

The **MINISTER FOR EDUCATION** (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [10.17]: I see no ground for the assumption that because the board has been appointed the work of the Commissioner is rendered lighter.

Hon. H. Stewart: I said, relieved of his responsibilities.

The **MINISTER FOR EDUCATION**: He is not relieved of his responsibilities. He has to make his classifications with the greatest care, and having made them has to defend them before the board.

Hon. J. Cornell: He has to exercise greater care than ever.

The **MINISTER FOR EDUCATION**: Neither his work nor his responsibilities are decreased in any way by the appointment of the board.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—CORONERS.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to make amendments Nos. 1, 2, and 4 requested by the Council, but had declined to make amendment No. 3 requested by the Council, now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

The **CHAIRMAN**: The amendment which the Council made and which the Assembly decline to agree to is as follows:—

Clause 39.—Add the following sub-clause, to stand as (3):—

When the Commissioner of Public Health certifies in writing that it is necessary in the interests of public health that a post mortem examination should be held on the dead body of any person, a coroner may, without holding an inquest, direct any medical practitioner to make a post mortem examination, and to report thereon to the Commissioner of Public Health, and it shall be lawful for, and the duty of, such medical practitioner to make a post mortem examination, and to report thereon accordingly.

The **MINISTER FOR EDUCATION**: I understand that the Legislative Assembly did not refuse to make this amendment because they considered it undesirable, but because they considered it improper in the Coroners Bill. Whilst regretting that the amendment has not been agreed to, I cannot see my way to contesting the attitude taken up by the Assembly. If we could have got

it through it would have been very valuable. I move—

That the Council's amendment be not pressed.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I am sorry the little infant I was the means of bringing to life has been strangled by another place, and that the coroner is not allowed to hold a post mortem upon it. I do not propose to dispute the ruling of the Chair in another place. I notice in the Press that certain remarks were made in connection with my attitude in instigating this particular clause. When remarks tending in the same direction were made during the passage of the Bill through the House, I protested vehemently against the medical profession being regarded as ghouls who wished to go body-snatching for the purpose of dissecting. I see by the Press that this opinion still prevails. I desire to repel that as the vile insinuation of vulgar minds. In all matters of public health the medical profession has set a high standard. There has been practically no progress made in public health but has been instigated by the medical profession and been most heartily supported by them, although detrimental very often to their personal interests.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not pressed.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 10.26 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 16th December, 1930.

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

BILL—TAX COLLECTION.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: Hon members are of course aware that for a very considerable time, in fact for several years, the matter of the duplication of State departments and Federal departments has been under discussion. It has been pointed out from time to time that a great deal of additional cost is imposed upon the taxpayers of this State by reason of such duplication, and from time to time efforts have been made to remove the cause of this additional, and, as it seems to me, quite unnecessary expenditure. By this Bill I am asking that authority be given to the Government to enter into an agreement with the Federal Government for the collection of certain of our taxes. If this arrangement is completed, it will mean that our State Taxation Department will disappear and that the Commonwealth Government will collect our taxes for us. I know, of course, that every member in this House would prefer to have the Commonwealth taxes collected by the State rather than have the State taxes collected by the Commonwealth. Probably my friends opposite, in common with all other Ministries for years past, have endeavoured to bring about that desirable position. However, in that respect this State has never got any "forrader." But to-day I am able to submit to the House an offer by the Commonwealth authorities to do the work of tax collection for us. At present there are two Taxation Departments, each fully staffed, each controlled by a Commissioner, each doing almost precisely similar work, and each requiring, in order that its assessments may be made, a separate set of returns by taxpayers. I should like the House to realise that the Government are acting rightly in introducing this Bill. I want it to be clearly understood that we are taking this step only because we feel that the people ought not any longer to incur the double expenditure, and also that they should not any longer be called upon to incur the trouble of preparing two sets of returns. By the way, the terms of the two sets of returns are not identical, which makes the work involved in preparing two returns very heavy. In addition to the duplication of Taxation Departments, there is of course the duplication of Electoral Departments. The Commonwealth Government are mainly responsible in this respect. We had a Taxation Department before they set up their Taxation Department, and we had an Electoral Department before they set up their Electoral Department. Similarly, we had a State Savings Bank before they set up the Commonwealth Savings Bank. In addition, we had here a Workers' Homes Board perfectly capable of erecting homes for all our returned soldiers, and yet the Commonwealth Government recently set up another organisation to do precisely the same work. It has to be remembered that all these departments are supported and paid for by the Australian people, and largely of course by the people of this State. Whilst by this Bill

I am asking for authority to save the country something over £20,000 through the amalgamation, I do think that we ought to protest against the establishment by the Commonwealth of departments that apparently are unnecessary—unnecessary because the State departments can so much more economically and, as I think, so much more effectively do the work.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What kind of protest do you suggest?

The PREMIER: I suggest that we send the hon. member interjecting to Melbourne as a delegation. Ministers have made protests in Melbourne often enough.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You yourself have been there often enough, and if the Commonwealth Government will not listen to you they will not listen to anybody else.

The PREMIER: Every Minister of this State who has visited Melbourne has made such a protest. The saving, if this agreement is concluded, will mean something over £20,000 a year. We are to pay the Commonwealth Government one-third of the present cost of collecting our taxes. The salaries and wages paid by the State Taxation Department amount to £29,719. The printing bill of that department amounts to £4,183 annually. Then, of course, the Taxation Department occupy premises which are worth something too. Thus, the saving which will result from the arrangement should amount to a little more than £20,000 a year. It has to be borne in mind, also, that the expenditure of our State Taxation Department would increase in the course of time. There is the further advantage that under the amalgamation the taxpayer will make only one land tax return and only one income tax return. The Bill provides that an agreement may be made. The agreement is completed and provides for all essentials—among other things that we shall still have our Commissioner of Taxation as a State officer. That is necessary because he must direct the methods for the collection of our taxes, and must be available to interpret our Acts, and to give advice to the State Government in connection with taxation, and to watch the interests of the State.

Hon. P. Collier: Will he be under Commonwealth control?

The PREMIER: No.

Hon. P. Collier: Still, they will be the dominating power.

The PREMIER: Yes, but so far as our taxes are concerned our Commissioner will be responsible for assessment and collection through the Federal officers. He will be absolutely free from interference and control by the Federal Commissioner. To my mind, that is not only a possible arrangement but a right arrangement, because we cannot let the Federal officers decide what shall be done in connection with the collection of our State taxes.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a right arrangement, but I fear the State Commissioner will be controlled by the other party.

Hon. T. Walker: Swamped by the other party!

The PREMIER: That matter will be provided for in the agreement. In fact, it is provided for in the agreement as drafted. I want hon. members to realise that the agreement which accompanies the Bill is not necessarily final, but may be varied. It is an agreement which has been submitted to us by the Commonwealth authorities, and, in the main, it is the agreement which will be approved.

Hon. P. Collier: Have you accepted this agreement?

The PREMIER: It has been submitted to us by the Commonwealth as the result of negotiations and consultations here with the Federal Chief Commissioner of Taxation, Mr. Ewing. We have had an intimation that the agreement has been generally approved, but may be varied in some slight particulars. However, it is, in the main, the agreement that will be signed. The agreement makes special reference to "the respective Sovereign Powers, to wit the Commonwealth and the State," thus preserving the rights of the State.

Hon. P. Collier: The Commonwealth's troubles about the sovereign rights of the State!

The PREMIER: The Federal Government have a great respect for the sovereign rights of the State. I understand that fact has recently been emphasised in London by Senator Millen. The interests of the State staff to be taken over by the Commonwealth will be fully protected. It is necessary that the State staff should be taken over, and that their interests should be protected in the same way as the interests of other officers transferred from a State to the Commonwealth have been safeguarded.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Does the protection apply to the temporary employees?

The PREMIER: I do not know that the temporary employees have any very great measure of protection now.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They have a moral claim to protection, though.

The PREMIER: I know they have; but, of course, a temporary employee who has been in the department for five years has the right to be made a permanent officer.

Mr. O'Loughlen. It is pretty hard on a man who has been there 4½ years.

The PREMIER: Such a man will still be retained in the State service, because he must be a pretty good man to have been kept for so long. The agreement does not specially provide for temporary hands. As a rule temporary officers are there for only a short time. However, I will see to it that their interests are not prejudiced, because there will be room for them in the ordinary State Government departments if they are not taken over. The proposal is a simple one. It is that the Federal Government should do our work at one-third of the present cost.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is the first step towards unification.

The PREMIER: I do not know that it is, because, of course, we do work for the Fed-

eral Government in many ways. If hon. members think it is the first step towards unification, they will vote against the Bill. But I do not know that we are entitled to refuse to have work done for us at one-third of the present cost.

Hon. P. Collier: But consider what we are giving away!

The PREMIER: Neither do I think we can expect our taxpayers to continue to submit two taxation returns. Anyway, we cannot lightly turn down this proposal. I am absolutely against unification and just as whole-heartedly opposed to the duplication of departments.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This is the way in which the Commonwealth are bringing about unification.

The PREMIER: We would be very pleased to-morrow to take on several of the Commonwealth departments.

The Minister for Works: We could take on the lot, and do the work better than they are doing it.

The PREMIER: I do not know that we could do it better, but we could do it just as well. I am not going to say anything against the Federal Commissioner of Taxation. He is a first-class man.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, he is all right.

