conduct the discussion from that point of view, perhaps some good may result from this motion. The Premier must know that it is no light matter for an hon. member on this side of the House to table a motion, because our numbers are only sixteen against thirty-four. All we can hope is that we may induce the Premier to be reasonable, and I believe if he is convinced that harm is being done by these instructions he will have them amended. I ask the House, are these instructions in accordance with the Land Act? I say they are not, and if the Minister had endeavoured to put his instructions into the form of regulations they would have been *ultra vires*.

The Premier: Why did you not take exception to them when they were laid on the Table?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have a right to take exception to them at any time I please, and in my opinion this is the right moment. If we had taken exception to them last session we would not have had the same opportunity of having them discussed, because many members on the Government side believed that the speculator was everywhere. I contend that the instructions are not in accordance

with the Land Act. The Minister has undoubtedly very extensive powers, powers to be used wisely and sympathetically. The Premier knows that until Sir Newton Moore's time the only restriction on transfers was in connection with homestead farms; except for them, no transfer was refused, and it was realised that no harm could come to the State by reason of sales. It was realised that the same payments and conditions of improvement are imposed against every holder.

The Premier: It all depends on the interpretation of the word "State." The people are the State; individuals make up the State.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The State could not lose any conditions of improvement or cash by allowing legitimate sales, but if the Premier wishes to protect the individual, let him say where the individual has suffered. I do not know that the Premier will bring down legislation to prevent betting.

The Premier: We might.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: To bring about the closing of hotels—

The Premier: We might.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And the running of motor-cars.

The Premier: We might.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Premier is going to protect every man against himself, then he will be right to protect the buyer of a conditional purchase holding against the seller, but he will find his hands full if he tries it. The Premier says that it is not the State but the individual whom he wishes to protect. If an individual has a liking for a block, and it has been improved in accordance with the Land Act, and residence conditions have been fulfilled—I agree with the Minister when he says that he insists on having those conditions fulfilled—in such a case the Minister has no right to interfere. If a block has been improved and resided on from the time it was acquired up to the time of the sale, the Minister should hesitate to withhold his consent. Whenever I thought the seller was making too much out of the sale, or was acting to the in-

jury of the buyer, I always refused a transfer, but to issue wholesale instructions against transfers in the way the Minister has done could have no other result than to injure all men on the land whether they wanted to sell or not. It is not only the man who wishes to sell who is hurt by these instructions; it is because of the interference with the value of the security that I object to the instructions. Will the Minister declare that sales are not as freely allowed to-day as ever they were? Agents say they can get transfers through and that there is never any objection. When these instructions came out, men who knew the ropes came from the country to Perth to induce the Minister to allow transfers to go through. Could good come to the State, or to the seller, or any advantage come to the buyer, under a system which provided that a man who knew his way about the Lands Department could induce the Minister to register a transfer? Men had to go to lawyers to get their transfers through, although previous to that time they could have had them registered without any trouble. I am not complaining about the way in which the Minister has administered the Act, because I believe he has been exceedingly sympathetic; he has allowed transfers to go through, although in some cases I believe the improvement conditions, particularly residence, were altogether ignored. If hon. members will turn up the rent list in which the conditions of residence are set out they will find much information which will enable them to make a comparison and see who has sold land recently. They will also be able to satisfy themselves that in many cases the residence condition has not been fulfilled. However, we are not dealing to-day with individual cases but with the broader issues. We want to ask the Minister to withdraw those instructions, and we want to make it apparent to him that the instructions can only work harm. The Minister is disposing of town blocks under the leasehold system. Are they for sale? In some cases the Minister allows more than one block to be selected at a time.

The Premier: Not now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And one applicant, if he pleases, may have a block in each of half a dozen townships.

The Premier: That has not been so for some time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes. If there are leasehold blocks at Katanning, Wagin, Northam and Kellerberrin, one man can select a block in each place.

The Premier: That has nothing to do with the leasehold system.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, but this system was introduced by a Minister who said there should be no speculation. Does the Minister think that a man who acquires four blocks under leasehold, and puts up on each a building and lets it, is not just as much a speculator as the person who sells his conditional purchase lease? Of course he is just as great a speculator. The Minister issued his instructions against the transfer of conditional purchase leases, and he made a new departure when he arranged that town and suburban blocks should be disposed of only under the leasehold system. But he has not taken the trouble to prevent speculation in those blocks. If hon. members will turn up the rent list they will see what has happened. A Minister who has issued instructions that must bear harshly on all producers, and who a few days afterwards set up leasehold conditions and under those conditions does not insist on residence, is not consistent, and I want him to be consistent. I do not believe in speculation, and I believe that my administration reduced it to a great extent.

Mr. Underwood: Oh!

Hon. J. MITCHELL: At any rate, it could not be carried on to the same extent as was possible when the member for Pilbara acquired his block under the system of free selection. The hon. member was not required to go before the land board, which did away with speculation to a large extent. But I plead guilty to having increased the desire for land, to having filled the people with a wish to become agriculturists, and to having increased the value of all land, because of the demand that was created for it in my time. I plead guilty to that, and if I had

power to-morrow it would be my endeavour to again fill the people with a desire to be possessed of some of Western Australia's broad acres—acres of the cheapest land which can be acquired anywhere in the civilised world and under more favourable conditions than prevail elsewhere, and certainly when it is acquired the Government do help the owner to a greater extent than is the case anywhere else. I contend also that when the Minister issued these instructions he provided an opportunity for the buyer to the detriment of the seller. The seller is often a man who is compelled by force of circumstances to leave his holding. There are altogether over 50,000 conditional purchase blocks and it is no wonder that some people are all the time for selling them. When the Minister determined by his instructions that transfers should not be registered he prevented the holder of land from negotiating as he did before, and as he was able to do when he was in a position of having a little capital to spare. If a man, and particularly a working man, goes on to a block and does his best, he should be able to sell when the opportunity comes to do so at a profit, for it is an advantage to the settler and to the State as the seller thereby is provided with the means to start again. Certainly no harm can be done and no harm is done in such circumstances, but harm is done if the transfer of the block is forbidden under the Minister's instructions, or if the seller is squeezed in consequence of those instructions—I do not say by the Minister—but by the would-be buyer. The intending buyer is in a position to say to the seller, "These instructions are against you. I will not give you as much as I would have given you before. I will wait until you are squeezed by your creditors and then I will be able to buy the land more cheaply." Ministers may laugh, but there is a genuine trouble existing in the country, and it is largely the result of these instructions issued by the Minister for Lands.

The Premier: Who is laughing?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Ministers will urge that the bad season had something to do with the difficulties with which set-

tlers are faced. I do not say that the bad season has not had some effect, but I say that the bad season of 1911—the season of 1912 was fair—was not largely responsible, but that many men were squeezed off their holdings not because of the bad season but because they were unable to borrow money on them in consequence of the Minister's instructions.

Mr. Lander: Not many.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: When we say that a man must have five years' improvements done under residence conditions before he can sell and ten years' improvements in the case of non-residence, and that in both cases he must be on the land for two years before he can sell, we are not improving his chances; in fact, we are decreasing them. I know that the Premier does not wish to do that. I do not think that anyone wishes to injure the settlers in the way in which these instructions are injuring them. I am pointing out the effect they are having in order that the Government may change their methods, because it is wrong that this has been done. Under non-residence conditions no transfer is allowed for ten years, but special cases may be dealt with by the Minister. The Minister said he would throw land open only under non-residence conditions. Will the Minister say that he has not allowed many men to transfer their holdings from Section 55 to Section 56?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: He cannot prevent them; they have the legal right.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Will the Minister tell us that he has prevented it? He had as much right to prevent such transfers as he had to prevent people from taking up land under Section 6.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: He cannot prevent it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Minister cannot prevent it, all they would have to do would be to take up land under Section 55 and transfer it on the following day to Section 56. That would be ridiculous and if the Minister permitted it he would be stultifying himself. Those in the know would simply take up the land under Section 55 and transfer it afterwards to Section 56, just as a man can take up a town

block to-day and sell it to-morrow. If the Minister acted in that way the position would be a hundred times worse. Dozens of men, I am told, have transferred their holdings from Section 55 to Section 56, and some of them, I know, since these instructions were issued.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The Act gives them the power to do so, and it cannot be stopped except by Parliament.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not wish to repeat what I have said, but if the Act gives that power, the Minister has no right to stop the sale under Section 56, because it is the law of the land and surely the Minister is not above the law of the land. The law says in effect that a man who sits in Parliament or who wishes to make a home for his son, may select under Section 56, so long as he does 50 per cent. more in the way of improvements, and he cannot select a second block unless he takes up his residence on the block. That is reasonable, and it is right, it is the law of the land, but the Minister says, "I will not do it, although it is the law." This is one of the things to which we members on this side of the House object. The Minister says, "If a man holds a thousand acres under residence, I will allow him to have a second thousand under non-residence conditions." The law, however, says that a man may have a thousand acres under residence and a thousand acres under non-residence, and that he can select the clause embodying the conditions under which he will take those areas up. It is perfectly clear in the Act, and the Minister should ask Parliament to alter the Act before determining that a man should not take up land under Section 56. How many members of this House hold land under Section 56? Could any one of them fulfil the residence conditions on his block? Is there any member in the House who holds land under any other section than 56? Are we going to make a law for ourselves, and another law for other people? That is not fair. Let the Minister say that he desires an amendment of the Land Act, and let him bring it down, and if the House passes it let him act upon it.

but in the meantime let him be true to his trust and true to his country.

Mr. Lander: He has been true in issuing these instructions.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I venture to say there is not a man in this community possessing an atom of sense who will say that the Minister has acted rightly in issuing these instructions. At the present time the Minister is helping the Midland Railway Company to sell their farms along their railway line. I do not object to that at all, but we have a Minister who says that one of his own selectors shall not sell his land to another would-be selector, while at the same time he is helping the Midland Railway Company to sell their improved farms along the Midland railway line. Is the Minister going to continue to help the Midland Company to do something which he says that members of this House and members of the community must not do? According to a London paper, Mr. Gilbert, of the London office, is endeavouring to sell some of the Midland Company's land for the Midland Company. I realise that most of the harm that comes to the world comes from the well-intentioned activity of men of immature judgment due to inexperience and want of capacity.

Mr. Heitmann: Where did you get that?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I borrowed it from the hon. member for Cue. It is one of the wisest things he ever said. I believe his words are sometimes words of wisdom. In making the statement to which the hon. member referred, I wish to convey the idea that I do not think the Minister has acted viciously in this matter, but I believe that the Minister does not know; his intentions are all right, but his judgment is all wrong, and his want of experience has led him into this difficulty which has caused trouble to dozens of settlers and ruination to not a few of them.

Mr. Lander: To the sharks.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I wish a shark would swallow the hon. member.

Mr. Allen: It would take a whale.

The Premier: He might be a modern Jonah.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister has no doubt seen the disastrous effects of his

administration, and that fact has been impressed upon him by many people. Writers in the Press have given prominence to it, and the hon. member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston), I have no doubt, has told the Minister what effect it is having, and other hon. members, including the Attorney General as a land owner, probably have mentioned the matter to the Minister. Having seen that his instructions are wrong and that they are only working harm, will not the Minister now ask this House to approve of an amending Land Bill? Will he not give Parliament and the country the right to say that the Act shall be altered? Is he going to assume the full responsibility of declaring what the land policy of the country shall be? We have seen the disastrous effect of his policy in the falling off of selection. There has been an appreciable decrease in the area under crop considering all the circumstances, because people have been deterred and discouraged by reason of the administration, and particularly of this instruction. Will hon. members who support the Government realise that apart from finance, no question is of such vital importance to the Government of the country as the administration of the land laws? Nothing is so easily influenced by injudicious actions on the part of the Government as this question of land tenure. The tenure of the land, as the Attorney General knows, should be definite; it should be fixed; it should be safe and it should not be subject to the whim of any Minister or of any party in Parliament. Parliament having considered the question of our land tenures and having fixed them, the Act should be honestly and fairly and sympathetically administered by those who are responsible for its administration.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: What have these instructions to do with the tenure of land?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The Act places the administration at the Minister's discretion.

The Attorney General: Sympathetically for whom, the settler or the speculator?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I say it should be sympathetically administered for the

benefit of the man who works on his land, and of the man who sits in this House and has his land worked for him, and for the benefit of all who acquire land.

The Attorney General: That is how the law is administered.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is not. If these instructions were administered in their entirety the effects would be even more disastrous than they have been. What I claim is sympathetic and proper administration for all people. A man who selects land under Section 56 has as much right to sympathetic treatment as the man who has a homestead farm or a block under Section 55 and resides on it. I am not defending the man who takes up land under Section 55, and who does not reside on it, and who sells it again. I am asking that the administration of the Land Act should be fair, and I have shown that these instructions are not operating honestly and fairly to the people in the country.

Mr. Heitmann: Give us instances to show that they are not operating fairly.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I hope that names will not be mentioned in this House—the hon. member knows that they cannot be mentioned—but let him ask any lawyer in Perth, or let him consult the files of the *West Australian* and see the number of forced sales advertised from day to day, or let him go to the Agricultural Bank and he will get some information there.

Mr. George: Yes, look at the advertisements of sales.

Mr. Heitmann: You are moving the motion; give us some instances.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If Ministers and members supporting them are foolish enough to shut their eyes to the position—the Attorney General is a lawyer, and he has probably some of these cases before him—

The Attorney General: They exist only in your fertile imagination.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If Ministers are willing to shut their eyes to the harm which is being done as a result of these instructions, then all I can say is that I have done my duty by pointing out the facts to them. Being one of only sixteen members sitting on this side of the House,

I realise that I have no chance of getting carried any motion to which the Government are opposed. I did not approach the matter altogether with the idea that I could get the motion carried, but with the idea of making public what has happened in regard to these instructions and the effect they are having on the community. I want to inform the House of the position, and have the matter fairly dealt with in the interests of the country and of the man on the land. There is no one to-day who deserves more sympathetic treatment than the man who is striving to develop the back country. We have a duty to him, and we ought to discharge it. I have finished what I had to say under increasing difficulties, because my friends opposite will interject, and my words are sometimes lost, or I am afraid they have fallen on deaf ears. I now merely wish to move the motion standing in my name, and express the hope that the people concerned will be considered. I trust that this matter will be dealt with apart from ordinary party warfare.

Mr. MONGER (York): I second the motion.

On motion by the Premier debate adjourned.

MOTION — WICKEPIN-MERREDIN RAILWAY ROUTES.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) moved—

That a map be laid upon the Table of the House showing the position of—1, The surveyed route of the Wickepin-Merredin Railway. 2, The route of same as recommended by the Advisory Board.

He said: I am asking for this map as I wish at a later time to have this information before me so that I may table another motion. There has been a diversion of the line, as everyone in this House knows. The matter was impressed on the House by the hon. member for York (Mr. Monger) at different times, and he exchanged words with the Minister for Works in that connection. I do not wish to say any more about the

diversion, except that under our system we had an Advisory Board which marked the map showing just where the line should go. The present Government when they came into office said they knew as much as any Advisory Board, and would put the line where they pleased. The Minister for Works took advantage of the position, as he had the power to do, and put down the line in opposition to the report of the Advisory Board.

