

out of our mines and throw it away for the reason that the Minister will not allow us to use it except under impossible conditions. I do not desire to discuss this matter at any length, but I would be wanting in my duty if I did not call attention to anything that interferes with the Goldfields Water Scheme, and to the crying needs of the goldfields, and of the low grade shows particularly, for a cheaper water supply.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 18th December, 1911.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL ROLLS, LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Mr. FRANK WILSON (without notice) asked the Attorney General: In reference to the announcement which appeared in the Press on the 16th December, does the Attorney General think that he is justified in striking all names off the Legislative Council roll of electors who have not signed claim cards since 1907? If so, what is his object in thus dis-franchising bona fide electors?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: The object of striking out all names is to prepare for the Legislative Council elections and to get new rolls completed. All the old rolls will be wiped out, but every one upon those rolls will receive notices and cards.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Away in the back country?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It does not matter where they are so long as their addresses can be obtained. We shall utilise existing rolls, and every post office and public building will be availed of for publishing proclamations to notify the people. Every possible means of letting the people know that they have to take steps themselves to get on the roll will be employed.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Why depart from the usual custom of taking a census?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Because the census has always been unsatisfactory. This step has been taken on the advice of the Chief Electoral Officer, and the proposal is really his. It has been endorsed by me and approved by Cabinet, and he is of opinion that we shall get a fuller, safer, and more complete roll than if it were dealt with by the census system.

QUESTION—WATER SUPPLY, PERTH.

Mr. LANDER asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has the water from the new bore at Leederville been analysed? 2, What is the report of the analysis? 3, Is it the intention of the Minister to provide a larger reservoir for the water supply around Perth?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Analysis as follows:—(Figures represent parts per 100,000.) Ammonia, free, .036; ammonia, albuminoid, .006; organic matter (oxygen absorbed in four hours), .15; nitrogen as nitrates, .0065; chlorine, 32.4; chlorine sodium chloride, 53.46; sodium carbonate, 6.31; hardness (degrees) temporary, 3.5; hardness (degrees) permanent, nil; the figures are similar to analyses of other water obtained in that locality. 3, Yes; plans are well in hand for a ten-million

gallon service reservoir at King's Park, and the work will be proceeded with early in the coming year.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, NEW LINES.

Mr. MONGER asked the Minister for Works: Whether the Minister will give priority of construction to railways already authorised?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Circumstances may arise which would render this impossible in every case. The next lines to be undertaken will be Quairading-Numagin and Wickepin-Merredin.

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th December.

Mr. MITCHELL (Northam): I would like to say that I approve in the main of the Bill which has been brought down, and I am quite willing to admit that the temporary officials should be controlled by the Public Service Commissioner. We are bound to have a good number of temporary officials because, I understand, an insufficient number present themselves for examination: but, at any rate, we cannot dispense with experienced officers. I should like to see as many of these officers as possible made permanent, and I think it is a step in the right direction to place them under Mr. Jull. It is true that there is a Public Service List and that they must get on the list, but the present system does not provide for close inquiry into the antecedents of the applicants. It is necessary to have the closest inquiry into the character and capacity of each official, and this can be done only by the Public Service Commissioner; but when it comes to the control of the officers, that must remain with the under secretary. Then, too, I approve of the proposal that the Public Service Appeal Board shall be presided over by a judge of the Arbitration Court, which, of course, means a

judge of the Supreme Court. This will, I believe, give satisfaction. At the present time it is more or less like appealing from Caesar to Caesar, and there are disadvantages under the present system. When an officer is charged with an offence, he does not regard the Public Service Commissioner notwithstanding that he is on oath, as quite the equal of a Supreme Court judge, or even a magistrate. He does not realise that it is necessary to tell the truth absolutely before the Commissioner, but most people would hesitate to commit perjury before a Supreme Court judge. It is essential that the truth be stated by all who give evidence before this board. But I think an appeal should go beyond an appeal against classification. I think an appeal should be allowed in all cases of any importance; because money is not always the first consideration. An officer may consider he has suffered an injustice, and why should not one who has been dismissed for a serious offence have the right to appeal? It seems to me it should be allowed, because it does not only mean that a man's office is taken from him, it also means an indelible stain may be left on his character. Members do not wish this, and in order that we may place the matter in order, I propose to move an amendment. The proposed appeal board is in every way superior to the board we have had in the past, and I think that officers who imagine they are suffering under an injustice should be permitted to go to this new tribunal if only to have their record amended should the judge at the re-hearing so decide. Of course we cannot have an officer already dismissed reinstated, but it is my intention to submit an amendment so that the Bill may be made retrospective to the extent that, where in the opinion of a Minister an officer's character has been affected by any finding of the Commissioner, the officer may go to the appeal board for a re-hearing of his case. From my experience as Minister I realise there are some cases that might well be brought up for further consideration. I am bound to confess that, while I feel we will be only doing justice to give a dismissed official

the opportunity to go before this new board, a man already out of the service, I am not altogether acting unselfishly, because as Minister for Lands I had to do some unpleasant things and had to approve of the dismissal of officers. I consider a man's honour is dearer to him than money. While a man may not get his position back he may be able to clear his character. I have had to dismiss some men and I have had to get others to resign from the department while I was Minister, and I should like to think now they will have the right to go to the appeal board. I had to approve of the dismissal of one man found guilty of wrong doing while occupying a responsible position. The offence was aggravated, it is true, by a want of frankness and truth at the inquiry, and also by his demeanour towards other officials; and his conduct before Mr. Jull when the inquiry was held had some effect, it may be; yet at a rehearing it is possible this impression may be removed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): He was a very good officer.

Mr. MITCHELL: At any rate the decision left me no alternative, and since then, I understand, this officer has lost no opportunity of abusing me, of course untruthfully. I am bound to confess by a change of circumstances he has had an opportunity of misrepresenting me on all that has happened without incurring any risk himself. Apart from this, for the sake of his family and relatives, it would be a good thing to give him a chance of removing the record now standing against his character. I am sure I will be assisted in this by members of the House. I make no secret of the fact that the officer to whom I refer is the present member for Williams-Narrogin. He, in common with others, should be given the opportunity to go before this judge and the members of the board sitting with him and to remove the record which exists. My amendment is a reasonable one. In any event I hope the Premier will amend the clause to provide that officers who consider themselves harshly treated, at any rate dismissed for any serious offence, may go before the appeal board.

The Premier: We are not altering the appeal board.

Mr. MITCHELL: You are having them tried by a judge.

The Premier: Only in cases of appeal against classification.

Mr. MITCHELL: I want to make it an appeal against the findings of the Public Service Commissioner, not for trivial offences but for serious offences.

The Premier: How are you going to define "serious offences"?

Mr. MITCHELL: If the Premier will consult the Parliamentary Draftsman—

The Premier: That is your study. You want to make the amendment.

Mr. MITCHELL: It is my duty as a member of the House to assist the Premier, but not my duty to draft the Premier's Bill. I want the Premier to improve it. It is my duty to point out where he can amend it, and it is his duty to listen to what I have said, and, if he thinks I am right, make the alteration. We are powerless on the Opposition side to have the Bill improved, but it is clearly our duty to point out where it can be improved.

Mr. Taylor: I used to say that when I was in Opposition.

Mr. Frank Wilson: What do you think now?

Mr. MITCHELL: It would be of more use to the Premier if the member for Mount Margaret would say what he thinks now. However, the Bill is a good one, and I believe will result in giving satisfaction to the service. The appeals in the past have not been satisfactory and the Public Service Commissioner will be glad to be relieved of the responsibility. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 27:

The PREMIER moved an amendment—

That after "words," in line 1 of Sub-clause (b), the words "during the month of May in each year and" be

inserted, and the words "before any increase of salary is paid to such officer" added at the end of the subclause.

The Act provided that a report with regard to an increase in salary should be made in May only. The amendment provided that a report could be made at any time during the year before an increase in salary could be granted in accordance with the desire of the permanent head.

Amendment passed, the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Amendment of Section 51:

On motion by the Premier clause amended by striking out in line 5 the word "any" and inserting "the"; also in line 6, striking out the word "relating" and inserting "of."

Mr. MITCHELL: Would the Premier give consideration to the advisableness, not necessarily at the present time, of inserting a clause to provide that where, in the opinion of the Minister, an officer's character had been affected by any finding of the Commissioner, or the appeal board, a rehearing might be granted to the officer?

The PREMIER: The Bill had only been brought in to get over the difficulties in connection with the reclassification now proceeding. He had already assured the House on the second reading that when the whole question was being taken into consideration provision would be made for appeals in all cases.

Mr. MITCHELL: His only desire was to get an assurance from the Premier that the suggestion he had made would be considered in a few months' time when the principal Act was being further amended.

The PREMIER: The matter would receive attention then. He had already explained that it had been considered when the present Bill was being drafted, but it was decided owing to the limited time at the disposal of the Government to confine themselves to the amendments to the reclassification matter only, and to allow everything else to stand over until the next session.

Mr. MITCHELL: The object he had in view was to provide for appeals in serious charges, and that the Act may be made retrospective. Did the Premier approve of that principle? No one should object to it. However, as he had been given the Premier's assurance that the matter would receive attention next session he would allow it to drop at that stage.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 52:

The PREMIER moved an amendment—

That at the end of paragraph (a) the following words be inserted:—"Or change an officer from one division to another."

It was provided in connection with an appeal against a classification, that the office may be either maintained, increased, or reduced, and the object of the amendment was to give additional power to the Appeal Board to alter an officer's position.

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

New Clause:

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON moved—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 8:—Every civil servant shall have full political rights provided he does not divulge information acquired by him in his official position.

It would require very few words to commend the amendment to the Committee, particularly that section on the Ministerial side. It would be remembered that the Labour party went to the country with that proposal in the forefront of their programme, and the omission of any reference to it must have been an oversight on the part of the Government.

The Premier: It was not an oversight.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Premier's remark surprised him. It was certainly a clause which ought to be included in the measure.

The PREMIER: It would easily have been possible to have brought down a Bill of 50 clauses, if necessary, but as he had already explained time was very limited and the Government had to be content to deal with the classifications only.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Hon. members ought to be reminded that the Legislative Council elections were to take place in May next, before the meeting of Parliament, and before the Government would have a chance of submitting further amendments. It was the duty of members to put this alteration into operation before those elections took place, so that civil servants might know how they stood.

The PREMIER: The Government had not overlooked this question, but had decided that owing to the fact that the reclassification would probably be published soon after the holidays, it was desirable that the Bill should become law this session; and, having regard to the circumstance that if the measure were overloaded with contentious matters it would stand a chance of being thrown out, it had been resolved to restrict it to its present form, leaving many other points of interest to be included in a comprehensive measure which would be brought down next session. In the circumstances the member for Narrogin-Williams would be considering the interests of the service by withdrawing his amendment and so avoiding lengthy discussion. It was quite likely that the point sought by the amendment could be achieved through the regulations; he would make enquiries and if this proved to be so, he would readily consider the framing of a regulation to bring about this reform. The Government policy was to give full political rights to public servants, while at the same time protecting the State against any premature divulgence of confidential information.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In view of the Premier's promise to fix up the matter under the regulations he would withdraw the amendment.

New clause by leave withdrawn.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments; and the report adopted.

BILL—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th December.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE (Toodyay): I would like some information from the Minister as to the price to be charged for water. In respect to the Goomalling extension, I understand the price has been fixed at 8s. a thousand gallons. I would like to know whether that is fixed on the capacity, or on the estimated consumption at the end of the extension; that is to say, at Goomalling itself. If that is so I am afraid the rate of, say, £25 per 1,000 acres, which this scheme may have in contemplation, will be dear water. That I understand, is the proposed price. I would be glad if the Minister would inform us as to whether this is correct. It seems to me that it will be prohibitive, and I would like some information as to whether, if the consumption increases, the price of the water will be reduced. At 8s. per 1,000 gallons it can hardly be levoted to any other use than that of watering stock. The Minister might give us the required information when in Committee.

The Minister for Works: Yes I will give you that information in Committee.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco): The Government are to be commended for the very practical way in which they have met a difficulty with which a large body of our selectors have been faced owing to the dry season experienced. The Government have done very good work indeed in bringing down this measure so early in their term of office. The extension of the Goldfields Water Supply main through the agricultural areas rendered it essential that the old guarantee system should be abolished. It would be absurd to attempt to continue that system through any great extension of the reticulation. However, it is a question whether the substitution of a uniform acreage rate upon all land within a mile and a half of a railway line, is preferable to a rate upon the unimproved value. I did not hear the Minister make any reference to the system of rating on the unimproved values when introducing the Bill, but I know that when speaking to a deputation of farmers some time ago he told them there were objections to the system. I have given the matter some little thought, but have been un-

able to find any potent reason why this rate could not be levied on the unimproved value. The Minister contends that the water is a commodity and has the same value, whether to the man close to a railway line, and whose land is generally more valuable than the land farther away, or to the man at a distance from the line. That is correct in one sense but incorrect in another. As a rule a man on poor land and who is farthest out is called upon to use a greater quantity of water; but I contend that the people who have been fortunate enough to secure land close to a railway line are saved from expensive carting, and, seeing that that is so, there is no reason why some relief should not be given to the man out back, by allowing him the necessary water at a lower rate. Then we have the anomaly that a great deal of sand plain was originally taken up at 5s., and much of it at 3s. 6d., while some land ranges as high as 27s. 6d. per acre. Clearly then it is anomalous that the man owning poor sand plain should be called upon to pay the same price for his water as the man with expensive and highly fertile land, especially in view of the fact that much of this good land lies close to the railways, and so the owners escape the expense of lengthy carting, which the man further out has to provide for. Therefore I see no reason why the rate cannot be fixed upon the unimproved value instead of upon a flat rate system. I was particularly struck with the circumstance that the Minister made no reference to this when introducing the Bill. Apart from the anomaly pointed to I have pleasure in supporting the Bill, because I recognise that the Government are endeavouring to assist those people who but for such assistance, would be forced to leave their holdings.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): The position referred to by the member for Subiaco is deserving of some consideration. When it comes to a question of rating at so much per acre, as provided in the Bill, it is necessary that consideration should be given to the diversified values of the land. I think it would not be impossible to levy a rate on the unim-

proved value of the land, and I hope the Minister will consider this point.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): I do not propose to speak at any length to the criticisms of the Bill, because they have been mostly all confined to one phase of the question. In introducing the Bill I endeavoured to make it clear that, after all, the price charged for the water was not of very great importance, provided that for the rate he paid the farmer could get sufficient water for his requirements. The Bill is essentially a technical one, and therefore I tried to make it very clear in order that hon. members would be able to follow it. I will try again to make it clear. If you give cheap water, then the farmer cannot use the water in consideration of the rate he has to pay, and consequently the cheapness of the water is of no benefit to the farmer if he cannot use that water.

Mr. Mitchell: He has the right to use it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Just let me explain. I could see from the files that the member for Northam did not understand the question at all. I have read his criticism and his representations to the department, and it was a clear indication to me that the hon. gentleman had never studied water supplies at all.

Mr. Mitchell: What do you know about it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am just stating that the hon. member's interjection makes it clear that he has not studied this phase of the question. To-day we have a guarantee system which goes beyond the limit of this proposed rating.

Mr. Mitchell: It does not cost as much as yours.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To some it will cost 100 per cent. less than they are paying now, because they will not pay at all. Under the guarantee system we go out four or five miles and expect men to pay who have to cart their water in tanks, and this rating system will be a reduction to such men as that. To the men within $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles it will be an increase in some cases, and a decrease in others. Under that guarantee system the farmer is supposed to get his water at 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, and he guaran-

tees for such an amount that he cannot use anything like the water he is entitled to in consideration of the payment he makes; thus, instead of the water being 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons it, in some instances, goes up to 10s. per thousand. In order to arrive at what was a fair amount to allow, I went through all these guarantees and struck an average, and I found that the average consumption was 46,000 gallons. Then I said to myself, "If I give roughly 10,000 gallons more than the average consumption that will surely meet all requirements." Now, what is the advantage of doing that—and this is the whole point of the Bill? If we give the agriculturist water at, say, 2s. per 1,000 gallons, we must assume that he is going to use the water; if we assume he is going to use the water, we must give him a main that will convey that quantity; and if we provide a main of that capacity the capital expenditure becomes so great as to make the whole proposition impossible. Realising that, we propose to give a man just what he requires, and build a main of just that capacity, and in this way we keep the cost down so low that it becomes a practicable proposition. I say that 8s. per 1,000 gallons is not a matter of importance to the agriculturist. If we were to give him 54,000 gallons at 12s. I would not hesitate, because if that is all he uses that is all he wants, and what is the use of giving it to him any cheaper? Now, as to the rating on unimproved values, naturally as a strong advocate of this system of taxation, I immediately instructed that the Bill should be based on rating on the unimproved value, but I had not gone far before I realised that it was an impracticable proposition. We had a commodity to sell, and hon. members will agree with me that the man on sandplain country is the man who carries stock, and he is the one who wants water. The man on poor land, generally speaking, uses more water and, consequently, it is unfair to tax on the unimproved value when the poor land uses as much, if not more, than the good land. For that reason we must rate on the acreage.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: The man on the sandplain does not get anything like the return that the other man gets.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not a question of the return he gets, but of charging for the water. To follow out the hon. member's argument, we might say that because a man does not get as great a return from sandplain as a man on better land he should get a reduction in freights on the railways; and so, to be logical, we might follow that argument right along. When we are dealing with a proposition for the sale of a commodity we have to estimate the value of it and then sell it to everybody exactly the same. A gallon of water is the same to one man as to another man, and it is not a question of whether he is giving it to stock raised on sandplain or to stock on salmon gum or morrel country. In order to get a practical demonstration as to the effect of rating on the unimproved value, I told the officers to take out these 13 mains and to put up a proposition for rating on the unimproved value. As soon as I got it in front of me I saw how unfair such a system would be. On some of the mains the unimproved value on which they would be paying would be considerably more than on others, although the amount of water would be identically the same in both cases. I therefore had to abandon that as an impracticable proposition and had to realise that rating on the unimproved value would not apply to a scheme of this character. Consequently the water was fixed at the same price, so much per acre. Then the hon. gentleman raised the point that, basing it on the unimproved value, the land would have an increased value near the main, but I overcame that by charging the same price for water near the main as at the other end of the pipe: in that way, the man close handy was penalised to that extent, and I think justifiably so, because the 8s. extends for the full length of the main, and I do not propose to fix a different rate for the different districts. I claim that the Bill is a practical suggestion. I can assure the House that it has been submitted by myself and by officers of the department to agriculturists, and

they are satisfied that we have in the Bill a practical method of overcoming the difficulty that is facing them, and they will readily shoulder the burden. Let me again tell hon. members that I do not want to force this water on to the farmers; I have simply taken out these 13 mains and the people say that they are prepared to pay. Outside of those 13, until I get a requisition from a given area there will be no further extension made; consequently, I am not asking the House for permission to force on this scheme; I am supplying those who are willing to take the water, and if other districts want extensions they will have to requisition for them.