The PREMIER: That is the position. This offer to do the work has been made, and it was my duty to bring the offer before the House. I have done so.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The first thing the Federal Government did was to take our commissioner from the State service.

The PREMIER: They have taken many of our good officers.

Hon. P. Collier: And now they are trying to take some of our leading members, to deprive us of the best talent we had here.

The PREMIER: I advise the House to very seriously consider before refusing to have this work done at the price. It means a very considerable saving.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I do not think you are too keen on it.

The PREMIER: I am keen on saving £20,000 per annum, and I am keen on saving the taxpayer the annoyance of having to furnish two returns.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a proper subject for discussion in the House.

The PREMIER: Yes, and it is an easy matter to discuss. Everybody can understand that the Federal Government have offered to do the work for us, and that it will close up our State Taxation Department. It does not mean that we cannot get out of this agreement if we wish to.

Mr. Johnston: On six months' notice.

The PREMIER: I do not know that it would be necessary to give notice at all. We can simply revert to the old system. Whoever may be responsible for this system of imposing an additional charge on the people, it is absolutely wrong. On the other hand, it is right that we should endeavour

to make a saving of £20,000. Of course, the duplication of the Taxation Department was nothing to the opening of the Commonwealth Savings Bank. That was a dastardly act. This is not on the same lines, for here we can see exactly what we are losing.

Mr. Pilkington: There is no competition here.

The PREMIER: No, but one cannot tell what the effect of the second Savings Bank has been.

Mr. Gardiner: Yes, you can.

The PREMIER: Not exactly. In that case we are in competition with the Commonwealth Savings Bank.

Mr. Gardiner: They offer you very good terms for your Savings Bank, if only you would look into them.

The PREMIER: We are in competition with the bank, and the result of that competition means a higher rate for money and a very considerable cost all over the State. The Commonwealth Savings Bank have a big pull in having the post offices. Any bank which has the post offices throughout the State must have a big pull over another bank which has to operate through agencies and stores. However, I have brought this proposal to the House, and I hope the House will favourably consider it. Had I thought it was a step towards unification I would not have brought down the measure. I do not think it is a step towards unification.

Mr. Johnston: It is a step towards economy.

The PREMIER: I am alive to the fact that representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament are anxious for unification. Senator Millen has been talking very freely in London about the position. Only the other day he said that, as a result of the work done by the Federal Government during the war, the people of Australia would demand that the Federal Government should be given much more extensive powers.

Hon. T. Walker: He is just voicing what has been aimed at for years.

The PREMIER: I do not believe a word of it. Nothing will convince me that the people of Australia wish it. I know that many members of the Federal Parliament wish it, and that the Federal Government probably wish it, but I hope we shall never agree to it.

Hon. T. Walker: The plutocrats of the East wish it.

The PREMIER: Of course, they would like to swallow us altogether. However, I cannot see that there is any danger of assisting unification by passing the Bill.

Hon. T. Walker: It is another shadow falling on us.

The PREMIER: Very well, I cannot see that, but I can see that we have no right to submit the taxpayers to unnecessary expense.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the same thing would apply wherever the Federal and State Governments have similar departments.

Hon. T. Walker: Yes, until there would be no need for the State Government at all.

The PREMIER: I do not think so. Here is a special duty which is very easily defined and which is well away from the ordinary departmental work of the Government.

Hon. T. Walker: There is a hoof behind it.

The PREMIER: No, it is not so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Did they in the negotiations give you a chance to take on the work of both departments?

The PREMIER: No, they would not agree to that. Had they been agreeable we should have been doing the work long ago. They would never have had to establish their department had they been prepared to let us do the work for them. They are not prepared to sacrifice anything in the interests of economy, except that they are willing to do our work very cheaply.

Mr. Maley: That is effecting economy.

The PREMIER: It will be economy for us.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Hand over to them the whole of the departments, and it will be still greater economy.

The PREMIER: No, that would be no economy. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

BILL—PIAWANING NORTHWARDS RAILWAY.

First Reading.

On motion by the Minister for Works, Bill introduced and read a first time.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [5.57] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is for an extension of the Belgart line. At present the railway ends at Piawaning, in what I have heard described as a sand plain, and it is considered desirable that the line should be extended northwards, passing through land of value. The proposal, as hon. members will see from the plans, is to extend the line 24 miles with the ultimate objective of curving round eastwards and joining up with the Wongan-Hills railway. Provision is made for a deviation of five miles on either side. It is proposed to use standard 45lb. rails on sleepers 8in. by 4in. and 6ft. 6in. in length. The ruling grade is one in 60. The estimated cost of the line is £97,500, and the cost of water supply £10,000. Since that estimate was got out some time ago, the wages scale has advanced considerably, and hon. members must bear in mind that when the work is entered upon it is extremely probable that the rates given will be exceeded. The Midland railway is 10 miles from what is termed the area of influence of this proposed railway. The area of influence is a

10-mile line from the different parts of the railway proposed, and the Midland railway is 10 miles further on. Approximately this railway will be 20 miles distant from the Midland line on the west side. On the east side there is the Wongan Hills line, and the distance from the proposed railway is from 20 to 25 miles, varying as the Wongan Hills lines meanders around the country. Hon. members will be interested to know what the railway is going to do.

Mr. Brown: It will meander round the country, too.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The line will not meander; it is a straight line until it gets a curve. It goes straight and then follows a curve of a rhomboid. The land to be served consists of 317,000 acres, of which there has been selected 50,000 acres of Crown land. There has been selected or purchased from the Midland railway 161,000 acres, and there still remains under the influence of the Midland railway 106,000 acres, making a total of 317,000 acres. Of this land it is stated that at least one-third is what is called first class land. The advisory board's report dealing with this particular area was presented to Parliament on the 23rd September last, and in order that hon. members may feel that they have all the cards laid on the table, I wish to say that there is a company called the New Zealand Land Company—I think the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) knows more about the company than I do—who are interested in the area. That company are the biggest owners of land in that locality, the area being set down at 52,000 acres. Of this it is said that 35,000 acres is first class land, but it is said to relate that only 1,500 acres of it has been cleared. The reason, it is said, is on account of the distance from a railway. It is contended that it would be madness to proceed with clearing and cultivation unless there was an assurance of the construction of the railway, so that produce might be carried at a reasonable rate.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How many farmers are there who have had that assurance?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no doubt that the member for Irwin has all the statistics at his fingers' ends and will give them to the hon. member. It may be said that this railway will really serve the Midland railway people more than it will serve the Government land. That is so, so far as land and possible settlement are concerned. I would point out, however, that even those who settle on the Midland Company's land are still Western Australian settlers and they have a full right to consideration from the Government and from Parliament.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No one has ever suggested otherwise.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The existing line ends at Piawaning. The proposed line will go on for 24 miles. The working railways express the hope that the line will be constructed as soon as funds are

available and that it will be carried on to join the Wongan Hills line. This will give quicker transit and will reduce the cost of working and result in more general efficiency. The advisory board's report dated the 22nd June states, amongst other things—

Having given consideration to both routes, it is found that the route suggested by the Roundhill settlers will best serve the needs of existing settlement, but that a larger area of land now without reasonable railway communication will be served by a line approximately midway between the existing railway lines. We beg to recommend that, when an extension northwards from Piawaning is to be undertaken (as far as engineering requirements will permit), such extension follow the routes approximately midway between the existing lines with a view to its later extension north-easterly through the Duckling agricultural area to some point of junction with the Wongan Hills railway. The present board enforces this recommendation and on the accompanying plan is shown the route, which appears to be the best from an engineering point of view. The terminus for a time should be about 25 miles from Piawaning.

With regard to the land, after giving figures, the advisory board state—

The board considers the area lying to the east of a line from Walebing to Berkshire Valley is a particularly fine stretch of country, and that the extension of the line 25 miles from Piawaning should result in greatly increased production and profitable freight to the Government railways.

They say further—

The board recommends that in the event of the Government favourably viewing the extension recommended, that the survey be put in hand as early as possible and station sites fixed, in order that feeder roads may be surveyed in the most suitable positions before surveys of the unsubdivided lands are made. The early choosing of these feeder roads when they pass through undeveloped or partially developed country will enable owners to arrange their improvements to suit the roads and reduce compensation for improvements to a minimum.

With regard to making roads as feeders to the railway, that is only common sense and must appeal to every hon. member. In connection with the matter, the Engineer-in-Chief has simply given particulars with regard to the cost and how the line should be constructed. The estimate which I gave to the House a few minutes ago was £97,500 for the construction and £7,000 for water supply. Owing to the increased cost of labour and material, the Engineer-in-Chief states that an additional cost of 25 per cent. must be added to the estimate, which was made only in June of this year. I desire to emphasise that very strongly because the increased cost will apply not only to that work but to

other works which are being and will be carried out by the various departments. Hon. members may hear all manner of criticism about the cost of Government jobs. Let them make inquiries from those who are carrying out similar works in a private capacity and they will find that the Engineer-in-Chief has been moderate in his estimate of 25 per cent. The building trade estimates which were made only two months ago on prices ruling then are absolutely lost compared with the prices which exist to-day. I think it only right to emphasise this point. It may be considered that I have reflected in some way against the construction of the proposed railway, but that is not my desire. My object is to explain to members, and perhaps through the medium of the Press to the general public, exactly what has taken place within the short space of four or five months in connection with engineering and architectural costs. These costs, too, may advance even more. I do not know that I can give much more information. I do not know how many farmers are on the area, how many schools or how many children are there.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is necessary that we should know how many settlers have been promised railway facilities and have not had them.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If we are satisfied that the quality of the land is good, if it is as it has been represented by the advisory board, we are justified in asking, when we know the development of this land has been prevented by physical difficulties in the way of carting, whether we should continue to allow this land to be locked up and not be dealt with in any shape or form until someone comes along full of hope and with pockets full of money. My idea is that if we are justified in building railways, we have not only to take into consideration those people who are already settled, and what the land may be, but also those areas which are likely to lead to settlement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What about the settlers who have already waited years for railways?