The Minister for Works: The hon. member surveyed five different routes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Land values are, of course, affected by the proximity of a railway, or by a proposed railway. This question of land values is of great importance to the settlers in this district, and in order to deal with the question I want the plan for which I am asking. Values were put up by me on land that was to be close to the railway, a perfectly reasonable and legitimate thing for me to do, as it must be realised that the man near to the railway station is in a much better position than the man who has to go four, eight, or ten miles, and he should have to pay a bit more. That system has not been disputed by the present Government. I feel I have a responsibility to the people whom I settled there.

The Minister for Works: You have a big burden to carry.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They would like to settle you back.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not know what the hon. member means by "settle you back." I do know the hon. member would like to set me back, but neither he nor others opposite can do so. I was responsible for increasing the value of the land which was to be on the line or close to the line, as marked by the Advisory Board. The Minister for Works deviated the line, with the result that land which was to be near to the proposed railway, has now become very distant from it; the man who paid a low price for his land because it would be further away now has the railway, and the man who paid the high price is left without it. It is because I wish to deal

with this matter of values, and give fair consideration to the people settled there, that I desire to have this plan, and when I get it I mean to move for a reduction of values where the people expected to get a railway and it has been denied them. I know that the Government will not object to lay the plan on the Table, and I do not think hon. members will oppose me when I move that these people should be treated fairly. Recently the Minister for Lands visited the wheat district, and was asked to reduce the value of the land.

The Attorney General: Value or price?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The price. The Minister said he would not reduce it in a bad year. If we have built railways that have been promised, and provided the roads, water supply, and harbour facilities, that have been promised, and have advanced money from the Agricultural Bank which the people had the right to demand of us, then there is no reason why the price should be reduced; but if these things have not been done, the people have a good case to make out against us. The Minister will probably tell us he means to extend railway facilities to these people. That is all right, but in the meantime they have not got them. The Minister should do something to compensate these people for the absence of a line in the meanwhile. The man who is out there and has cleared his land in the expectation of a railway, and has prepared his land to receive the seed, expecting to grow a crop, should be fairly treated. I expect we shall be able to do this if the Government say they will build a second line opposite the Wickapin-Merredin line to serve the settlers. I believe that the system of giving advances on wheat stored in anticipation of a railway is a good scheme. I understand it has been agreed to be done at Esperance, but it was wrong in that case, because Parliament had decided that that line should not be built. The idea is right, however, if applied to districts where lines have been authorised, and particularly where the Minister is now building railways. If advances are given on stored wheat de-

velopment would be more rapid, and settlers would be able to carry on their operations because the line is being built, and the Government should not lose by the transaction.

Mr. George: They have a good precedent.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It was a pity that this line was deviated, but the trouble can to some extent be obviated by the building of the second line. The Minister for Works will understand that in asking for the plan my desire is to know what is to be done for these settlers, and to have an opportunity of proving that they should be treated fairly. I have opened up the question so that we may have an opportunity of discussing the position of those who have suffered through the deviation. The Government have taken the responsibility of the deviation, and now the House must take the responsibility of saying what can fairly be done for the people. I hope that the Minister will tell me it is his intention that the people east of the Wickepin-Merredin line shall have the railway facilities to which they are undoubtedly entitled.

Mr. MONGER (York): I second the motion.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth): Now that the hon. member for Northam has submitted this motion I sincerely trust that the Minister for Works will place on the Table of the House plans of the whole five routes. When the Minister took up his present position he found that there had been a squandering of money, possibly to buy votes. Anyone can go up now in that district and they will find that there are many settlers who are very well satisfied with the deviation along which the railway has been built. There seems to have been a great deal of stress laid upon the Wickepin-Merredin line, but not a word has been said about Yorkrakine and the poor beggars up there, and even in connection with the Dowerin-Merredin line where there was so much corruption, and where they jerked that railway—

Mr. Monger: Is the hon. member in order in referring to corruption?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know to whom the hon. member is ascribing corruption. He has not charged anyone.

Mr. George: And he also said that the line had been jerked out.

Mr. LANDER: I may say, Mr. Speaker, that I do not intend you to know. I trust that the Minister for Works will do what the member for Northam is asking, and also that he will try and make some provision quickly for the settlers who are beyond Emu Hill and Mount Arrowsmith. I would like to see some consideration shown them in the way of deferring their rents.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not discussing the motion.

Mr. LANDER: I hope some provision will be made as soon as possible for the construction of a railway out to those settlers.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): I propose to move an amendment to the motion submitted by the hon. member, but before doing so I want to express my admiration of the courage of the hon. member in attempting to deal with this question. If there is one district which has a grievance against the hon. member it is that particular district, and I want to congratulate him on his admission that he settled those people on the land. He did indeed settle them in the truest sense of the word. We know that he promised railways in all directions.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You know nothing of the sort.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do know that, and I know also that he issued plans showing railways proposed in various portions of that particular area, and in every case the people have been disappointed. Had the hon. member stuck to the advisory board's route, one could understand him moving this motion, but when he and his Government deliberately took away—

Hon. J. Mitchell: You took away.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member knows full well that there were five different propositions.

Mr. Monger: Nothing of the sort, and no one knows that better than yourself.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: The five railways were promised by the Wilson Government.

Mr. Monger: That is absolutely wrong.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: What position now does this Government find itself in? We could only build on the one route and we had to disappoint, in any case, three. The member for Northam does not make an appeal on behalf of the people who are on the west; they are all right. Seeing that we built the railway on the west side the hon. member now makes an appeal on behalf of the people on the east side. This kind of thing reminds me of the man who gets into financial difficulties, finds himself in a hopeless mess, and then goes to the racecourse in the hope of putting himself right. The hon. member knows well, to use a vulgarism, that his name is mud with the people in this particular district.

Mr. George: What?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: The hon. member's name is mud, and knowing full well the opinion he is held in by the people in those parts he comes along at the eleventh hour, when a number of the settlers down there are absolutely ruined, and he says "I want to get the plans so as to see what should be done to help these people," the people he settled on the land, and as I said, settled in the truest sense of the word. What was the position when the present Government took office? There had been a lot of talk about five different railways on one authorisation of Parliament.

Mr. Monger: Nothing of the sort.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: And nothing had been done in the way of building the line. They got the authorisation of Parliament for various railway propositions, but they did nothing in the way of building any of them. As a matter of fact, they slackened up on railway construction. Then, in order to try and get votes when the elections were approaching, they said to one section of the people down there, "It is all right, return us and we will make it right for you." The same thing was told to the other section. A deputation came

down and said, "If you are not going to build the railway in such a direction, we will vote against you," and the member for Northam replied to them that it would be all right and that the Government would put a railway down for them as well. They promised four different routes in order to get four different lots of votes.

Mr. Monger: No one knows better than yourself that that is not true.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: I am going to amend the motion so that I may be able to bring down plans of all the surveyed routes and the proposed routes. The matter was investigated and the select committee which inquired into it took the then Minister for Works to task for having made a hopeless mess of this matter. I am prepared to say that the then Minister for Works did not understand the question, and he allowed himself to be influenced by others who understood less, and declared that he would send a survey party out on that proposed route. After he got a start, there was another proposal from another deputation who said, "Do not do any more on that particular route, because we have another proposal"; and so the matter went on until the elections came. It was clear that of the five routes which were proposed, the advocates of four would have to be disappointed. What has the present Government done? We took the view that every right-thinking man would have taken, and that was to do a fair thing to those who had been settled in that locality by the member for Northam. We knew, and everyone who looked at the plan had to admit, that it would be quite impossible to serve the area with one railway. The member for Northam started out with four or five propositions. The present Government does not propose to build five, but we do intend to build two so as to serve the area in accordance with the generally accepted policy of the country. We built the line to serve the people on the western side and we now propose to build another line to serve the people on the eastern side.

Hon. J. Mitchell: When?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member has declared that we should have built a line between the east and the west, but then the people on the west would have been isolated. That is what the hon. member wants to do. He wants to declare that there is no need for two railways, that we should have built one railway, but by building that one, those on the west would have been quite isolated, in the same way as the hon. member isolated the people in the Yorkrachine district, and practically ruined some of the best settlers in this country. He would have isolated the people on the eastern side and so ruined a few more. His name is not too good to-day amongst the people in those localities, and if I had done what he wanted to do, the position would have been much worse than it is.

Hon. J. Mitchell: My name, at any rate, is better than yours down there.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am prepared to put my name against that of the hon. member, and if he wants a little more information I may refer him to some recent transactions of his. I am in the fortunate position in this country of having done nothing that I need be ashamed of, and I have always paid 20s. in the pound. I have been in politics longer than the hon. member and I defy anyone to point the finger of scorn at me. I would, however, be ashamed to be in the hon. member's shoes in regard to recent transactions with which he has been associated.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I protest against the Minister's remarks; he must say what he means and takes the consequences.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member has stated that his name is as good as mine; I say it is not.

Mr. Underwood: Let it go at that.

The Premier: Let's take a vote on it.

MR. SPEAKER: Order! I think we might allow this question of names to stand aside for the time being. The Minister must discuss the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member will not be so disorderly and make interjections, I will be able to proceed without transgressing the Standing Orders. In this particular area there

are people who have a genuine grievance against the previous Government.

Mr. Monger: Against the present Government.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have on more than one occasion expressed my sympathy for these people, but I cannot do more than I have done in the way of expediting the construction of the Wickepin-Merredin line and also the commencement of the other line so as to serve the other settlers at the earliest moment. I intend to do my best to help those people out of the difficulty they have been placed in by the hon. member and his friends. Again we have to bear in mind that the hon. member promised to construct railways to the backyards of many settlers, and that he also put up the price of land because railway communication was going to be so close to those people, with the result that not only have the settlers east of the Wickepin-Merredin line been left lamenting as far as the railway is concerned, but they have been penalised by having had the cost of their land increased out of all proportion to its real value. Then we must bear in mind that those people went there under a distinct promise made by the previous Government that railway communication would be provided for them within a reasonable time. But there was absolutely no effort made further than to pass a Bill through Parliament. They got the authority of Parliament to do that which they failed to do. It would have been interesting to find out where the Government really intended to build it. They certainly would have disappointed the people on four routes. They only had authority to build one line and they had five routes along which to construct it. As far as the hon. member's motion is concerned, I want the people to know exactly the various proposals and it is with that object in view that I propose to amend it. If the motion, as amended, is carried, I will see that each of the various routes is shown on the map in different colours, so that it will be possible to see exactly the details of the five proposals. I move, therefore—

That paragraphs (1) and (2) be amended to read as follow:—(1) The

Wilson Government's various surveys and proposed routes of the Wickepin-Merredin railway, (2) including the route as recommended by the advisory board.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth): I second the amendment.

Mr. George: Is that what you call check-mate?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

The Attorney General: No, the map will be checked.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to disconnect these amendments. The Minister for Works will require to move the amendments in sections as he desires them to be inserted. The first will be that there be inserted after "the" in the first paragraph the words "Wilson Government's various."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then I move an amendment—

That after "the" in the first paragraph the words "Wilson Government's various" be inserted.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam, on amendment): I have no objection at all to the amendment, no objection to the various trial surveys which were made being shown on the plan; but I have the strongest possible objection to the attitude taken up by the Minister for Works when he says that we made these surveys in order to get votes, and infers that I was responsible for the multiplicity of surveys. No one knows better than the Minister that these routes were surveyed by the Works Department.

The Minister for Works: Under instructions.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They had no instructions from me. It is perfectly patent to any man who has any idea at all of railway building, that you have to make two or three trial surveys before the best route can be selected.

The Minister for Works: No. It might be necessary to run a traverse to get an idea of the country, but you would never run more than the one survey.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I know nothing of the reasons that actuated the then Minister for Works in making three

or four surveys. Certainly it was not done to get votes, nor to delude the people into the belief that they would get five railways. None but an absolute fool could be deceived into thinking that a Government with authority to build only one railway would be likely to build five. Is it not an insult to the intelligence of those people to be told by the Minister that they were hoping to get five railways? These surveys were in the wrong place, and when I heard that they were being made I protested very strongly. However, it was determined by the present Minister that the line should go to the west of the lakes, where it is to-day. Now the Minister for Works has thought fit to move this amendment because he wishes to hide as much of his own work as he can. He thinks that if he gives us these five surveys he will be—

Mr. Dwyer: Illuminating your work.

The Attorney General: With beautiful coloured lines.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The position is that one line has been built and I desire the plans showing that route. I have no objection to the House being given all the information the Minister can put on the plan. I accept this amendment without any objection.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I am glad indeed that the mover of the motion has accepted this amendment. It serves to show, at any rate, that he feels that the Government with which he was connected have nothing to be ashamed of in connection with this particular railway. The showing of the five different routes will simply demonstrate to the people of the State that the previous Government were taking the best possible care to see that they secured the best route available. The member for Northam has accepted the amendment, and I am satisfied that when we do get the map laid on the Table it will be possible for hon. members to see exactly what are the rights and wrongs of this particular proposal. I think the House is to be congratulated upon the fact that the member for Northam has the courage to face even the redoubtable Minister for Works on this question. We have heard from

my friend the member for York (Mr. Monger) on various occasions—

The Premier: On numerous occasions.

Mr. Dwyer: In season and out of season.

Mr. GEORGE: I do not think a complaint regarding this railway could be held to be out of season at any time. The member for York has voiced the opinions of the settlers in this particular locality, and whether or not the Government can show that they have put this railway in the best possible position, it is certain that the member for York has shown the necessity for consideration being given to a number of the settlers who are beyond the range of the railway.

Mr. Munsie: Which the present Government admit, too.

Mr. GEORGE: I am not concerned with the present or any other Government. The only thing I am concerned about is that the people who are settled on that land shall have their proper claims properly considered and dealt with, whether by this or some other Government. What does it now matter which Government have done a wrong to the settlers? What the member for York is looking for is a remedy for the undoubted wrong which has been done. I must congratulate the Minister for Works on having taken the course he did in saying that he will give us all five of the routes. Indeed, I had intended to move an amendment on these same lines, because I think the House is about sick and tired of the eternal controversy on this particular line. The only thing that can come out of it is, not so much a determination as to who made the mistake, as the information as to who are going to help the settlers lying beyond the range of this railway. I am not particularly concerned as to whether the present or the past Government made the mistake; but what the country is concerned about is, that if a mistake has been made it should be rectified. I look upon this motion and the amendment as the first practical step towards enabling the House to find out where we are in regard to this railway.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly): I am glad the member for Northam has accepted the

amendment moved by the Minister for Works. From what I know about this line, the position was created by the deputation which waited on the then Minister for Works some years ago to get a railway from Wickiepin to Merredin with the object of facilitating the conveyance of Collie coal to the Eastern Goldfields. That is the crux of the whole trouble. I know the country in that locality, and I am convinced that the line should have gone up to Kunjin and thence east to Korrijin, and east to Kurrenkutten, passing on the eastern side of the Kurrenkutten lake. Undoubtedly, the land realised big prices in consequence of the anticipation that the line would be taken on that route.