Mr. Mitchell: So will these people you have served.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They have requisitioned already.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

Mr. MITCHELL: It was practically impossible to rate sand plain and pastoral country the same as first class land, and the Minister was making a mistake in fixing a tax for that purpose. Sand plain had less carrying capacity than good land, and although the problem was a difficult one the Minister should endeavour to discriminate in some way, because people who had poor land could not afford to pay the same price as people who had extensive farms in operation. The Minister would be wise to extend the guarantee system.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: The guarantee system is an absolute absurdity.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Government had something to sell, and they should sell it in the way the people liked best.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: There is not one district which has not pronounced against the guarantee system.

Mr. MITCHELL: The hon. member was wrong. If the scheme was to be a success the Minister would have to dis-

criminate between different classes of land. He asked the Minister to give the matter careful consideration, and if the scheme was not working satisfactorily, bring down an amending measure next session. If the Minister would look into the matter in the meantime and on the spot he would find sandplain country could not pay the rate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member could be assured that the difficulty of the Bill was thoroughly recognised, as also was the magnitude of the task of overcoming that difficulty. His ideas he could not claim to be perfection; and during the recess it was his intention to see how the scheme operated. Some farmers were now on guarantee to take the water under the rating proposition, but if he found it would be an unworkable proposition he would not hesitate to bring down something better.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Power to rate country land, First Schedule:

Mr. MITCHELL: The farmers were to be called on to pay more than was paid by the mines. At Kalgoorlie, 351 miles from the reservoir, water was supplied for sluicing purposes at 1s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, but for ordinary mining purposes it was very much cheaper than was proposed to be charged to the farmers. At Southern Cross it was 4s. 9d. per 1,000 gallons and at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie 6s. 6d. on the average. At Bulong, to which a special main was run to serve a few people, the charge was 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons. Again for batteries crushing exclusively for the public the charge was 4s. per 1,000 gallons at Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, and Boulder. He had gone into the matter fairly thoroughly with the officers of the department, but they always assured him the price of water could not be brought down.

The Minister for Works: You do not realise the handicap you are putting on the agriculturists by giving them cheap water.

Mr. MITCHELL: Fancy going to the farmer and saying, "It will be bad for you to have cheap water."

The Minister for Works: He cannot use it.

Mr. MITCHELL: The farmer could have the right to use it. The tax was to be a permanent tax. Under the agreement system the agreements were for ten years, at the end of which period it was understood the water would be cheaper if the pipes were still in existence. A permanent tax had the disadvantage that it made the land of less value when the owner came to pledge it or sell it. Under the agreement system there were payments for ten years and that was the end of it; there was no permanent charge against the land. On the other hand, under this Bill, so long as the Minister could supply water the tax on the land would last. Why should it cost 8s. per 1,000 gallons, 1s. a mile per 1,000 gallons, to run water eight miles from the main, when the department could run it 350 miles to Kalgoorlie for 4s. per 1,000 gallons and in other cases for 1s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, or even up to 7s. per 1,000 gallons? Of course it would be said the department could run water out to scattered farmers at a lower price, but the figures of the department last year were very satisfactory. Although £79,000 was set aside as sinking fund, the scheme was only £25,000 to the bad. On a present capital of £2,300,000, the sinking fund of £79,000 set aside was over 3 per cent. It was too heavy. The pipes might be deteriorating, but the reservoir was always there.

Mr. Green: And they are replacing the pipes as they corrode.

Mr. MITCHELL: That was true. The pipes were being replaced from revenue, so that the department were really £79,000 to the good and really made £54,000 on the operations of last year less deterioration. Would it not be wise to take a little risk and reduce the cost of the water to the price at which it was sold to the mining companies under the most favourable conditions? When Minister he must confess he had never been able to get it done, because the officers of the department always said it could not be done; but he believed the officers over-estimated the case. They required 10 per cent. for administration, 4 per cent. for

interest, 3 per cent. for sinking fund, and 3 per cent. for maintenance. It was altogether too much. The maintenance could be reduced two-thirds and the sinking fund by one-half, and thus the farmers could get the water at a lesser rate.

The Minister for Works: What about the goldfields?

Mr. MITCHELL: The price could not be very much cheaper than that already charged on the goldfields. The Minister might charge for the water as at the main and charge only the cost of connection. Under the guarantee system the farmer paid sinking fund to work off the cost of the connection in ten years, but under the Bill the Minister wished to work off the cost in the same term, and still keep the charge as a permanent tax. By reducing the maintenance charge and the sinking fund charge, water ought to be supplied at 5s. per 1,000 gallons. The farmers would like to get the water and put it to some use. The charge of 8s. was impracticable; the farmers would have to pay for the connections, and a man a mile away, allowing the pipe a ten years' life, would thus pay £14, which with the rate would mean a total payment of £35 per 1,000 acres. The farmers might be willing enough to pay it to-day, but when the scheme was in operation they would be obliged to come to the Minister and ask for a reduction. Seeing the price at which water was sold at Kalgoorlie, it would be well to make some reduction to the farmers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would not assist the farmer to reduce the price of water. What should be done was to reduce the rates. Although the rate specified in the clause was 5d. that was the maximum. These schemes would be put down in the most easterly and driest portions, and the cost there would be 1d. per acre, but in others it would not cost that. Members were asked to fix the rate at 5d. maximum, leaving to the administration the striking of the rate for every particular connection, exercising the right to strike the rate on each particular capital expenditure. At Kalgoorlie there was no rate paid, the mines paid per 1,000 gallons used. The farmer would

be called upon to pay, roughly, £21 a year for 1,000 acres, but could have all the water he could possibly use in consideration of that £21. The price of 8s. per 1,000 gallons had no bearing on the situation. In connection with the numerous connections running out at the present time the farmers were not using the amount of water they were entitled to; and after having that practical experience, why should we penalise the farmer who used 46,000 gallons only by supplying him with water at 1s. per 1,000 gallons, which he could not use? Under the Bill we said to the farmer we would give him more than practical experience showed he required and, instead of giving him 46,000 gallons, we would give him 56,000 gallons in consideration of the rate it was necessary to strike on the capital expenditure. If we made water cheaper we would assume that it was going to be used, but it would not be cheap if it was not going to be used. When he assisted the farmer he would do so in connection with the rate, because that assistance would then go into the farmer's pocket. The size of the main was the governing factor. The capital cost of a small main did not make the proposition an impossible one, but, if we put in a large main the capital expenditure would be too great. In South Australia a Royal Commission sat on a similar question, and he wired for a copy of the report and found right through that argument was advanced. It was pointed out by the farmers that the proposition of 4d. was not suitable, and they argued for a reduction of that rate. The department replied that they were giving cheap water, but the farmers contended that it was not cheap because they could not use it. They emphasised the point that the mains need not have been so large, and consequently the capital expenditure not so great, and the rates might then have been reduced. That was just what he was trying to avoid in this State.

Mr. MITCHELL: The farmers objected to the Minister cancelling the agreement, and substituting without a petition the rating scheme. The Minister ought to abide by the agreement which had been

entered into. If the Government did not observe agreements, who would? A great many people had spent money in supplying themselves with water, and they now found no relief under this measure. The Minister sold water at per thousand gallons to the goldfields; why not serve farmers without asking them to submit to a tax? If we could do all we were doing at Kalgoorlie, which was 350 miles from Mundaring, we surely could do something better for the farmer, who was eight miles away from the main.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The farmer would not be relieved by reducing the price of water per thousand. If he was going to assist the farmer he would do so in a practical way by reducing the rate. The price of water at Kalgoorlie had no bearing on the price of water under the proposal which was being considered. With regard to the agreement's he was prepared to leave it to the guarantors under the extension to decide whether they would have the guarantee or the rating system, and he desired to emphasise the point that there would be no guarantee which would expire at the end of 10 years. The guarantees were for 10 years, but it did not follow that the farmers would not pay for water after the end of 10 years. The extension of the guarantee system went through a number of properties of people who would not join in the guarantees, with the result that those people could not draw on the mains, or, rather, galvanised iron tubes, and to-day these people were asking to be allowed to draw water from those tubes, and the reply given to them was that we had no right to supply them with water when others had entered into guarantees. He promised the member for Northam that he would not cancel the guarantees unless requested by a majority of those operating under the guarantee system.

Mr. MITCHELL: These people who had spent considerable sums in providing wells and dams should be considered because it was a fairly burdensome tax. The Minister estimated that the outside requirements of farmers would be 56,000 gallons. If the farmer already had that

56,000 gallons would the Minister force him to buy another 56,000 gallons? The Minister ought to consider the question of discriminating in favour of the men who had already made provision for a water supply. Through the Agricultural Bank the Government had lent these men money to put down wells and dams; so we had the Government encouraging the conservation of water on the one hand, and on the other taxing a man for an additional supply of water, notwithstanding that he had already met his own requirements.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: The Minister had dealt with these proposals in a clear manner, and it was pleasing to have his assurance that if the scheme proved to be burdensome to farmers it would be reconsidered. In his (Mr. Piesse's) district a guaranteed extension passed through several holdings of considerable size, all of which were well watered. If it was intended to do away with the guarantee system and impose the tax, the owners of these holdings would be called upon to pay a considerable amount, notwithstanding that they had no use whatever for the water. Where people had agreed to the rate the scheme might reasonably be tried, especially in dry districts, but in well watered districts some consideration was due to the property holders, who were already paying land tax and roads board rate. However, it was comforting to have the assurance of the Minister that the guarantee scheme would not be altered except at the wish of the majority.

Mr. MITCHELL: What was the purpose of the provision that the prescribed scale could be exceeded if so desired by two-thirds of the people of a district?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The object of the provision was to meet special cases. For instance, a requisition had been received to-day for an extension of the pipe line from Kellerberrin to Kwoollyn. Under a 5d. rate this could not be done, yet the people of the district were crying out for the water and were willing to pay a special rate for it. Hence the provision for the exceeding of the scale in certain cases.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: In such a case would the vote of the ratepayers in a

town be taken with the vote of the farmers on the long route?

The Minister for Works: No, it would be decided by the farmers on the long route.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 9—agreed to.

First Schedule:

Mr. MITCHELL: Was it necessary to have this fixed tax of £5 for the domestic supply? Why not take power to rate sufficiently high to cover the whole lot?

The Minister for Works: The rate would be too high.

Mr. MITCHELL: The farmer was not so simple as not to see through that. The Minister feared to make the tax more than 5d., whereas this £5 would represent a 6d. tax on a large block and as high as 10d. on a small one. Moreover, the people should be told at what rate they really were being taxed. The schedule should be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To do that would be to render the Bill of no value, for the rate would have to be increased all round. There were in the agricultural districts some people holding blocks of 160 acres. On such a block the family resided while the husband was working for other agriculturists. The owner of such a block would pay £5 for his domestic supply and £2 13s. a year by way of rating. The man on a thousand acres would not require any greater domestic supply than the man on 160 acres; consequently if the rate were to be fixed at such a price as to bring in the necessary revenue it would place a burden on the man of 1,000 acres and unfairly relieve the man on 160 acres, who, for his domestic supply, would be using practically the same quantity of water, and possibly even more. The only way of overcoming this difficulty was to fix a domestic charge for everybody, and then to make an acreage charge in accordance with the area. This system was in operation in Victoria and New South Wales, where it had been found to be the only practical way of adjusting the difference between the areas, while allowing the domestic supplies to be practically the same.

Mr. MITCHELL: Under this scheme the small man would have to pay for the big man. It meant paying 8s. per 1,000 gallons for water and 8s. for any excess over 54,000.

The Minister for Works: There is no talk of excess at all.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Minister ought to know exactly what he was going to charge for excess. He (Mr. Mitchell) would assume it to be 8s. since the Minister apparently did not know. If the man on 160 acres paid 8s. a thousand gallons for the water he used he would have done all he ought to do; however, he would be called upon to pay £5 and £2 13s. which was equivalent to nearly 20,000 gallons. If the man on 1,000 acres used only 54,000 gallons the man on 160 acres would not use 20,000 gallons. He moved an amendment—

That the following words be struck out of the Schedule:—"A fixed sum not exceeding five pounds and in addition thereto."

Mr. McDOWALL: The member for Northam should remember that the people on the goldfields were paying for an immense scheme, for a reservoir which had cost a quarter of a million, the 13in. main, and the cost of administration at head office, and the farmers were to get water without any of these charges being debited against them. As to the insinuation that the goldfields were getting water at 1s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, the annual report of the administration showed that the charge for water for ordinary mining purposes was 7s. per 1,000 gallons; scheme water when supplemented by water for the lenses, 10s. per 1,000 gallons; supplemented by water purchased from other sources, 15s.; and for low-grade propositions, on which the profit was not more than five per cent., 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons. For domestic supplies they were charged 7s. 3d. per 1,000 gallons, and the rate was 1s. 6d. in the pound on the net annual value of the property. The member for Northam and other representatives of farming constituencies should be grateful for getting the water at the proposed rate, and being allowed

to escape the charges on account of capital cost and administration. It ill became them to cavil at the charges proposed in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To accept the amendment would defeat the Bill, which would be of no value without this provision. The Committee should understand, however, that the sum of £5 was the maximum; the fixed charge for domestic supplies was not to exceed £5, in the same way as the rate was not to exceed 5d. per acre. Each extension would be dealt with separately.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Minister had stated on the second reading that he was going to charge £5 for each home, no matter whether it was large or small. This domestic charge was objectionable, and if the 5d. rate was not enough the Minister had provision in Clause 3 to get him out of the difficulty. In regard to the charges on the goldfields, it should be remembered by representatives of those constituencies that the general taxpayer had to foot the bill for a fairly large deficit year in and year out. This was not altogether a goldfields scheme; rather was it a national work. If the Minister would fix a reasonable amount to cover a small holding, say, not more than £2 10s., he would agree to it.

The Minister for Works: It might be £2 10s. in some cases.

Mr. MITCHELL: The charge of £5 on large and small homes alike was penalising the small farmer.

Mr. McDOWALL: It was necessary to point out to the member for Northam that the charge of 1s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons to which he had referred obtained only in connection with a special arrangement in regard to water for sluicing away residues, and people who paid for water at this rate had to take an immense quantity.

Amendment put and negatived.

First Schedule put and passed.

Second Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment; and the report adopted.

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

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) in moving the second reading said: It is not my intention to deliver anything in the nature of a lengthy address in introducing this Bill to the House, as it will only be necessary for me to explain to members that the Bill is for the purpose of re-enacting the statute which fixes the rate for the land and income tax, and the present Bill is identical with the Act of last session. The Government gave consideration to the question of altering the land and income tax as enacted in the past, and eventually we decided that as it required a fairly comprehensive amendment of the machinery Act it would not be desirable to attempt it this session. In those circumstances, we are making no alteration in the present land tax and income tax. The rates contained in this Bill will apply in the case of the land tax to the land owned by taxpayers on the 31st December, 1911, and in the case of the income tax, to the incomes earned during the current year ending on the same date. It will be observed that the rates at present in force are re-enacted without any change, and that the proviso to Section 2 which suspends the operation of Section 56 of the Assessment Act, as to paying the taxes in two moieties, is again inserted. This is rendered necessary by the fact that the financial year, in aid of which the taxes are imposed, ends in June, and that more than six months of such year have elapsed when the returns are received at the earliest due date. I might explain that the revenue collected under the Land and Income Tax Act during the last financial year amounted to £87,450, made up of land tax, £37,571, and income tax £49,579. The estimate for the current year—as members will see in the Estimates—assuming that the current rates will continue in force, is land tax £40,000, income tax £50,000, total £90,000. I do not think it is necessary for me to say any more, except to draw hon. members' attention to the annual report of the Commissioner of Taxation, where they will see particulars of various matters affecting this Bill,

and dealing with taxation generally. They will also notice that the cost of collecting the taxes controlled by the Commissioner of Taxation amounted to 6.09 per cent.; also, that the unimproved value of the land wholly exempted from land tax amounts to £1,956,246, and that land of the unimproved value of £11,659,088 is subject to half the tax only, being improved land. These are matters the Government have now under consideration, and next session we propose to ask for an amendment of the land tax in order to remove the exemptions and rebates which exist at present. We believe that the time has arrived when, without exception, the owner of the land, should pay something of its rental value to the revenue of the State. We are every day receiving requests from people in various parts of the State for further facilities in the way of railways or roads or wants of some other description; and we find that while these are given the value of the land is going up year by year, and this is due to the expenditure of large sums of money, both loan and revenue, and not so much to the energies of the owner himself. In many cases there are people reaping an advantage from the expenditure of such public moneys and doing nothing in any way towards improving their land or putting it to proper use. However, I am not desirous of causing discussion on these points to-day. I simply mention the fact that we are giving consideration to the matter in order to bring down the necessary amendments next session, not to this Bill but to the Assessment Act. In the circumstances I hope the House will pass this measure without any undue discussion recognising that the rate cannot very well be altered at this stage, in fact cannot be altered unless we also alter the Assessment Act, and as this would call for comprehensive amendments we have decided not to do so this session. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I think I can assure the Premier that there is not going to be any opposition to the passage of this little measure. The very

fact that it is merely a repetition of similar legislation we have had to pass year by year in order to raise the requisite revenue to carry on with to a small extent from land and incomes, is sufficient warranty the Bill will go through without opposition. The rates being exactly the same as we have imposed ever since we have passed legislation of this description, makes it clear that there cannot be much discussion. I am very much interested in the statement of the Premier that next year the Government propose to bring down a Bill amending the Assessment Act, and that they propose to carry out to the fullest extent their platform and abolish all the rebates and exemptions. I do not propose to discuss that aspect of the question this afternoon because it would be premature and we have not the matter before us, but still I can congratulate the Premier on standing to his guns. I think he has received a mandate from the people to pass certain legislation and this is portion of it, and I am not going to find fault with it, but at the same time when he does introduce the legislation I shall oppose it with all the vigour and ardour I possess.

The Minister for Lands: Not after we have convinced you it is right?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I am afraid the Minister will take a long time to do that. I do not want to get into an argument now. I know the Government want to get rid of the business this week; and if we start a debate as to the justness of rebates and exemptions, we would not get finished this side of Christmas.

Mr. SPEAKER: And likewise it would be out of order.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I congratulate the Commissioner of Taxation on the fact that the cost of carrying on the department and collecting the income tax and land tax is only 6.09 per cent. That is a very creditable performance. I remember the prophecies which were given voice to in this Chamber when I was passing this measure, that it was to cost all the tax we collected to carry on the department, or, as others said, that it would cost 25 per cent. or even 50 per cent. No one would agree that it would come under

10 per cent., and I believe hon. members who now occupy seats on the Government side of the House who were then members of Parliament nearly all voiced the opinion that we could not carry on this department at anything less than 10 per cent.

The Premier: This includes dividend duties and the totalisator tax.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: How much is applicable to the land and income tax?