Mr. Gardiner: We took 33 members through that country to show them where the settlers were and they were satisfied that they did not have the ordinary conveniences that other people were getting.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know how many settlers are there, but I want to impress this fact on members, that even if there are only a few settlers there, if the land is good, and is capable of being cultivated and brought into production, transport facilities should be given, and we are not justified in holding over those facilities which are required to open up the land until more people settle on it, and in the meantime allow those who are there to go through the hardships of having to cart their produce 20 or 25 miles. The money

which benefits the State is not only the money raised by revenue or by loan, but it is that which belongs to the man who pioneers, and from my point of view it is the duty of the Government not only to assist such people, but so far as it lies in their power to prevent those people expending their money in a way that cannot be economical. If people have to cart these long distances, it will either hinder production or bleed the producer white. If the Government can remedy these things and as a result people can be settled happily, comfortably and prosperously on the land, it is the duty of the Government to do so. I will leave the Bill to the mercy of hon. members and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [5.15]: I have pleasure in seconding the motion for the second reading of this Bill. It is possible that members have a greater knowledge of the country to be tapped by this line than they have of any other portion of the State. The Bolgart Railway Bill was passed in 1907 to extend the railway from Newcastle to Bolgart, a distance of about 23 miles. It was never intended when the Bill was introduced that the railway should stop at Bolgart, but it was always intended to continue it north in order to open up the country lying in that direction. In 1912 a further extension of the railway was proposed in a Bill before the House by the Seaddan Government, and introduced by the then Minister for Works, Mr. W. D. Johnson. That Bill passed through this House without any discussion the day before Parliament rose—that was on the 12th December, 1912—and was only moved by the Minister for Works and supported by myself. It passed through Committee without any voice being raised against it, this House being fully aware of the importance of the extension. At the time, the Government were not prepared to authorise the construction of a railway for a greater distance than 31 miles. Under that Bill authority was given to extend the line to a place called Piawaning. It is 31 miles from Bolgart to Piawaning. Piawaning is a point due west from the Wongan Hills railway station, and at a point equi-distant between the Midland railway and the Wongan-Mullewa line, that is to say, there are 20 miles on each side. A little while after that, when the member for North-East Fremantle was Minister for Works, a Bill was brought in to extend the railway a further distance of four miles. That was done because the point at which the railway ended under the previous Bill was not a suitable place for a terminus. The settlers in the country that required to be opened up felt that the railway was creeping a little nearer. From 1912 every Premier has been requested by deputation from the settlers to extend the railway further north into that

area. On every occasion most favourable replies were given, but it was stated that the Government, though feeling justified in constructing the railway, at that time were not in a position to do so.

Hon. P. Collier: All Governments say the same.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: In 1915 the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) and I took a party of 33 members of Parliament round that district.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the way to catch them.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: Hon. members will recollect that on that occasion the leader of the Opposition had a race on horseback with the then Premier, the present Minister for Mines.

Hon. P. Collier: I remember that the horse halted with me.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is that going to cost the country £140,000?

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: We thought it was only right that members should see for themselves what the country was like. Those who went on that expedition were fully impressed with the country and satisfied that the construction of the railway would be justified.

Hon. P. Collier: Does this railway serve any of the country we saw then?

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: It goes right through it.

Hon. P. Collier: I thought we were on the Midland railway land.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: It was Midland railway land, but is not so now. It belongs to citizens of the State; not to the company. It is held and occupied by settlers who bought it from the Midland railway company. This is one of the best patches of land for mixed farming in Western Australia. The results from the district have been excellent. The hon. member asked how many settlers there were in the vicinity. The country is all settled up to a point north of Piawaning. The question, however, is how to get there. Piawaning is on a sand plain. It is not advisable to leave the railway there, but it is well to carry it on to country which will be served and which is capable of great production. This area is held generally by people who are in a position to put money into it if they only had better railway facilities. At present they have to cart wheat 25 miles. On the occasion when members of Parliament made their visit, on one property there were 2,000 acres of wheat growing and all that had to be carted 25 miles. That is enterprise. The country cannot be left without railway communication if the State is to get the best out of it. The people cannot be expected to spend their money there unless they can do so profitably to themselves.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why should we build up their hopes falsely, knowing well there is no possible chance of their getting the line for some years?

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: There is no ground for such a remark as that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: On account of the railways already authorised.

Hon. T. Walker: We must take them in their order.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: Let the people know that Parliament is satisfied that the country should have a railway.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not necessary.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: And that when the State is in a position to do so, the line will be built.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not honest for Parliament to pass Railway Bills when the lines cannot be constructed for years to come.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: That has been done over and over again. We want to encourage the people there to open up the country, and to feel that they will have railway communication as soon as the State can give it to them. It may be urged that this is Midland railway country. I am sure the members of the Opposition will not use that argument. When these Bills were before the House previously they took a broad-minded view of the position.

Mr. Johnston: Do the Midland railway company own much of this land?

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: Most of it is in private hands. It is not the cost of the land which matters so much. It is the people who go on the land who make it valuable to the State. The price of our land is 15s. per acre at the most, which is a mere bagatelle, and much of it has been sold by the Government at a considerably lower price. It is the people who produce who benefit the State. That is what we want to see in this country, and that is why it is proposed to construct this railway. The Advisory Board has reported twice on the proposal, and on each occasion in most glowing terms. The late Surveyor General, Mr. Johnston, informed me that it was one of the finest pieces of country in Western Australia. If we can put a railway into it I am sure the State would derive great benefit. The people there were told years ago that the Government would build a line at the earliest possible moment.

Hon. P. Collier: Other parts of the State are being told the same thing, and in some instances the construction was authorised 10 years ago.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: That may be so. The best country is now occupied and I suppose there will be something like 25,000 bags of wheat from that locality. There are now about 25,000 sheep pastured on it. Country of that description responds to improvement. Its carrying capacity can be very much improved by clearing and cultivation. The railway through this district would give every encouragement to the people to improve their holdings and make three blades of grass grow where one grew before, as we

have heard, and carry perhaps 10 sheep where one was carried before. Crops in this district have been known to yield up to 25 bushels to the acre. I know of one crop which has reached as high as 30 bushels to the acre. I do not say that the whole crop will average that, but portions are yielding 30 bushels to the acre. The country has an excellent rainfall. No such thing as a drought is known there, and water can be secured with facility. As the member for Irwin, when land salesman for the Midland Railway Company, used to tell us, it is splendid country for making tanks and the ground will hold like a bottle. The hon. member was quite right. It is grand country for tank sinking, and there is everything in the country which will add to the wealth of the community if the settlers are only given those facilities for carrying on production which is so necessary for the State. I trust that the Bill will be received with approbation. It is not a Bill to authorise the construction of a railway at once, but merely to make it lawful to construct the railway northwards for about 24 miles from Piawaning to tap some of the finest country in the State. If the settlers in this locality are now informed that the Government have the power to build the railway when the money is available, it will put fresh heart into them and induce them to spend more on their holdings in readiness to produce to the utmost when the railway is provided. I hope the Bill will be supported as one worthy of consideration; it will benefit not only the people whom it will serve but the State as a whole.

Mr. GARDINER (Irwin) [5-32]: I have some slight diffidence in speaking on this Bill because, as the Minister when moving the second reading, clearly put it, I am attorney for one of the largest holders of land there, and I rather pride myself that in this House never once have I spoken or voted on any measure in which I have been directly or indirectly interested.

The Minister for Works: Did I say that?

Mr. GARDINER: I feel, however, that my constituents have a right to expect my voice to be raised on all questions which appertain to the prosperity of the district. I have two regrets that there is a necessity to construct this line. One is that an insane Parliament—I shall never call it a sane Parliament—turned down the proposition to buy the whole of the Midland concession for a million and a-half sterling. It would have obviated the necessity for constructing the Wongan Hills line, and would have given the State a wonderfully good asset. This is one regret. My other regret is that until the Scaddan Government came into office every obstacle was placed in the way of the Midland Company putting out spur lines. I tell the House quite candidly that if they had been allowed to put out spur lines to develop their own country, that country would have been very much better served than it is to-day, and they could have given the convenience of this line for a distance of 15 instead of 25 miles. The present line ends in a sandplain; it will not pay axle grease as it is. The extension of this line in my estimation—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They did not say that when they wanted the line built.

Mr. GARDINER: They never do; the hon. member knows that. The line has a dead end in the sandplain, with no convenience whatever, and with no settlers worth talking about north, east, or west of it. We took 33 members through that district, and I think we established a record by preferring no request whatever to them. We told them to look at the country for themselves. We treated them well. I remember what the then Premier said when he got outback and saw the class of settler who have to cart their produce 15 to 25 miles to a railway. He said, "There is to be no more of this dog-in-the-manger policy. If the Midland railway cannot give you facilities to get your produce away, we shall."

Mr. Davies: How long ago was that?