The Minister for Works: How could it realise big prices when it was not up for competition? The price was fixed by our friend, the ex-Minister for Lands.

Mr. HARPER: I was going to take up some of the land myself on the understanding that the railway would go in that direction. I am sure that when the plans are put on the Table it will be clearly shown that the land on the eastern side of Kurrenkutten lake is all selected and occupied. This line should never have been built as a Collie-Eastern Goldfields line. The idea is monstrous. There is sufficient firewood on the goldfields to last them for the next 20 years. The line should have been purely an agricultural one. It is a fallacy and a fraud that such a thing should have been perpetrated. The line should have gone east of Kurrenkutten lake and given facilities to the settlers in that part.

The Minister for Works: What about the people on the west?

Mr. HARPER: The Quairading-Nunagin railway and the railway from Brookton to Kunjinn are only about 25 miles apart, and so those people to the west would not have been very badly off in any case. Twenty-five miles between the two lines means a radius of 12½ miles as the crow flies. Certainly it might have been a disadvantage to some of those settlers, but they would not have been nearly so great in number as those others who have been put to great inconvenience, not to say

brought to the brink of ruination, through not having this Wickepin-Merredin railway further east.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. HARPER: As I was saying before tea there has been a lot of bungling in connection with the Wickepin-Merredin railway, probably not altogether due to the present Minister for Works, but due to some extent to a former Minister for Works who gave a favourable reply to a deputation introduced by the member for Collie to ask for more direct communication between the Collie coalfields and the goldfields. I say this line should have been carried from Wickepin to Kunjin, thence easterly via Korrijin to Kurrenkutten. The alteration of the route was a great injustice to the people at Kunjin, and also to the people further east.

Mr. SPEAKER: I want to point this out before the hon. member goes any further: I know his desire is to speak to the motion, but the motion is not now under discussion. The amendment is under discussion, and that amendment is that three words shall be inserted, namely, "Wilson Government's various." I think it would be far better to take a vote on that amendment—of course, it is within the province of hon. members to decide one way or another—and the hon. member can continue his remarks later on when the motion is under discussion.

Mr. HARPER: If that is the right line of procedure to pursue I am quite agreeable, but I thought I was speaking to the motion and the amendment conjointly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Although the hon. member has spoken, this will not deprive him of his opportunity later.

Mr. MONGER (York): Naturally I can hardly allow an opportunity like this to pass, and as you, Mr. Speaker, have very rightly said, at the present moment we have to confine our remarks to the amendment moved by the Minister for Works. We have from time to time debated the question of this railway to a very considerable extent, and in the history of our railway construction I do not think any railway matter has been more debated than this particular line, and

deservedly so. I would like to go back for a moment to the introductory remarks made when this railway was first introduced in this House in December, 1911, when the only opposition to the Advisory Board's recommendation emanated from the member for Collie, and during the whole of the debate and arguments that have taken place since I have had but one desire in view, and that was to see that the recommendations of the Advisory Board were given effect to. As far as I can remember, when the Bill was originally introduced the line was to be constructed in accordance with the schedule then attached to the Bill. Apart from the member for Collie, few members spoke on the Bill. The Minister for Works moved the adjournment of the debate on one occasion, and he was going to make one of those, no doubt great, speeches of his, but on that particular occasion after moving the adjournment of the debate, he was suddenly called away, and that speech which he was going to deliver is not recorded in *Hansard*. I have heard the hon. member say that had he been present the Bill would never have been given effect to.

The Minister for Works: I never said that.

Mr. MONGER: Well, the hon. member intended to. He is so given to twisting and twirling that one never knows what he is referring to.

The Minister for Works: That would mean that I was going to oppose the Bill, which was not the case.

Mr. MONGER: I have no desire this evening to be at all personal. On the many occasions I have spoken on this matter I think I have been as personal as the privileges of the House would permit one member to be towards another in my remarks in regard to the Minister for Works. To-night I have no desire to trespass on the ground I have already gone over so frequently, but I do want to repeat what I have said on more than one occasion that the original route as recommended by the Advisory Board was in the interests of that great agricultural area, and the best route that could have been selected, and I do not think that any other man in Western Australia than the Mini-

ster for Works would have deviated from it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Mr. Daglish promised to.

Mr. MONGER: Mr. Daglish promised to support the suggestions that emanated from the member for Collie that the line should be taken from Wickepin in a north-easterly direction to a point 50 miles south from Merredin. That is all that I or any settler in the district desires, namely, that a point 50 miles south from Merredin should be the junctioning point of the line from Wickepin. What did the Minister for Works say, and what did the Acting Minister for Works tell us on one occasion? That the Government were going to avail themselves of the full deviation limit given to them by the Act. I wish to congratulate the hon. gentleman on having done that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I did not say anything of the kind. I said I was going to keep within the provisions of the Act.

Mr. MONGER: The hon. member said that he was going to avail himself of the full 10-mile limit of deviation. He has done so and I congratulate him.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That was the day you lost your temper.

Mr. MONGER: It is not often I do so. The amendment moved by the Minister is to bring within the scope of the motion certain surveys made under the auspices of the Wilson Administration, but the hon. member did not tell us the attitude he adopted when he came into power.

The Minister for Works: I stopped the lot.

Mr. MONGER: You adopted one which suited yourself and your friends.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. MONGER: I am desirous that all possible publicity should be given in the way of showing to the public the routes surveyed or partly surveyed by the late Administration, and more particularly do I want to see every publicity given to the original route recommended by the Advisory Board, and along which a great deal of settlement took place. I want to

see that those people who selected on the Advisory Board's recommendation and on plans issued from the Lands Department, once contradicted and repudiated by the Minister, are fairly dealt with. I want to see that justice is meted out to those settlers who, on the representations of a previous Administration, took up land in accordance with the Advisory Board's recommendation, and now the line has been deviated to such a considerable extent I hope that proper and due allowance will be made. That, I understand, was the reason for the motion moved by the member for Northam this evening, and on that motion I shall have an opportunity of speaking later.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): Is it possible, Mr. Speaker, to move another amendment because this specifies the "Wilson Government's" routes? If any other route has been surveyed by any Government, whether before Responsible Government or since, I should like to have it.

The Minister for Works: Only one Government were interested in the surveys.

Mr. GEORGE: Did not the Moore Government do something?

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. GEORGE: If the amendment is carried it will bring out all I want.

The Minister for Works: The map has been on the wall of the Chamber already.

Mr. Underwood: We saw the map last session.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson) moved a further amendment—

That after "surveyed" the words "and proposed" be inserted.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): There is no question of a proposed route because the line, I understand, has already been laid down. I suggest that the Minister should alter his amendment from "proposed" to "present" route.

The Minister for Works: That will be included, of course.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, there is no proposed route; it has been adopted, and the line has been laid down. I want the

present route of the line. Of course I cannot carry any amendment—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can move an amendment to any amendment.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But I know there will be no chance of getting it carried. To save time I suggest that the amendment be altered from "and proposed" to "and present" route.

The Minister for Works: The present route will be shown.

Mr. George: You are going to show everything?

The Minister for Works: The present route is one of the proposed routes, and one of the partially surveyed routes. The Wilson Government started the very first survey, and it was the one on which the line has been built.

Mr. George: You must have done a lot of work in a very short time.

The Minister for Works: We have done so.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I want the present route laid down. Why will not the Minister include it in the amendment?

The Minister for Works: I will explain why.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The words "the proposed route" do not mean anything. I hope the Minister will agree to my suggestion, or he might alter the amendment by making it read, "the proposed and present" routes.

The Premier: Make it "all" routes.

Mr. George: That is all we want.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The amendment will specify the Wilson Government's various surveyed routes and the proposed route. That will be unfair. I want the route of the line as surveyed and laid down.

The Minister for Works: You will get it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have no wish to discuss the matter with the Minister, but I hope the House will insist on the Minister giving it. We do not get all that the Minister promises us. We have not got some information which was asked for the other day, and are not likely to get it.

The Premier: You are asking for information which does not exist. That is

why you are disappointed. You cannot have what does not exist.

Mr. Underwood: You cannot imagine something, and then lay it on the Table.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is ludicrous to say that the present route of the line does not exist. I want the motion to specify the present route, as well as any other route that the Minister likes to include. While members on the Government side might be willing to take the Minister's word, as they were in connection with the sleeper contract, I am not willing to do so, but I hope that the Minister will realise I am reasonable in asking for this alteration.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): My object in amending the motion is to give Parliament a map showing the whole of the routes. Some routes were surveyed, some were partially surveyed, and there were some on which there was a trial survey. As a matter of fact, if my memory is right, when the present Government took office there was a new proposed route altogether. Therefore, it is necessary to retain the word "proposed" because there was something new. In regard to the point raised by the hon. member for Northam, the motion covers the present surveyed route because the very first survey put in by the Wilson Government was the survey on which the line was built by the present Government. If they had continued on the route on which they started, they would have received the commendation of all the people in the district, but they stopped when they were going right, and then started to go wrong. The further they went, the more criticism they received, and in the struggle to put themselves right, they made a mess of the whole concern. In the proposed surveyed routes must be included the present route because that was the first which the Wilson Government undertook.

Hon. J. Mitchell: May I move, Mr. Speaker, that "proposed" be struck out and "present" substituted?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has already spoken.

Mr. MONGER (York): I beg to move an amendment on the amendment—

That "proposed" be struck out and "present" substituted.

Mr. SPEAKER: I accept that amendment; it is an amendment of one word.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley): I second the amendment on the amendment.

Mr. MONGER: I fail to see why the Minister cannot agree to the proposed amendment to the amendment.

The Minister for Works: I am agreeing to it. I absolutely agree to give you the present route. If you get that, that is all you want. You want to strike "proposed" out.

Mr. MONGER: There is no "proposed" in the matter. There is a line of railway practically completed.

The Minister for Works: The hon. member knows there were many proposals.

Mr. MONGER: I do.

The Minister for Works: Then I want to give you the lot.

Mr. MONGER: Well add "proposed and present."

The Minister for Works: The various surveyed routes are included.

Mr. SPEAKER: This discussion is not in order; we are not in Committee.

Mr. MONGER: I desire to move the amendment to the amendment which I have indicated.

Mr. SPEAKER: In dealing with the proposed amendment on an amendment, I shall take the amendment as if it were the original question. The question is that the word "proposed" stand part of the question.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): May I suggest that the Minister should agree to accept the suggestion of the member for York by adding the word "present." I wish to have laid on the Table of the House a map showing the present route, and as many of the proposed routes as the Minister thinks fit. Will the Minister agree to add the words "and proposed and present."

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I rose to suggest that the hon. member for York should withdraw his amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member for York adhere to his amendment?

Mr. MONGER: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment, and will agree to the other.

Amendment on amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question now is that the words "and proposed" be inserted.

Mr. Monger: "And present" also.

Mr. SPEAKER: I suggest that if it is the intention of any hon. member to have inserted the words "and present" after "and proposed" we should deal with this amendment first, and when these words have been inserted another amendment can be moved to have "and present" inserted.

Mr. McDowall: The Minister for Works agrees to it.

Mr. George: I do not know where we are.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no doubt in my mind where we are. The motion moved by the hon. member for Northam has been amended by the insertion of the words "Wilson Government's various" after "the" in the first paragraph. A further amendment has been proposed by the Minister for Works to insert after "surveyed" the words "and proposed." The question is that the words "and proposed" be inserted after "surveyed."

Amendment (to insert "and proposed") put and passed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Now the hon. member for York may move his amendment.

Mr. MONGER (York): I beg to move a further amendment—

That after "proposed" the words "and present" be inserted.

Mr. SPEAKER: The sentence will read most ungrammatically, if that is done. I suggest that if the hon. member desires to achieve his object he had better move to insert after "railway" the words "together with that of the present route." If the hon. member does that the sentence will be in grammatical form and will achieve what the hon. member desires to achieve.

Mr. McDONALD (Gascoyne): I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if the words

"and the present route" were inserted after the words "the Wilson Government's various surveyed and the proposed route" it would meet the case.

Mr. DWYER: I desire—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I am not going to take all of these suggestions. I want a definite suggestion.

Mr. Underwood: I hope, Mr. Speaker, that a little bit of bad grammar is not going to stop the business of the House.

Mr. MONGER: I beg to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. MONGER: I beg to move a further amendment—

That after the word "railway" the words "together with that of the present route" be added.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister for Works has a further amendment?

The Minister for Works: My amendment would be a consequential one. I will take the amendment.

Mr. DWYER (Perth): I desire to point out that the insertion of these words will simply imply that the present route is something different and distinct from one of the surveyed routes of the Wilson Government. Anyone reading the amendment could not come to any other conclusion. I understand the existing route is one of the routes surveyed by the Wilson Government, and if that is the case I submit that the proposition should read, "The various surveyed routes including the present route." It would be giving a wrong impression to the country if we implied that the existing route was not one that had been previously surveyed. We wish our deliberation here to give to the public a true reflex of what action has taken place. I have, therefore, to oppose the amendment in its present form.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): What the hon. member for Perth says is exactly the inference that would be drawn if we agreed to this amendment. I propose to ask the House not to agree to the amendment, as I do not want an inference of that kind to be drawn in regard to the present Government. The present route is one of the

surveyed routes of the Wilson Government. The motion covers what the hon. member for Northam wants, and I am not prepared to accept this amendment, as it would permit a wrong construction to be put on the position.

Mr. Male: Is the Minister for Works in order in now objecting to an amendment which a few minutes ago he agreed to?

The SPEAKER: The amendment is perfectly in order, and is open to discussion by this House, no matter who raises objection.

Mr. Monger: The Minister for Works agreed to it—

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not here to say what the Minister for Works agreed to or did not agree to, I am here to state whether the amendment is in order. It is in order.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): It appears that at present there is more anxiety to see how the motion hinges than there is about the real thing that interests the country. An amendment has been proposed implicating the Wilson Government. I do not care whether it is the Wilson Government, the Moore Government, or the present Government. If we made a mistake we must stand up to the mistake, but the way the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Dwyer) puts it indicates that he wants to rub it in and to stir up the dying embers of party warfare.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley): On a point of order, my enquiry was not whether the amendment was in order, but whether the Minister for Works was in order in opposing an amendment which a few minutes previously he had agreed to.

The Minister for Works: I never agreed to the amendment—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Does the hon. member ask that I should decide on that point of order?

Mr. MALE: No. It was a point of conscience, I take it.

Mr. George: Let us get to business, we are only wasting time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): All I wish is to get a map of the present route of the line as laid down—

The Minister for Works: You will get it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think the House should order the Minister to give it.