The Premier: The Commissioner does not say.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: At any rate it shows that, notwithstanding we are collecting a comparatively small sum of money, it is not costing such an enormous amount as hon. members prophesied. I shall not detain the House. I simply say I intend to support this measure in every clause.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I am also pleased to support this measure, and I am pleased the Premier has indicated the intention of the Government next session. One cannot but be struck by reading the report of the Commissioner of Taxation to find that the rebates and exemptions, which are absolutely against the policy of the party on this side of the House, a little more than halve the amount that would be collected with no exemptions and no rebates. I think, according to the statement, the amount of taxation that would be derived, if there were no exemptions or rebates, would be £68,417, whereas the total amount collected is only £37,333; so we can see, apart from the justice of incidence of taxation on unimproved land values, there is a considerable loss of revenue to the Treasury through exemptions and rebates. I daresay too if the collection of the taxes of land were set apart by itself and not coupled with that of the other taxation collected by the Commissioner the cost would be a little higher than 6.09 per cent., and I think also that if there were no exemptions and rebates the taxes would be collected much more cheaply, because I believe the exemptions and rebates must increase the cost of collecting. However, as the Premier has pointed out that he is going to bring down a Bill amending the

Assessment Act next session, it will then be time to debate that aspect of the question; but I hope, no matter how long we may debate it and no matter how much argument is brought to bear, the principle will be carried as accepted by this side of the House. We know the shortness of the session and the limited time the Government have had to go through these various measures, and that it has not been possible for them to bring down the Bill this session; but I am sure those of us on this side of the House and those who supported the view in the country will be glad when next session opens and the Premier brings down that policy we have been fighting for so long.

Hon. H. B. LEFFROY (Moore): I am glad to hear the remarks of the Premier with regard to requests made for railways and other facilities for people in the country and the benefits which land owners derive from those railways and other public works without any direct return being made by those land owners to the State. I rise now with no intention to bring forward any controversial matters, but simply to emphasise the fact that in the country which lies north of Perth between here and Geraldton, within 40 miles of the Midland railway and on each side of it, the people have not gained any benefit by the tax which has been placed on their land. Moreover, I would point out that the unearned increment does not enter into the question of taxation within this area, because 90 per cent. of the land held under freehold there now was purchased, not before the construction of the railway, but after its construction, so that the value of the land was placed upon it by the construction of the railway, and the land was knocked down to the highest bidder; and nothing else has since occurred within that extensive area to in any way raise the price of the land. So the people in the area have not derived any unearned increment up to the present from any works carried on in the State within that area or outside it, and they naturally feel aggrieved that they should not have been able to benefit in the same manner as their brethren in other parts of the State. I would like the Government

of the day to take this matter into consideration; I would like the House to offer their practical sympathy to those settlers in this part of the country, and I would like the Government to devise some system whereby the area might be opened up by railways and the settlers there benefit to the same extent as settlers in other parts of Western Australia. There is a strong feeling in that large area that the people who pay the land tax are not gaining the benefits they should out of it. When the land tax was first brought into the House it was urged by the Government of the day, as one justification for bringing it forward, that people were clamouring for railways and other public works in all directions, and that they were unable to carry them out unless they had some further means of raising revenue. In consequence of this the land tax was proposed and brought forward. The people do not object to a land tax if they are likely to gain some benefit from it, but the people in that large area I have mentioned and which the member for Irwin represents, do not gain any practical advantage from the imposition of the land tax. It will be easily seen by the Government and the members of the House that no unearned increment is attached to the land held by these people, and I trust that in the future requests will come forward from this area asking the Government to devise some means by which the area can be properly developed. I trust the Government will take the matter into consideration and if possible devise some means by which the excellent land in that area may be improved, not only for the benefit of those who hold the land, but also for the benefit of the State. The people there have no objection to paying a tax which will enable them at any rate to make their lands more reproductive and get an increased increment from it. I wish to point out this because it has always been held in the past that when a railway is built and land taken up that these people who take up the land have gained an advantage by the construction of that line. The people of this area had the railway constructed first, and the land was sold at a price higher than

any land sold in Western Australia owing to the construction of that railway and its existence at the time. I hope that the Government and their administration will have some sympathy with those occupying the land there, and also at the same time recognise the fact that, by the development of that huge estate, which is occupied by people who are prepared to assist in the development of the country, they will be benefiting not only those who are on the land but the State as a whole. I know during the first debate on the Land Tax Bill in this House it was held that many roads boards in Western Australia were receiving a very much larger amount, compared with the rates they were raising, than should have been the case, but I would like to point out that the roads board with which I am more immediately connected—the Moora roads board—received a subsidy from the Government this year, for road making only, which amounted to 3s. for every pound raised. I know it was held, when this Act was first introduced some years ago, that there were many roads boards in this country actually receiving a greater subsidy than the amount they were raising from rates. I would emphasise the fact that this district is not a great burden upon the finances of the State, and that the people there are actively developing the country, and it is hoped that the Government will in the future devise some means by which this portion of Western Australia will be improved for the benefit of those who are in it and for the benefit of the State as a whole. I do not object to the income tax, which is perfectly fair and equitable, and a land tax, up to a certain point, is also equitable. I believe in a land tax, for revenue purposes, but not in the same way that some people consider that land should bear all the taxation. That question I do not intend to speak upon at the present time, because it would raise matters of a controversial character which might occupy the attention of the House for some days to come. I support the second reading of the measure, and, at the same time, I trust that the district I represent will in the future gain some benefit by the tax

which is derived from the land in that locality.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): I do not intend to offer any opposition to this measure, and I may say straight away that I am pleased the Government have introduced it as it was passed last session. I have listened to what the Premier has said with regard to what the Government propose next session, and I would like to make one or two observations with reference to taxation generally, more by way of suggesting to the Premier that he might take these matters into consideration when dealing with the subject next year. I would point out that the people in the country districts do not object to taxation, up to a reasonable amount, especially taking into consideration the fact that we have a great number of calls upon the Treasury in the direction of construction of public works throughout the country. At the same time it should be borne in mind that the local authorities have at the present time greatly increased taxation in the country districts. For instance, I find that in 1907-8, just about the time the first land taxation proposals were introduced, the roads boards had collected during that year £40,309, while during the present year the amount which has been collected has totalled £60,000, an increase of nearly £20,000 in that period. I understand that since the passing of the new Roads Act last session, owing to the minimum rating on the unimproved value being fixed at 1d., the total amount collected is likely to be increased by probably 20 or 25 per cent. I wish the Premier to bear this in mind, so that the amount that is being levied in the country districts may be taken into consideration by the Government when formulating their new proposals. I would like to point out to the Premier, if I may be allowed to do so, that, while I think it is only fair that land that is able to bear taxation should pay its fair proportion, there is a lot of our country which is very poor in quality, and which, if affected, will bear very heavily upon those who have taken it up. I hope this matter will be given attention by the Government, and also the amount

levied by the local authorities. Perhaps some scheme might be evolved similar to that in force, I understand, in New South Wales, where, in the districts of local authorities who rate themselves up to a certain amount, the taxation proposals of the Government are inoperative. I have already said the country districts do not object to pay a fair and reasonable tax, and I hope the Premier will take these few points into consideration when he is dealing with the measure he hopes to bring down next session.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin): I do not intend to take up much of the time of the House, as the Premier has indicated his desire to finish the session this week, if possible. But I cannot give a silent vote upon this Bill, because only a few weeks ago I traversed a large and important part of this State, and one of the planks of the platform that I was advocating was, "No land tax." I was a little bit surprised to-day to hear the leader of the Opposition say that he was supporting the land tax which the Premier had introduced, because, as I have said, it was one of the planks in our platform that there should be no land tax. I would like to say to the Premier, and to the members of his Government and those supporting them, if they could only travel through a portion of the Great Southern districts they would find that a number of settlers had recently selected land, probably 60 miles from a railway station, and it was taking these people all they knew to live without being called upon to pay one farthing for a land tax. I can assure hon. members that I am not exaggerating when I say that a number of those farmers will probably have to go to the storekeepers this year in order to secure assistance to enable them to pay their land rents.

Mr. Green: You will own half the country directly.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I would inform the hon. member that my desire is only to own sufficient land which will keep my wife and family for the rest of their lives. I have no intention whatever of becoming rich. Many members fail to realise that the storekeepers have played

an important part in the development of the agricultural portion of this State, and I would like members to believe me when I say that I have no desire to shirk my fair share in connection with the tax, if we desire to see the country go ahead. In the Lake Grace country a great number of men have taken up land; the majority of them have migrated from the goldfields, some of them through unfortunate circumstances, many of them on account of the climate, and some of them because of the disease, miners' phthisis, and having had to abandon the occupation of mining on the advice of doctors. They are as fine a class of men as one could wish to meet, and they are endeavouring to make homes for themselves in that district. I can assure members it is a pleasure to meet those men, because they are doing their level best to develop the country. They have been handicapped, unfortunately this year through an insufficient rainfall, but, apart from that, they are not in a position to pay a land tax, or any other tax, this year.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They are exempt for five years.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I heard the Premier say that next year he intended to bring in a Bill which would prevent anyone escaping the land tax. I hope the Premier and the members of his party will give due consideration before bringing in a Bill of this kind affecting people like those I have referred to. I fail to see that I would be acting straightforwardly to my constituents if I voted in favour of this Bill after only a few weeks ago having told them that I was dead against any land tax being enacted this year. Even though, as the Premier has stated, and I have no reason to doubt his statement, the Government may require money I cannot see my way to vote for the second reading of the Bill.

The PREMIER (in reply): I do not propose to reply to all that has been said this afternoon by members opposite, but I must make some reference to the remarks of the member for Moore in connection with the treatment which the settlers on the lands owned by the Midland Railway Company and served by the Mid-

land railway have received at the hands of the Government. The hon. member's statement is correct, perhaps, so far as regards railway facilities are concerned, but only from that standpoint, because they receive all other public facilities given to other settlers in every other part of the State, with the exception that we have had some difficulty in being able to bring them under the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act. I have already announced to the Chamber that we are dealing with that question, and my colleague, the Minister for Lands and Agriculture, is now arranging for a conference with the representatives of the Midland Railway Company to see if some satisfactory basis cannot be arrived at in order to allow the settlers in that district to enjoy the facilities provided under the Agricultural Bank Act just the same as those in other parts of the State. From a preliminary discussion I believe that such can be done. I have always held that the settlers there are just as much citizens of the State as any others, and just as worthy of consideration; but the State must be protected, and it is because hitherto we have not been able to discover a system which will be satisfactory from all points of view that they have not had the advantage of the Agricultural Bank. In all other respects, except that of railways, they have enjoyed the same facilities as the settlers in other parts of the State, and if they have been neglected it must be that their member has not made himself sufficiently prominent at the Treasury and other State departments. So far as the opposition from the member for Wagin is concerned I believe he stands absolutely alone, except, of course, that a majority of the Chamber believe we should remove all exemptions and rebates. Another hon. member appears to imagine that the greater proportion of the tax is derived from country lands; but if the hon. member will peruse the report of the Commissioner for Taxation he will find, as I have stated on the public platform, that the farmer this tax strikes the hardest is the farmer in St. George's-terrace, the farmer who never farms. The hon. mem-

ber will see on page 11 of that report a table analysing the assessment for 1910. This shows that the amount in the metropolitan districts from Midland Junction to Fremantle liable to taxation was £1,293,313, while that of all the country lands alienated or in process of alienation was £1,096,238. So the district between Fremantle and Perth comprises land the unimproved value of which is higher than that of all our country lands alienated or in process of alienation. Thus the country lands are paying but little as compared with the town lands. Yet the owner of town lands never complains on the public platform that it is unfair to him; he always says that it is unfair to the man in the country district, this being his little way of obtaining relief for himself from the burden of taxation. It will be seen also that in other towns outside of the metropolitan district the unimproved value of the land is £332,023; so, totalling the two, we have a value of one million and a half of town lands as against £1,096,238 of country land.

Mr. S. Stubbs: It will be a big lot next year.

The PREMIER: That may be so, but the Taxation Department are only to-day commencing to do their work. In the past they have accepted lands assessments made by the roads boards and municipalities, and to such an extent do these vary that they are not worth the paper they are written on. In one district the roads board assesses in one way, while in the adjoining district it is done by a totally different method, with the result that there is no uniformity whatever. To-day, however, we are employing special men with special knowledge to assess unimproved values. Their method is a correct one. They are using a zone system, particularly in the agricultural districts. Under this system, if a man is away 40 miles from an existing line of railway and proposes to grow cereals, the circumstance is allowed for that he is not going to make much out of that land; but if the railway communication comes within five miles of his holding the value of that holding is largely increased and the State at once begins to receive a por-

tion of that increase. That is the only way of establishing a system of land tax which will give satisfaction. It is the man who obtains the benefit of the expenditure of public moneys in the way of building roads and railways who should return to the State something for the benefits derived. Quite a number of settlers to-day have to pay an increased rate over some of our newly constructed railways. Yet they do not complain; they say that it is much cheaper for them to pay that excess rate on the new railway than it was to pay for carting over the road, that while they are leaving perhaps 80 per cent. in our hands yet they are taking away the other 20 per cent. for themselves. However, in my opinion that is unfair to new settlers while those who have had railway communication for years are paying the ordinary rate of freight. If we had a proper land taxation we could give the man who is 60 or 70 miles away from railway communication the same opportunity of getting his produce to market as the man alongside the railway. A proper land tax puts the man who is producing on land 80 miles to the east of Wagin on exactly the same footing as a man farming on similar land 20 miles this side of Northam. That is the true object of a land tax, because we then have returned to the State a proportion of the advantage the man nearer to the market is obtaining, and we have that for the supplying of public requirements farther away from the centre. To-day we are simply accepting the position as it is, but next session we propose to bring down what we believe is the proper system of land tax, and when this is explained even the member for Wagin will realise that it must be of advantage to the State to have such a system of taxation. Before the second reading is submitted to the House, Sir, I have a message from His Excellency.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

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

BILL—UPPER DARLING RANGE RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in moving the second reading said: I think the only objection to this railway is that it is such a little one. The proposition is for the construction of a line to connect with the present Canning Mills railway, which runs from Pickering Brook to the Canning Mills, and which was purchased last financial year from the timber company for the sum of £4,500. The terminal point of the railway to-day is within the catchment area of the Victoria reservoir, which is part of the source of the water supply of the metropolitan area. This terminal point is surrounded by private property. It is desirable that the terminus of the line should be on Crown lands, and even more desirable to remove the terminus from the present catchment area a distance of 1 mile 26 chains further on in order to overcome the difficulties which are said to be facing the water supply people in connection with the pollution of this particular area. The line was promised definitely by the previous Administration on the 19th May. A deputation representing the Canning fruit-growers waited on the then Acting Premier (Mr. Gregory) and Mr. Gregory stated in reply to the request of the deputation—

The building of the line meant only the construction of a few miles, and he thought that could be conveniently done after Parliament met. He could assure the deputation that the whole work would be completed before the end of November. If he was satisfied that the work could not be carried out by the end of November, he would ask the Cabinet to consider the matter and go on with it without waiting for the sanc-

tion of Parliament. In answer to a question as to the possibility of a change of Government, Mr. Gregory said that no Government coming into power would be likely to repudiate the promises that had been made. The deputation thanked the Minister, and withdrew.

Then on the 4th August the Acting Premier wrote—

Please instruct that survey of this promised work is completed early so that the promise made that this extension should be completed this year.

The instructions were given, but they were not altogether expedited—I do not know why—with the result that the survey was not completed, and it was impossible to carry out the promise to have it finished by the end of November. As a matter of fact when these instructions were given in August it would have been impossible to do the work because the rails were not available.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Not one and a quarter miles of rails?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We would have had to rob Peter to pay Paul; the rails would need to be taken from some other work. However, the position is that it was impossible to carry out the promise of the Minister, and the present Government have decided to honour that promise, and are now asking Parliament to give them authority to construct the railway. The intention of the previous Government was to construct the railway without getting the sanction of Parliament, but we are asking for the sanction of Parliament for the construction. I do not know that there is anything more I need say, except to give the information that the line will be on the 3ft. 6in. gauge, with 45lb. rails. The cost of construction will be £3,000, and rails and fastenings £900, making the total estimated cost £3,900; whilst the length of the line will be 1 mile 26 chains. With these few remarks I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): Of course this little extension of the Upper

Darling Range Railway for one and a quarter miles amounts to nothing more than the length of an ordinary siding. I was not aware of the promise made by the late Acting Premier during my absence, but in view of that promise I am surprised that this one and a quarter miles is not already constructed. It is a mere bagatelle, and the reason given by the Minister for its construction is unanswerable, that is, to take the terminal point away from the catchment area of the City supply. It is sufficient for me to have this terminal point carried a little further, so long as I know that it will not jeopardise the main supply from which sooner or later we shall draw our water for the City, that is, the Canning River. So far as my knowledge of the country goes—and I know that area pretty well, having built the Canning railway some 20 years ago—the line when extended will go into the Canning River catchment, and I believe I am safe in saying that the drainage from that terminus will then go into the Canning River, but at a point very much below any portion of the river where a dam may be constructed for the supply for the metropolitan area. If that be so, we will be perfectly safe in passing this little Bill, and allowing this railway to be built possibly early in the new year.

Mr. TURVEY (Swan): I rise with pleasure to support the second reading. As has already been mentioned by the Minister for Works and the leader of the Opposition, the railway is a very short one indeed, and I am hopeful that when the very vexed question as to the source of the metropolitan water supply has been definitely settled, this line will be then continued further on through Roleystone to Kelmescott, or link up with Armadale, thereby providing one of the best round railway trips that can possibly be secured in Western Australia from a scenic point of view. I mean a trip from Perth, via Midland Junction, through Kalamunda and Canning Mills past the present terminus of this railway, and thence on through Roleystone, linking up with Kelmescott, or proceeding through Bedforddale and linking up with Armadale. The Minister for Works has already

stated the necessity for building this short railway, and, as one who knows the locality well, I have no hesitation in saying that it is absolutely essential that the present point of termination should be moved further on. At the present time the sleeper cutters and wood carters of the district cart into this spot and as a great number of horses are engaged, the drainage from this spot leads to a certain amount of pollution in the catchment area. At the present time the land for many miles around the proposed terminus is locked up by Millars' Karri and Jarrah Company, and some other concession holders, and, also, I understand, by the Lands Department until the question of the source of the future metropolitan water supply is determined. Once that question is settled, and it is possible to throw this land open for settlement, it will be found that we have in this locality some of the finest soil in Western Australia and eminently adaptable for intense cultivation. I had the pleasure of visiting this locality on Saturday last, and also attending a meeting of the Canning Mills Fruit-growers Association. I inspected several orchards, and they were, to my mind, some of the finest to be seen in Western Australia. Without taking up any further time, I have very much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill to construct this very short line.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth): I understand from the Minister for Works that in extending this railway there will be no danger whatever to the water supply of the City. I should like to have a definite assurance from the Minister that that is so, in which case I see no danger in agreeing to this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): There is no doubt that this railway will be of great assistance to the orchardists in the locality, but one of the main things influencing the late Government and the present Government in extending the line is to take the terminus out of the present catchment area.

Mr. Frank Wilson: What about the new catchment area?

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow this discussion. It is irregular.

Question put and passed.
Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Authority to construct:

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Perhaps the Minister for Works would now answer the question as to whether the land at the terminus of this extension drained into the Canning River, and if so, whether it drained into the Canning River at a point below any suggested dam site for a water supply for the metropolitan area.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Inquiries had been made, and so far as could be gathered from the departmental engineers, this extension would not interfere with the proposed supply of the metropolitan area from the Canning River.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 7—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

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

BILL—NORSEMAN-ESPERANCE RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in moving the second reading said: I rise with the greatest of pleasure to move the second reading of this Bill to authorise the Government to construct a railway from Norseman to Esperance. The Bill is one of the utmost importance to the State, and has been the subject of agitation for the past 15 years. I have gone very carefully through the history surrounding the agitation, and it supplies the most interesting reading, but I feel it is unnecessary for me to take up the time of the House in giving members a brief outline of the many discussions and many decisions that have been arrived at in connection with this proposition in this Chamber and in another place.