Mr. GARDINER: About five years. The Midland Railway Company are going to protest pretty strongly over this Bill, because it is proposed to run the line through their country and to take the traffic that ought to legitimately belong to the Midland line. Times without number I asked various Ministers to be allowed to put in spur lines, and similar requests were preferred in London. The Midland Railway Company could not raise the money to-day to put in a mile of railway, but this is no reason why the settlers situated 15 to 25 miles from a railway should be without those conveniences which both Governments have said should be not more than 12½ miles distant. It will come as a shock and a surprise to this House to know that not £10,000 of loan money spent in Western Australia has been spent in that 277 miles of Midland country. The only money that has been expended there was on a bore to tap the sub-artesian water, which would have been of benefit to the whole of the State. This is the only money which has been spent there, and I venture to say that the taxation paid by the Midland Company and its settlers doubles the cost of any other convenience they receive either from the State Government or from the Commonwealth. It has become a recognised saying in that district, "We are aliens; we do not exist because we bought land from the Midland Railway Company, and the only time we are treated as citizens is when you want to tax us." I say without the slightest hesitation that the men this railway would benefit are the sturdiest settlers and the most independent in Western Australia. We in our district do not go crying to the Government for assistance; we try to do things ourselves. But is it fair that these people who are citizens and a good class of citizen, simply because they do not always go crying to the Government for assistance, should be left without railway communication, without the right to develop their land profitably and get their produce to market? The members who made the trip to which I refer will remember that they had lunch at Cranmore Park. Before that they were at the school at Berkshire Valley. The Berkshire Valley people are 14 to 15 miles away; the Craamore Park people, where members drove past 2,000 acres of crop, are 25 miles away, and the property of which I am the attorney is 30 miles away from the railway.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How far are they from the Wongan Hills line?

Mr. GARDINER: I should say they are quite 20 miles from the Wongan Hills line.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: They are 25 miles away.

Mr. GARDINER: It would cost a mint of money to provide roads to cart to Wongan Hills. These people pay for the making of their roads, but when they have to cart their produce so far every farmer knows that it is impossible to carry on profitably. So far did I recognise this that when I put the price on the Midland land, I adopted grazing prices as the value for land beyond 12½ miles from the railway. I tried to prevent the Welsh settlement from going there. I told these people that it was too far away for farmers to carry on successfully.

Mr. Davies: You cannot beat a Welshman.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What about a Cornishman?

Mr. GARDINER: I would back Cornwall any time.

Hon. P. Collier: I am a bit suspicious about them both.

Mr. GARDINER: These people came from the Argentine and had funds in the Argentine banks. Some of them are going back now to try to get their money; they have not been able to collect it here. I have been candid with these people and have told them that it is idle to ask for a promise of a railway, owing to the present financial condition of the State. They said, "Give us a promise and let us get a survey and we will hold on in the same desperate hope that we have held on for years." I hear of railways being wanted here and there. I realise that they cannot be constructed for years and the House should realise this also. I do not want the House to deny to these settlers, merely because they are settled on Midland land, the right to which every citizen is entitled, more especially as the Government have not spent a penny of its loan money in this district. The Midland Railway Company, with all their faults, have created a State within this State, at no expense whatever to Western Australia. If anyone says "The State gave you the land" my reply is, "Very well, you got the railway." The railway could not be built to-day for a million and a-half of money, and we got about two million acres of land for that million and a-half of money, so nothing can be said on that score. This is the only likely part of that area whence there will be a clamour for a railway, and when citizens of the State, taxable propositions, ask for the extension of a railway from a dead-end where it is of no earthly use to give them reasonable facilities, let us say that when the time is opportune and when we have the money to construct it we shall give them the same facilities as other citizens enjoy to-day. I am warm on this subject because I have it at heart, and not from any personal interest. Personally it will not do me one atom of good. These constituents, mostly those of the member for Moore, contend, and rightly so, that they have not the facilities or the conveniences to which they are entitled. They have the land and the rainfall, and everything which could make a prosperous settlement, but it is utterly impossible for them to make progress until they get railway conveniences. I shall be candid and admit that, as the Bill suggests, there is some Midland land unoccupied to the north of this. I think that within 10 or 15 miles of the railway we

would be able to get 20 farms out of it, but there is a large area of sandplain. Members who made the trip went through 90 miles of this country and I took good care that they did not see a poor acre. This is the class of land which runs right up to the railway north from Piawaning. I do not expect that any man has more strongly advocated agricultural lines than have I. Not even the member for Kanowna has been a stronger advocate of the Esperance line, but merely because I helped other members, I do not wish them to help me or my constituents, or Sir Henry Lefroy's constituents, to get this railway. If the line will not stand on its own basis, I ask that the sanction of the House be extended to the proposition as a tardy act of justice towards these settlers who could have had the railway long ago had the Government allowed the Midland Company to construct the line when they could have got the money.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5-46]: I hope that the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) is not of the opinion that the House would refuse to consider a railway because it has to be constructed over a portion of the Midland Railway Company's land. We recognise that the land is portion of Western Australia the same as any other part of the State. We recognise that the land was granted to the Midland Railway Company on the understanding that they constructed the railway. That railway has been constructed. It is not a matter of whether it is the Midland Railway Company's land or State land, which will be opened up by this line. Undoubtedly a portion of the land which will be served by the line is within the Midland Company's territory, but that is not the point. The point which is of interest to members is whether we shall keep on year after year building up false hopes in the hearts of the settlers. The point is as to whether we shall continue to bring down railway Bills when we know that there is no possibility for years to come, of these lines being constructed. We are asked to pass railway Bills like this to encourage people to go into these areas and settle there in the hope that at an early date the railway will be built, although we know there is no hope of it for years to come.

Mr. Gardiner: There are settlers there already.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But there are some large areas which are not settled yet.

Mr. Gardiner: Not to any considerable extent.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister has already indicated that there are large areas belonging to the Midland Railway Company which can be opened up and the reports in "Hansard" when the railway Bill was before the House in 1912, when 30 odd miles were authorised, and also the Bill which was passed in 1914, indicate that there were large areas to be opened up.

The Minister for Works: I said that this railway was to serve good land which was settled.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: And there is a lot unsettled and this Bill will encourage other people to go there because the railway has been passed by Parliament. It is not a question of the railway itself. No member sitting in opposition would be willing to vote against the

construction of a railway no matter to what part of the State it was to go, so long as we knew that the railway could be constructed within a reasonable time. We are doing wrong in carrying a Bill such as this knowing that it is impossible to give effect to the measure for years to come. There are other railways which have been authorised, and let us consider the position. There is the Esperance railway which was agreed to five or six years ago. There is the Busselton - Margaret River railway agreed to over five years ago. There is the extension of the Kondinin-Merredin line, which was carried some time ago, and the Nyabing-Pingrup extension which was passed in 1915. That is the next line to be built after the Esperance railway. Then there was another line which we agreed to last year, namely, the Wyalcatchem-Mt. Marshall extension.

Mr. Johnston: And there is the Dwarda-Narrogin extension which was agreed to in 1914.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have all these lines authorised by Parliament. No doubt the war has delayed the construction of these lines, but the money market in all probability will delay the construction of these lines for a still greater period. In addition to that, the increased cost of materials and goods will adversely affect the position. To pass another Bill for a further railway extension when we know that it will not be possible to do anything with it for years to come, is entirely wrong. The passage of the Bill will lead people to think they will have the railway there at an early date but members should realise that there is no possibility of it being constructed within the next eight or nine years. This system is wrong and it is time that we should take some cognisance of that fact and deal fairly with the people settled in the country districts. I have no objection to the line whatever but if there is no possibility of it being constructed within a reasonable time, it is wrong for the House to pass the measure.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move -

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion declared carried.

The Minister for Works: I called for a division.

Mr. O'Loughlen: No, you did not.

The Premier: Yes, he did.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is different when he calls out in ordinary cases.

The Minister for Works: I called loudly.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry I did not hear the Minister. I did not think that he called for a division.

Division taken with the following result:--

Ayes	9
Noes	19

Majority against	10
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AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Brown	Mr. Walker
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Holman	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Davies	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Duff	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Durack	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Gardner	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. George	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Hardwick
Sir H. B. Lefroy	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5-54]: I am at a loss to understand why the Government are so anxious to force this Bill through at this stage.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is an election coming on.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We have been sitting here since August last. There have been plenty of opportunities of introducing the Bill at an earlier date if it was so urgent, and having regard to the Notice Paper, seeing that there are only one or two matters to be dealt with, we should have had an opportunity of looking into it. The Bill has only been brought before our notice to-day. This is the first we have heard of this matter of constructing a line from Piawaning to somewhere else. I doubt whether two-thirds of the members have ever heard of Piawaning before. For my part, I have not heard of it. The Minister brought a number of plans relating to the railway and laid them on the Table. He might just as well have left them at his office.