The Minister for Works: We will see whether the House will.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I asked simply for the surveyed route of the railway and the route of same as recommended by the Advisory Board. The Minister has added words which will enable various routes to be shown, but there is no need to add those words, because the Minister has absolute power to put on the Table anything he pleases. I well remember a conference we had a few weeks before we were put out of office and the present Government were put in, at which conference it was decided that the route should be east of Lake Kurrenkutten, and I doubt whether any railway survey of the Wickepin-Merredin route before the present Minister took office—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This debate is not in order. The matter now under discussion is concerning the addition of the words "together with that of the present route," The discussion must be confined to that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I believe the amendment would meet the case, and I consider it is a decided improvement on the one previously moved by the hon. member for York (Mr. Monger). I am not even going to call for a division on this question. I do not care what is done, but I believe the House should decide that we have the route as at present laid down shown on that plan.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Why not accept the routes suggested by the hon. member for Perth?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member for Perth can move a further amendment if he has an improvement on this one. All I desire is to get a map showing the present route. I ask the Minister to allow us to put in this motion an order that he shall supply a map of the present route of the Wickepin-Merredin line.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin): If I am in order Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that a great number of people are under the impression that a mistake has been made with the present route of this particular line of railway, and I understood

the Minister a few minutes ago to state that the line was being constructed now upon a route that had been surveyed by the Wilson Government.

The Minister for Works: There was just a mile or two to connect up.

Mr. S. STUBBS: A few minutes afterwards he tells the House in answer to an interjection of the hon. member for Northam that the surveyed route had not been completed by the Wilson Government.

The Minister for Works: There was just a mile or two to connect up.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Surely there must be something wrong somewhere. A great number of people are under the impression that the route adopted by the present Government is wrong in the best interests of a large number of the settlers there. That is an absolute fact, and the hon. member for Northam was anxious when moving this motion to have the route laid upon the Table of the House, also the Advisory Board's idea of the route the line was to take. I do not think that any false impression, as the hon. member for Perth suggests, would go abroad to the country if the amendment that has been made to the original motion of the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) is carried as suggested by himself.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker): I submit that there is a broad distinction between the amendment that was accepted by the Minister for Works and the amendment as suggested, Sir, by you. The object of the first part of this motion, as amended, is to indicate that all the routes that are to be shown upon the map are routes in which the Wilson Government were concerned. That is to say, all the proposed routes and the route that was ultimately adopted, the present route, had their origin in the Wilson Government. If the amendment as proposed now is to be carried, then it would make it appear that the Wilson Government were responsible for the surveyed routes, but the present route was something different, for which someone else was responsible in regard to the proposal and the survey. The Minister for Works has repeatedly assured the Chamber that he will place a

map upon the Table showing all the routes, omitting none.

Mr. Allen: Past and present.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Past and present, and, therefore, there can be no particular object in insisting upon "the present" being in at all. If all the routes proposed and surveyed by the Wilson Government be placed upon the map the present route must be there, and the other is useless verbiage. It means nothing except a suggestion that the Minister for Works is simply and only responsible for the present route. That is an inference that I, for one, would guard against, and I should vote against it being conveyed in the amendment.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Do you not believe in the present route?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, but not in the stigma which it is sought to place inferentially on the Minister for Works.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is not.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Undoubtedly it is the desire to seek to declare an objectionable line to be the conception of the Minister for Works when, as a matter of fact, the whole thing originated in the previous Government, by which Government the line was surveyed and mapped out. All that the present Minister for Works did was to carry out that one particular route. He accepted that in preference to four or five others which were open to him and all of which were proposed by the Wilson Government. The Minister for Works simply made a selection out of five possible lines open to him.

Mr. S. Stubbs: He evidently selected the worst route.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Never mind what he did. That worst route had previously been mapped out and surveyed by his predecessor.

Mr. S. Stubbs: But it was wrong.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is a matter not now for argument, and I should be out of order if I were now to pursue it. I only want to show the lack of justice, as well as wisdom, there would be in having the words "together with" inserted, making therefore a distinction

between the Wilson Government surveys and proposals, and the present route. There is no distinction. The present route is part and parcel of the proposals of the previous Government, and therefore no distinction in justice and in common sense ought to be made. The words are absolutely unnecessary and they are more than unnecessary in the sense of completing the motion, and, as imposing a duty on the Minister for Works, they are actually misleading, and reflect upon the Minister for Works, and, therefore, upon this Government.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I would be sorry to reflect on the Government; I do not think there is any reflection at all in the words.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Let not this inane hypocrisy break forth from the hon. member. We know that the hon. member would lose no opportunity of colouring us with his tar brush if he could. The fact that there is this distinction created when it is unnecessary, when it adds words to the motion which give no further meaning and no further light to it, which make no further clearness to the subject—the fact that this distinction is there, is liable to mislead, and it is the strongest possible argument to me for voting down the amendment.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley): In spite of the eloquence of the Attorney General, I am afraid that that eloquence is not sufficient to convince me that his argument is right. He has certainly emphasised to me the necessity for inserting these words. He says that the insertion of these words offers a suggestion. Then, I say, having pointed that out, the omission of these words also offers a suggestion; it offers a suggestion to the effect that we are only going to produce the surveyed routes and the proposed routes of the Wilson Government, but those routes apparently were not availed of, and we will say nothing about the present route.

Mr. Dwyer: It will include the present route.

Mr. MALE: If it includes that route the suggestion is left that the surveyed and the proposed routes of the Wilson Government were not the right routes,

but that the present Government had discovered the right route. Let us make the motion quite clear. I have no objection to the words being altered so that there may be no suggestion left. We can alter the amendment to the effect that the present route is one of those surveyed routes, but we should not let it go forth that we are only going to produce the surveyed routes and the proposed routes of the Wilson Government—

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): There are no others.

Mr. MALE: And it does not include the present route, which was one of the original routes surveyed. I think the suggestion which is left is as bad as the suggestion pointed out by the Attorney General, and for that reason I shall certainly vote for the amendment.

Amendment (that the words "together with that of the present route" be inserted at the end of paragraph 1) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	24

Majority against .. 13

AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Monger
Mr. George	Mr. A. E. Plesse
Mr. Harper	Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munslie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Price
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnston	Mr. A. A. Willson
Mr. Lander	Mr. Heitmann
Mr. Lewis	(Teller).
Mr. McDonald	

Amendment thus negatived.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson) moved a further amendment—

That the word "Including" be inserted at the beginning of paragraph 2.

Hon. J. Mitchell: May I ask what the idea is?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I propose, then, to strike out the words "of same," and the paragraph will read, "Including the route as recommended by the Advisory Board."

Amendment passed.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the words "of same" were struck out.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): moved a further amendment—

That the following words be added at the end of paragraph 2, "and also the one adopted by the present Government."

Then we can have no mistake about it. I do not think it needs any words of mine to commend this amendment to the House. The desire is that we should have everything that is to be found.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot accept the amendment because it is similar to the one already negatived in regard to the preceding paragraph.

Mr. George: I am sorry.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin): I would like to say a few words before the action is put. If hon. members opposite had looked through the report of the select committee which was adopted by this House last session, they would have had a clearer idea of the issues. I am sorry they have not done so. If they had, they would not have uttered words calculated to mislead the public.

Mr. George: Is it not possible to have two opinions about that report?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Of course, but it is not possible to utter expressions of opinion if you have read that report and the sworn evidence taken by that committee.

Mr. George: In spite of that, different opinions have been offered.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: By gentlemen who, I am afraid, have not read the evidence and who are not prepared to accept the sworn evidence.

Mr. George: The stuffing has been knocked out of that by the fact that different opinions have been offered this evening.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, by gentlemen who, I am afraid, have not read the evidence, or who are not prepared to accept the sworn evidence of the witnesses. At any rate, if the member for Murray-Wellington will be a little less disorderly I will give my views on the question. I would like to emphasise the fact that the whole of the trouble with which the Government have been faced in this matter is that when they came into office they found that, while one railway from Wickpin to Merredin had been authorised, the previous Administration had surveyed or partly surveyed five different routes for this railway at the point in dispute near Kuminin. It is evident to everyone in Western Australia that whichever of those routes the Government had selected a large number of settlers in the district would have been intensely disappointed; and whichever route was accepted members opposite would have declared that it was the wrong route, and would have sympathised with the people on the other four routes. People who were deceived by the late Administration, because the late Administration should never have made that large number of surveys. Although the members opposite now pose as great supporters of the Advisory Board's route, when they were in office and in power; they were nothing of the kind, because if they had intended to take the Advisory Board's route at that time they would never have surveyed all these lines, one of them nearly 10 miles away from the Advisory Board's route. The whole responsibility for whatever disappointment the settlers have been subjected to lies with the late Administration. I think every settler realises the difficulty the Minister for Works has had to face, and realises also the fact that the select committee appointed by the House to inquire into the matter agreed that the present Government did the right and proper thing.

Mr. George: You, above all others, ought to know that it is necessary to make several shots before deciding on a railway.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: There were no engineering difficulties whatever in the Advisory Board's route. We had that evidence before us also. Instructions were

given by Mr. Daglish, the then Minister for Works, to proceed on the direct route. Those were his first instructions to the departmental officials, and that is the route which the line has been built upon by the present Government. The late Government wasted money in unnecessary surveys, and as the election was coming on they were afraid to take the responsibility of deciding which of these routes the railway should be built upon. If they had come to a decision before the elections, I think that whichever route they had adopted we would have had one or two members sitting on this side of the House from the districts concerned. Because it is clear that there were five routes, only one of which could be accepted, and the electors living near the other four routes would all have been intensely disappointed with the Government. The late Government, by their inertness and inaction in this matter, threw the responsibility on the present Government, and now they are trying to get credit with the disappointed settlers along the other routes. I am sorry that the scope of this motion cannot be extended. We are to have this map laid on the Table, and I am sorry we cannot post a copy of it to every elector in Western Australia. If we could send copies of this map to all the electors we would put into their hands standing and lasting evidence of the vacillation and wasteful methods of the late occupants of the Treasury bench. I say that map is enduring evidence of the extent to which the Wilson Government were prepared to submit to political and other outside influences in regard to fixing the routes of railways in Western Australia, which to-day, I am glad to say, are being built on lines dictated only by public policy.

Mr. George: And the Trades Hall.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If there was a wrong thing ever done in Western Australia it was when the Lands Department, under the control of the late Minister for Lands, issued maps of that particular district, showing railway routes east of Emu Hill on the Advisory Board's report, and also the direct route. Three different routes were shown repeatedly on the maps issued by the Lands Department. A large

number of subdivisions were being thrown open by the Government, and on plans of those subdivisions the route for this railway nearest to the land offered was marked, although the Government realised at the time that only one railway could be built. The settlers were grievously disappointed, and the select committee which had to inquire into this matter, in pursuance of its duty sharply drew attention to this in its report, and recommended that in future very much greater care should be shown by the Lands Department in issuing its maps.

Mr. George: They never shifted the position of the ocean.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: But they shifted the position of this railway. At present we are discussing the question of the railway, and I am going to have my say despite the hon. member.

Mr. George: But you should not speak about maps.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I will speak about maps, and against the hon. gentleman I will speak on any subject pertaining to politics anywhere and at any time he likes; and if the hon. gentleman should pick the historic town of Pinjarra for the debate I will be there on the appointed date.

Mr. George: I never shifted the ocean.

The Premier: But you have shifted a foundry or two.

Mr. George: And I will shift you yet.

The Premier: No chance; you were shifted from the Railways once.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I was connected with the Lands Department for some time, and during that period a proposed line of railway from Wickepin to Merredin was shown on the plans of the department. That was before the Advisory Board had made a report on this project at all. The line shown at that time on the Government plans on which hundreds of people took up land and made selections, was the direct route. That proposed route was removed from the public plans in 1909, and I am glad to say the Government built the line on the direct route, and so kept faith with all those people who settled in that district on the strength of public information shown on the official maps up till 1909.

There is, however, one feature which perhaps to-night's debate has emphasised, namely, the fact that it is necessary to give the settlers of that district relief by extending the Yilliminning-Kondinin railway northward into that district. That is a matter upon which—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not debating the question.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I would like to point out that the report of the select committee on the Wickepin-Merredin railway made it clear that additional facilities were required for the people of the district, particularly those who had expected to get the Wickepin-Merredin railway. These people are situated in the Emu Hill-Arrowsmith district, and north of Kondinin. They expected to be within reasonable distance of the Wickepin-Merredin railway, but owing to the direct and right and proper route having been adopted by the Government they are now some distance from railway communication. The Government have another proposal to serve these people, and I hope consequently—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not pursue that course of conduct.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, Sir. At any rate, Sir, the hardships the people in that district have suffered—I am obeying your wishes, Mr. Speaker—the people in that district have been referred to in another direction to-night, namely, in regard to the price of their land.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member pursues that course of discussion I shall compel him to take his seat.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am most anxious to obey you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member's anxiety almost disarms me.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If I might be entitled to refer to the price of land on the same lines as hon. members opposite did earlier in this debate?

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member's remarks are to have any application whatever to the motion under discussion he may proceed to make them.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I will be as plain as I can. The Wickepin-Merredin line has been rightly shifted to a direct

route. Hon. members on the Opposition side have referred to the fact that, consequently, those people who settled on the Advisory Board's route were charged a much higher price for their land than would have been the case had the Advisory Board's route not been before the Lands Department at the time the land was taken up.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Who said that?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell); and he was quite right in saying it, too. I wish to endorse that hon. gentleman's remarks in this respect. Since the route of the line has been altered I hope the Government will be sympathetic and will have a reclassification of the district made, and will reduce the price of the land to those settlers who were charged an undue amount on the anticipation of railways which never would, and never could, have been built to the immediate vicinity of their holdings. That is the point I wished to make when the hon. member interrupted me, and I think it is very pertinent to this motion. These people have suffered great hardships. They find themselves deprived of a railway, and I say it is the duty of the Government to see that any increased price that was put on the land on account of the very many routes along which the previous Government thought of building the line ought to be remitted, especially in the case of those settlers who find themselves 10 miles away from a railway. In conclusion, I wish only to say that this railway is a trunk line, and a heavy one, and it is going to be the main highway between the Eastern goldfields and the whole of the southern districts, the southern ports, and the watering places of the State, and I am satisfied that the present Government did the right thing when they refused to add 10 or 12 miles to the journey of the goldfields people to the southern portions of the State, and to the distance that the produce of the whole of the southern producers has to travel to reach the great goldfields market. The present Government have done many good things for the people, but I say there is none that will stand out better than their refusal to add

12 miles to the length of this trunk line and saddle our southern producers with that unnecessary freight for all time.

Resolved: That motions be continued.