I feel it would weary hon. members and be of no assistance to them in coming to a decision on the proposition as now presented. The Norseman railway running out from Coolgardie was passed in 1906, and formed part of the line that for so many years had been agitated for to connect Coolgardie or the Eastern Goldfields with Esperance; and when that line was passed and subsequently constructed, it removed the agitation as far as it applied to the necessity for doing something for the mining industry situated in part of the area to be covered by the proposed Coolgardie-Esperance railway. That line having been constructed, it now serves the goldfield of Norseman, so that to-day the line I am now dealing with is purely and simply an agricultural proposition, running as it does through an agricultural area almost the whole way from Norseman to Esperance. It is an agricultural railway that we are dealing with to-day, and as such I propose to lay it before members of the Chamber. The length of the line is about 125 miles, the gauge and the weight of rails are similar to all our agricultural railways, namely, 3ft. 6in. gauge and 45lb. rails, the grades are one in 60, and the sharpest curve a 20-chains radius. The estimated cost of the line is as follows:—Construction, £191,500; rails and fastenings, £81,250; water supply, £40,000; total estimated cost, £312,750, or a cost per mile of £2,502. There are no engineering difficulties in connection with the construction. The agitation of recent years has been, as I have said, for an agricultural railway, and recently, comparatively recently, considering the length of the agitation, the late Government appointed a board to investigate the area and inspect it thoroughly. That board consisting of competent departmental officers reported on the 30th June, 1910, and they said that from 30 miles north of Esperance to 75 miles there was a continuous belt of mallee country of which 1,248,000 acres were suitable for wheat. This quantity of land they pointed out would need to be served by spur lines running from the main line that is now under consideration; but within a 15-miles radius of the proposed line they said there was 864,000

acres of this land of which 576,000 acres was good wheat land. The board also went into the question of the rainfall, and from the information they obtained it is found that at Esperance the annual rainfall is 25½ inches, at the 30-mile post it is 17½ inches, at Lake View it is 11½ inches, and at Norseman 10 inches. These figures represent the annual average, but would be of little assistance to hon. members in recognising the value of the rainfall from an agricultural point of view, unless we could also supply the average rainfall during the most important months namely during April and November. We find by investigation—and I am pleased to say that this extends over a number of years—that at Esperance the average rainfall from April to November is 22½ inches, at the 30-mile post 14½ inches, at Lake View 9 inches, and at Norseman 8 inches. So hon. members will recognise that, taking the months when rain is necessary, there can be doubt that the rainfall, striking the average as we do in connection with all other agricultural railway propositions, is sufficient to justify the many reports that we have received that this is undoubtedly a valuable area of wheat-growing country between Norseman and Esperance. After the investigations the majority of the board recommended that 60 miles of railway should be constructed, that 60 miles to run from Esperance inland towards Norseman; and in connection with their report the majority report *inter alia* says—

We may state that this large extent of wheat-growing country, some 1¼ million acres, is the greatest area of wheat land at present in the State in possession of the Crown with so good a rainfall.

That is their report on this land.

Mr. Carpenter : This line does not serve 1¼ million acres.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But they say that spur lines can be run out from the proposed line now under discussion to serve that area of land which the majority report says is good wheat-growing country, and the greatest area of wheat land at present in the State in possession of the Crown with so good a rain-

fall. Then Mr. Paterson says in his report, dealing with that question—

We would then settle one of the largest virgin tracts of land that I know of easily accessible by railway still in the hands of the Crown.

Then lands inspectors May and Hewby state the following in regard to the mallee belt—

We did not go to the southward of Fraser's Range road and the mallee may extend for a considerable distance in this direction, but from Fraser's Range road westward it comprises approximately 3,000 square miles of which 1,350 square miles would be served by the present surveyed line from Esperance to Norseman, taking 15 miles on each side as the limit at which payable wheat farming can be carried on.

Surveyor Watkins, who surveyed this country and possibly gave it closer attention than any other officer that inspected it, states—

This large area of splendid agricultural country of uniform quality, with a good loam and clay of subsoil containing lime, is eminently suited for cereals. It has a reliable rainfall, an exceptionally favourable climate, is in close proximity to a surveyed line of railway and within easy distance of a good harbour with shipping facilities, and is capable of supporting a large and prosperous community, and especially a profitable and large export trade.

I have quoted these from the reports submitted by different expert officers who have had the opportunity of inspecting this land, and who in all cases were authorised or instructed to make an inspection by the then Government of the day; and in order that I may be fair to hon. members, and in order that hon. members may see the whole of the reports, I have had them typed and distributed, and hon. members will find in front of them on their desks the full text of what I have quoted from, and will agree that my quotations are fair in connection with the whole reports. Finally the board recommended, the majority recommended, that 60 miles should be constructed. Mr. Paterson dissented and urged that certain experiments

should be made to more closely test the value of the land and give the Government a greater guarantee as to its value; but while I have the utmost regard for Mr. Paterson's report, and know what a capable and conscientious officer he is, still, I would point out that if we adopted this procedure in connection with other areas it is very doubtful whether we would get as good a result as we can get from the area to be served by this railway. I cannot understand why we should depart from the usual practice of going through the country as we have done in connection with our eastern agricultural belts, inspecting the value of the land and estimating its value from a wheat-growing point of view, and studying the rainfall, and on that inspection and that rainfall submitting a railway proposition to open up the area. For instance, without drawing any great comparisons, I would ask hon. members to bear in mind when they are considering this proposition, the Cowcowing and Mt. Marshall areas, and ask themselves the question whether Mr. Paterson was right in demanding an investigation in connection with these propositions, and whether the same procedure should not have been adopted in connection with that of Esperance. With regard to the Cowcowing and Mount Marshall areas, I believe the railway should be constructed and I will go further and say that the railway will have to be constructed, because agriculturists have been allowed to take up land in those areas, and we must recognise that they cannot make a success of their holdings until they have railway communication. I am not narrow enough to say that that point of view is all right for Cowcowing and Mount Marshall and all wrong for Esperance. The Esperance proposition is as good as that of Cowcowing and Mount Marshall, and if the railway is necessary in one case because we have the people selecting and the people cultivating and living on their areas, it is equally good in the other. The report or recommendation of the majority of the board does not appeal to me, insofar as they recommended that a line should be constructed only from Esperance to a point 60 miles

inland. I would point out in connection with that proposal that the present market for the produce in that country would undoubtedly be the Eastern Goldfields, and the farmer who cuts his hay and produces chaff would be prevented from taking it to the Eastern Goldfields market unless he carted it a distance of forty miles from the proposed terminus to Norseman. I cannot understand what arguments or evidence could have induced the board to limit this proposition to a distance of 60 miles. The Government have not taken that seriously. They are satisfied that the railway is justified, and that in order to make agriculture in that country a success the line will have to be carried right through from Esperance to Norseman. I recognise, as the board have recognised, that ultimately this will be a wheat growing area, and, as such, export facilities will some day have to be provided. I want to say, the sooner the better. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to expend a sum of money on Esperance harbour to make it possible for large boats to enter it and load Esperance wheat for export to the markets of the world. But I am not prepared to admit that that time will come for some years. For the present we must recognise that this is a hay proposition, ultimately, however, wheat will be exported from Esperance, and when that time comes we shall have to give the facilities that the export trade will demand.

The Minister for Railways: It is a good harbour now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I admit there is a harbour there now, but we shall require larger boats to come there by and by. To sum up the position it appears to me that those who know anything of this area are aware that the land is good for wheat-growing. The only doubt there seems to be in the minds of any of those who have reported on it is that the land is so porous that water conservation, which is essential as we all know to agricultural development, is rendered difficult. It is interesting to know, however, that an effort has been made to test the country in that direction. There have been dams constructed and I have

made a special inquiry from the engineer for mines water supply, who is controlling this particular area at the present time, and he informs me that the dams are watertight and that the water is perfectly fresh. Consequently members will see that water conservation is not the great difficulty that the reports would lead us to believe.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Where are those dams?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the best portion of the agricultural area.

Mr. Frank Wilson: How many of them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Two dams to my knowledge, and both are well stocked with water to-day. That is more than we can say in a number of our so-called superior agricultural areas. But the point is, even supposing there is only one dam which is full to-day—

Mr. Harper: What is the capacity of those dams?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will give the details later.

Mr. Underwood: Seven hundred thousand gallons.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not so well posted as my friend the member for Pilbara, and I would rather the hon. member gave notice of the question. What I want to emphasise is that, suppose there is one, and it is only a small one—and the size has no bearing on the question—we know that the dam has been able to catch a large quantity of water, and that the water to-day is absolutely fresh. I have made this point because it has been stated that water cannot be conserved and if it is conserved there is a danger of it being salt. That fear is exploded by the fact that we have water conserved there in a particularly dry season. The dry season has not been confined to our agricultural districts, it has gone through Western Australia, and, despite that, we have water conserved in the Esperance country to a greater extent than we have been able to conserve it in the larger and more thickly populated agricultural areas. I am going to give some figures to show that selection has been going on continually for some time.

The land selected in 1900 was 13,759 acres, and in 1910, 97,900 acres; the area held at the present time is about 767,000 acres.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Is that conditional purchase?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That includes pastoral and agricultural lands. I would point out that the average size of the holdings is 900 acres, so that hon. members will see that, generally speaking, we are dealing with agricultural propositions, and not pastoral.

Mr. Hudson: And that selection has taken place against the opposition of the Lands Department?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was going to say that had greater facilities been given to the people to select land in this area, the selection undoubtedly would have been greater, but all sorts of difficulties have been put in the way.

Mr. Frank Wilson: You cannot cut up land in the face of these reports.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Land was being cut up and was cut up in face of the reports, which were so unfavourable, but the difficulty was that the Government of the day did not grant those facilities to the people desirous of selecting in this area, as they did in other areas with the result that numerous complaints have been lodged by a number of intending settlers, and consequently that has had the effect of limiting the amount of selection. But I am pleased to say that now facilities are being offered by a more sympathetic Government, and selection is going on at a greater pace.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Have you forfeited any of the selections for the non-fulfilment of conditions?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, because it would be utterly unfair to forfeit the holdings when we recognise that the people who went there to farm could not do so successfully unless they had facilities for taking their produce to market. The position is exactly the same as that at Cowcowing and Mount Marshall areas. Until we give the people an opportunity to farm successfully by supplying railway communication, there is no justification for forfeiting their areas, and I

trust the Government will never be guilty of anything like that. I want the House to look at this as an agricultural proposition. I do not want any narrow parochialism to be evidenced in connection with this line, as has been shown for about 15 years towards the line that was urged for that period from Coolgardie to Esperance. The objection to that line years ago was that it would come into competition with the Eastern Goldfields and would work an injury to the metropolitan area, and to the port of Fremantle. That idea had been exploded to-day. The proposition now is whether we shall build the railway to open up what is admitted to be a good and extensive agricultural area, an area capable of being people by a big population. I would like to point out to hon. members also that the people who have selected land in this area are mainly goldfields people and I would like the House to bear in mind that these people have played a very prominent part in the development of Western Australia, more particularly in the development of our agricultural areas. It should be remembered that the goldfields people gave Western Australia their first start in connection with agricultural development. If it had not been for a goldfields market we would never have had agricultural development, as we find it to-day. We had their market to start on and we started right well, with the result that by their assistance we have been able to extend the agricultural industry to such an extent that to-day we are no longer dependent on the goldfields, but we have the world's markets before us. I appeal to hon. members to recognise the part that these people have played and to say whether we were not justified in declaring "You have done well to assist the agricultural areas and now we are prepared to assist you by opening up that agricultural district which is practically at your own doors."

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 8.15 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When we adjourned I was making an appeal to hon. members to recognise what has been done by the goldfields people in support

of agricultural development. When we find those people who have done so much requesting that some little should be done to enable them to open up a new agricultural area close to their own doors, their appeal should receive favourable consideration. But no words of mine could be as eloquent as those contained in a leading article in a recent number of the *West Australian*. In that article appeared the following paragraph:—

That the Esperance line has not to the present been built has been to the immense advantage of the State. What would have been an oppressive weight on the community in the shape of a huge unproductive eastern railway system, and a languishing main port, has been averted. The burden of these would probably have lain heavier on the fields than any relief the cheaper markets of the East could afford. The enormous impetus to agriculture in the State which the existence of the goldfields markets gave would not have occurred, and those many ex-residents of the auriferous districts, who now seek comfortable competencies from the cheaply acquired agricultural lands of Western Australia, which wise policy has opened up to them, would have been lacking their opportunities. It will be for Parliament to consider how far these arguments exist to-day. To have built the Esperance railway at any previous time would have been injurious to the best interests of the whole of the State, goldfields and coast. But probably these arguments have not their aforesaid strength. It may be thought that the State has so far established itself that it can look to the markets of the world as well as to those of the fields. Let the line be built.

That is exactly what I have urged. We are to-day reviewing a proposition totally different from that which has been urged on previous occasions. Hitherto it has been claimed that the goldfields people wanted the railway in order to cheapen the cost of living: what we urge to-day is the construction of an agricultural railway to help these people to embark in agricultural development, in which no

doubt they will display the same energy as they have manifested in the mining industry. I do not know that I need say any more on the subject. I have already pointed out, and it has been proved by the reports of departmental officers, that we have in the district to be traversed by the line a huge area of good wheat land ready for the plough. We have demonstrated the possibility of water conservation; people have selected land and all that is required is a railway to enable those who have selected, and a number who have already cultivated, an opportunity of conveying their produce to the market. I say, in conclusion, that these people are justified in asking to be granted the same facilities in this agricultural district as have been granted to thousands of others in Western Australia. I desire to emphasise the point that this proposition is as good as numerous other propositions for railway extension which have been viewed with favour in this Chamber. I appeal to hon. members not to allow narrow parochialism to enter into their judgment, but to view this as a legitimate railway proposition, and to realise the vast agricultural areas which the line will open up in the interests, not alone of the goldfields, but of the State as a whole. If they do this they will have no hesitation in supporting the measure which I submit to their favourable consideration. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Frank Wilson, debate adjourned.

BILL—HOTHAM-CROSSMAN RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in moving the second reading said: This is a proposition for the extension of a railway under construction, running out from Pinjarra to Hotham, and on to a point known as Boddington Pool. The railway to-day is within the vicinity of Boddington Pool, and has been extended a short distance beyond the point

authorised by Parliament. Representations have been made that the line should not be stopped at the point known as Boddington Pool, but that it should be extended on to serve the long settled agricultural area known as Wandering. The advisory board recommend that this line should be extended and eventually run into Narrogin, while a number of people contend that the railway should be extended, not to Narrogin but to Williams, while still others are earnest in their advocacy of extending it along the valley of the Hotham to Popanyinning or Pingelly. So there is a wide difference of opinion as to where this line should ultimately junction with the existing railway system. I candidly admit that I have not had time to go into the relative merits of the different routes advocated; but I have had time to recognise that the Wandering people have been isolated too long, and that they should have had railway communication many years ago. Having sympathy with the Wandering people the Government decided to extend this railway to a point which would be common to all the routes advocated, and, later, from that point to determine which route should be adopted for further extension. Consequently the proposition now before the Chamber is to take the line a further 10 miles beyond the point authorised by Parliament. It is not altogether 10 miles from the proposed terminal point at Boddington Pool, but, as I have said, the late Government decided to go beyond the point authorised by Parliament. But, taking the point authorised by Parliament to what is known as Crossman, the distance is 10 miles. The estimated cost of the construction is £13,500, and of rails and fastenings £6,500; the total being £20,000, or a cost of £2,000 per mile. Land under cultivation to be served by the railway is 3,000 acres, while the average rainfall is 26 inches. The land available for selection within 15 miles of the line—I regret that this has been worked out on a 15-mile basis, because I contend that it should not go beyond 12½ miles—within the 15-mile radius the area available for selection is 87,000 acres, while the land alienated within the 15-mile radius is 266,000

acres. Of large holdings within this radius there are 37, averaging 1,000 acres, while the total area of large holdings is 285,346 acres. That is a very large area. It is explained by the fact that the line comes within 15 miles of the Occidental Syndicate leases which were purchased by Messrs. Wilkie Bros. It is these areas mainly that constitute the 285,346 acres.

Mr. Underwood: What are the names of the holders of the large blocks?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There are too many of them to give the holder's name just now. There are some 25 of them holding these 285,346 acres. The pastoral lands served by the line represent 68,000 acres, and pastoral leases held run into another 20,000 acres, while the area reserved is 6,200 acres. As for the quality of the land within the influence of the railway, 121,000 acres is first-class, 115,200 acres is second-class, and 120,000 acres is third-class. It is pretty hard to estimate the yield for this year, but the Wandering area is one of the best in the State. That is demonstrated by the fact that it is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, of the settled areas in the State. We may rest assured that the best land was selected in the old days, therefore, this being one of the oldest districts, it follows that it comprises good land. We have not gone past the point where there can be any difference of opinion as to the route to be followed. As to the necessity for giving railway communication to the Wandering agricultural area there can be no two opinions, and consequently the Government, without stirring up any difference of opinion as to the route to be followed, have decided to take the line for the present as near as they can to the Wandering area, and leave all differences of opinion as to the further extension to be settled later on. I would also like to emphasise the point that to-day we are constructing departmentally the line from Hotham to Boddington's Pool, and I want to get authority to construct this further portion so that we will not have the expense of shifting the plant and organisation we have there, but that when we reach the point of the termination at present contemplated, we will be able to

continue this line to the terminus mentioned in the Bill. I trust that by this time we shall have come to a conclusion as to the point at which it will junction the existing railway, and that we shall be able to continue right on until we get the whole of this area served by railways. I have nothing further to say, and I beg to move--

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. DWYER (Perth): As one of those who waited as a deputation on the Premier advocating the construction of this line I desire to support the second reading of the Bill. I think it was then clearly shown that the land proposed to be served was one of the best districts in the whole of the State, and, moreover, it is a district which hitherto has been entirely neglected and ignored as regards railway facilities. Indeed, it is only meting out a very much delayed measure of justice, if this railway is given to help the farmers in this district and bring them within reach of the market. This district is in a sense a poor district, inasmuch as men have been born and reared there, and have never yet seen a railway; yet it is a land rich in prospects, the soil and rainfall are good, and we have potentially, if not in actual existence, all that makes for a prosperous agricultural community; but up to the present time for some reason or another the district has been ignored and forgotten. I, therefore, think that we are merely doing justice to some of the oldest settlers in the State in granting this railway which will bring them within easier reach of the existing market. I had understood that the railway would have continued further than is now proposed. I believe that the terminal point as indicated in the Bill is about twelve miles from Wandering, but I understood that the terminal point was to have been brought within six miles of the settlement, where it would have reached a Government reserve which could have been converted into a Government townsite, blocks of which could be disposed of on the leasehold system, making in time a flourishing township there, as well as bringing the railway nearer Wandering townsite. I would like to ask the

Minister if he cannot extend the line another four miles in order to reach this Government reserve.