The Minister for Works: The report has been on the Table for some time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that, but members cannot go through all the reports which are laid on the Table. When business comes before the House, members then avail themselves of the opportunity of perusing reports bearing on the subject. When the Bill was brought down to-day, if the debate had been adjourned, one would have had a chance of looking up the papers dealing with the railway. It is useless to endeavour to look up plans and reports when a Bill is under discussion. We are now asked to vote for the construction of a railway which will cost £140,000 and we are not even permitted 24 hours in order to examine the project in which so large a sum is involved. It is no wonder that this State is in such a parlous condition financially, when matters involving so large a sum of money are not considered worthy of consideration. We are asked to pass this measure without a moment's notice. We have been spending day after day discussing matters that do not mean a pound to this State. When matters affecting the finances are before us, we are asked to swallow them holus bolus. The Minister in introducing the Bill stated in reply to an interjection that he did not know how many settlers were to be served by the railway. Apparently it is of no importance as to how many settlers it is intended to serve. We are asked to commit this State to an expenditure of £140,000 and yet the Minister does not know how many people are in the district! No member of this House, except those with a personal knowledge of the district, can possibly know. We have been given no information by the Minister. The

hon. gentleman does not know where the railway ends, and he does not know how many settlers it will serve. But, nevertheless, he urges us to pass the Bill. It is no wonder that this country finds itself in financial difficulties. I protest against being forced to consider a matter of this kind without having an opportunity of making myself conversant with the information that is available.

The Minister for Works: Oh, pass the second reading!

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. When we pass the second reading we pass the Bill. The Committee work on such a measure as this is only formal, and does not count at all. I want to have a look where the line is going, and an opportunity of judging of the area to be served. Some members may take their work in such a light fashion that they are not concerned as to whom this proposed line will serve, but I want such information before I agree to a proposition involving such heavy expenditure. I say I should not be doing my duty by the State unless I insisted on obtaining the fullest information.

Mr. Teesdale: What about the 33 members of Parliament who went there?

Hon. P. COLLIER: They went out in the morning, and made a motor tour, and returned the same evening. Of course they gathered a lot of information! I was one of those 33 members.

Mr. Teesdale: I was thinking of that: and you promised the settlers the railway.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No.

Mr. Teesdale: Well, Johnson did!

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Johnson was not there.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Mr. Johnson was not of the party, and in any case I hope the hon. member does not propose to commit me to anything and everything that was promised by one who happened to be a colleague of mine in years gone by.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Especially Johnson!

Hon. P. COLLIER: Does the member for Roebourne think that a peregrinating party of politicians—

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: The leader of the Opposition does not seem to have a very high opinion of politicians.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, I have; but not so high an opinion as to lead me to believe that in the course of a few hours' motor ride politicians can judge of the capabilities of a district and of its need, or otherwise, for a railway.

Mr. Teesdale: That is how you came to give us that curse the Port Hedland line, as the result of a hurried peregrination!

Hon. P. COLLIER: I want to avoid a repetition of what occurred on that occasion. I was not a member of the party to which the hon. member refers, but I have no doubt that the railway in question would not have been constructed but for that party. What do two-thirds of the members of this House know regarding the merits of the railway now proposed? Nothing whatever. There are, however, some things that all members know, and they are these: We do know, as the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has said, that this Parliament is already committed to the construction of a number of railways. Even so far back as six years ago, various railways had been authorised for different parts of the

State. Those railways are not yet constructed. Their construction is not even in sight. There are other districts for which no railway Bills have yet been passed, but which have been asking for railway communication for the period of a generation, and have been promised lines. But nothing has been done in those cases. Apart from railways already authorised but not yet constructed, there are places like Yorkkrakine. Yorkkrakine has been settled for the past 12 years or more. The Yorkkrakine people are in a somewhat similar position to those whom it is proposed to serve by this Piawaning railway; that is to say, they find themselves between two stools, between two existing lines each of which is further from them than what is considered to be fair carting distance. What is going to be done for Yorkkrakine settlers? Then there is the district west of Merredin, through which a number of members of Parliament flew in a motor car. During a stoppage of 20 minutes those members met a deputation, and promised them a railway. Thereupon the members came back to Parliament House and put through a Bill for the construction of that railway. But that railway is not yet in sight.

The Premier: Yes, it is. We are beginning it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is wrong for men holding the responsible position of members of Parliament to fool the people by passing such railway Bills while knowing perfectly well that there is not the slightest possibility of the railways being constructed for years to come. That is not a policy which we should pursue.

The Premier: Who can say how soon railway material will become cheaper?

Mr. O'Loughlen: It will not be cheaper before next Parliament, any way.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The cost of material will follow the price of money, and the Premier showed what he thinks the price of money will be in asking the House, as he did yesterday, for authority to increase the rate of interest that may be paid for the money which he proposes to borrow. This proposed Piawaning railway, the Minister for Works tells us, will cost 25 per cent. above the estimate which was made in June last. In six months the estimated cost has gone up 25 per cent., which means that for 24 short miles of railway we shall have to pay nearly £140,000. We know that our present financial difficulties are due mainly, if not entirely, to the policy of railway construction which has been pursued in this State. Last year's deficit on our railways amounted in round figures to £400,000. We have one mile of railway for every 87 inhabitants of this country. Is it any wonder that our railway system is not paying when there are only 87 persons, men, women, and children, to provide traffic for each mile of railway?

Mr. Johnston: And 40 per cent. of the population are in the metropolitan area.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, that is the point. Those 40 per cent. are scarcely using the railways at all, except for passenger traffic. We are over-built in the matter of railways proportionately to our population in a greater degree—this may be news to hon. members—than any other country in the world.

The Premier: But the goldfields of this State take up a tremendous area.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not talking about area. I am talking about population. There is not another country in the world that has anything like the same railway mileage to population as Western Australia has. Is it any wonder that our railway system incurs losses? And here, instead of adopting a policy which will fill up all those unoccupied lands that are served by existing railways, we propose to stretch out our railway system still further into new territory. Our railways are not paying because they run for scores of miles, and even for hundreds of miles, through country that is very sparsely populated.

The Premier: The country between Southern Cross and Menzies cannot be settled.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But there are other areas served by railways which can be settled. The policy of the country should be—and I venture to say that financial stringency will compel the adoption of such a policy—to cease adding to our burdens by railway construction and to force into production the large areas of land which are already served by railways but are lying unused at the present time. That is the policy which ought to be pursued if Western Australia is not to be landed in more financial difficulties. This argument is nothing new. Year after year our Commissioners of Railways have complained of the fact that railways are being built without any reference at all to the Working Railways Department, that the new lines are simply handed over to that department with a demand that they shall be made to pay.

The Minister for Works: But you do not take any notice of the reports of the Railway Commissioners! The House should take notice of those reports, but does not do so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Unfortunately it is true that Parliament has not taken any notice of those reports. It would have been infinitely better for the country had Parliament listened to the warnings on this score which were given by Railway Commissioners in the past. It would have been a better policy to lay down that the heads of the Railway Departments should be consulted before the construction of any railway was resolved upon. But there is the fact: by this Bill we are proposing to add to our mileage, which is admitted on all hands to be excessive already; and the increased population which we shall get as the result of the construction of this railway is—what? Possibly a dozen or two of new settlers.

Mr. Davies: Nine hundred immigrants will be arriving next month.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: By what boat?

Mr. Davies: The "Zealandic."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not 700!

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not talking about the gain of population by immigration, but the gain which will accrue as the result of settlement that will follow the construction of this proposed railway—30, or 40, or perhaps 50 new settlers. Can we afford to spend £140,000 in order to secure half a hundred settlers?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I should like to assure the members for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) and Moore (Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy) that I approach the question of the construction of this railway absolutely free from any prejudice against either the settlers or the district. As the member for Irwin stated, I endorsed the sentiments expressed by my then leader that the men who were developing the lands along the Midland railway ought to be regarded in the same light as those settled on Crown lands, ought to have the same consideration. I fully appreciate the difficulties which the settlers in this particular district have been labouring under for a number of years. I am not opposed to the construction of a railway to serve them, but I say, as the member for North-East Fremantle has already stated, we are merely fooling them. One would imagine that we were ready to proceed right away with the construction of this railway. The Minister for Works wants to gallop the Bill through to-night. Apparently he is quite ready to begin the construction to-morrow; ready with a gang of men to proceed to Piawanning right away and get on with the work. But we know that he has already 205 miles of railway authorised, the construction of which has not yet begun. Nearly the whole of those railways, five in all, have been authorised for periods of five and six years. Yet we are asked to rush the Bill through to-night in order, apparently, to afford the Minister an opportunity for beginning the construction to-morrow morning.

The Minister for Works: That is not so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then why all this haste? Whether the Bill be passed to-day or even this session, the period of construction will not be brought nearer by one hour. It matters not the slightest to the settlers in the district whether the Bill goes through this session or next session. Certainly they will not be any nearer to having the railway constructed. This House has already decided by resolution that railways shall be constructed in the order of priority in which they passed through Parliament; so before this latest line can be commenced, if we are to carry out the decision of the House in that respect, the Minister has to make a start with the construction of 205 miles of railways previously authorised. But I want to ask, is the time opportune to build railways at a cost of £5,000 or £6,000 per mile out of loan funds for which we have to pay 6½ per cent. interest? This railway and any other works to be constructed for some time to come will be burdened with 6½ per cent. interest for all time. I do not know whether it is because we are approaching an election and it is intended to make the path of some particular candidate easier through his being able to say, "We have secured the passage of a Bill to construct a railway for you, so your railway is assured." I know not whether that be

the object, but certainly the passing of the Bill this session can have no result affecting the settlers concerned. With a population of only 330,000 we have some 4,000 miles of railway which last year showed a loss of £400,000. Stretching out in all directions we have railways running for hundreds of miles through sparsely populated country; and apparently we propose to continue that policy and run out lines here and there in order to pick up 20 or 30 settlers who happen to be isolated, without a railway service. We are going to intensify our financial difficulties if we pursue this policy, if we do not turn our attention to seeing that the lands already served by railways shall be better utilised than they are at present. I will not vote against the Bill. If it be any satisfaction to those concerned to know that the Bill has passed the House, I will not deprive them of that comfort; but its passing this session will not bring the construction of the railway any nearer. The time has arrived when we should try a halt to the paying of something like £140,000 for the building of a 24 mile stretch of railway. We can never make our railways pay at that cost and with a burden of interest at 6½ per cent.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Norham) [7.37]: I can quite understand the attitude of the leader of the Opposition. Of course this line cannot be built for the next few months.