Mr. MONGER (York): The hon. member for Williams-Narrogin made considerable reference in the early portion of his remarks to what the select committee appointed by this House did in regard to the matter under discussion. I would like the hon. member and other members on the Ministerial side to remember that in December, 1911, I moved for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the proposed alteration of the route of this particular line. My proposal on that occasion was not agreed to. Some six or eight months afterwards another place resolved that a select committee of that Chamber should be appointed to inquire into the deviation of the route of this railway, and shortly afterwards a member on the Ministerial side in this House moved that another select committee be appointed to consider the same question. I will give members on the Ministerial side credit for this, that whilst a few months before they refused to give me the select committee I asked for, yet when it was moved for by one of the nominees of the Minister for Works, the motion was carried without the slightest hesitation. Later on the two committees sat together, and listened to a great deal of evidence, and I want the member for Williams-Narrogin, who has spoken so much about the report which was accepted by this Chamber, to understand that had there been a vote of the joint select committee of the two Houses there would have been a six to four majority against the report submitted by the member for Subiaco. After the laudatory way in which the member for Williams-Narrogin referred to that report, I want to tell him and the people of the country that there was never a more unnecessary, a more adverse, and more unfair report brought in by any select committee that that adopted in this Chamber on the motion of the member for Subiaco. No one knows better than the member for Pilbara and the member for Williams-Narrogin, who sat on that select committee, but who never

listened to one word of evidence, and who never read the report which was carried overwhelmingly in another place, and who yet had the audacity to refer to it this evening—

Mr. E. B. Johnston: On a point of order, I object strongly to the statement that, as a member of that select committee, I failed in my duty by not reading or hearing the evidence. I read every word of the evidence, and heard most of it.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no point of order involved. The hon. member is not in order in interrupting another hon. member in the course of his speech. If the hon. member deems that there is a reflection on him, then he may rise to a point of order.

Mr. MONGER: I want the people to understand that the two select committees tendered reports to their respective Chambers, and I want the people to ask themselves whether they will take the report recommended by the member for Williams-Narrogin and the member for Pilbara, and brought in by the member for Subiaco as chairman of the select committee from this House, in preference to that carried by a four to one majority, practically on the voices, of the members of the select committee from another place. I ask them whether they would prefer to accept the interpretation placed on the evidence by the nominee of the Minister for Works, or the interpretation by the independent gentlemen from another place.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in reflecting on another member of this House. He is not justified in calling any member the nominee of any other person. Every hon. member is independent, and must be recognised as such.

Mr. MONGER: I have said all I intend to say about the appointment of that select committee, and the verdict they arrived at. I understand now that this line of railway is practically completed, and I do want it to go out to the people that I consider it was absolutely unfair to deviate from the recommendations of the Advisory Board. I want mem-

bers on the Ministerial side to bear in mind, that in the many remarks I have made on this railway I have always advocated that the recommendation of the Advisory Board should be given effect to whenever any agricultural line of railway has been submitted for the consideration of this House. That was all I asked. I did go one point further when I understood that the Minister in charge of this work had some idea of making a change from the Advisory Board's recommendation; I did suggest that he should again refer it to an independent tribunal, but that he absolutely refused to do. I want hon. members on the Ministerial side, and the people of the State, to know that in making that alteration from the Advisory Board's recommendation, a person interested in the route appointed himself the sole arbiter in connection with the deviation, which has affected many hundreds of settlers to a very considerable extent.

The Premier: Name?

Mr. MONGER: I say that the Minister for Works was interested, and being interested, he should have been the last person to have appointed himself sole arbiter in connection with this matter.

The Premier: You are stating something which you know is incorrect.

Mr. MONGER: I know it to be correct, and it is not the first time I have said it.

The Premier: Your best friend was interested.

Mr. Lander: That is what hurts; it did not suit your friend Copley.

Mr. MONGER: I had no interest in the matter, but I am perfectly right in saying that any individual who was personally interested—

The Premier: He was not interested in the slightest degree.

Mr. MONGER: I do not want to go through his land transactions or those of another hon. member who sits on the Government side, but I do say without the slightest hesitation that any person who was interested, as the Minister for Works was, should have been the last to have appointed himself to the position of deciding the route of that particular line.

The Premier: Cabinet decided it.

Mr. MONGER: After a previous Cabinet had decided on an absolutely different route.

The Premier: They had done nothing of the kind.

Mr. MONGER: I am only going on the evidence before the select committee and the evidence contained in the files on the Table.

The Premier: They decided on five different routes, but on none definitely.

Mr. MONGER: There was a definite instruction given by the Cabinet of a previous Administration. Whilst on this point I desire to congratulate the Premier and his colleagues on having taken every possible opportunity to alter the instructions or promises of their predecessors.

Mr. Lander: Would it not have been a good thing to have altered their decision in connection with the Fremantle dock where £200,000 was lost?

Mr. MONGER: I am not going to deal with the Fremantle dock this evening. I rose only for the purpose of pleading, if I may be permitted to say so, on behalf of a body of the finest settlers on the lands of Western Australia.

The Premier: You are smoodging now.

Mr. MONGER: I am asking that fair play should be meted out for having taken away from these people a railway after they had taken up their selections on the understanding that they would be in close proximity to the line, whereas now they find themselves placed at the extreme limit of $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles from a railway. No matter whether the smoodging promise of the Minister for Works to construct another line is carried out, these people are at the extreme limit, and I ask the Government to say, "We have failed to carry out the promise of a previous Administration. We realise that the price is in excess of the value of your land, owing to its distance from the nearest railway communication not being what you anticipated it would be when you took up your land; consequently we intend to reduce the price of the land." I ask that in fairness to themselves and in fairness to the people who have settled in this particular locality, reasonable consideration should be

given to the requests for a reduction in the price charged for the land. I have one more request to make and it is that the best facilities in the shape of road communication be given to the settlers who have from twelve to thirteen miles to cart their produce. I ask for the fair and reasonable attention of the Minister for Works, who has an interest in the welfare of the district, and who, I am going to say—according to the plans I have seen—has not failed to see that the selection he is interested in and the selection in which a brother member of Parliament is interested have been given very reasonable road facilities, and I hope that in his Ministerial capacity he will give these settlers who are not so favourably situated his most reasonable attention.

The Premier: You ought to get a lot of consideration.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly): I have only a few words more to say on this matter. We have heard a great deal of discussion about the various routes surveyed and the route recommended by the Advisory Board, and we have heard that none had been adopted at the time the present Government took office. In that case the responsibility certainly devolved upon the Minister for Works to select the route which would suit the greatest number of settlers. The plan before me clearly demonstrates that there is a large number of settlers on the east side of Lake Kurrenkutten and along the route recommended by the Advisory Board. It is clear that there are 80 per cent. or four times the number of selectors along the Advisory Board's route, the most easterly route, as there are on the westerly route. The hon. member for Williams-Narrogin seemed to be a great advocate of the direct route from Collie to the goldfields and seemed to think that traffic should be diverted from its natural route going from Bunbury and the southern districts to the fields instead of from Fremantle or Perth.

The Premier: You are getting a bit muddled.

Mr. HARPER: No, I am not. The most direct route for settlers in this part

of the State is the railway to Fremantle. Another big error has been committed by making the Wickiepin railway a trunk line. It will only be a feeder to the spur lines of the Great Southern railway, namely, the Yillimining-Kondinin, Brookton-Kunjin, and the Korrijin lines. A trunk line will cost double the amount per mile that these spur lines cost to construct. That is another blunder which has been made. I do not think that anyone looking at the plan would have taken any other route than the eastern route via Kurrenkutten. I regret that this error of judgment has been made. That is my opinion of it, and the plan before me backs up my statement. There is no doubt that those who settled on this land on the strength of the railway being constructed on the eastern side of Lake Kurrenkutten should be exempted from rent until they get railway facilities. A great injustice has been done to those people who took up the land. I know many who have been ruined as a result. Men who were working in Perth started out for the Kurrenkutten district with considerable sums of hard-earned money saved by their energy and thrift and they have spent their money and are still without a railway. That money was fraudulently received from those people and they should be exempted from rent and other conditions until railway facilities are granted them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Deceived by the late Government.

Mr. HARPER: But the present Government deprived them of the railway; that is where the injustice comes in. Everything would have been all right if the line had been built according to the Advisory Board's recommendation. I hope the people of this State will become acquainted with the facts and will realise what an injustice has been done to these settlers.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): When I brought forward this motion, I did it with the best possible intention. I desired to rectify a wrong done to some settlers who were allowed to take up land during my term as Minister for Lands. There was a recommendation by the Advis-

ory Board and there is the route laid down by the present Government. I wish to have a plan in order that I may do my duty by the people who were sent out into this country when I was Minister for Lands. A great deal of unnecessary heat has been imported into this debate. Why should that be so? The Government have even taken the opportunity of amending my motion in order—to use the words of the Attorney General—to whitewash themselves. I had no intention at all of doing other than benefiting these settlers. I did not want to blacken the Ministry; I had no intention of whitewashing them, although they are very much in need of it; I merely wished to have the map in order that I may deal in a reasonable fashion with the matter of these people settled on this land. If the Advisory Board's report had been adopted, and the Advisory Board's report would have been adopted if the previous Government had remained in office—

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You know jolly well it would not have been.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: A few weeks before the Wilson Government left office, the Premier, Minister for Works, and myself, as Minister for Lands, met and decided that the Advisory Board's route should be the route as nearly as possible, notwithstanding any surveys made before.

Mr. Taylor: I do not know where "possible" came into the transaction.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is a well known fact, and if authorities are consulted they will bear me out, that money spent on surveying lines and trial surveys is money well spent. Take the Eastern railway line, many deviations have been made, because the surveys originally were not sufficiently accurate to get the best routes.

The Premier: The surveys should be made before a railway is authorised.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The line from Chidlow's Well to Wooroloo is laid down in an almost direct course and hon. members know that several routes were tried before the line was finally determined upon. I know nothing of what has been done by the Works Department

beyond the fact that certain lines have been surveyed. I do not know whether they were in search of a better grade. In this House there was considerable discussion and the hon. member for Collie—more power to him, he did his duty—desired that the line should be as direct as possible in order that coal might be sent to the fields as cheaply as possible. It was not a matter of saving twelve miles, the freight over which would have been very little indeed. That hon. member, in this House, properly and rightly stated that this aspect of the matter should receive consideration. The decision of the present Government to build the line to the west of Lake Kurrenkutten instead of to the east, as was intended by the Advisory Board's report, is absolutely wrong. To-night we are being asked under the amendment moved to the motion to say that the Ministry were right. If they were right, they have nothing to fear. If they were wrong, their attitude to-night is just the attitude which they should have adopted. The Government now ask their followers, numbering 34 in all, to say they were right. Whenever a motion is brought forward the Ministry, apparently, take it as a vote of censure and consequently amend it. The other day the Premier moved an amendment to a motion in order to get a vote of confidence passed in the Government. The Premier knows that a majority in this House have confidence in him. He has 34 men and true to stand by him and there are 16 who stand for the country.

Mr. Taylor: The country has a poor chance.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: My motion was really moved with the intention of doing bare justice from my point of view to the men who are settled east of Lake Kurrenkutten. This evening we had the Attorney General on his feet for the first time this session, objecting to my motion. I do not say one word in regard to the wild personal attack he made on me. I wish merely to do my duty to this country. So long as I occupy a seat in this House I shall attempt to do my duty no matter what the consequences might be,

I have no fear of the consequences, and my duty is perfectly clear. I had no ulterior motive at all, and if any suggestion of such a thing has been brought into this debate it has been brought in by hon. members sitting opposite. Every member of this House is responsible to the people of this country, and particularly responsible to the people settled on the land in response to the very cordial invitation issued to them by the past Administration. The Parliament of this country is responsible for the action of the past Parliament, and the Government of this country is bound to give assistance. Let us frankly discuss things in a plain business fashion, so that what is best to be done in the interests of this State can be done. I have already shown that we intended to go east of Lake Kurrenkutten, and there is no need to debate that further. I ask how the Minister proposes to get over the difficulty that has been caused through the deviation of this route. The lines that must run from the Great Southern railway to the Wickipin-Merredin line could have been extended, and all the people brought within reasonable distance of railway communication. The Wickipin-Merredin line should have been the furthest east line to be built, but now we are faced with the question of constructing another line. I have been accused to-night of having deliberately deceived intending settlers. It has been said that I marked the various maps showing a railway line on three different occasions, just to suit the locality I desired to sell. I want to disclaim all responsibility in that connection; I never did anything of the sort, and I was never capable of putting on the map a railway line suggested by the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board made the suggestion and the line went on to the map in the Lands Department; as the Premier well knows it was put on by the officers there. Surely it is not suggested that the Surveyor General deliberately marked three different maps, and three different subdivisions to deliberately deceive the people.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The maps were produced to the select committee.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member was for a long time an officer of the Lands Department, and he knows that the Minister does not mark the maps. It is not necessary for me to say that if the people have been deceived, there is a duty on the present Government to rectify the wrong. I am absolutely unconscious of having done any wrong to these people, but if any wrong has been done why do not the present Government right the wrong? Why do they not help me to right the wrong?

The Premier: We cannot do anything in a day.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier says the Government cannot do anything in a day, but they have another year in which they can do something. I have called attention to the fact that three lines of railway were shown in connection with the proposal. I do not doubt the ability of the hon. member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) to read into maps just what he wants to read into them.

Mr. George: He was able to shift the ocean.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That may or may not be. So far as I am concerned I have no desire to deceive anyone. I wanted those maps to be perfectly accurate and I believe they were accurate. If those maps were not accurate the Premier knows what to do. My anxiety is to have this map laid on the Table of the House in order that there may be a further motion in the interests of the people who have been charged more for their land than they would have been charged if I had known where this railway was going. Not only is the Premier willing to put the map on the Table, but he has apparently prepared one to meet the amendments inserted in my motion.

The Premier: The map was here last year and I have not touched it since.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier has made the motion fit the map. I do say it is a strange thing that this motion should have been altered in such a way as to fit the map already in this Chamber.

The Premier: It is the map produced last year when the railway was under

discussion. It is the same map, we have not touched it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier says the map was not made to fit the resolution; therefore, I take it, that the resolution has been made to fit the map, which is equally objectionable. I hope that motions which we bring forward in the interests of the people of the State will be treated fairly and will receive the consideration we are entitled to expect. My career in this State as a Minister of the Crown is perfectly well known. It has been said that I promised railways. I certainly promised to recommend railways, and I said unhesitatingly that certain railways should be built to serve the interests of all the people of this country, and I say it to-day. I regret that railways are not being built more rapidly, and I regret also that recommendations of the Advisory Board are not being adhered to, that board being a board of experts. The Minister considered he knew better than the Advisory Board in deviating this particular line.

The Premier: You thought you knew more.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There was no intention on the part of the past Government to build a line west of Lake Kurrenkutten.

The Premier: Why did you survey it?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Lines have been deviated by the Works Department and have been taken far out of the course originally intended, in more than one instance. I want to assure the House that I have brought this motion forward with the idea of doing what I believe to be bare justice to the people who have been deprived of a railway line, which this Parliament ordered should be built. It is perfectly true that a 10-mile deviation was provided, but only in order that the best possible route might be selected. This authorised deviation has been used to carry the line much further to the west than ever was intended.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): It has not gone outside the deviation.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Government are responsible for what they have done in that connection. My responsibility is totally different from theirs. I want this map in order that I may do what I believe to be right by the people I had a hand in settling on the land. I hope that the Minister for Works will not only lay the map on the Table of the House, but when a further motion in connection with this matter comes up for consideration, that it will be treated fairly and dispassionately, as motions of this sort should be treated.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

PAPERS: LOCK HOSPITAL, DORRÉ ISLAND.