Mr. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I am happy to-night in the thought that the Government are steadily and surely carrying out our policy of railway construction.

The Premier: You would rather have carried it out yourself.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: We would have done it so much better and more expeditiously, but as we cannot do it ourselves we are going to assist the Government to do it. My only objection to the Bill is the paltry ten miles. I agree with the member for Perth that the Minister might have taken authority to go a little further, probably twenty miles, and I do not think that by doing so, according to the plan attached to the Advisory Board's report, he would in any way have jeopardised the big scheme which I outlined as part of our policy for opening up the land between the South-Western and the Great Southern railways. However, if the Minister gets authority under this Bill to construct this ten miles, I think he will probably exercise his discretion and carry the line a few miles farther eastward. I agree that Wandering is a very fertile spot. I had the opportunity of visiting that area some time back and was greatly struck with its possibilities, but I cannot accept the argument that it is a poor place because men have been born there and have never seen a railway. It seems to me to rather indicate the richness of the district: they do not want to leave there.

Mr. Dwyer: It suffered from a poverty of political blessings.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I do not understand the hon. member's term, "a poverty of political blessings," but I certainly think that the time has come when all that country ought to be brought within measurable distance of the railway system. That was our intention at all events. The 12½ miles limit that the Minister for Works has stipulated for is one that my colleague, the late Minister for Lands, has advocated for a long time. He came to the conclusion that 30 miles between

railways was rather too far, for though that means a fifteen miles limit, yet it has to be borne in mind that a farmer cannot get to a railway as the crow flies. The roads do not go perfectly straight, and in nine cases out of ten the settler will have to cart his produce 16, 17, 18 miles, or even farther, even though he is only 15 miles from the railway as the crow flies. Therefore, I am in accord with his intention to, if possible, keep the settlers at a maximum distance of 12½ miles from the railway system. At the same time, it is well that we should recognise that we have a big territory to develop and a very small population, and it cannot be expected that we can put down railways immediately to bring every settler within 12½ miles of the system, although that ought to be our ultimate aim. I do not intend to say anything in opposition to this Bill, but I repeat the wish that it had been for 20 miles instead of for ten. I think that the Minister will find himself in the difficulty that he is faced with now, that his men will have finished this line and he will want to continue it. I suppose we shall meet about June next, and before that time he could easily have this ten miles constructed and he will want to go on, but will not be able to do so.

Mr. O'Loughlin: They will not finish for some time the section they are working on now.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: But they ought to finish it inside a month, although I recognise that it is somewhat rougher country than we had to deal with in our wheat areas. The line ought not to take long to construct, and I believe that before we meet next year they will not only have finished the present contract but also this extra ten miles. I notice that the costs are gradually creeping up, but that, I take it, is due to the all-round rise in the cost of labour and material. Still the Minister ought to keep his weather eye open and warn the departmental officers to keep the cost down to the lowest limit that is commensurate with reasonably good work. There is a tendency to gradually creep up with the costs in the Works Department, and every thousand pounds

extra that we have to spend on any line is apt to decrease the ultimate total of miles we can construct. If the Minister cannot amend his Bill now to take in a few extra miles, I hope that he will exercise the powers he possesses to extend this line six, seven, or ten miles farther.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly): I am very glad indeed that this short distance of railway has such valuable and general support in this Chamber. I was one of those who waited on the Premier some little time ago, and on that occasion there were represented four railway leagues from the Wandering district, who were all agreed in advocating the extension of this railway beyond Boddington's Pool somewhere to the south of Wandering, for a distance of at least 15 miles. I am glad that the Minister for Works has seen fit to propose the continuation of this line, but I do sincerely regret that it has not gone as far as the Premier had promised on that occasion, and as the leader of the Opposition, in his policy speech indicated—a distance of 15 miles. I am quite sure that anyone who has travelled through this area will readily realise that this line should be continued very much farther. We have in our agricultural districts no better settlers than we have in the Wandering area and the very fact that the people have been born and bred there, and have lived in the locality for fifty and sixty years is sufficient proof that they are deserving of railway communication. Had that country not been good agricultural land it would not have been possible for those people to have endured the hardships of so many years absolutely isolated from any communication by railway. Anyone who looks at the plan of the agricultural area will see that this line has stopped just exactly where it ought to start. The people have been looking in vain for many years for a railway, and they are in the position of the boy who has been promised a Christmas toy and does not get it. The line is very near and dear to the hearts of the people in the Wandering district and the Hotham valley, and they are enterprising and industrious folk. They have cultivated the land to a very considerable ex-

tent, and have made preparations in the full hope that at an early date they will enjoy railway facilities. I wish that the Minister for Works could be induced to extend this railway a considerable distance farther. If it were to go five miles or ten miles farther, that extension would be quite warranted.

The Minister for Works: Where would you go, towards Narrogin, Pingelly, or Cuballing?

Mr. HARPER: Through Dumbitmoony and continue due east or south-east if that be preferable.

Mr. Green: Would that still keep it in your electorate?

Mr. HARPER: This is entirely out of my electorate; it is in the electorate of Williams-Narrogin. It is in the Williams district. However, it is serving people in an agricultural district, and that is all I want to support. I would like full inquiry to be made, so that this railway would be continued to Dumbitmoony, due east from the present terminal point as proposed by the Minister for Works. I refer any member of the House to the plan to see how the land is selected. All over the district it is fully occupied; every inch of it is taken up.

Mr. Carpenter: In pretty large holdings.

Mr. HARPER: There is only one eyesore, the area held by Mr. Brown.

Mr. Green: Have not Wilkie Bros. got nearly all that land?

Mr. HARPER: Not in the direction I am speaking of. Wilkies' land lies to the south. All due east are small farmers, and they are isolated 20 miles from any railway, a great many of them. I urge upon the Minister the great necessity for further extension of the railway. I am glad the member for Perth is supporting the Bill so strenuously, also the leader of the Opposition, and I am sure every member of the House would support it if they knew the conditions as well as I do, and the requirements of the district, and the amount of freight that would be carried from it. All these would convince hon. members that the railway ought to be extended a great deal further. I hope

the Minister will see the necessity for it before he takes in hand the construction of the present short line. It is a great disappointment to the people there not to have at least the 15 miles they were promised, but I suppose the Minister has given the matter full consideration, because I am sure he would not have stopped at the short distance of 10 miles unless he had some very important reasons for doing so, though I am equally sure that when the matter is thoroughly investigated it will warrant extension as far as Dumbitmoony at a very early date. I only put forward a reasonable request, and I hope the Minister will see his way to grant it.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle): I had no intention of speaking on the Bill, but the Minister has given so little information in reference to essential details that I am bound to ask a question or two before giving my vote on the second reading. Any railway which will assist the settler to get his produce to the market and at the same time open up land will always have sympathy, not only from myself but from other members on both sides of the House; but the speech of the Minister was so brief and contained such little detail that I am bound to ask for further information as to the land already taken up which will be served by this railway. I have a return from the Minister dealing with the excessive number of large holdings along the route of the railway. Apparently, the Minister has recognised this, and has had a special note from the railway advisory board with reference thereto, and that report gives the significant fact that the approximate area under crop is now only 3,000 acres.

The Premier: It is only a £20,000 railway.

Mr. CARPENTER: But the question we have to consider in spending £20,000 on any railway is what will be the practical value of the railway to any given number of people, and if we have, as I believe we have, other parts of the country where there are a number of small men settled, whose claim is as great, or is perhaps greater than that of those along this route, then we have to ask ourselves

whether we are justified in supplying a limited number of holders with railway facilities as against those who may need them more. There is a reference in the return I have to 37 holders who hold 285,000 acres, and that is putting it in the most favourable light. When we come to analyse the return we find that the 37 holders are composed very largely of apparently the same family, or family relations. Apparently, one family holds over 100,000 acres, and another 40,000 acres, while the Occidental Syndicate Ltd., holds 60,000 acres. Altogether, the 285,000 acres seems to be in the hands of about a dozen families, or family connections; and when it is stated there are 37 holders, it is not putting it quite fairly, when evidently several members of one family hold between them such a large amount. But even that would not prevent me voting for the Bill if I felt sure that these holders were developing their holdings. Whether they have simply got hold of the land and are waiting for a railway to enhance its value, or whether they are genuine settlers prepared to work the large areas they hold, are matters on which I would like some further information. If we can get that assurance, I am prepared to vote for the Bill; but the request to spend this large amount to serve the interests of about a dozen people, is a matter we cannot vote upon unless we get some assurance in the direction I have indicated. I therefore ask the Minister in his reply to give further details as to the number of families holding this land, as to how the land is held, and for what purpose, and what effect the building of the line is likely to have upon the production.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): There have been some extraordinary arguments used in connection with this line. We are told it is the best country in Western Australia, in one sense, and, immediately afterwards, we are told it is a very poor place, so poor that people have been born and lived there and cannot walk out of it to look at a railway. The member for Pingelly states that the fact that people have lived there for a long time proves that it is good agricultural country. As

a matter of fact, people have lived at Hall's Creek and in many parts of Kimberley and at the head of the Ashburton for a long time, but that is no proof of the existence of agricultural country there; and people have lived at timber mills, and there is no agricultural country there worth mentioning. The fact that this is a very rich part of Western Australia, and the fact that the people there are very poor—these supposed facts do not work together. There seems to be a kink somewhere, and possibly that kink is brought about by Wilkie Brothers and other big holders in the district. What I want information about more particularly is whether it is the intention of the Government to put into force Clause 4 of the Bill, which provides that the Government can resume large holdings along the railway. In every instance when we build a railway the Government should resume all the large holdings and let them out again in smaller lots, because I do not care, and I am speaking from experience, how many railways we have, or what facilities we give for working the land, while the land is held in large holdings it will not be cultivated to its fullest extent. There are millions of acres of better land than this Wandering land in many parts of Australia with railways passing all over it and yet only a few sheep running on it. There are millions of acres in Victoria well provided with railways, but because they are in the hands of a few people they are still out of cultivation, and the Victorians, thousands of them, are coming over to Western Australia looking for land. I trust we will have some information with regard to the Government's intention of resuming some of these large areas, and I trust that they will put Clause 4 into effect not only in connection with this Bill but in connection with all the agricultural railways they intend to construct during their term of office.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth): It is my intention to support the Bill, but there is one thing I would like to hear the Government speak about, and that is as to the poison land in the district. We have heard a lot about the quantity of poison in

the district, and I may tell hon. members that, speaking candidly, this district is as full of poison as London is full of lamp-posts.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin): I intend to support this line from Hotham to Crossman, but I am sorry the Government have not extended it still further east, to the point recommended by the Advisory Board, where it would junction with the proposed Narrogin-Armadale railway. I think in recommending this section the Advisory Board also recommended the Narrogin-Armadale railway, and I think in bringing the measure forward the Government might well have taken it a little further on. At the same time, I am very pleased the district of Wandering is at least to be served. As previous speakers have pointed out, settlers have been there for 40 and 50 years; men have been born there and all these years they have been without railway communication. These very old settlers who have not given our party much support in the past will doubtless be pleased to note that it was not until a Labour Ministry came into power that a measure is brought down to give them what they should have had years ago, direct access by rail to Perth and the coast. They have put their faith in the past in politicians of another kind, and have got nothing. The Labour party get in against their wish and at last that fertile district of Wandering is going to get a railway reasonably close to it.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Who built the railway to the Hotham River?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I understand the Labour Government are just building it now.

The Premier: That railway would not serve Wandering; it stops just when it would serve the agricultural country.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At any rate, I believe it was in the time of the English Government that the proposal for a railway into this district was first brought forward, and, if that Government had stayed in power, doubtless these people would have had this railway years ago, instead of having to wait until last year for it to be taken as far as Dwellingup.

It was recommended by a Commission appointed by the first Labour Government, and then the real Labour Government, with power as well as office, do their duty in taking the railway on. At the same time, I cannot leave this question without mentioning that the route the Government are following in building this railway is not the route I, personally, would have liked to see the railway follow on an extension from Hotham, but, still, as the Government are building it towards Wandering, I mean to support it, though I think it should have been extended in a more southerly direction, to the district of Quindanning, and east from there to the town of Williams. I am sure had that been done the railway would have served more people. The two questions are not counter propositions by any means. It will remain for the Government in the near future to make Hotham a junction and build in a southerly direction from there a railway to Quindanning and to the important town of Williams. Quindanning is one of the oldest settled districts in Western Australia and when this railway goes to Wandering, it will be the only one old settled district in Western Australia that is left without railway communication. There are settlers at Quindanning who were born in that district and they are old families who are worthy of every consideration. The valleys of all the other rivers of this State have been opened up by railways and it remains for this Government to give railway communication to the valley of the Williams River in the near future. I need hardly point out that in the Quindanning district there is some of the most fertile and well watered land in Western Australia.

Mr. Moore: What about the poison?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: There is no poison at Quindanning; thousands of sheep are kept there and the land is of the nature that a few acres to-day would support a family in comfort if it were opened up for close cultivation, for which it is eminently adapted. There are no droughts in the Williams and Quindanning districts and the people there do not go to the Government having to report a failure of crops and

ask for a supply of seed wheat. On the contrary this is a rich and fertile district and only wants railway communication to bring about its development. There is a feeling amongst the people of Quindanning that they have been overlooked in the past. For many years they sent a member to this House whom they felt was an honourable and estimable gentleman, but unfortunately he was too easily satisfied by his Liberal associates at that time on the Treasury benches, and the people of the district did not receive the consideration they deserved, and which I hope the present Government intend to give. I do hope now that the Quindanning people have representing them a member whom they did not want, that the Government will give them those railway facilities which have been denied them in the past, and it will be my object while in this House to see that this, the oldest settled district in Western Australia, is not left without railway communication any longer. In the meantime I intend to support the present measure because I think this railway will afterwards be taken on from Crossman to Narrogin and thus do a great deal to open up that important part of Western Australia.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): I am glad that the Bill has received such favourable consideration and I would like to point out that my instruction from the Premier was to take this line as near Wandering as possible without going beyond the point where the difference of opinion arose; consequently my instructions to the engineer-in-chief were simply to take it as far as possible within the limits outlined by the Premier, and if it is possible to go further, without opening up the question as to the ultimate junction, then I shall be prepared to do so. We want to serve the Wandering area and get as close as we can to it, and I can assure hon. members that while we are constructing the line investigations will be made, and if we can go a little further that will undoubtedly be done. In connection with the large areas the member for Fremantle stated he was disappointed that more detailed information had not been

given and then proceeded to criticise the Bill, on the details which had been given. The opposition to the Bill was due to the fact that I gave too much detail. It would have been a simple matter for me to have left out all the information with regard to the large holdings.

MR. CARPENTER: That would not have been fair to the House.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was not fair on the part of the hon. member to say that I did not give details to the House. These areas are some distance from the railway, and personally I am just as strong in my objection to build railways to serve large areas as the hon. gentleman is, and I want to say that if the land is worth resuming, doubtless we will take advantage of the provisions we have in this measure to resume. I would point out this is a large area of poison country. The Occidental Syndicate originally got this land as a grant on condition that they eradicated the poison, but they failed to do that and other people took it over and spent a small fortune in trying to eradicate it. Some have succeeded and others have failed, but the fact remains that it is poor country and it is questionable whether we should resume it and guarantee to settlers that they can make a living on it if we cut it up into small areas. Before the hon. member raised the point the Government had considered it and we propose to have an inspection made to see whether it would pay us to resume the land in order to throw it open in small areas. I do not think it is necessary for me to say anything further except that I am pleased that the old district of Wandering is at last going to receive some measure of assistance from this Chamber.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Deviation:

MR. FOLEY: Would the Minister give some explanation as to how much latitude the department would have?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The right existed to deviate a distance of five

miles but he questioned whether there was the absolute right to extend beyond the terminal point shown in the Bill. In a case like this where the organisation and plant would be on the spot, if it was possible to go a little further without binding the Chamber to the ultimate route the Government would be justified in doing so. It had been done on previous occasions.

Mr. FOLEY: This clause should be strictly adhered to. He was not familiar with the country but after looking over the map he found that a good deal of this land was held by gentlemen of the same name. In fairness to the House the Government should at least state where the proposed present terminus was to be, and not to go on with the line until the House had had an opportunity of gaining some knowledge of the district.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 7—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—YILLIMINING-KONDININ RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in moving the second reading said: This proposition is to extend the line junctioning with the proposed railway from Wickepin to Merredin at Yillimining, and extending in a North-easterly direction to a point known as Kondinin Well. The length of the line is 71 miles, the estimated cost of construction is £85,200, the estimate of cost of rails and fastenings £46,150, and the total cost of the line £131,350, working out at an average of £1,850 per mile. The resident occupiers within 15 miles of the railway number 4,370. Again I want to point out that this is 15 miles instead of 12½ miles, and if hon. members will look at the map they will see it is based on the 12½ miles radius, and consequently by going 15 miles we are taking an area that will be served by the Wickepin-Merredin line. The land under cultivation this year is 51,000 acres, the average rainfall is just on 16 inches, and the average yield all round last

season was 11 bushels per acre. The land available for selection within the 15 miles radius is 703,000 acres, the land alienated is 772,000, the large holdings number 32 and the total acreage of these large holdings is 58,800 acres. The pastoral land within 15 miles of this line totals 680,000 acres. Pastoral leases held represent 15,000 acres, area reserved 11,600 acres, area of first class land to be served 481,000 acres, of second class land 184,000 acres, and of third class land 110,000 acres. This railway has been reported on by the Advisory Board on three different occasions. The first report was submitted on the 29th July, 1910. On that occasion the board recommended that the line should be taken from Wickepin to Kurrenkuttien via Kulin and they then estimated that it would be 50 miles in length, and would serve a belt of country very fertile and of good wheat growing character. They finished up that report by putting in a further recommendation. I may say that in that report they were dealing with numerous other railway proposals to open up the country between the Great Southern and the Eastern Goldfields systems, and the recommendation, with which they concluded was as follows—

“Of these lines”—referring to all the lines they were reviewing—“we consider that next to the through line, Wickepin-Merredin, the eastern or Kulin loop should have preference in order of construction, as the land is of high quality, is relatively far from any existing service, and promises very substantial returns to the general railway system.”

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is the only one the Government did not authorise.