Hon. P. Collier: Few months!

The PREMIER: Well, the hon. member talked of building it to-morrow morning. Say the next 12 months if you like. It has been the practice to authorise lines some time ahead of construction. We have heard of building railways ahead of settlement, but if that were attempted it would result in a considerable loss. It is true we have a great many miles of railway, but it is true also that we have many industries demanding railways. Take the gold mining industry. There would have been but very little gold if it had not been for the hundreds of miles of railway laid to the several goldfields. Then the timber industry demands many miles of railways. But apart from their earnings, the railways are of tremendous benefit to the country. It has been contended that the spur lines have not paid. The view I take is that but for the spur agricultural railways the general system would have been losing to-day a great deal more than it is losing. These spur agricultural lines do pay, because but for them there would be no traffic for the main lines. Years ago our friends opposite authorised railways which have not yet been built. We are about to build a railway at Esperance, a line authorised years ago by our friends opposite.

Hon. T. Walker: Authorised by Parliament.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not the only one.

The PREMIER: No, it is not the only one which you authorised. If those lines had been built when authorised it would have been a good thing for the State, because they would have been built much more cheaply than is now possible. Then there are other lines waiting to be built. We can have no real expansion or development without laying down new lines of railway. There are the Yorkkraine and the Esperance districts to be developed.

Hon. P. Collier: We have been talking about Yorkkraine for years, but apparently we are not doing anything yet.

The PREMIER: Yes we are. We are doing all we can. At present, of course, we cannot build railways because it is impossible to get rails. But that will not last much longer. I do not expect the present price of material will keep up for long. The prices of everything else coming down.

Hon. P. Collier: Except wheat.

The PREMIER: And wool. I believe iron and steel will be very much cheaper before long. The world's trade must be restored. The same deposits are there, the same people are back at work and there is more machinery available than ever before. But unfortunately some people who endeavour to grow rich quickly have been at work, and so the high prices are only now beginning to fall. When those prices do fall I hope it will be the policy of the country to build these lines as quickly as possible. If the Esperance line could be built now, and if the land there is as good as we believe it to be, we would be able to put in 300 or 400 farmers on virgin land there straight away.

Hon. P. Collier: The existing railways were built when money was costing four per cent. Yet we are losing on them to-day, and now we are going to build more railways with money at 6½ per cent.!

The PREMIER: Without these railways it would be a very poor country indeed. One might just as well say that the roads which have been built are not paying. Of course they are paying.

Hon. P. Collier: But I am referring to the direct loss.

The PREMIER: Yes, and rightly so. On the railways it amounted to £400,000 last year. But the hon. member knows full well that there is a very substantial indirect gain. The Minister for Works has told us that the cost of railways construction, which was once from £1,600 to £1,800 per mile, is now £4,000 per mile. We know that but I think the House realises that these lines cannot be built straight away.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why authorise railways years before we can build them?

The PREMIER: Why should we not?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Because it is putting people into a false position.

The PREMIER: It is right to let the people know that we are going to build these lines. It helps development. Do you mean to say that, as we intend to do, we could go into the Esperance district to develop it if the line

had not been authorised?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But for the war those authorised lines would have been built.

The PREMIER: Yes, the war is responsible for the delay in the construction of the lines authorised. But for the high cost of money and material the lines would have been constructed ere this. The House knows well and the hon. member knows well that we must authorise some distance ahead of construction. There is every chance of material cheapening in the future. I do not know how far off that time may be.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is only fooling these people.

The PREMIER: I have no intention of fooling the people. I told them the line could not be built straight away, but they say if they have the assurance given by the passing of the Bill they will go on with the work of developing their properties, clearing and preparing their lands. Situated as they are it would be rather foolish of them to do it unless they knew that the House was favourable to the construction of the line. I know that the lines which have been authorised must be built first.

Mr. Johnston: We are pleased to have your assurance on that.

The PREMIER: After all what is the mileage we have to face? It is infinitesimal. The land which is undeveloped is not nearly so large in extent as some hon. members believe. I hope the House will agree to the authorisation. I admit that the line cannot be built straight away. Just as my friends when they authorised the construction of the Esperance line—

Hon. T. Walker: We started it, and it would have been through to Norseman before this if we had remained in power.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We were in office for three years before you allowed us to pass the Bill.

The PREMIER: I wish to impress on members that when we talk of having a mile of railway to every 90 people in the State that hardly sets out the position.

Mr. Willecock: The Midland railway is not included in that.

The PREMIER: I hope members will realise that this railway, like others, is necessary to open up the country and must be built sooner or later. I hope the House will authorise the construction of the line.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [7.50]: I do not suppose there can be any valid objection to the construction of the line provided the Premier is candid enough to intimate that it is just one little additional argument that he will have to offer when he is approaching the people in a couple of months' time.

The Minister for Works: An election cry!

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister for Works, I do not suppose, is looking for that. Whenever the general elections are approaching the shop window is always dressed up. Just now it is pretty empty.

The Premier: There is nothing in it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: As the Premier admits, there is nothing in it. I have never known a Government go to the country with such a barren record.

The Premier: The people who are going to support you were never so well off. That is the best record that I can refer to.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Premier has left it late in the day to refer to records. The fact is that he has not produced one argument to combat those advanced by the leader of the Opposition and the member for North-East Fremantle.

The Minister for Works: They did not put up any arguments.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Of course they did.

The Minister for Works: Benevolent statements, no arguments.

Hon. P. Collier: You told us you did not know how many settlers were on this area.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It will greatly surprise me if the Bill goes to a division and the members who have authorised railways in their own electorates support it. What position would the member for Sussex, the member for Williams-Narrogin, the member for Katanning be in if, by deliberate vote they sanctioned the authorisation of this sum of money for another railway when there is no possibility within the next few years of building it?

The Premier: This was promised years ago.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If I am in the next Parliament I shall support it, and there is no doubt an overwhelming majority of members will support it. The member for North-East Fremantle hit the nail on the head when he said that certain negotiations will be carried on if this authorisation goes through. If the Bill passes we will find that vendors of land in that locality will use it as a trump card in order to get inflated prices for the properties they have to dispose of, and the person who goes to settle there will find that he will have to wait for nearly a decade before the material gets cheap enough to warrant the construction of this line. The Premier states that it will be built when material gets cheap. The Premier does not know when material will be cheaper than it is to-day.

The Premier: I did not say that.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I heard the Premier say that 100 miles of railway was the limit of the Government's resources.

The Premier: Oh no.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: He was not prepared to go to 150 miles to please his supporters.

The Premier: I said not less than 100 miles.

Mr. Johnston: We must speed him up.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: You, Mr. Speaker, have done some trenching in your time, and I am sure you never measured a mile when a chain would keep you going for a week. It is the long track that always breaks one's heart. Here is the opportunity for the Premier for the next two years, that is, if he gets back. People were led to believe many years ago that they would have railway faci-

ties provided; definite promises were made and the Bills authorising the construction of the lines were passed. Now it is not fair to those people to sanction the construction of further lines in view of the fact that not even a sod has been turned in any of the other districts. We have no definite proof even that the new Parliament will take the authorised railways in rotation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is nothing provided for this one on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Premier has told us that he has no intention of immediately building the line. Therefore what harm can be done if we delay the passing of the Bill? The Premier has no chance of turning the sod of this railway before next Christmas 12 months.

Mr. Harrison: What about the preparatory work?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Premier said that he could not survey this line for another 12 months. Therefore why raise false hopes?

The Premier: We can get it ready.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The object of passing the Bill is to satisfy some of the constituents of members opposite who are hungering for railway facilities. The hon. member who represents the district will be able to say that the stage has been advanced a step further, the Government having authorised the construction of the line. It will be a trump card. It is a window dressing affair after all, and I am surprised that the Minister for Works was induced by his colleagues to bring forward a proposition which he in his heart knows cannot be tackled.

The Minister for Works: I can tackle it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister knows that there are five or six railways authorised and he cannot satisfy the people interested as to when they are likely to be built. We know the position of the money market, and we know what the cost of material is. The Premier has ventured the opinion that material will get cheaper, but I do not know whether he has anything with which to buttress that statement.

The Premier: The Speaker will not let me tell you now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Premier might have told the House on what he based the information.

Mr. Johnston: There is a heavy tariff on rails now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Is there anything cheap? Is there any indication that prices are coming down?

The Minister for Works: Talk is cheap enough.