Charges against Officials.

Mr. McDONALD (Gascoyne) moved—

That all papers in connection with the inquiry made into the charges against the medical superintendent and the nurse-in-charge at the Lock Hospital, Dorré Island, be laid upon the Table of the House.

He said: These charges against the doctor and the nurse-in-charge at the Lock hospital on Dorré Island were made, first of all, about a year ago. They emanated in the first instance from a couple of dismissed servants. It would be seen later on from evidence he would produce that bad feeling existed between these people and their fellow servants in the one instance, between them and members of the staff in another, and finally between them and the medical superintendent. The time when the acts of alleged misconduct were said to have occurred was the early part of April last year. The Minister for Works, accompanied by a parliamentary party, paid a visit to those islands either at the end of April or the beginning of May, 1912, and it was strange that those people did not take the opportunity of the presence of a Minister of the Crown on the spot to prefer their charges, although they took advantage of the presence of members of Parliament on the island to complain of treatment meted out to them there and in this country gener-

ally. They were new arrivals in Australia and were dissatisfied. At the same time, they made no attempt to show that there had been any misconduct on the part of the doctor or the nurse in charge of the hospital. Their charges, however, were listened to in the Aborigines Department after the arrival of these people in Perth, and the first intimation the medical superintendent got of the matter was when he was recommended by his official superior to send in his resignation. The Doctor naturally asked why, and was told, "You are in a fearful hole, but you are a young man yet and if you resign you might go to the Eastern States and do well." The doctor was in a quandary as he did not know what was the matter. That was the first he had heard of these charges, which had been made some time previously, and he at once demanded an inquiry. That inquiry was held, but notwithstanding the fact that the accused people asked that the Press and the public should be admitted to it, their request was refused and the inquiry was held with closed doors. Taken all in all it seemed plain to these people that someone was interested in having the one, or possibly both of them, removed from the islands, and they wanted to know why. On that account therefore they asked that every publicity should be given to the evidence taken at the inquiry. He (Mr. McDonald) had here the matter put very clearly in a letter addressed to the Colonial Secretary by the legal representatives of these people, Messrs. Ewing and Holden, and with the indulgence of Mr. Speaker, and that of hon. members, he would read it—

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary. Perth, Dear Sir, *Re* Dr. Pritchard and Nurse Bateson. We have now seen our client, Dr. Pritchard, as to the result of the inquiry. We may point out that this is the first opportunity we have had to confer with our client since the inquiry concluded its sittings some two months ago. For the greater part of that period our clients were kept in ignorance of the result of the Royal Commission owing to the s.s. "Venus" not running to the

island. It seems to us that it was only a fair thing that a special effort should have been made to bring to the knowledge of the accused, at the earliest possible moment, that the charges had been dismissed, especially in view of the nature of the charges, and as there have been several small craft here during that time which could have been sent over to the island. Even up to the present moment no other communication has reached either our clients or ourselves than the somewhat laconic message running, "*Re* Dr. Pritchard and inquiry. Charges have been dismissed. Under Secretary." And a letter confirming same, although we have asked to be furnished with particulars of the actual findings of the commission, which our clients are absolutely entitled to know. We are simply at a loss to understand the treatment which has been meted out to our clients, not only for a considerable time before the inquiry, but during the time the inquiry was in progress and since it was concluded. It seems to us that there are some influences at work to prevent our clients obtaining an ample measure of justice in this matter; influences which apparently are powerful and difficult to cope with, but which we are quite confident will eventually be defeated. The way in which the charges came to be made, the tenacity with which they were persisted in, long after it had become abundantly clear that they were not only false but ridiculous, in our opinion lends colour to the belief which Dr. Pritchard and Nurse Bateson entertain, that the whole thing has been wickedly engineered and contrived by some person or persons with the object of bringing about the downfall of one or both of them. Referring to a minute from yourself to your under secretary dated 19th August, 1912, we would like to call your attention for a moment to the following remarks made by you therein—"But the very gravity of the accusation, the fact that a doctor's reputation and a woman's honour are at stake, makes it incumbent on us that, while sparing no effort to ascer-

tain the truth, we shall be careful not to pursue, without an ample measure of justification, any course which would even with ultimate exoneration, leave a lasting stain on their characters." We may say that we thoroughly and heartily agree with that expression of opinion, and are of opinion that, had the same been carried out and acted upon to the strict letter, the unfortunate events which have since transpired would never have happened, and the grievous and irreparable injury which has been done to our clients would not have been inflicted upon them. We would ask where is "the ample measure of justification" which you spoke of in that minute? Can any justification be found in the evidence which was given at the inquiry from beginning to end? We are confident that no reasonable person could for one moment contend so. We should like to call your attention also to the following further remarks made by you in the same minute—"The course that commends itself to my mind is that the Chief Protector of Aborigines should without any unnecessary delay visit the island, take the statements of the accused persons as well as those of any of the residents who can throw light on the subject, and if he finds sufficient evidence to justify the step, bearing in mind all the while the allegations of the Quinces, suspend the doctor and the nurse, with the understanding that the question of their innocence or guilt will be submitted to a board of inquiry." Again we beg to agree with the course that commended itself to your mind. We would however point out that your recommendation was not acted upon, because although an inquiry was subsequently held on the recommendation of Mr. Gale, yet he failed to suspend either the doctor or the nurse, which he ought to have done according to your instructions if he found sufficient evidence to justify his recommendation for an inquiry. We would invite you to turn up exhibits 48 and 49 which were put in as evidence at the hearing of the commission, and also those portions of

the evidence of Dr. Pritchard and Nurse Bateson which relate their replies to Mr. Gale when he made the charges against them. The net result of Mr. Gale's visit to the island to prosecute this inquiry was, that the evidence he obtained was of an absolutely negative nature, and such as could not have justified him in recommending an inquiry, as he did in his report to the under secretary of 24th September, 1912. As a result of Mr. Gale's visit to the island and in view of the fact that the object of his visit had become public property, there was only one course left to our clients, and that was to demand the fullest possible inquiry, with a view to refuting the charges and vindicating their honour. With that object we accordingly wrote to you on 20th September, 1912, formally requesting an inquiry. That letter in the ordinary course of events would reach you about 23rd September. On September 24th Mr. Gale in his said report thought fit to recommend an inquiry, in spite of the fact that the result of his visit to the island was that the evidence he had collected was of an absolutely negative character. A portion of Mr. Gale's report in which he recommends the inquiry, is absolutely inaccurate. That portion is as follows:—"There is no evidence in this office to show that there was any friction between the Quinces and the doctor prior to the last date. The statements made by Mr. Angelo and Captain Melsom of the "Venus" show that the doctor made no complaints about them, and that friction was only apparent after Miss Jones was suspended by the doctor and subsequently dismissed. During Dr. Pritchard's visit to Perth I had tales of the Quinces' incompetency poured into my ears, but at the time it appeared strange to me that not one word of complaint had reached the office although they had been on the island nearly six months."

[Mr. McDowall took the Chair.]

Mr. McDONALD: That is taken from Mr. Gale's report to the Colonial Secretary. The letter continued—

That statement is pregnant with importance, because it is intended to point to the likelihood of the charges made by the Quinces being true, by showing an utter absence of any motive for their having made the statements. The fact that complaints about the Quinces had reached the office of the Aborigines Department before Mr. Gale wrote that report is incontrovertible, because as far back as the 18th May and 3rd July last, Dr. Pritchard wrote to the Chief Protector of Aborigines, making a number of important complaints about the Quinces (see exhibits 19 and 22). How Mr. Gale, in view of these letters, could have stated in his report that not one word of complaint had reached his office about the Quinces, is more than we can possibly tell. It was a most important statement and one which must have had considerable weight with you. The first thing that was sprung upon the accused at the inquiry was that the inquiry was to be held with closed doors. In view of the fact that our clients were the accused persons and had requested an inquiry and who would have been the persons most likely to suffer by publicity if they had been guilty, our Mr. Holden at once protested against the exclusion of the public and the Press. He could get nothing out of the commissioner, however, but an expression of rigid determination to so hold the inquiry. We have never yet had vouchsafed to us any sensible reason why that request was ignored. Another most extraordinary incident occurring at the inquiry was that Mr. Gale, in opening his case, said that he appeared for the department and he was going to "prove the charges right up to the hilt." In view of that remark, our Mr. Holden asked him whether he was assuming responsibility on behalf of his department for the making of the charges. Mr. Gale did not appear thoroughly to understand his position, but the commissioner at that juncture remarked that the charges were taken up by the department and that Mr. Holden must leave it at that. A great deal of evi-

dence was called by Mr. Gale which was irrelevant to the charges, which were those set out in the commission, and referred to certain incidents alleged to have been witnessed by the Quincees. The witnesses Gladys Jones, Captain Melsom and Angelo, had no evidence to give bearing on those charges and ought not to have been called, as their evidence, being outside the charges which the commission was to inquire into, became matter of mere prejudice. Our Mr. Holden repeatedly objected to evidence of this sort, but his objections were consistently overruled. In addition to this, Gladys Jones was allowed to alter her evidence after she had been examined, cross-examined and re-examined and had finally left the box, and after having had a whole evening to think over her evidence and mix with the other witnesses. Furthermore, Mrs. Quince was allowed to alter her evidence with the object of breaking down an alibi, which her own previous evidence and the Log of the s.s. "Venus" produced by Captain Nelson had established. In short, every possible opportunity was given to the accusers to prove the charges, which they entirely failed to do. As to the inquiry and its results, it has been a perfect farce as far as our clients are concerned; the mere fact that the public and Press were excluded from its sittings have robbed it of any value to our clients, for the simple reason that, whereas the nature of the charges and details thereof have been well spread throughout the Gascoyne district, the accused's answer to the same is absolutely unknown. True it is that the public know that the charges have been dismissed, but as the result of the public being excluded from the inquiry, the common interpretation they put upon the charges being dismissed, is that they have been "hushed up." From our clients' point of view this is the most disastrous result that could have occurred. You must remember that Dr. Pritchard is a professional man whose reputation is everything to him, and that Nurse Bateson

is a woman whose honour is everything to her. What you yourself were apparently anxious to avoid, namely, taking any course which would, even with ultimate exoneration, leave a lasting slur on a doctor's reputation and a woman's honour without an ample measure of justification is just exactly what has happened. There never was the slightest justification for the steps being taken which brought about the inquiry. The whole trouble has arisen through an unfortunate eagerness on the part of certain officials to receive and attach credence to the idle rumours, silly tittle-tattle, and malicious slanders of dismissed or disappointed servants, without ever acquainting our clients with the same, or asking for their explanation. Our clients as a result have suffered irreparable damage; damage which can never thoroughly be set at rights in this world. They are entitled, however, to very heavy damages for the grievous wrong that has been done to them. We have, therefore, to ask what pecuniary amends the Government are prepared to make to our clients in respect of the injury which they have sustained. We have also to point out that the injury done to our clients has been aggravated during the past two or three days by the fact that certain persons, some of whom were actually witnesses in support of the charges at the inquiry, have been circulating reports through Carnarvon that one of the witnesses for the defence, namely, Nurse McNicoll, had gone back on her evidence. These reports no doubt are intended to give rise to a belief that our client must have been guilty of the charges, in spite of the finding of the commission. In regard to Nurse McNicoll's evidence we may point out that neither our clients nor ourselves have had any intimation whatever from Nurse McNicoll of any desire on her part to modify, qualify, or amend her evidence or any portion thereof. Furthermore we would emphasise the fact that Nurse McNicoll's evidence was practically a repetition of the evidence obtained from her by Mr.

Gale when he visited the island to collect evidence. We have no doubt that you are as anxious as we are that our clients should receive justice in this matter, and that you will do all that you can to right their wrongs. It seems to us that in addition to suitable pecuniary amends the least that can be done is that the evidence taken at the commission should be laid on the Table of the House, in which case, no doubt, by the medium of the Press the public will be put in possession of the full facts.

Without making any reference to their desire for pecuniary amends, and dealing only with the desire they express for publicity he would move the motion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The affair which had taken place on the islands mentioned had caused some annoyance to the department. It would be realised that when a few people, four or five in number, were isolated on a far distant island, it was sometimes difficult to avoid tittle-tattle. Certain statements had been made in regard to the staff on those islands, and it became necessary in the interests of the hospitals situated on those islands, and in the interests of the service, that departmental officers should make some inquiries in regard to those statements, the seriousness of which called for immediate investigation. An inquiry was made by the officers of the department, with the result that the doctor on the island—and rightly so—demanded that he should have an independent inquiry to investigate the charges made in regard to himself and one of the nurses on his staff at the hospital. When a medical officer was stationed at a hospital such as this, extreme care should be taken in laying a charge against him in connection with any of the nurses who assisted him in the carrying out of his duties. It was very easy sometimes, if a person desired to injure a doctor or a nurse, to bring some charge against them which might be very difficult to refute. A very difficult position was set up when it was found necessary to hold an inquiry at a place like Dorre Island. In his opinion

a mistake had been made in placing the hospital away from the Medical Department. All hospitals should be under the Medical Department, and the professional officers who were there to carry on the health and medical portion of the work of the State should be the principal officers to advise and direct any operations in connection with any hospital of the State. A good deal of the difficulty which had been experienced would never have arisen if the hospital had been under the direct control of the Principal Medical Officer. A change had been made in that direction, and since the change there had been no complaint whatever in connection with the work carried out at Dorre Island. He believed we had there an efficient officer, a man who took great interest in his work, who had brought about splendid results among the patients, and who had done a great deal of good in relieving the natives under his care. That being so, it was necessary that the officers of the department should make careful inquiry into the charges brought against the doctor. The report which was made by the commissioner had been forwarded to the doctor as early as possible after it was received, the decision of the magistrate being sent up by wire and the actual report forwarded by the next succeeding mail.

Mr. McDonald: Two months elapsed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): It would be seen that by the time the commissioner had prepared his report, brought it to Perth, and sent it to the office, where it was immediately dealt with, there was not much time wasted in getting it back to Carnarvon within two months. Officers situated so far distant from the centre had a good deal to contend with. Much of the difficulty had been brought about by the action of those on the mainland, whether through petty spite or not he could not say. However, when some of the subordinates from the hospital came on to the mainland, almost the first thing they did, at the request of some person on the mainland, was to ask a magistrate if he would take a declaration

in regard to proceedings on the island. It was hoped that that practice had now been stopped, and would not again be revived, and that those on the island would work together in harmony for the benefit of patients in their charge. He would not make any objections to laying the papers on the Table. He had already informed the hon. member that he thought it would be wise if the papers were not asked for, but seeing that the persons most concerned were so anxious for the papers, he would offer no objection to the motion.