The Premier: A good thing for you they did not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The next report recommended that the line be taken to Yillimining and looped up at Kulin. Still another report was made, and this time it recommended that the line junction at a spot called Boundain on the Narrogin-Wickepin railway, and then continue and strike the line as previously proposed, running out from Yillimining, and thence go up and loop again at Kulin. I am not in a position

to say why all these reports were obtained. Time has not permitted me to go through the files to find the reason. However, I have gone into the question myself, interrogated the departmental officers, and have come to the conclusion that the route now recommended to the Chamber is the best that can be followed to serve the people without giving any special consideration to any special area. Consequently the Bill before the House recommends the construction of a line from Yillimining to Kondinin, and does not follow other routes recommended on the three different occasions by the Advisory Board.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Whose recommendation is it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The recommendation was mainly put up by the surveyor who started the survey of this line. Strange to relate, although the Advisory Board gave the previous Government three different recommendations, they themselves evidently did not give this officer any definite instructions as to which route he should follow; because when I took over the department and investigated the different routes being surveyed, and the different lines under survey. I discovered that this surveyor had started out from Yillimining, and not from Bouldain, as the previous Government had led the people to anticipate. He was going out to get immediately 25 miles from the existing surveyed line from Wickepin to Merredin. I investigated the matter, got all the information I could gather, and came to the conclusion that the surveyor was acting in the best interests of the State by taking the route he was then surveying. The only alteration I made was to go out and then strike in a northerly direction within 25 miles of the surveyed route of the Wickepin-Merredin line. The Government take the responsibility of not looping up, as suggested in all the reports by the Advisory Board, into a spot called Kulin; because ultimately we must continue this line still northerly to serve the large number of people who have been encouraged to take up land north of this Kondinin Well and too far east of the area to be served by the Wicke-

pin-Merredin line. Consequently instead of looping up we stop at Kondinin Well, recognising that we must ultimately continue on to serve the people who, as I have already stated, have taken up land too far east of the Wickepin-Merredin proposition. I do not know that I need give any further information. I have given the details, as far as it is possible to get them, as to the area to be served, etcetera. I did try to get figures more up to date, but this is a difficult task owing to the decentralisation scheme which was being adopted by the Lands Department. To secure up-to-date information it was necessary to get into touch with the district surveyor, and it was somewhat difficult to get this information within the limited time at my disposal. Speaking generally, however, the figures are reliable, and have been brought as nearly up to date as possible, having regard to the limitation I referred to. With these few remarks I recommend the Bill to the favourable consideration of the Chamber. It has been brought down because the Advisory Board urged that it should receive special consideration.

Mr. Monger: They did not mention this line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; but we are dealing with the area it is proposed to serve, and the Advisory Board urged that it was an area which should receive special consideration, and which was only second in importance to the Wickepin-Merredin proposition. As I have already stated in reply to a question, the Government do not propose to give it preference over the Noonagin-Narrogin line, nor over the Wickepin-Merredin line, but we propose to give consideration to the recommendation of the Advisory Board, recognising that this is a thickly populated area, that a large proportion of it is under cultivation, and that in many respects it is deserving of consideration. The Bill has been brought down in order to get the necessary authority to construct the line whenever time permits after we have finished with the other propositions I have referred to. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I admire the audacity of the Minister for Works in introducing a Bill of this description, departing from all the recommendations of the advisory boards that have reported on the district, and ultimately asking the House to accept his recommendation, a recommendation which, I think, is based on the public announcement of the member for Williams-Narrogin when on the hustings, promising these people that they should obtain this railway communication on this particular route.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It was promised by you on three different routes.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member will have an opportunity of proving his statement. The Minister says he does not know why three reports were made, that he did not know, at least, why the third report had been made. Surely he has not read the commencement of the report addressed to the Premier. The first paragraph says—

As the result of the promise given by the acting Premier to a deputation of the Dongolocking settlers we have made a further examination of the country between the Wickepin and Dumbleyung railways.

The Premier: It is all very suspicious.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: There is nothing suspicious about it at all. The report of the deputation was published in the Press.

The Premier: I thought you never interfered with the Advisory Board.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Neither did I.

The Premier: You instructed them three different times on this subject.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: That is where the Premier makes a mistake. He has dropped into the mire again; he always drops in right to the chin. The trouble was that the advisory board recommended a line such as recommended by the Minister for Works, from Yillimining via Kulin to Kurrenkullen. Then the Dongolocking people interviewed the Acting Premier by deputation, and complained that they were going to be left 17 or 18 miles from any railway system: they were the peo-

ple in the centre of the district, and they asked for an examination of their country with a view to seeing whether the Government could not construct a line between Wickepin and Dumbleyung. It had nothing whatever to do with this. That is where the Premier falls into the mire. The Acting Premier promised that an inspection would be made, and an officer of the board was requested to examine the country between Wickepin and Dumbleyung. As this meant building a railway between two railways already authorised, and rather cutting through the country which was to be served—there were two parallel lines of railway about 35 miles apart—we added to the Advisory Board Mr. Despeissis and Mr. Stead, a railway officer of the traffic branch, in order that he might give advice to the other members of the board as to the probabilities of traffic if in the manner wished for the country were tapped by the line from Wickepin south to Dumbleyung. The result is a report, a copy of which I hold in my hand. Not in any way were they asked to report on this district, to interfere with the original proposition to carry a railway from Yillimining via Kulin to Kurrenkullen, but they were asked to see how best they could serve the district between Wickepin and Dumbleyung. This report reads as follows:—

The previous recommendation of the board embraced a junction at or about Yillimining, extending thence easterly for some distance. The board recognised at the time that this proposal would leave a small strip of country in the neighbourhood of Dongolocking, outside the 12½ mile radii from any line. This Dongolocking country is, on the whole, a particularly good area of wheat land, already settled and well developed. After very careful consideration and inspection of the locality we have unanimously agreed to recommend better railway facilities than those previously recommended for this district. The request for a railway northwards from Dumbleyung or Nippering we cannot recommend in view of existing and proposed railway de-

velopments in the locality, but in lieu thereof we now put forward an amended proposal, and suggest that the proposed Yillimining - Kurrenkutten loop should start at a point nearer Narrogin, say at or near Boundain siding, extending thence in east-south-east and easterly directions for some 20 miles, passing close by White Lake, and joining the original proposed loop as shown in blue on the accompanying plan.

Then they go on to emphasise the point by saying—

This proposal would bring the whole of the settlement between Narrogin-Wickepin, Dumbleyung and Wagin within about 10 miles of existing or projected railways, and would effectually and satisfactorily serve the whole district without increasing the number of junctions, and although the Kurrenkutten loop would be lengthened by about four miles, the actual haulage to and from Narrogin along the route would be practically the same as by the board's previous recommendation. Our objections to the construction of a line northwards from the Wagin-Dumbleyung line, commencing either at Nippering or Dumbleyung, are the inconvenience of working a short spur extending eastwards from the point of junction, and the creation of two additional junction stations; although the Dongolocking settlers would be better served thereby. We consider that as the adoption of the present proposal would bring them all within 10 miles of a railway they are being very well catered for. We have also very fully considered the point of junction with the Great Southern railway and the ultimate future destination of wheat traffic, and have come to the conclusion that for the present it is advisable to constitute Narrogin the main junctioning point. We have further considered the advisability of starting the proposed Kurrenkutten loop direct from Narrogin as against utilising a portion of the existing Narrogin-Wickepin line, thus cutting out the junction at Boundain, but have come to the conclusion that it will not be advisable to

do this, inasmuch as we know that the present line as constructed from Narrogin to Boundain—although laid out with 1 in 40 grades—can without much expense be converted into 1 in 80 grades, and therefore recommend Boundain as the point of junction, thereby saving the cost of constructing about nine miles of new line. The increased cost of the loop line to Kurrenkutten, due to the additional mileage recommended, is estimated by the inspector of engineering surveys to be about £6,000.

That is signed by Harry F. Johnston (the Surveyor General), John Muir, Mr. Arthur G. Hewby, A. Despeissis, and George W. Stead, and that is the reason why they recommend that the original suggestion for a line from Yillimining via Kulin to Kurrenkutten, should be departed from, and that the line should start from Boundain, a few miles from Narrogin, then go south and then north-east, and junction on the originally proposed loop line. Now the Minister has ignored the recommendation of this board and he coolly proposes that we should take his recommendation in lieu thereof. He is going to depart from the line as recommended by the Advisory Board—

The Minister for Works: Which line?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The line I have described.

The Minister for Works: There are three propositions.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: There were two and the Minister is making a third one of his own.

The Minister for Works: Which one is that?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: One to start from Yillimining and go south-east to wards the Dumbleyung railway, and then north-east to Kondinin. We have not got the Advisory Board's report recommending this alteration, and the Minister himself stated that he consulted the surveyor who had been instructed to carry out the survey of this railway, and that the best route was that which he recommended, based on the recommendation of that surveyor. What are we coming to I should

like to ask? Here is a gentleman who 12 or 18 months ago never ceased to take the opportunity of rising in his place in this House and condemning the Government because they dared to pass or suggest Railway Bills on the advice of this Advisory Board. He almost insinuated that they were incompetent—

The Minister for Works: No. I always insinuated they were unduly influenced.

The Premier: And here is proof of it.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The Minister always said that they were unduly influenced—why? Because they were sent out to report on railways which Ministers wanted.

The Minister for Works: Hear, hear.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I suppose the Minister thought he was in order when he made that statement, although it has been denied on more than one occasion. To put the Minister right let me repeat the general instructions given to the Advisory Board in connection with the reports they had to send in. The Minister declares that they were influenced; of course, they are not influenced now; oh, no. When he gives instructions they are not influenced. When he goes to the surveyor who is carrying out the instructions of his chief—goes past the chief and gets this surveyor's advice, and then comes to the House and recommends it—I wonder if the Minister is working any undue influence on the surveyor?

Mr. Bolton: I do not think he said that.

The Minister for Works: I said the departmental officer carrying out the work.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Exactly.

The Premier: He did the work while you were in office.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: He was an able officer no doubt, he certainly was if he was one of my officers; but he was not one of the Advisory Board who made this report. Surely we are not going to override the report of the Advisory Board merely on the recommendation of a subordinate officer. Let us deal with this charge. Of course anyone instructed by the Government of which I had the honour to be head was unduly influenced; now that the Minister is in office anybody's ad-

vice is good enough, and he cannot be unduly influenced. Here is the letter of instruction given to these gentlemen when they were first appointed, and it is dated the 26th March, 1910, and is signed by the then Minister for Lands—

The Hon. the Acting Premier desires that the Advisory Board, together with an officer of the Public Works Department whom he will appoint, confer and report to the Government in regard to the railways necessary to open up the land in the South-West division of the State. This is probably the most important work that has been set up for your consideration. I am quite sure that it is unnecessary for me to point out the effect that the policy which you are now called upon to take part in formulating will have upon the future development of Western Australia. There are several matters to be considered in connection with this work. Firstly, you will be asked to advise the Government whether these lines should be at 30-mile rests or whether they should be a less distance apart. You will also be required to mark the lines in the order of preference, that is to say, the line that will serve the largest area of first class land should, I think, take precedence over the line through country which is not so good. Of course there are other considerations, such as the settlement that has taken place. I have caused a map to be prepared for your guidance and this will be supplied to you. I think you should call into requisition a sufficient number of the departmental chief surveyors and land inspectors to enable you to get a classification of the country sufficiently informative to enable you to arrive at a decision. You have already determined that the land within the 10-inch rainfall belt is to be considered agricultural land. You will therefore take this as a basis upon which to work. You will see from these instructions that you are absolutely free to set up the advice we need in connection with our railway policy. We do not wish to trammel you with unnecessary instructions, because

we recognise in you the departmental experts whose duty it is to take responsibility such as that we are now asking you to face.

The Premier: Why did you send them back twice?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: These are the general instructions to the Advisory Board which the Minister accuses us to-night of having unduly influenced.

The Premier: You kept on sending them back.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Hon. members opposite judge others by themselves.

Mr. Green: Why did you give special instructions to the Advisory Board in connection with the Esperance railway?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Speak a little louder; I cannot hear you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Kalgoorlie must keep order.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I resent this constant accusation against these gentlemen, responsible officers of our Works Department and Lands Department, the Chairman of the Agricultural Bank, and officers holding responsible positions in the Railway Department. Here are these gentlemen called upon to carry out this responsible work in these general terms, and to be continually haggling and saying that they are open to undue influence is casting an aspersion on their integrity and honesty of purpose, which I do not think any one in this Chamber, let alone a Minister of the Crown, should be guilty of. Surely we can fight our battles in this Chamber in regard to the merits of various railway proposals without besmirching the characters of these gentlemen with dirty insinuations.

The Premier: You can defend yourself, the aspersions are against you.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I can defend myself and the Premier knows it, or he ought to know it by now if he does not. But I am defending responsible officers who have been called upon to discharge an onerous and difficult task, a task that cannot please everybody but a task that must redound to the advantage of all the people in this State. The very report that the Minister quotes refers

to a line about 34 miles in an easterly or north-easterly direction, but he suggested that we should build a railway of 71 miles. The first report certainly did refer to a railway from Yillimining via Kulin to Kurrenkutten.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That 34 miles is a deviation; it junctions then with the original recommendation.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Well I have not seen any report. Where is it, when was it obtained?

The Minister for Works: You have all the reports.

The Premier: You issued the instructions.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: We have a report on the railway from Yillimining to Kurrenkutten, we have a report on a line from Boundain and junctioning with the original route, and there is a report at the same time on the whole of the country between Wickepin and Dumblebung. The suggestion to-night is that we shall depart from the lot of them and take the route which the Minister himself has selected, and for no reason so far as I can see. The map I have here shows the route, and the last report of the advisory board distinctly states that it is the best route they can recommend, after going over the ground again. If we adopt their report it will bring every settler, so far as this map shows, to within 10 miles of a railway as the crow flies. It shows 20 miles between the Wagin-Dumblebung line and the proposed route, 20 miles on the other side between the proposed route and the Wickepin-Merredin line, and so on till we get further up and then it widens out to 26 miles. We have nothing brought forward this evening to show why we should depart from this last report of the advisory board.

The Premier: Why the last report, why not the first or second?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Because the board has been strengthened by two more officers and they recommend the last as the best. Does the Premier dispute that?

The Premier: Why did you strengthen the board?

Mr. FRANK WILSON : I have explained to the Premier. Surely he does not want me to repeat it.

The Premier : I did not hear.

Mr. FRANK WILSON : I explained that it was in response to a deputation from the Dongolocking people, who desired to have a railway running north and south from a point between Wickopin and Merredin.

The Minister for Mines : Every time you had a deputation did you double the board?

Mr. FRANK WILSON : Double the board! When we had a deputation that wanted us to carry a railway through country between two parallel lines then we put a traffic man on to see what the probable traffic would be, as we did in this instance. Why should we take the Minister's recommendation in place of the Advisory Board's? Why does the Minister consult the Advisory Board if he does not intend to take their recommendation?

The Premier : Why did you not take their first report?

Mr. FRANK WILSON : And why does not the Minister take their first report? He does not, for he proposes to go south and then act on the last report, that is to say he proposes to take half the route on the last report; and yet here is the Premier twitting me and asking me why I did not take this first report, and why I appointed the board, when his own Minister has adopted half the second report. Why does he discard the beginning of it, especially if it will serve a number of settlers who are spoken highly of? Without injuring the people to the north we can bring the line further south and serve the people between two parallel lines in country which is well settled and has an enormous area under cultivation, and bring them all within 10 miles of a railway system. We have had no just reason why we should depart from that, and I now ask the Minister to adopt the last report.

Mr. E. B. Johnston : It is only a difference of four miles. When you get out from the main line it is the same railway.

Mr. FRANK WILSON : But it is not hurting the people the hon. member wants to serve, and it serves a large number of people to the south who are otherwise too far away from the railway system. I have no interest about it, I do not know any people about there. Certainly I know Mr. Moran.

Mr. Green : Do you know C. J. Moran?

Mr. FRANK WILSON : I mentioned Mr. Moran's name before the hon. member blurted out as usual.

Mr. Green : Has he been in town lately?

Mr. FRANK WILSON : I met him 10 days ago just to say, "How do you do." I was rather surprised he never mentioned his railway. If I had been in his place I would have buttonholed every member I could find.

The Premier : He said a few things during the election he wished he had never spoken.

Mr. FRANK WILSON : He said some truthful things.

Mr. Mitchell : Perhaps he was too outspoken.

Mr. FRANK WILSON : I hope the Government are not going to make him suffer for his outspoken opinion of the Premier's party; in fact, I think better of the Government than that; I think they will do the best they can in their judgment, notwithstanding the pronounced expressions of opinion of any settler living in this district; but I object to the railway being altered to suit any given member, and I here say that the member for Williams-Narrogin on the hustings promised these people a railway.

Mr. E. B. Johnston : That is a deliberate lie.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must withdraw that.

Mr. FRANK WILSON : And he ought to apologise.

Mr. E. B. Johnston : I withdraw it, but at the same time I ask—

Mr. SPEAKER : Order!

Mr. E. B. Johnston : I ask that the hon. member should withdraw the statement he made.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw unconditionally. The leader of the Opposition did not make any statement he is entitled to be called upon to withdraw.

The Premier: If the hon. member denies the statement he is entitled to a withdrawal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Did the leader of the Opposition say that the member for Williams-Narrogin had promised on the hustings definitely?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Yes; he promised these people a railway.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member objects to that it must be withdrawn.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I object to the statement that I promised it on a definite route. I promised these people east of Narrogin a railway; I did not promise that it should follow any definite route.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I said the hon. member promised the people of the Kondinin district they would have a railway.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has said he did not make any such statement.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I promised those people at the end, yes.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: That is all I said. I do not know that I can say any more in connection with this matter. I hope the Minister will withdraw this Bill and reintroduce it on the proper route.

The Premier: Which is the proper route?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The southern route.

The Premier: Why?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: To serve the people down to the south.

The Premier: Near Mr. C. J. Moran?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: To serve the Dongolocking people, including Mr. C. J. Moran, and well worthy he is of being served by a railway.

Mr. Green: He is a friend of yours.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Of course he is a friend of mine. I should think that he was a friend of the hon. member's by the dialect that is spoken. He is a very worthy friend, and he has been a good friend to this State. He has served his country for many years and has had a

very hard battle on the land for the past five or six years.

Mr. Green: He was kicked out of the fields for treachery.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: All I can say is that I do not think any man would kick Mr. Moran out of any portion of the State.

Mr. Green: He was kicked out.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Not kicked out; he is not a man to be kicked out. He has done good work for the State.

The Premier: You did not say that when he was sitting opposite to you.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I have had occasion to criticise Mr. Moran, but nevertheless he has done very good service to this State. I do not care whether he was opposed to me or not, I am very willing to concede to any hon. member the service he has done to the State, no matter what attitude he may take up. I hope we shall not get into the habit of condemning any man who has put a large sum of money into the country; I hope hon. members will refrain from sneering at those who have put thousands and thousands of pounds and many years of hard work into developing the back blocks of Western Australia.

Mr. O'Loughlen: A lot of them got it out of Western Australia.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I do not think the hon. member can point to half a dozen men who have done well out of their farming operations and made a profit on them.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I was not talking of farming.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: If Mr. Moran has taken it out of the land he has put it in again. He has a very poor chance ultimately of getting it out of the land unless he gets reasonable railway facilities which hon. members are always demanding for the small men. Let us try and deal with the big men as well as the small men and help the whole lot together, because, rest assured, if we begin to discriminate between one settler and another we will do some grievous injury not only to the settlers themselves but to the country at large.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): I am sure members of the Chamber have listened with considerable interest to the leader of the Opposition attempting to defend the actions of the previous Government, particularly in connection with this railway, and to his very deep cunning in attempting now to pass the criticism for his actions on to permanent members of the public service. There is no member sitting on the Government bench who has cast any reflection upon any member of the Advisory Board.

Mr. Frank Wilson: You all did, every one of you.

The PREMIER: Neither now nor at any time. I will prove before I conclude my remarks that the leader of the Opposition did cast reflections on the members of the Advisory Board.

Mr. Frank Wilson: You cannot do anything of the sort.

The PREMIER: Of course not. The hon. member appears to forget what is placed on the files in the various departments.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I do not try to remember.