Hon. P. Collier: Then you would not get much on a value basis.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: When money is available, if I can give the Bill a vote in support I shall do so. In justice to the people who have already been waiting for five or six years for railways sanctioned by Parliament, and in justice to the people in the locality to be served whose hopes we are trying to raise by the passing of the Bill, the House would

be wise in postponing the question for another year or so in order to see what progress is made in the direction of delivering the goods we have already promised.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [8.0]: I shall support this Bill on different grounds from those given by the leader of the Opposition, the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin), and the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen). They stated it was of no use granting authority for the construction of this line because many years must elapse before it could be commenced. Premier of the State during the past six years. The deputations represented people in these country districts, and they always asked the Premier to give them some assurance that they should one day get their railway. They also wanted to have the survey made beforehand so that they might know in what direction the line would be built. Some members opposite have taken part in those deputations. The farmers want to know whether a line will be built near their holdings because they want to prepare for increased production. There is something lacking on the part of various Governments. At present many of the settlers do not know where they stand. Many have had to wait for years without any assistance being afforded to them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is no money for railway construction.

Mr. HARRISON: A good deal more should be done by the Government than has been done in this direction. Surveyors in the country could have been utilised to have the necessary surveys made. It was amusing to hear the member for Forrest refer to window dressing and electioneering. If during the past fortnight there has been any window dressing and filling up of "Hansard" to be ready for next March, are we on this side of the House more guilty than members on the Opposition benches. The Minister for Works has had two reports from the advisory board, and yet he has only brought down one Bill to authorise the construction of a railway. He has lost an opportunity for window dressing. The Yorkkrakine-North Baandee railway has been waiting for years. In the Governor's Speech when the Scaddan Government were in office it was stated that the survey would be made in 1914, but that survey has not yet been made. We have had placed on the Table of the House two reports of the advisory board. It appears from one of these reports that there are 448,500 acres of land in the locality to be served, of which 289,000 acres are alienated and in process of alienation. There are in addition 126,529 acres of forest land cleared and a considerable quantity of forest land uncleared. The line that this report deals with could well be built in conjunction with the one now before us.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is that not window dressing?

Mr. HARRISON: That is what the Minister for Works could have brought forward if he had been desirous of window dressing.

Hon. T. Walker: You are doing it now for your constituents.

Mr. HARRISON: I am merely showing what we on this side are not doing in the way of window dressing.

Hon. W. C. Augwin: You are doing it now.

Mr. HARRISON: We should be foolish if we did not take the tip given to us by the member for Forrest. I am surprised, however, that the Minister for Works did not do it. It is the policy of the Government and of Parliament to increase the production of the State and to show to those who are settled on the land that they will eventually be afforded facilities for the marketing of their produce. During the last few years it has been impossible to build new railways, but there is a chance of doing it now and we should take that opportunity.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Where is it?

Mr. Davies: It is coming.

Mr. O'Loughlen: So is judgment day.

Mr. HARRISON: It would be a warranty that the Government were in earnest in trying to give these settlers the necessary facilities at the earliest possible opportunity. It would stimulate them to further production. Let those men have these facilities so that instead of spending months carting their wheat to the sidings they can go on to their seed beds and prepare their land for further production.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [8.7]: I have always supported the policy of opening up the agricultural areas of the State by means of railways, and I do not propose to depart from that attitude on this occasion. After looking at the plan showing the route of the proposed railway I cannot help remarking on the great difference in policy in this proposal compared with the policy in operation in other railways that are being built by the State. Practically throughout the whole length of this proposed line I notice the huge areas of land which have been granted by way of concessions, to the Midland Railway Company in Western Australia. Unfortunately, we do not know how much of this land has been sold by the Midland Railway Company; we do not know what proportion of it is in the hands of the settlers who have acquired it from them.

The Minister for Works: I gave you the figures.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It was impossible to take them down at the rate at which the Minister delivered them, and, as the adjournment of the debate was refused, I had no opportunity of getting the figures.

Hon. P. Collier: Did you not join in the refusal?

Mr. JOHNSTON: It has been usual for the Government to conduct the business of the House.

The Minister for Works: There have been alienated 161,000 acres and 106,000 acres have yet to be alienated.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister for Works has already addressed himself to the subject.

Mr. JOHNSTON: We see from the map that this railway opens up a huge territory which has been granted to the Midland Railway Company, a portion of which has been re-sold. This line, therefore, differs in policy from any other line which is being built. It appears to me that the railway company will get a huge benefit from the construction of this line by the increased value that this work will give to the lands that the company still hold. Any other railway authorised and built in this State has brought great benefit to the State in the direction of opening up our vacant Crown lands. The plan shows that the State will receive very little benefit from the opening up of vacant Crown lands in this instance. I regret that it does not show in distinctive colours the area of land which has been re-sold by the company. The member for Irwin, who has a great knowledge of the Midland railway district, thought that the company might take exception to the construction of the line on the ground that it would rob the company of part of its existing traffic. Taking into consideration the huge area of land originally granted to that company, which this particular line will traverse, I am inclined to think that the benefit the company will receive from increased land values will be much greater than any loss they may sustain through decreased traffic. The large amount of unsold land which the Midland Railway Company still possess is evidenced by their own annual reports, and therefore the company must receive great benefit from the construction of this line.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: We cannot help that.

Hon. T. Walker: It will still open up the lands of the State.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If the Government exercised the powers conferred upon them under this measure they would be able to obtain the best of the land, if they wished to do so, for closer settlement at the value of the land without any regard to the proposed railway. The clause of the Bill which gives the Government power to resume agricultural lands if suitable for closer settlement, in blocks of over 1,000 acres in extent, provides that in the event of compensation being claimed, no regard shall be had to any increased value occasioned by the railway. This is a very beneficial provision.

Mr. O'Loughlen: When do you hope to see the Dwarda Railway completed?

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Government might well have the unimproved land owned by the Midland Railway Company classified with a view to taking advantage of that resumption clause of the Bill. I regret the Government did not have the surveys of the line carried into effect before introducing the Bill. That

has been the general practice in years past. It was introduced by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) when Minister for Works. It was a very wise policy. His practice was to ask the authority of Parliament for a survey Bill for a particular line to enable the surveys to be made before the Bill authorising the construction of the line was brought down. This was of great advantage to the communities affected, because after the survey had been made they had an opportunity of having their views ventilated in the House before the building of the line was actually authorised. I am pleased to have the assurance of the Premier that it is the desire of the Government to build railways, which have been already authorised by Parliament, before the construction of this particular railway is put in hand. Had not that assurance been given, my support of this line would have been tempered by a little diffidence. I should have felt reluctant to put into the hands of the Government authority to construct his railway prior to the five or six railways which have been authorised, some of them as far back as 1914, and the construction of which has not yet been commenced. I have in mind the Margaret River, Esperance, and Nyabing railway, and last but not least the Narrogin-Dwarda railway, which was authorised in 1914. If I thought that the approval of this measure would interfere with that great public work I would certainly hesitate before voting for it. All the other railways to which I have referred—six have been authorised—go through Crown lands from beginning to end. They have been authorised for six years—

Mr. O'Loghlen: What do the people think of the promise made six years ago?

Mr. JOHNSTON: The people think that these railways should be built first of all. They know that, had it not been for the war, either the Labour Government, who authorised many of them, or the succeeding Governments, would have constructed them. These works have been held up entirely by the war conditions, but it is absolutely essential that the promise of the Premier, given so happily to-night, that the already authorised railways will have precedence, will be given effect to. These lines will bring a large amount of revenue into the coffers of the State by reason of the large area of Crown lands which they will open up. While I admit that the Piawaning extension should be built, from every point of view these railways to serve the settlers whom the Crown have put on their own lands should have preference. This one may be a desirable proposition, but in contradistinction to the others it will be opening up part of the huge territory granted under a land grant system to the Midland Railway Company.

Mr. O'Loghlen: When do you think this railway will be constructed?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not know.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Can you make a guess?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I hope it will be built, in the interests of the people it is to serve, at a much greater rate than railway construction has been carried on in this State—through circumstances beyond the control of the Government during the last six years.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Do you think it will be built in four years?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I think the people will be lucky if they get it in four years.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Then why pass it to-night?

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Premier said there was little to do to carry out the existing railway authorisations which he hopes to do at a minimum rate of 100 miles a year. If there is little to do to carry out the existing authorisations, I say to the Government, "Go ahead by all means and do it quickly." The assurance of the Premier that it is a small thing for the Government to do should carry hope to the people in the Narrogin-Dwarda district and elsewhere, people who for years have been waiting for the construction of railways, just as these people north of Piawaning desire the construction of the railway mentioned in this Bill. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [8.18]: Two discordant notes have been struck which will distress members very considerably, especially those members who have already railways authorised in their electorates. One was that of the Minister for Works, who told us the cost of this railway would be approximately £5,540 per mile. The estimate given by the Minister for Works was £97,000 for the railway and £10,000 for water, and he said that the Engineer-in-Chief estimated that this would be exceeded by at least 25 per cent.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: I think the water supply was really intended for existing lines.

Mr. PICKERING: I know nothing of the details, but I say that the price of £5,540 a mile is a very high one for railway construction, especially when we remember that Mr. Teesdale Smith, some years ago, estimated the cost of railways at something like £1,000 per mile.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They built some of them and the lines cost £2,000 a mile afterwards to put in order.

The Minister for Works: Teesdale Smith said he could build them for £600 a mile.

Mr. PICKERING: The other discordant note was that struck by the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loghlen) who disabused my mind of a conviction that this Parliament was obliged or bound to build these railways in order of priority. I am quite sure there is no doubt in the minds of members that this policy of precedence will be carried on and will not cease with the present Parliament. If this policy is not binding on the next Parliament, I fear that the adding to this list of the Piawaning Northwards railway may militate against the prospect of carrying on the work of constructing those railways already passed.