Question put and passed.

RETURN—SUPREME COURT JUDGES' ATTENDANCES.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth) moved—

That there be laid upon the Table a return showing the attendances of Supreme Court judges for the past twelve months—1, At the different courts. 2, In Chambers.

As no opposition to the motion was expected, it was not his intention to say much in moving it. It was to be borne in mind that for a long period the business in the Supreme Court had been considerably delayed. In some quarters it had been suggested that the judges were overworked, while others in authority had declared that if things were arranged differently more work could be got through. It was rumoured that one gentleman in a high position in the courts spent a great deal of his time on the golf links. If this was correct the only way to confirm it was to call for a return of the days put in by gentlemen holding high positions in those courts, in order that it might be seen what time they devoted to the State in return for the high remuneration they received. If it were found that these gentlemen occupying high positions in the courts were not giving that attention to their duties which was expected of them, it would be for the Government to take action.

Mr. Allen: And as in the case of the "land sharks" you sometimes speak of, put the boot into them.

Mr. LANDER: Yes, put the boot into them. It was very costly to have the business of the law courts held up from day to day. If it was found by the return that the judges were overworked it might be necessary to appoint another judge or even two.

Question passed.

RETURN—STATE STEAMSHIPS, COST OF REPAIRS.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley) moved—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House, showing—1, The amount of expenditure, separately, which had been incurred for repairs, renewals, and alterations to the "Western Australia," the "Kwinana," and the "Eucla." 2, The amount charged against revenue, and the amount charged against capital account.

He said: In moving this motion it is not my intention to make many remarks as the motion is practically covered by one standing in the name of the leader of the Opposition in which that gentleman asks for a balance sheet in connection with the State steamers. Had that motion been proceeded with this evening mine would really have been of a formal character, as the information asked for here would practically have been covered by those balance sheets. My reason for asking for this information is that we might get a little more knowledge in respect to the financial position of the steamers. We have very little information at present in connection with them, except, perhaps, the information which has been shown in the financial statement issued by the Treasury for the year ended 30th June, and again, the monthly statement which is issued in connection with the statement of the finances for the twelve months. Therein is shown a big cash deficit. But at the same time we have no information which would show us whether the expenditure which I am asking for in connection with the repairs, renewals, and alterations to the different steamers have been charged under the heading of expenditure. It may be that these amounts are included in this expenditure

item. If so, then the balance sheet of the State steamers would not come out nearly so badly as it appears. But it may be possible that these amounts have all been charged against capital account, that is to say, against loan expenditure. If such is the case, it seems to me that the results of the trading of our State steamers will come out very badly, but in face of the fact that we have no balance sheet and no information to go upon, I think I am justified in asking for this information. We are all shareholders in these steamers, perhaps some of us unwilling shareholders, but at the same time, we are justified in desiring to know to some extent how these ships are being run and how the expenditure is allotted.

Mr. Bolton: You would like to gloat over the failure.

Mr. MALE: I have no desire to gloat over the failure. If it can be shown that these amounts have been already charged to ordinary revenue, then what appears to us to be a loss on the State steamers is not nearly as bad as it appears at the present time.

Mr. Bolton: It would be a disappointment.

Mr. MALE: Not at all. If these amounts have been charged to Loan Account I should certainly take strong objection to that form of bookkeeping, because it is quite evident to all of us that in purchasing these steamers we did not get new boats. A considerable amount has been expended on them in renewals, repairs, and alterations, and I do not think that anyone can say those renewals, repairs, and alterations have added to the capital value of the steamers. We paid something like £40,000 for the "Western Australia" and £11,000 or £12,000 was spent in alterations. Other amounts have been spent since, and I still contend that that steamer is worth no more to-day as an asset than when we purchased her; as a matter of fact, not worth quite so much when we write off the amount which should be written off for depreciation. I am not dealing with the amount of depreciation, which is a bookkeeping item. I am dealing with merely the capital expenditure on these ships. The policy of

running these steamers I am not discussing; I am simply seeking information respecting the financial aspect of the boats. We can get very little information in regard to the State steamers. We were anticipating that a certain amount of information would be given in the report of the Royal Commission appointed a short time ago, but that commission has been revoked and we shall get no further information from that source. Looking into the figures we have got, we find that the revenue derived from the steamers for the twelve months was £66,000 odd, whilst the expenditure was £86,000, leaving a cash deficit of £20,000. Now, I am trying to ascertain if the items I have referred to form portion of this cash loss of £20,000. If they do, then the apparent loss on the trading of the steamers will not be very great, but if this expenditure is over and above that £20,000, then I anticipate that the balance sheet will come out very badly. In making his estimate for the twelve months, the Colonial Treasurer was very much at sea with his figures. He gave as his estimated revenue £73,000, which is several thousand pounds more than what he actually received, whilst the estimated expenditure was shown as £61,000 as against an actual expenditure of £86,000. If we take his over-estimate and his under-estimate, we shall find that his figures are something like £32,000 out.

Mr. Bolton: What a way of putting figures.

Mr. MALE: It is a very effective way of putting them. It shows that the Colonial Treasurer was unable to gauge the actual figures to the extent of £32,000. That is a big item on one trading concern and we have some right to know something about it. We find that the revenue for the one month of June was £18,000 and the expenditure £24,000; then in the following month of July the revenue was only £2,000 and the expenditure £5,000. I admit that not much information can be gathered from those figures. We have no record of outstanding accounts to be collected or of outstanding expenditure. It is almost impossible for us to say whether, if a balance sheet were to be produced, it would show a loss or a profit, but

I think we are entitled to some information. Under the Trading Concerns Act of last year, instructions were given that a balance sheet should be prepared for all these concerns. According to those instructions the accounts of the trading concerns were to close on 30th June or some other date which might be fixed, presumably by the Minister. Even assuming those trading concerns closed their financial year on the 30th June, it is quite possible that it will take them a month or more before they can produce a balance sheet, and it is also quite possible that it may take them another couple of months, perhaps more, before the balance sheet can be properly audited by the Audit Department. Therefore, we can anticipate a lapse of three or four months before the Minister will be in a position to place those balance sheets on the Table, and what I honestly fear is that the balance sheets will be so delayed that the information will not be given until after the House goes into recess. I think it is fair and proper that we should have some information as to how these trading concerns are going before the House goes into recess, and in asking for particulars of this expenditure, I am asking only for something reasonable. I take it that the accounts are being properly kept, as the Trading Concerns Act requires they shall be, and it is a simple matter for these figures to be extracted from the books. It would take only a few minutes and the accountant in charge would know at once whether these items of expenditure have been charged to loan or to general revenue. Therefore, I do not think I am asking the Government to go to unnecessary expense in obtaining these figures. They must be kept and are easily obtainable, and I think, as a shareholder and one representing shareholders, I am entitled to some information.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): What will you sell your share for?

Mr. MALE: I will sell it willingly if I can find a buyer. I am not asking the Premier to give us a profit and loss account or a general balance sheet. I am asking simply for information so that we may know what amount is being spent

on each of these steamers for repairs, renewals, and alterations, and so that we may also ascertain from him whether these amounts have been charged up to general revenue, as I contend they should be, or to Loan Account and capitalised, thereby making the capital value of the steamers more than they should be. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I second the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): One can always appreciate the desire of hon. members opposite when they are seeking for information and I know of no question on which they require it more than on the question of the trading concerns. For colossal ignorance of the laws of the country commend me to members of the Opposition, particularly to the gentleman who submitted this motion. Only last year we passed an Act providing that proper accounts should be kept; the words "true accounts" are also used. We have an Auditor General, who is not under any Minister so far as the auditing of the accounts of the various departments goes. He is responsible wholly and solely to Parliament, and if the accounts are not true and proper in accordance with the law, he will in due course report to Parliament; yet the hon. member who Tabled this motion says he does not know whether we are keeping proper accounts or not. Of course he does not know. I did not expect that he would know, but he should know that we have an Auditor General to see that we do keep them and if we do not, to report the matter to Parliament.

Mr. George: It has not been reported yet.

The PREMIER: But it will be reported in proper time. The hon. member knows well the work that devolves on the Audit Department in auditing the accounts at the close of the year. It is not a question of doing them by a particular day or a particular week; they must be taken in turn and we have no control over the actions of the Auditor General as to what accounts he shall audit first. The result is that we have to wait the same as Parliament has to wait, and we are not going

to direct the Auditor General as to how he shall conduct his work when he is responsible to Parliament and not to the Government. I rather think that the member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) requires this information out of inquisitiveness rather than with a desire of knowing whether we are keeping proper accounts, because if the hon. member knows the laws which we passed in this Parliament, he must know that this clause is in the Trading Concerns Act of last session—

The Minister shall cause books to be provided and kept, and true and regular accounts to be entered therein—(a) of all moneys owing to and by the Minister in respect of the trading concern administered by him, and of the several purposes for which such moneys are received and paid, and owing, and (b) of all the assets and liabilities thereof.

Then the hon. member says that even if a balance sheet is produced, members will not be in a position to know whether there are accounts outstanding.

Mr. Male: No, I did not say that.

The PREMIER: I listened carefully and the hon. member made use of those remarks. I want to point out that the Trading Concerns Act further provides—

(1.) The Minister shall, in every year, cause a full and true balance sheet of the assets and liabilities of each trading concern, together with a profit and loss account, and such other statements as may be necessary, to be compiled from the books and submitted to the Auditor General for audit.

(2.) The Auditor General shall certify that he has found the accounts in order, or otherwise, as the case may be; and whether, in his opinion, the accounts are properly drawn up so as to present a true and correct view of the transactions for the period under review as shown by the books; and all items of receipts and payments and all known liabilities and assets have been brought into account, and the value of all assets fairly stated.

(3.) The Auditor General shall, in respect to such accounts, have all the

powers conferred on him by the Audit Act, 1904.

Then another clause goes on to say that copies of such accounts together with the Auditor General's report thereon shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament annually.

Mr. Bolton: Present him with a copy of the Act.

The PREMIER: That would be of no use; he would forget it again before next year.

Mr. George: That is not fair.

The PREMIER: It is fair and it applies not only to the hon. member but to the leader of the Opposition, because he has a motion asking that we shall provide a balance sheet in connection with State steamers and lay it on the Table of this House during the currency of this session. Let me point out that if we were to provide the information the hon. member desires at this stage, he would be none the wiser from the point of view of knowing whether we had properly charged the various accounts. He could never discover that with certainty unless we showed each actual item.

Mr. Male: I should know if you told me.

The PREMIER: I will tell the hon. member now that we have charged the proper accounts and I suppose he will be quite satisfied at knowing that, but he will be no more enlightened if I give him the figures for each account. The hon. member might be enlightened from the point of view of being interested in the shipping service, but as Premier controlling Government concerns which are running in opposition to other trading concerns, I am not prepared to give premature information which will be of assistance to those opposing us. One could be more popular, perhaps, if every time a question was submitted or a request was made by our friends opposite, he rushed along and delved out information without considering the question of how it would affect the concern. I know how many enemies this concern has, political and commercial, and so long as I am here entrusted by the people of the State to conserve the interests of the various depart-

ments we are administering, I am going to suffer even ridicule or criticism from our friends opposite in order to protect the concern as far as possible against opposition from outside. The action of some of those connected with various other concerns during recent months shows to what depths they will descend to injure concerns operated by the Government in the interests of the people.

Hon. J. Mitchell: To whom do you refer?

The PREMIER: I will not mention names; the hon. member knows.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No, I do not know.

The PREMIER: And they descend to these depths to injure not only the concern but the individual attached to it, and when I know this, I am not going to be led by what appears to be an innocent request for information, as indicated by this motion, into making returns public prematurely. If I have the support of members on my side of the House, I will decline to give any figures in connection with the State Steamship Service and other trading concerns until they are properly supplied and audited by the Auditor General and submitted to this House in accordance with the terms of the Trading Concerns Act passed last session. I want to compare this with the attitude of my friends opposite who never kept proper accounts in connection with trading concerns, but who for years submitted draft after draft for the consideration of Cabinet and to be passed into law which would compel them to keep proper accounts, but as frequently as submitted to Cabinet they were shelved, and it devolved upon the present Government to see that the people who are shareholders in these concerns and their representatives in Parliament are kept fully acquainted with the transactions of these concerns from every point of view, and we brought down the Trading Concerns Bill last session to demonstrate not that we desire but that we shall, and that any future Government shall bring down proper accounts, audited by the Auditor General, so that the people shall know the real position. But until this is done in the proper way and in accordance with the law no one can complain if we adhere

strictly to the letter of the law. Full information will be given to members opposite in that way, but I will not give premature information which will be of more assistance to opponents than information to the public.

Mr. Price: It will be of assistance to other opposition concerns.

The PREMIER: That is what I have pointed out. It will be of no value to the public and of no value to the hon. member. He will not understand it if I give him the information in round figures as he desires in accordance with his motion. The hon. member wants details and he will get the details when he gets the proper report and balance sheet and profit and loss account audited by the Auditor General. That will be done in accordance with the law and our friends opposite and the public cannot complain if we comply with the letter of the law. As to when these accounts will be audited and submitted to Parliament I cannot say, but I can say that we have to close our accounts on the 30th June.

Mr. George: It might be next session.

The PREMIER: I do not know why it should be next session; it may be next week for all I know, but I can say that the accounts have to be closed on the 30th June, and a proper balance sheet has to be submitted to the Auditor General. The Auditor General is not under the control of Ministers in this matter but is under the control of Parliament, and I suppose that if Parliament expressed a desire for early reports, the Auditor General would make it convenient to have these accounts audited as early as possible. When the accounts have been submitted to the Government and certified by him, they will be brought down to Parliament for the information of hon. members and the public, and it will be information which will be of value to members and the public, but the information asked for in this motion will be of no value to the member who asked for it and of no public interest and of no value to the public. Under the circumstances I will ask the House not to agree to the motion, as it will mean giving premature information and information which is of

no value at all, when we have an Act compelling us to bring down complete details annually.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I can understand the Premier's somewhat heated expressions though there was nothing to uphold the contentions he has placed before members. What he has done is this: he has tried to draw a red herring over the track. He has told the member for Kimberley that the Trading Concerns Act passed last session deals with the whole of this matter. It does nothing of the kind. What that Act provides is that there shall be a complete balance sheet together with a profit and loss account. But the member for Kimberley is not asking for a balance sheet but for a return showing specific expenditure, and a return which can be obtained by the department controlling that particular branch of the service in a very small space of time, and it is not required to be audited in any shape or form.

The Premier: Do not you know from your experience in the railways that if you wrongly charge an account the Auditor General pulls you up and calls your attention to it?

Mr. GEORGE: I know what the Auditor General can do. If the Premier will not consider me conceited may I say that my training might allow me to know more than he does regarding accountancy. What the member for Kimberley is asking for is a return similar to which hundreds have been given during the time I have been in Parliament, and during the time the Premier has been in Parliament. The hon. member is not asking for a thoroughly audited balance sheet but for a return of certain expenditure. He is not asking to have an account giving all the expenditure which has been incurred and the corresponding receipts. He is simply asking—

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The concern has been running only 12 months; give it a show.