The PREMIER: As hon. members are not likely to know of it I am going to acquaint them with one or two things.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Put the files on the Table of the House.

The PREMIER: According to the hon. member's own statement the members of the Advisory Board are sent out for the purpose of recommending to the Government the best way of providing railway communication in our agricultural districts, and they were told to do this in the year 1910 in regard to this particular district. Now, if the Advisory Board had thoroughly inspected the district, then when they made their report on the 29th July, 1910, the Government must have felt in duty bound to have introduced a measure last session for the construction of a railway on the route they recommended. Will the leader of the Opposition tell the House why they did not do so?

Mr. Frank Wilson: Yes; if you will let me.

The PREMIER: Notwithstanding that in their report they said that, next to the Wikepin-Merredin line, the eastern or Kulin route should have preference in order of construction, on top of that recommendation for that route in that district the Government did not introduce a Bill for the construction of the railway; and it is rather remarkable that three months later the same board apparently were sent out to further investigate the same district. Why? Were the Government dissatisfied with their previous recommendation; did they obtain fresh information from any source which would cause them to instruct the board to go out again? Was it not a fact that giving a second instruction to the Advisory Board to make a further recommendation in the district where they had already made a recommendation was tantamount to telling them that the Government had no confidence in their recommendation? It is necessary for the leader of the Opposition to explain this.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I clearly indicated and stated that the Advisory Board were asked to report on the land between Wikepin and Dumbleyung, and not on the same route. The Premier is twisting my words.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not say that.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Then he is misrepresenting my words.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot admit that either.

Mr. Frank Wilson: What can I say?

Mr. SPEAKER: There is any amount of language to use without using those words.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Misstating my words; that is Parliamentary language.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member said "twisting."

Mr. Frank Wilson: I withdraw "twisting" and say "misstating."

The PREMIER: Apparently the leader of the Opposition has made no remarks. I cannot misrepresent his wishes on the files to get reports from the Advisory Board in connection with the best route for a railway to serve a definite district.

The Minister for Works: Perhaps the district twisted.

The PREMIER: The district did not move about. It is the same to-day as when the board made their first report. Did the Advisory Board twist, or did the previous Government twist, or who twisted, or what twisted?

Mr. Frank Wilson: You are wriggling.

The PREMIER: The fact remains the board submitted a second report, and then there was a deputation waited on the Acting Premier from Dongolocking, and that deputation submitted that they should receive consideration in connection with railways in that district.

Mr. Frank Wilson: What did they ask for?

The PREMIER: They asked for railway communication to serve the district between Dumbleyung and the Merredin-Wickepin railway.

Mr. Frank Wilson: What has that to do with this railway?

The PREMIER: Then why did the Advisory Board accept it as being an instruction to consider again the question of serving this district, because they only shifted the connection of the railway a little further down towards Narrogin at Boundain. That is all that transpired in the second report, and let me say that in reply to that deputation there appears on the file a rather significant remark by the Premier.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Acting Premier?

The PREMIER: No. the Premier. He wound up by saying, "I can promise you that if the Advisory Board who have just inspected the line say that this line ought to go there, I will construct the line, and if not, I will go into the reasons and make full inquiry into the matter." Yet the leader of the Opposition, in the face of that, tried to lead the House to believe that no influence was brought to bear on the Advisory Board. He practically said, "I will send them down until they do report in the direction I desire."

Mr. Frank Wilson: The Premier is putting his own construction on it.

The PREMIER: I forgot to refer to the construction that the deputation put

on it. Their construction was "cheers," and that is on the file.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I think you ought to read the whole thing instead of only extracts. Put it on the Table of the House, we will get the whole of it then.

The PREMIER: There is not much to read; I will read it all—

The Premier, in reply, said that so far as his memory went, he had not made such a promise as had been stated. He thought he had promised that the country should be inspected, and that he had outlined a general scheme which was in his mind regarding these spurs ultimately being linked up by a loop to the south. Whether it would be constructed farther east before looping he did not know. Had he made a definite promise he would have certainly brought in a Bill last session. His object was to connect all the spurs, north and south. He did not want the deputationists to go away with the idea that a promise had been made and that he had not kept it. After some conversation between Mr. Moran and himself regarding the distance between railway lines in Victoria, and that limitation which it had been stated was aimed at by the Advisory Board, the Premier said he understood that his colleague, the Acting Premier, had promised that the Advisory Board should investigate the merits of their case, and this had been done. He (Mr. Wilson) would now say that if the Advisory Board reported to him that a railway should be carried through the district then being dealt with, the railway would be carried through. If they did not so report, then he would have to know the reasons why, and he would have to fully consider them.

It is even worse. I have never yet in the course of my career seen such intimidation—that if the board did not report in the direction he desired he would know the reason why. Then we have the statement made here and repeated that no influence had been brought to bear on the Advisory Board by the Government and now that the action is being criticised the hon. member is trying to shelve it by saying

that it is a reflection on the Advisory Board.

Mr. Frank Wilson: So it is.

The PREMIER: Let me read this—

I can promise you that if the Advisory Board, who have just inspected the land, say that this line ought to go through there, I will construct the line, and if not, I will go into the reasons and make a full inquiry into the matter. There is the whole of the reply. Let me point out that we were just on the eve of a general election when that reply was given. Some time later something in the form of a banquet took place at Wagin, and a gentleman by the name of Mr. Moran, who was referred to in the extract I have read in the words, "after a conversation with Mr. Moran" attended that banquet.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Will the Premier say what that conversation was?

The PREMIER: It is not shown on the file.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Yes it is.

The PREMIER: There is some reference regarding the distance between railway lines in Victoria.

Mr. Frank Wilson: That is it. What has that to do with the banquet?

The PREMIER: I am just going to show what happened there. Mr. Moran was a member of the deputation, and when the Premier attended the banquet in Wagin I have a lively recollection of reading in the newspapers that Mr. Moran, so enamoured with the reply given by the Premier, made some utterances about the members of the Opposition in connection with the campaign and said that they were skulking damnably. Mr. Moran was very much concerned about the Government being returned in order that they might have an opportunity of keeping their promise. Apparently without the knowledge of the head of the Government, that Government had committed the country to the construction of the line. We have not altered the route decided on by that Government until we get to the position in regard to which the Advisory Board has reported. Here we have the position put up by the Engineer-in-Chief on the 29th September, 1911,

"Will you please ask the Minister to confirm the route of survey as suggested by Mr. Stronach and now being surveyed, instead of that recommended by the Advisory Board." This was approved by "H. Daglish."

Mr. Frank Wilson: What was?

The PREMIER: The line you are complaining of.

Mr. Frank Wilson: On what date was that?

The PREMIER: Would the hon. member like me to tell him? It was after he ceased to be a Minister, on the 7th October.

Mr. Frank Wilson: That shows the absurdity of it; we were out of office then.

The PREMIER: The Engineer-in-Chief's recommendation was made on the 22nd September and was passed on to the Minister and he approved of it on the 7th October.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I could not have had any knowledge of it on the 7th October.

The PREMIER: The then Premier could have instructed the Minister for Works to comply with the recommendation of the Advisory Board. Was he not aware that a survey had been put through the district over a distance of 30 miles before he replied to the deputation?

Mr. Frank Wilson: I have no knowledge of it.

The PREMIER: When we took office they had completed 34 miles of the survey over the route we are now asking Parliament to sanction. Does the leader of the Opposition expect us to do over again the work that he did wrongly?

Mr. Frank Wilson: Certainly, if it was wrongly done.

The PREMIER: I have announced that the Government are not going to commit this country to survey and re-survey in connection with agricultural railways. We are going to decide with the authority of Parliament where the lines are to be constructed, and having done that we are going to have a survey made in the district which will best serve the interests of the community and not

have it surveyed and re-surveyed in order to suit political friends.

Mr. Frank Wilson: You are doing that between Wickepin and Merredin.

The PREMIER: The twisting which has been going on there is due to the previous Government.

Mr. Green: How many surveys have been made?

The PREMIER: Five surveys. And then, to try and cover up his own tracks the leader of the Opposition is shoving the responsibility of this action on to the public officers of the State, and he is trying to make out that our actions in asking the authority of Parliament to construct the line over the survey carried out during his term of office is a reflection on the Advisory Board.

Mr. Green: The leader of the Opposition is blushing.

The PREMIER: He is turning pale. Let me say at once that we are warranted in asking the House to construct this railway over the route proposed in the Bill.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Why? Because the late Minister for Works approved of it.

The PREMIER: Because the survey had been carried out over a route which we believed would serve the district. I was pleased to hear the leader of the Opposition say that we were apparently carrying out his policy so far as the construction of railways was concerned. I would like to tell him that we are doing so as far as the good points are concerned, but where we find it unnecessary and unwise to carry out his policy we are dropping it; we are taking out the good parts of his policy and there will be occasions when he will not recognise it in the future. When we bring forward Bills to construct railways over routes surveyed by him he complains that we are not doing the right thing.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Not on the advice of the Advisory Board.

The PREMIER: I am not concerned about what the Advisory Board did, or over such a threat as that I have referred to. It was a public declaration made in reply to a deputation. It is this kind of thing that caused members on this side of

the House in the past and to-day to say that the ex-Ministers brought influence to bear on the Advisory Board.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Let me correct the Premier. The instructions to the Advisory Board had reference to the railway between Wickepin and Dumbleyung. I have pointed that out half a dozen times.

The PREMIER: Apparently the leader of the Opposition's bump of geography is somewhat out of date. This line is to serve the country between Dumbleyung and Wickepin.

Mr. Frank Wilson: No.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member looks at the map he will find it is so. It is between Wickepin and Merredin, and the leader of the Opposition when Premier did not say to the Advisory Board, "Tell me how we can serve the country without interfering with your previous recommendation." He said the very reverse. I was somewhat struck with the desire, not of the Dongolocking people, but of the Wagin townspeople to have the district served by Wagin. There was the influence at the back of this to have the district served through Wagin, but I said that the Government in building railways to the agricultural districts were concerned about the men who were producing and not those who were taking the produce. But I still contend that we would not be warranted in asking the House to make a fresh survey of that first 30 miles from Yillimining seeing that it would not serve a single settler more than will the proposed route.

Mr. MONGER (York): In dealing with this railway I notice the schedule refers to a line from Yillimining to Kondnin, a distance of 71 miles. It also refers to Public Works Departmental plan 16088. The only report attached to that plan on which we are asked to authorise the construction of this railway is one dated 10th November of last year, and all it says is as follows:—

In our report of the 29th July we suggested the construction of a line extending in a general easterly direction from Wickepin. We now desire to amend that suggestion by proposing the construction of a line in the vicinity of

Yilliminig siding, extending 34 miles in a direction slightly north of east to junction with the former proposed route in the vicinity of the southern end of the Geetarning subdivision. This line will serve an area of 442,000 acres.

The only previous report is an extract from a report of the 29th July of the same year; but attached to the plan, and referring to this railway is merely a report concerning 34 miles of the line, a small portion only. I think that before approving of this line the House would be justified in asking the Minister to place on the Table a complete report of the 71 miles of railway which we are asked to sanction.

The Premier: They are all there.

Mr. MONGER: They are not attached to the plan. Does the hon. member wish to infer that some other hon. member has taken from the plan some of the papers originally attached to it?

The Premier: It is quite possible.

Mr. MONGER: I say that is an improper reflection to cast upon any hon. member.

The Premier: Have you not the full report?

Mr. MONGER: I have the full report of 12th September, 1911, and an extract from the report of 29th July, 1910, and an extract from the report of 10th November, 1910.

The Premier: Then you have the full report.

Mr. MONGER: No. The Minister showed me a portion of the extract referred to in the report of 10th November, 1910; but there is a lot of other matter in that report, and he does not show us the report referred to on 29th July, 1910, which makes mention of 80 miles of railway. The whole of the report is embraced in half a dozen lines, and I venture to say we ought to have a little more information about the 80 miles of railway. There is no information on the file, except that embraced in the few words referred to, yet the House is asked to sanction this 71 miles of railway. I think even those strongest in support of this particular line will admit that we are perfectly justified in asking the Govern-

ment to supply us with a full report as to the nature of the country through which the railway will pass, and I think we are justified in asking how the Minister arrives at the conclusion summarised in this statement, to the effect that there are so many acres of land to be served, etcetera. There is nothing in the report to confirm it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is just the same as any other report.

Mr. MONGER: Nothing of the sort. The member for Forrest knows he is stating what is absolutely wrong. Has there ever been a Railway Bill supported by such meagre information?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Scores of them.

Mr. MONGER: There never has been a Railway Bill submitted to the House and supported with so little information. I ask again that the Minister give us the information which he has, or ought to have. I am asking that we be furnished with some reliable data to go upon, and that the Premier will not use his overwhelming majority to carry a Bill the particulars in relation to which are so very meagre.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin): I did not anticipate that there would be any opposition to the measure at all, and I am sure it will come as a great surprise to the people of the district concerned to know that the leader of the Opposition, who promised this railway on three different routes at three different times, has turned around and now opposes the measure. It is only a few weeks since that gentleman, speaking in the Narrogin town hall on an electioneering mission, promised his hearers this railway. In fact he said, "Return me to power again and I will give you all the railways you want, in addition to this particular one." It will come as a surprise to the people of that district who supported that hon. gentleman's candidates, to know that at this early stage the member for Sussex has gone back on what he promised. I might have come more fully prepared to speak on this subject had I known that there would be any opposition to this railway recommended by the Advisory Board 18

months ago for special priority of construction. However, let us briefly review the history of the proposal. In the first place, we have the report of the Advisory Board, dated 29th July, 1910, in which the board refers to this particular railway as follows:—

We are satisfied that there are large tracts of first-class land suitable for wheat growing within this area, which cannot possibly be exploited without railway facilities, and we suggest the accompanying scheme of railway extension to meet the case.

The report went on to recommend the Wickiepin-Merredin line as the backbone of the scheme for opening up that part of the State. Then, in paragraph 8, the report recommended the construction of the Quairading-Nunajin railway, which was authorised last January. In paragraph 9 it recommended the Brookton-Kunjinn line, which was also authorised last January; and that report contained the following references to the loopline we are now discussing. It says—

The loop, as shown coloured green on the plan, from Wickiepin to Kurrenkutten via Kulin will be 80 miles in length, and is estimated by Mr. Muir to cost £1,500 per mile, including rails and fastenings, totalling £120,000. This loop would serve 829,000 acres, of which 154,000 have been alienated, and 36,000 acres subdivided, and will, in our opinion, open up one of the most even and fertile belts of wheat-growing land in this State.

Paragraph 10 states—

Of these lines, we consider that next to the through line, Wickiepin-Merredin, the eastern or Kulin loop should have preference in the order of construction, as the land is of high quality, is relatively far from any existing service, and promises very substantial returns to the general railway system.

Those last words are very important, because they mean that this railway is going to pay handsomely from the very start. But the point to which I draw special attention is that as far back as July, 1910, this report was put in recom-

mending four agricultural railways, and marking out the one we are now considering for special priority of construction. What did the late Government do? Last January, nearly a year ago, they brought down Bills for the construction of these railways, two of which, of course, serve districts represented by political friends whom they desired to see returned at the recent elections. The Government did not bring down by a Bill to authorise this particular railway which was recommended for special priority of construction. Now the leader of the Opposition tells hon. members they should adhere to the recommendations of the Advisory Board, when he himself, as leader of the late Government, shelved this particular recommendation. Had he accepted it at its true value this railway would now be in course of construction. I would like to say also, that all who know this district as I do, who know it from end to end, who know the number of people living closely settled on small areas of land—and I honestly believe this particular district is one of the most closely settled areas in the wheat belt of the State—all who know the large area under cultivation officially stated to be 54,000 acres, and the high quality of the land, will realise that the Advisory Board did, nothing more than their duty in picking out this particular railway for priority of construction. The board that made this special recommendation consisted of Mr. Paterson, Professor Lowrie, Mr. Johnston the Surveyor General, and Mr. John Muir; and in connection with another proposed railway we will probably have the leader of the Opposition telling us what great weight is to be accorded to Mr. Paterson's recommendation, notwithstanding which the late Government shelved Mr. Paterson's recommendation, made unanimously in conjunction with other members of the board, that this particular line should have special priority of construction. I may say that in looking up the records in connection with this line, I find it is reported that on the 4th November, 1910, the Hon. Frank Wilson visited Dorakin and definitely promised that the

railway would be authorised during next session of Parliament, which is the present session; and I take it he meant to build it on the route on which the late Government surveyed it, which is the route this Government propose to build it on. I believe also that on the 10th February, 1911, a deputation from Kulin waited on the Premier in Perth, and he then for the second time renewed his promise that this railway would be authorised during the present session if he were in power. In view of these facts I find it hard to reconcile the remarks made by the leader of the Opposition to-night. I would like now to refer to the report of the 10th November, 1910, which was laid on the Table of the House, and to which reference has been made by the member for York. This report refers to a portion, 34 miles, of the railway that we now propose to build, but it distinctly shows that it will junction with the former proposed loop in the vicinity of the southern end of the Geetarning subdivision. This report is merely for the purpose of altering the starting place from Wekepin to Yillimining, and it points out that it will junction with the other proposal 34 miles out, and does not suggest that the full 81 miles is not to be built. I would like to point out also that in the same report the advisory board recommended the extension of the Dumbleyung railway, and the construction of the Katanning-Nampup and Tambellup-Ongerup railways. Here again we have the Yillimining railway recommended by the advisory board, and the recommendation for priority of construction thus holds good. This same report for the first time brings in the three new railways.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: They had previously been promised and provided for on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: So had this line been promised and provided for, but the point is that the Advisory Board on the 10th November, 1910, for the first time brought forward these three important and wholly justifiable railways. I recognise that these railways are in every way justified, but I want hon. members to realise that they were brought forward

long subsequent to the railway we are now discussing being recommended for priority of construction. These three railways were authorised by the late Government nearly a year ago, and are now in course of construction. I am glad that these three lines are being built, but hon. members who approved of the construction of these lines should unhesitatingly and without delay approve of the construction of this railway, which the Advisory Board recommended for priority and which the late Government promised three times at least, and probably more often, and which the people are still without. We have no less than seven agricultural railways recommenced since the Yillimining-Kulin loop line was recommended, and all are now authorised, or in course of construction, yet the one we are discussing to-night has not been authorised. I find that an engineer of the Works Department (Mr. Stoddart) also inspected this railway in June of this year, and he reported that there are a million acres of first class land to be opened up by this railway. In his report he stated—"The land is of a specially consistent quality and I estimate that 75 per cent. is first class country, equal to anything I have seen in the wheat district of this State." That report truly described the position; the land is equal to that in any agricultural district in Western Australia, and there are at least three-quarters of a million acres of first-class land which this railway will open up in the East Narrogin district. The information we have before us shows that the railway can be built on a grade of one in sixty, and minimum curves of 15 chains radius can be obtained; so that members will see that the proposal contains no engineering difficulties at all, but on the contrary the country is level and can be well and easily opened up. It is further reported that the water supply will be chiefly by means of excavated tanks, concerning which the engineers do not anticipate any difficulty. And I would like to point out that this district has an annual rainfall of from 12 to 14 inches, whilst the great wheat belt of Keller-

berrin and northward has only an annual rainfall of 11.86 inches, and Merredin only 10.30 inches. The late Government have put people on the land 30 and 40 miles north of Merredin with a rainfall of 10.30 inches, and they have my sympathy to a certain extent; yet the late Government refused railway facilities to the great settlement east of Narrogin and east of Pingelly, which will be served by this railway, and which are favoured with a rainfall of from 12 to 14 inches. I may say that the holdings are very much in need of a railway, many of the selectors having to cart their material and goods 30 and 40 miles from the nearest station on the Wickepin line. Concerning the amount of land cleared in this district, the figures which have been given to the House are 51,000 acres under cultivation, but there are very large areas of land out there cleared but not under crop this year, so that the estimate of 51,000 acres does not indicate the full extent of the area cleared. Many of my own constituents have two, three, and four hundred acres cleared but not cultivated this year, because they are so far from a railway. They have preferred to put sheep on part of the land rather than crop it, so that although we are told that there are 51,000 acres of cultivated land to be served by this railway, I can say of my own knowledge that there is a much larger area cleared and ready for cropping next year. I would like to touch on the point mentioned by the Minister for Works, that the railway has stopped at Kondinin, and I congratulate the Government on stopping the line there, rather than carrying it on to junction with the Wickepin-Merredin line at Kurrenkutten, because there is no advantage at the present time to be gained by junctioning Kurrenkutten with Kondinin. At the present rate of development it may be necessary later on to junction the line with Yerbillon, or some other point on the Eastern Goldfields line, rather than link it up with the Wickepin-Narrogin line at Kurrenkutten. I feel that in dealing with this question it is a pity I have not power to put the position before members in the light that I have

seen it. I would like them to realise that we have there a very great district which is very closely settled. The figures supplied by the department to-day tell us that we have only 32 holdings of a thousand acres in size, although the railway will serve 772,000 acres of land already selected. There is also a further 703,000 acres available for selection. I think it is a remarkable fact that of nearly a quarter of a million of acres of land that will be served we have only 32 large holdings and that they comprise only 58,000 acres out of the 772,000 acres selected. This is, I believe, the most important railway, from the point of view of opening up a great agricultural district, that has been before the House during the last two or three years at any rate, and, knowing that, I am all the more surprised that it has not been brought in at an earlier date. The particulars put before us show the length of the line to be 71 miles, and I know of my own personal knowledge that the whole of the district is closely settled. It is true that there are in places patches of sand-plain, such as we find throughout the wheat belt, but the consistent area of good land is far above the average of the Great Southern districts. There are many hundreds of settlers on that land who were tempted to go there by the unfulfilled promises of railway construction made by the late Minister for Lands and those who are left on the Opposition benches. We are informed that there are 437 occupiers in that district, but I honestly believe those particulars are not quite up to date, because settlers are arriving at Wickepin at the rate of 10 and 12 per week, and going into this area with their wives and families and chattels. I believe that the number of farmers on the land in that district would be nearer 750 than 437; at any rate, I am satisfied that there are a greater number of resident settlers to be served within this locality, some of them being in the Pingelly electorate. One of the pleasant features in connection with the construction of this line is that it is going to serve the great Dorakin area. The settlers who went into the Dorakin

area some three years ago were promised a railway by the then Premier, Sir Newton Moore, as soon as they had the traffic to carry over the line. The settlers went on the land relying on that promise, they showed that the land was productive, and yet they find themselves after all this lapse of time without a railway. They fulfilled their part of the contract and they are honestly entitled to the facilities promised them so long ago, and which, I may say, they have paid for. At the time this Dorakin area was thrown open Sir Newton Moore stated that he would build the railway but the settlers would have to pay for it. It was one of the first agricultural areas to be thrown open at prices above 10s. per acre. It was mostly priced at from 11s. to 16s. per acre, which is, of course, a low price now, but the people paid it willingly then because they believed that they were paying for the railway, which so far they have not got. I congratulate the Government on bringing this Bill forward to serve a district closely settled by hard working and struggling farmers. They are not men of political influence, or they would have had the railway several years ago when it was recommended for priority of construction by the Advisory Board. I am glad we have got a Government in power who build railways where they are required in the interests of the State, and who make that the first consideration, instead of allowing other considerations to influence them to the extent that everyone knows, and the extracts read by the Premier this evening show, was the case with the past Government. In regard to the route, I want to say a word because the member for Sussex suggested that I had influenced the change of route. Let me say that if I had the marking out of the route I would alter it in one or two respects. I am sorry that the people at the Lakes are not better served, as they would be if the railway started from Boundain; and I am sorry also that it does not go into Scrivener's Soak reserve, and the reserve at Wogerlin; but these are minor matters. The people in these districts will be served by this railway, although it is not

being taken right to their doors. I can assure members that, knowing as I do the people away back want a railway, I am going to support the Bill as it is brought forward. I am not going to allow any question of a difference of two or three miles in a route make me do anything to sacrifice the interests of any people who are 40 to 60 miles from a railway, and who want this measure passed so that they will get consideration. There is a reserve at Wogerlin which would have made a very nice townsite, if the railway had been taken there. Main roads lead there from all directions, and I am sorry it is not possible to take the railway there; but, as I said before, the consideration hon. members have to face is the necessity for getting the railway out to that great district as quickly as possible. There are a large number of agricultural areas which have been thrown open during the last 18 months out east of the rabbit-proof fence, 30 to 50 miles by road from an existing railway. We have subdivisions at Geetarning, Kulin, Ngarning, and Jilakin, and two or three subdivisions at Kondinin; and there are people on all these subdivisions on 1,000-acre blocks; and I am going to support the Bill as it stands, because these struggling people who have been tempted there from the goldfields, the Eastern States, and England, cannot stay on their holdings unless they get a railway, and get it quickly. And these people are paying very high prices for their land. The late Minister for Lands seemed to pay them a special amount of attention. When he was sitting in his office—his cool, comfortable office in Perth—he put up the price of land on what was recommended by his departmental officers who had seen it. He never saw it; he never went out into the district; if he ever does and meets the people he will get a pretty warm reception and come back quickly; because the people out there do not view with any favour the policy of a Minister who put up the price of their land against the advice of his responsible officers, and without seeing it, and then assisted the late Government to shelve a railway that was recom-

mended for special priority of construction on so many occasions by the Advisory Board. I say that, good and fertile and rich as the land in this eastern district is, we should remember that it is outside the rabbit-proof fence, and that the people will have to contend with rabbits; and when we remember its distance from railways I say that the late Minister for Lands rent-racked these men when he charged them from 21s. to 30s. per acre for blocks his officers' classifications show as one-third sandplain. But, at any rate, the people are there, and they are on 1,000-acre blocks, and they are going to make a good do of it, as long as they are given this railway. The railway is essential to the welfare of that great settlement east of the rabbit-proof fence, east of Narrogin. It appeared to me that for political reasons the member for Sussex was trying to fasten the responsibility or blame, if there is any blame for the route of this railway, on my shoulders. Wherever a railway goes we will always get a few people who want it a little closer to them. I refuse to allow the hon. member to put the responsibility for the exact route on my shoulders. I think it is a good route; I am quite prepared to say it is the proper route the railway should follow; but I am not going to allow the member for Sussex to get up and say, as he said, that I am the one man who marked it out. The responsible officers of the department are the men who marked it out; and if these responsible officers recommend the route, and if the Government decide that the railway shall start from Boundain instead of from Yillimining, I am prepared to support them in whatever action they see fit to take. We have two routes close together, each recommended by the Railway Advisory Board, and we have the survey that was put in hand by the late Government practically dividing these two routes at the end of the railway closest to the Wickepin line. About 20 miles out the routes converge, so it really does not matter which one of them is taken; and, for my part, I am prepared to support whichever route the Government or their officers decide on, so long as the

hundreds of settlers back from the railway get the benefits it will bring them. I do not care whether it starts at Yillimining or Boundain, which is only four miles further south; and I do not think it matters much to the settlers, or very much to the country. I am sorry the member for Sussex evaded the question as to why the special priority recommended for this agricultural railway was not given effect to. I think the members of the House have the right to hear from the members of the Opposition why they shelved the Advisory Board's report in this disgraceful manner; and I may say that, not only did they shelve the authorisation of the railway, but they absolutely shelved the survey of the railway until the eve of the election when I got very active in that particular district. I was down there electioneering and was invited to attend a meeting of the combined railway associations, and at that meeting we had a letter from the Works Department saying it was impossible to send a surveyor along to survey a line which was not authorised at the time. Then something happened very soon. The member for the district at that time was in Perth, and no doubt he told the Government that I was getting a little bit energetic in that district; because within a fortnight of the writing of that letter saying that the survey party could not go down there to survey an unauthorised railway, the survey party arrived and set to work surveying a railway that was not authorised at all. They set to work after I had got very energetic. Right through the district people said to me, "We are glad you have come electioneering, because you made the Government send this survey party after they wrote and said they would not send one." I believe, in common with the people in that eastward district, that the reason the Advisory Board were sent out so often was because the Government wanted a different route altogether, because they wanted to start the railway from the Wagin-Dumbleyung line, and run it through Mr. Moran's property; and I believe that it was because they could not get a recommendation to that effect that they did not build the

railway. They sent the Advisory Board down there time after time with the threats the Premier has read out, saying that the matter would be looked into and their actions investigated, in the hope that the Advisory Board would recommend a railway that would lead into a different town altogether. We are justified in concluding that this was the reason for the delay. We all remember the words of the great poet, who said—

Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade,
A breath can make them as a breath has made;

But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

We want no deserted agricultural townships in Western Australia. We have a bold peasantry in the eastern districts; we have hundreds of settlers on these small areas, and unless this railway is built very soon these people will have to desert their holdings in the same way as that "sweet Auburn" was deserted years ago. They cannot stay on their holdings without railway communication. We have brave men and noble women in that district, 40 to 60 miles from a railway. I am glad to say we have at last a Government who recognise the rights of men, even if they are not men of great political influence; and I am glad that Government have brought in this Bill to do justice to that great community. I mean to support the measure whole heartedly.

Mr. MITCHELL (Northam): I am sorry the Minister has not sent down the maps to show where he intends the line to terminate. He cannot possibly let the line stop at Kondinin. The line must run parallel to the Wickiepin-Merredin line, and it would have been wise for the Minister to have a map giving us much fuller information and showing the country also from Kondinin to the goldfields railway. The Wickiepin-Merredin route has some bearing on the construction of this railway. I do not know what the Minister intends to do, but I believe he intends the Wickiepin-Merredin line to run to the west of Lake Yealering, as I think it should, and then I understand he wishes it to run west of Lake Kurrenkutten.

The Minister for Works: You seem to know more than I do.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Merredin line will have some effect on the line it is now proposed to build. If it is to go to the east of the lakes we can take a different route for the extension of this line north of Kondinin. The Wickiepin-Merredin line, passed last session, is now being surveyed, and the Minister should know just where it is likely to go. He has sufficient information in the office; he has the line practically surveyed, and should be in a position to tell us what he intends to do about it. Of course the settlers in all these subdivisions that have been submitted for sale after survey must be served. There are many settlers to the east of Lake Kurrenkutten who will be cut off from railway communication if the Wickiepin-Merredin line passes to the west of the lake, unless the Minister continues this line from Kondinin to the goldfields line. But if the Minister takes the Wickiepin-Merredin line to the east of the lakes, then he will serve all the settlers from Arrowsmith to Merredin. The country is undoubtedly committed to the building of railways to all our agricultural areas which justify them, and the subdivisions show that many lines will be wanted to the east of the Great Southern Railway. I would like the Minister, in his reply, to tell us, if he can, where he intends the Wickiepin-Merredin line to go. I would like to hear also that the people settled to the east of Kurrenkutten are to be looked after. It is essential that the Minister should tell us.

The Premier: We will tell you when we ask you to authorise the continuation of this line.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Premier thinks he is the whole country; we have the right to ask for information.

The Premier: We have a right to say whether you will get it.

Mr. MITCHELL: It is not a question for the Premier to decide; we are entitled to the information, and to polite replies to our questions.

The Premier: Then give notice; this is not the time for questions.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Premier seems to forget that he is the Premier of the country and not the whole Parliament. I hope the Minister for Works will tell us where the Wickepin-Merredin line is to run. They have altered entirely the intention of the advisory board. This line now alters, to some extent, the advice set up by the board. I am not opposed to the line but I am opposed to the route, but I shall not vote against the route, and as long as the extensions are made along the route there will be nothing to object to. I want to ask the Minister for Works to tell the House where he proposes to take the Merredin railway.

The Premier: Over one of the many routes you surveyed.

Mr. MITCHELL: Our policy was clearly defined, and we told the country we would build railways to open up agricultural lands. Last session we put through a great many lines, and so long as the lines are built it does not matter by whom they are introduced, but I do wish the House to understand that it was the policy of the late Government, and it was not set up by our friends when they were in power before. They had no policy at all. It is true they built the Jandakot railway and a little of the Collie to Narrogin line. If you bring the railway within two or three miles of Dongolocking the Government would be doing wisely; it is a magnificent area and is not all held by Mr. Moran. I have not the classification before me, and I cannot say whether this can be done with perfect fairness to the other parts. We have always had the greatest respect for the Advisory Board, and the Minister will find that the officers who comprise the board are capable, earnest, and honest men, willing to do their best, and quite incapable of being influenced even by a Minister.

The Premier: And you say to them, "If you do not do it as we want you to do it we will send you back again."

Mr. MITCHELL: That is not the case; but naturally if further information were required the Advisory Board would be sent back. The Advisory Board has made more than one report with regard

to routes, and there can be nothing said against that. Why object? You cannot have your information too complete. The very fact that the Premier has a line surveyed does not mean that he will build it over that route. A survey does not cost much.

The Minister for Works: I would like to have what you spent on the Wickepin-Merredin line.

Mr. MITCHELL: We built lines to serve the country, and it would have been a bad thing if we had made deviations to miss those people who had large holdings. The Minister might inform the House whether the people who are well to the east of the Wickepin-Merredin line are to wait much longer for the authorisation of a railway to serve them. I hope that the Minister will tell the House what he intends to do in this connection. No line has ever been brought down to the House with such little information.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): There are three sheets of information.

Mr. MITCHELL: The information is not of much more use than that on the Notice Paper. In connection with railways to open up the country, I would like the Minister to take into consideration the extension of the east and west lines in order that he may keep this Wickepin-Merredin route well to the east. Then I think that whilst on the scheme he should consider the question of a short line from Popanyinning to Stony Crossing to the north of Narrogin. I mention this matter because the people are looking to the Government scheme to bring them into closer railway communication. Some reference has been made to prices charged for the land. The system of valuing is fair, and is based on the reports of classification by the surveyors.

The Premier: No.

Mr. MITCHELL: I say yes. I have myself put prices up and put prices down, but the price is not the classification.

Mr. SPEAKER: Neither has it much application to the Bill.

Mr. MITCHELL: I think so, for the argument has been used that people have paid a high price for the land, and I am endeavouring to explain that these prices are fairly fixed, and that if the price is high it shows that the land is good and so justifies the railway. I wish to say that I heartily support the line, although it does not run quite where I would like to see it.

The Premier: Hear, hear.

Mr. MITCHELL: Well, why should I not support it? I have the right to support the line, and it is my pleasure and privilege to assist the Premier when he brings down a railway proposition of which I approve. The late Government have to-night come in for a good deal of criticism. I think it is a great pity that Ministers have so little to say for themselves. Never is an opportunity missed of having a fling at the late Government. We built railway lines, and a great many of them, and we proposed a good many railway lines for consideration, including practically this one. There is no justification for the attitude the Premier takes up on every possible occasion; he has never yet introduced a measure without having some criticism to level at those in office before him. Had we been in office to-day this line would have been brought down for consideration. I am glad to find that the policy of the past Government is to be continued, for, having regard to some of the election speeches, I was very much afraid that it would be so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): In a few words I want to make it clear to the Chamber the main reasons why the present route has been adopted. The Premier pointed to the promise given to a deputation which came from Wagin, in which Mr. Moran took a very prominent part, and there is already on record the reply given by the late Premier that if he could not get the Advisory Board to report in favour of that proposition he would get other reports until he secured the correct one. Other deputations waited on the Minister in connection with the same proposition, and I have here the record of one from the Dorakin Progress Association which

urged that the line advised by the Advisory Board should be constructed. The late Premier said "I am going to give you the line; I can promise you that. I cannot promise that I will give it you this session, but as soon as I have power to pass the Bill you shall have the railway." This is the self-same area for which he had promised Mr. Moran quite another route. After that deputation the late Premier wrote to the late Minister for Works, desiring him to prepare a Bill, and the Minister for Works replied—

Since receipt of your minute hereunder in regard to the construction of the railway from Wickepin eastward, you have, no doubt, noted the recommendation of the Advisory Board dated the 10th instant for the adoption of Yillimining Siding for the starting point. I presume you desire the consequent alteration to be made in your minute of the 8th.

In reply to this the late Premier wrote—

It is now for your engineers to either support the Advisory Board as to the starting point of this extension or otherwise. I shall be glad if you will give the matter consideration and, after inquiry, make a definite recommendation to Cabinet. I do not propose, however, to introduce a Bill during the present session of Parliament, as there are others more pressing.

Then another deputation waited upon the late Premier, and in answer to them he said—

I take it that what you are advocating to-day is that a line should be constructed from Yillimining or some other point on the Wickepin line, running in an easterly direction. All I can promise you this afternoon is that next session of Parliament I intend to introduce a Bill, if I am then leader of the House, for the construction of a railway eastward from Yillimining. Whether it will take a curve up north as suggested by the rough sketch of the Advisory Board or not I cannot say at the present moment. With regard to this I shall want further information.

The point is that the late Premier gave three promises on three different propositions to serve the same area and, to get out of the difficulty thus created he called for a departmental engineer to go over the land and make another recommendation. This was done, and on the 7th June, 1911, Mr. Stoddart submitted another report, which was adopted, and this is the line we are proposing, but which is meeting with the opposition of those who were then on the Ministerial benches. The report clearly demonstrates that they are responsible for the survey of the line, yet now they themselves condemn it, a clear indication that they had three or four propositions and made so many promises at the election that now, in order to give colour to the contention that they were sincere in their promises to Mr. Moran, they are opposing the proposition to-night. I contend that the Government have adopted the right route. It is practically surveyed now and the line will be constructed along that route.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Annual report of Zoological Gardens and Acclimatisation Committee.

By the Minister for Lands: Regulations and by-laws under Land Act, 1898.

House adjourned at 11.23 p.m.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Annual report Fremantle Harbour Trust; 2, Annual report Governors of High School; 3, Instructions issued by Government to Railway Advisory Board; 4, By-laws of the North Coolgardie and Jarrahdale Roads Boards; 5, Regulations and by-laws under Land Act, 1898.

BILL—DIVORCE AMENDMENT.

Select Committee's Report.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (North-East) brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into this Bill.

Report read.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY moved—

That the report, together with the evidence, be printed and taken into consideration at the next sitting of the House.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West): I wish to remind the leader of the House of the promise which he made to me that this would be the first order of the day to-morrow.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): I will make provision for that.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): I should like the mover of the motion to tell us whether this is a report of the whole committee as appointed by the House, or only a part of the committee.