The Premier: He wants to know if proper accounts have been kept and he would not know it from the information which he is asking.

Mr. GEORGE: I am taking the Premier's speech in reply to the right and proper inquiry of the member for Kimberley, and it was in effect that his request is out of order, or should not be granted because of the Trading Concerns measure passed last session. That Act provides that proper books of account shall be kept and that a proper balance sheet shall be prepared, but the hon. member is not asking for a balance sheet; he is asking for particulars of the amounts expended on certain items, just as we frequently ask for information regarding expenditure on drainage, sleepers, or on the Houses of Parliament. For the life of me I cannot see how the Premier can justify his attitude in refusing to give the information. Then the Premier stated that if he did supply the information it would militate against the working of the steamers or would give information to rivals, and that would enable them to injure the steamship service. That is so much moonshine.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): There will be something else requested to-morrow.

Mr. GEORGE: Let to-morrow carry its own burden; we are dealing with to-day.

The Premier: You will get proper accounts in due time.

Mr. GEORGE: It is not a question of proper accounts; if we are to accept that answer, it will be ridiculous to ask any question. If we are to be absolutely kept in the dark, let the Premier be bold enough to say "I refuse to give to my political opponents any information whatever, because I am afraid that they will be able to use it to the detriment of myself and my party."

Mr. Price: To use it in the interests of other companies.

Mr. GEORGE: That is the position. Let the Premier be a man amongst men—

The Premier: I told you plainly.

Mr. GEORGE: Let the Premier say to the country—"Although I am here as Premier of the State representing a majority of the people of this State when I was elected"—he knows he is not re-

presenting a majority to-day—"I refuse to give to the people who placed me in power the information which they are entitled to have." I am afraid what he would have to say if he was man enough is—"I will not let them know what the true facts of the case are because if I did, it would be a sort of lever to assist to yank me out of the position of Premier." When the Premier takes up that attitude, well, even the suggestion of it makes my blood run cold.

The Premier: You have no blood at all, in my opinion.

Mr. GEORGE: I might tell the Premier that he may find some difficulty to make it run, but in any case, he would not make my legs run. It is of no use the Premier going on in that way. Why cannot the Premier, instead of shielding himself behind an Act which does not apply—

The Premier: It does apply.

Mr. GEORGE: Why does not the Premier say, "I will not give the Opposition any information," and then we would know where we were?

Mr. Bolton interjected.

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. gentleman is so inconspicuous a member of his party and of the great Government at present in office, that he will excuse me if I have not time to pay any attention to him. The hon. member's light is so obscured by the absolute brilliancy of the Premier—

Mr. Bolton: I do not mind playing second fiddle to the Premier, but I would not to you.

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member would not be able to keep in time or tune and I have a very critical ear for anything pertaining to music, and would not have the hon. member in my orchestra.

The Premier: There is a great discord if those around you comprise your orchestra.

Mr. GEORGE: The member for Kimberley is asking for particulars of expenditure incurred, and he wants to ascertain what amount is charged against revenue and what amount is charged against capital account and it is easy to realise that such information will be of use. If a certain item is charged against

capital account when, in the opinion of the Opposition, it should not be so charged, the Government will be open to attack.

The Premier: We could not tell you that.

Mr. GEORGE: The Premier does not know what he can tell us. We know how we can deal with the figures if we can obtain them, but we must first have the figures in order to deal with them. The Premier is setting up a precedent which, if it is adopted against him in the near future, he will be one of the first to decry. Why should not the particulars of this expenditure be given?

[*The Speaker resumed the Chair.*]

The Premier: Because we provided an Act of Parliament last session to give you proper accounts in due course.

Mr. GEORGE: When is due course? In connection with last year's expenditure we had the Auditor General's report three or four weeks after Parliament had prorogued.

The Premier: No, you did not.

Mr. GEORGE: We had the second portion of his report, the most important part, three or four weeks after the House prorogued.

The Premier: It was the first time that you had had it in parts, and the reason it was in parts was so that it might be available before the end of the session.

Mr. GEORGE: Why I mentioned the Auditor General's report was that had it been available to members it would have been of considerable use in discussing the Estimates last year. If we are to wait for the balance sheet of these steamers in the same way that we had to wait for the Auditor General's report, then there is no opportunity of discussing the operations to the 30th June this year until Parliament meets next year.

The Premier: You would like to kill them in their infancy, would you not?

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member is always throwing away a lot of flirting interjections like that. I always notice, that when I am getting through his pachydermis and making his conscience wriggle he throws out these inane interjections. We on this side of the House

know that all we can do is to protest. We have not the numbers; the numbers are on the side of the Government, but as the old Book says, "Young man, do not boast thyself of thy strength," I say to the young man on that side of the House that the time is coming, and very shortly, when what I say is nothing more or less than absolute impertinence and disregard of the rights of the State as exhibited in connection with this motion, will have to cease. I consider that the attitude of the Premier in refusing these returns in this way is an insult to this country, and if the country will take the matter to heart, as I believe it will, it will see that the Premier is afraid to let the truth be known about these transactions, and as for the balderdash that the giving of information will enable the rivals of these steamers to cut in against them and do them damage, it is hardly fit to put before the children of a day school, much less an assembly which should represent the best intellects Western Australia can produce. The Premier tries to shield himself behind an Act which he knows does not apply to this affair.

The Premier: It does.

Mr. GEORGE: The Premier knows it does not. The Premier should be a bigger man and say, "I do not care a twopenny hang for my opponents; here are the figures, make out of them what you like," but he will not produce the figures because he is afraid of them. He is almost like a little child shielding himself behind his mother's apron because the cock happens to crow or the cow happens to moo. The spectacle of the Premier shielding himself behind this Act of Parliament is too contemptible for me to say anything further about it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): I would like to point out to the Premier that the Government Trading Concerns Act does provide for the keeping of accounts. It also provides that trading concerns are to be declared by the Governor in Council to come under the Act. In this case they came under the Act on the 21st May. The Premier knows further that under Section 18 of the Act the Gov-

ernor can determine when accounts are to be closed. It does not follow that they are to be closed on the 30th June at all.

The Premier: The 30th June unless otherwise decided.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is perfectly patent to all who concern themselves about this State steamship business that the June figures showed a revenue of £18,036 as against a revenue of £2,228 for July, and an expenditure of £24,420 for June as against £5,171 for July, and those figures cause one to question just what has happened in this connection. The hon. member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) is perfectly right in asking the Premier for this information, and the Premier is absolutely wrong in withholding it. The people can only regard with suspicion the departmental administration so far as these trading concerns go. We are entitled to know what the Minister intends to charge up for repairs to these old steamers that have been bought. I do not know whether we are justified in charging to Loan repairs for steamers just purchased, but we are entitled to know just where those charges have been debited. We are entitled to have this information now. The Government say they will give it in their own sweet time, but the public are getting a little bit tired of waiting.

Mr. Munsie: The public or the members opposite?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: For the Government to argue they would be giving information to the private trading concerns if they say how they debited their repairs is ridiculous. I know that when the Government put up their freight on cattle and wool they were following the lead of proprietary trading concerns.

Mr. McDonald: Is not there a big margin between them?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No. Exactly the same freight. We want to know what those boats are costing us, and what has been charged from loan and from revenue. I would also like to advise the Premier that he had better listen to the public demands if he will not listen to the words which are falling from this side of the

House. The public want to know whether these trading concerns are going to pay.

The Premier: They will know. A shipping company would not issue a balance sheet to its shareholders before it was properly audited.

Mr. Male: They would give information.

The Premier: They would not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Royal Commission had been allowed to report we would have had some information. It might, of course, have been valueless, but we are now not to have any report as I understand the Commission has been dissolved. It may be the desire of the Government to hide all that is happening in connection with the steamers. The Government ought to be frank in this matter and they ought to recognise the futility of attacking the Opposition whenever they seek information. When the Premier has had as much experience in business as the member for Kimberley he will see the wisdom of not hiding anything. It is well to tell everything, and tell it without reservation. How can it affect the position of a State trading concern if the public know what the boats have cost?

The Premier: We give that in our quarterly balance sheets.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: How can it affect the position if the public know what is being charged from revenue, and what is being charged from loan month by month.

The Premier: They know that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier knows that the crown of the boilers of one of these steamers fell in, and that repairs were necessary. How can it affect the position if the Premier tells us something about that? I advise the Premier to be frank. We are prepared to accept his statement that he should be given time to make these boats pay, and if he can do so, I assure him that the taxpayers will be very pleased. But he should tell us what is to be charged to revenue and what to loan. It may be that the £39,000 paid for the "Western Australia" had been increased by the amount spent on her before the Board of Trade allowed her to sail. The Premier knows that a good deal

of money was spent on this vessel before she left London.

Mr. Price: That is wrong.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Is that amount to be charged to revenue or loan. The member for Kimberley will not be able to get this information from the balance sheet which will be prepared under the Trading Concerns Act.

The Premier: You will know if a true and a proper account has not been kept. The Auditor General will certify if it is true or otherwise. Will the hon. member accept an assurance that the statement will be for the financial year as from the 30th June, 1912?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I will take the assurance of the Premier that the figures will be supplied as from the date he purchased the boats.

The Premier: If the information is not supplied in the balance sheet under the Trading Concerns Act I will give you the information you require.

Mr. Unsie: Surely you do not want more than that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Will the Premier tell us when we are likely to get the balance sheet?

Mr. SPEAKER: This is hardly the time for questions; moreover discussions in this Chamber are becoming very irregular.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: May I ask the Premier to tell us then, when he proposes to supply the information asked for by the member for Kimberley. Then we can finish the discussion without further delay.

The Premier: I have told you.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Auditor General's report is brought down at the last moment. This year it will cover the balance sheets of these trading concerns, and the member for Kimberley will not get the information he wants before the House adjourns. I hope that the Premier will promise that before the House adjourns we shall have it.

The Premier: You know that the Auditor General works under an Act of Parliament.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have no desire to detain the House longer, but I do

protest against this shirking of responsibility in regard to supplying information. This kind of thing only creates suspicion in the minds of the public.

Mr. Turvey: Suspicion is not in the minds of the people.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We who sit here have just as much responsibility as those who sit behind the Premier. I realise, however, that it is futile to proceed further. I again express the hope that the Premier will ask the Auditor General to let us have these balance sheets at the earliest possible moment. It is two months since the accounts were closed, and when appearing before the Royal Commission the manager said that after each trip he made up a balance sheet showing the result of that trip. There can be no difficulty, therefore, in acceding to my request if the books have been so well kept.

Mr. MALE (in reply): It is clear that the Premier refuses to give us any information at all respecting our State steamers or trading concerns.

The Premier: Premature information, yes.

Mr. MALE: I have some knowledge of the Trading Concerns Act put through last year, and I do not ask the Premier for a profit and loss account, as it is quite evident that he could not produce such an account at this juncture. I explained that it would probably take the department a month to prepare a profit and loss account, while perhaps another couple of months would be required for auditing it.

The Premier: Tell us what you want this information for.

Mr. MALE: What I pointed out to the Premier was that the return of expenditure and revenue which is given to us does not show us the true position of our trading concerns, inasmuch as there may be outstanding accounts unpaid and outstanding accounts uncollected. We shall get that in its proper time, and I have not asked for that information; but I have asked for information in connection with expenditure for alterations, repairs and renewals. If I had that information I should then know if it were included in these cash accounts. If the amount has

been included in the expenditure, I shall have then some idea as to how that expenditure has been made up, and as to whether this actual trading concern is showing the apparent loss which this statement leads us to believe it does show. If these amounts have not been charged to this expenditure, then I take it they have been put on to capital account and this expenditure shows an enormous loss.

The Premier: You will get all that information complete when you get the properly audited accounts.

Mr. MALE: But there is nothing in the Trading Concerns Act which prevents the Premier from giving us information from time to time if the country requires it. The articles of association of any shipping company provide that proper accounts shall be kept, the same as our Act provides; provide that an audit shall be made, the same as our Act provides. But those articles do not prevent the company from giving information to the shareholders as to what has been done, do not prevent the company letting the shareholders know whether a big alteration on a steamer is charged to capital account or to revenue. If they require that information it is given to them, and they then have information which assists them in ascertaining what kind of profit may be shown for the twelve months. The Premier absolutely refuses to give us any information with regard to trading concerns. We must wait for the profit and loss account to come back duly audited. I say we may be waiting until after Christmas for that, and so another twelve months will have gone by before we are in a position to criticise our trading concerns.

The Premier: It will come as a very decent Christmas present.

Mr. MALE: A Christmas present which we shall not find very easy to digest. The country has a right to this information. The Premier cannot raise the excuse which he raised in reply to a question regarding the Royal Commission, namely, that it will be too expensive. The Premier said that it would be too expensive to go on with the Royal Commission on the steamship service, even though it was to let the country know how the depart-

ment stood. But the furnishing of this information will not be expensive. An accountant at the office could take it down within an hour if the books are written up and I take it the books must be written up, as 30th June has some time passed. I think the least the Premier might have done was to give me the information asked for, as it easily obtained.

The Premier: I will give it to you in due course.

Mr. MALE: The only satisfaction we have is the knowledge that the Premier refuses to give us any information respecting our trading concerns, and the shareholders in these particular concerns can wait.

The Premier: The shipping companies' agents can wait.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	20

Majority against 13

AYES.

Mr. Harper	Mr. A. E. Plesse
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Foley	Mr. Price
Mr. Green	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Holman	Mr. Swan
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Lander	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Underwood
Mr. McDonald	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. McDowall	Mr. Johnston
Mr. Mullany	(Teller).
Mr. Munster	

Question thus negatived.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 21st August, 1913.

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

QUESTION—COLLIE COAL AND RAILWAY TESTS.

Mr. A. A. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Were the papers asked for by the Hon. R. J. Lynn, M.L.C., on 19th September, 1912, in the Legislative Council relating to the railway tests of Collie coal made by the department in March and April, 1912, ordered to be laid on the Table of the House? 2, Were the papers referred to laid on the Table of the House or given privately into the hands of the Hon. R. J. Lynn, M.L.C., by the Hon. the Colonial Secretary 3, Was the Railway Commissioner averse to allowing such papers to be laid on the Table of the House? 4, Did the Railway Commissioner contend, and voice his contention by a written minute, "that as the Hon. R. J. Lynn, M.L.C., was an agent for selling coal for one of the coal companies concerned, it would be unfair for the Hon. R. J. Lynn, M.L.C., to have access to such papers, as those papers could be unfairly used for trade purposes," or words to that effect?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, On the 3rd October, 1912, the Hon. Colonial Secretary explained to the House that as the file contained papers of a confidential character, it was undesirable that it should be laid on the Table, but that it would be made available to Mr. Lynn or other hon. members. I understand that the papers were subsequently perused by the Hon. Mr. Lynn. 3, Yes. 4, Yes, practically so.