Hon. P. Collier: As a matter of fact it does not bind this Parliament. The Government could depart from it to-morrow if they liked.

Mr. Johnston: They could start this particular line next week.

Mr. PICKERING: My constituents would very strongly resent any action on my part in support of a railway which would militate against one already authorised.

The Minister for Works: You nearly lost the jetty the other night.

Mr. PICKERING: I admit that the position was critical and I owe a debt of gratitude to the Minister for coming to the rescue. Certain statements have been made with regard to this line passing through the Midland company's territory. I do not take the least exception on that account. The land was conceded to the company for a certain object, namely, to build a railway to develop that country. The company carried out their work in an efficient manner. There is no doubt about that. This line is one of the best run in Western Australia to-day, and the permanent way is a credit to the company. The company have no right to extend this railway in any direction, and it would be wicked to think that citizens who bought land from the company in good faith should be treated differently from other citizens of the State. I endorse the attitude of the Minister for Works that we should hold out hope to these people that they will be granted facilities to enable them to develop this country. We have had an assurance from the Minister for Works and the members for Moore (Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy) and Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) and the Premier that the country through which the line will pass is good. I am prepared to accept the testimony of these gentlemen, all of whom are qualified to express an opinion. Therefore, I conclude that this country is worth the facilities asked for. If there is one advantage to be gained by passing this measure, it will be that, once the measure is put on the statute-book, there will be a reasonable prospect of the project being carried to fruition. Therefore I can understand the desire of the members for Moore and Irwin that the Bill should be passed.

Mr. Gardiner: That is all the people are asking for.

Mr. PICKERING: These people are asking for a definite assurance that there is an ultimate, not an immediate, prospect of getting a railway. The members for Irwin and Moore know that it is impossible for the Government to undertake to build the line for some considerable time, but I consider it would be a solace for the settlers there to know that this measure was definitely on the statute-book. For this reason I support the Bill.

Mr. HICKMOTT (Pingelly) [S.24]: I have no wish to oppose the Bill for the construction of this line. I was one of the party of members who went through that country some five years ago, and we were all satisfied that it

was some of the best wheat-growing and mixed farming country in the State. We went through a great portion of really first class land. I quite agree with other members that there are many railway Acts on the statute-book which should take precedence of this line. The line spoken of by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston)—Dwarda to Narrogin—interests me to some extent in that portion of it will be in my electorate. I do not refer to this as window dressing, but the line has been authorised for the last six years.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Bill was introduced on the 9th December, 1914.

Mr. HICKMOTT: There are a number of new settlers in that portion of the district, returned men who have taken up holdings on the Noobleing estate. I believe 17 men have taken up land on that old estate, and I have been agitating for a little deviation of this line in order to accommodate these new settlers. Then there is the line which was promised many years ago by the late Hon. Frank Wilson, long before I had the honour of a seat in this Chamber, the line 25 miles from Brookton into the Westdale country. Some of these settlers have been there for 60 years without any railway facilities to convey their produce to market. Recently the advisory board visited the district. I have not seen their report but one of the members spoke well of the country and of the need for railway facilities.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must direct the hon. member's attention to the fact that this Bill does not provide for the purposes which he is discussing. It is to authorise the construction of a railway from Piawaning Northwards.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I do not wish to digress. I believe that people situated as are those in the district north of Piawaning should have every facility to get their produce to market. Unless they have some assurance that a railway will be built some time or other, they will become disheartened and will not push on with the developmental work which they would undertake if they knew that a railway would be constructed at some future date. No doubt it will be a considerable time before railway material will be procurable at anything like a reasonable price. Owing to the present state of the finances it will be difficult for the Government to construct the lines already authorised, much less to undertake the construction of new railways. I am quite prepared to assist the Government in every way to construct lines, because I know what the carting of produce over long distances means. I have carted produce for 40 miles to the railway, and perhaps under worse conditions than are experienced by these settlers to-day. Settlers with holdings so far from the railways have many hardships to put up with. Then there is the fact that the line has not been surveyed. We are told by the member for Moore that some of these people have to cart their wheat 30 to 35 miles.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: Twenty to 25 miles.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I understood the hon. member to say 30 to 35. If a railway is constructed between the Midland Railway and the Wongan Hills line it will still leave some of the settlers a great way from railway facilities. Many of our lines have been so constructed that if another line is built between them the distance is then too little, the proposition becomes costly and the lines cannot be made to pay. The same thing may occur in this instance.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: The two lines are 40 miles apart.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I support the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [8.30]: Regarding the remarks of members in commenting upon the Bill I appreciate the comments which the member for Moore (Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy) made. We recognise his knowledge of this part of the country. The member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) seemed to be under the impression that I had used words which had reflected upon him. I have perused "Hansard's" copy of my speech and the only reference I made to the hon. gentleman was one regarding the New Zealand company. That was no reflection upon him because when he was a Minister he gave us information about that company's proposition which I knew nothing about.

Mr. Gardiner: I did not take any offence at your remarks.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I understood that the hon. member did. I mention that particular point in appreciation of the fact that the hon. member had a knowledge and practical experience of what he was discussing. According to the hon. gentleman some people seem to be under the impression that those settled in the Midland railway areas are not treated as well as those settled in other parts of the State. I do not know of any ground for such an impression. During the time I have been Minister for Works there has been no request placed before me that has not been fully considered, and if the finances warranted, there was no reason why it should not have been attended to. Although the people in this particular area are within the sphere of the Midland Railway Company, they are Western Australians and have as much right to be treated as such as those anywhere else. The leader of the Opposition could not understand why the Government desire to put this Bill through at one sitting. The only reason the Government have is that, as members have generally admitted, the Bill does not contain much for discussion and we are desirous of clearing the Notice Paper in order to be ready to deal with Bills which we know will come forward from the Legislative Council with many amendments. We desire to deal with those amendments as soon as we can. The leader of the Oppo-

sition made a jibe at me because I was frank, and said that I did not know how many settlers there were in the district. I was frank when I could easily have evaded the question and made no reference to that aspect.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You would not have evaded it because we would have asked you about that point.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think that any member would suggest that I would wilfully mislead the House. If I err at all, I err on the side of giving too much information. Some people, who are diplomatic, deem it advisable not to give too much information. The member for Forrest talked about electioneering cries and said that we were hypocritical over the matter. The hon. member does not mean that. It is a sort of camouflage. The leader of the Country party made reference to the Yorkrakine-North Baandee extension and complained that nothing had been done in connection with that line. He seemed to think that the Government had been neglectful of the interests of that part of the country. The hon. member perhaps does not know that the question of the railway gauges has been under consideration with the Commonwealth Government for some years past, and it is a matter which affects the country over which this particular line will run. There is a proposition by the Federal Government, and it has been before them for two or three years now, to extend the 4ft. 8½in. gauge line from Kalgoorlie to the metropolitan area, and that line will run through this particular district. The matter is of such importance to the railway system of Western Australia, that I am afraid the people in that particular area will have to put up with the inconvenience for some little time longer. There is no necessity to say anything more in reply, and I will be prepared to give any information I can during the Committee stage. I was asked by one hon. member to give some figures regarding the country which will be served by this railway.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister has already given that information.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but the hon. member based his criticism on certain statements and I see he is not present now to receive the information.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no necessity to give it in the circumstances.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That usually happens. Some hon. members cry out about the neglect of the Government; they make their speeches and then run away.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is right, trim them up.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is only one other matter. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Hickmott) referred to a railway which he said had been promised by the late Mr. Frank Wilson, I have no knowledge of that particular matter, but I will inquire

into it and let him know what I can ascertain about the matter.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will you bring down a Bill to-morrow?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is plenty of information perhaps in the Premier's office.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Authority to construct:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It has been stated that this railway was promised by the Labour Government when the matter was introduced previously. I have referred to "Hansard" and I find that the member for the district brought the matter forward and said, "I should be glad to have some assurance from the Government that it is intended at an early date to proceed with the further extension of this railway to the north, if provision cannot be made for that in the present Bill." The reply of the Minister was, "I only hope the time is not far distant when the finances of the State will be such as to allow the line to be carried further north in accordance with the suggestion of the member for Moore."

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: Yes, that is right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is no promise that the work would be done, but merely that it was hoped that the finances would permit of it being done in due course. This Bill authorises the construction of the railway. We are told that this line will feed some of the best land in the State. Thousands of acres there have not been taken up because there is no railway, while, in addition, there are many people there who cannot develop their holdings because there is no railway. It is a mystery to me why the Government did not avail themselves of this area for soldier settlement scheme. Had they diverted the money which they used to purchase the holdings of individual settlers in other parts of the State, this railway could have been constructed by now without any expense to the State. If this area comprises some of the best land in the State, why did not the Government put the soldiers there?

Mr. O'Loughlen: They always say that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Here was a good opportunity to have a railway to serve some of the finest land in the State free of cost to Western Australia.

Mr. Gardiner: Nearly all the land is settled there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am going on what the Minister says.

Mr. Gardiner: I can give the member for North-East Fremantle my assurance that I would not settle soldiers there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then it is not some of the best land in the State.

Mr. Gardiner: No, not the vacant land.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But the Minister referred to 56,000 acres of good land there, of which 35,000 acres have not been taken up and only a small area cleared.

Mr. Gardiner: That is quite wrong.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: There is a block of 35,000 acres which comprises a lot of first class land.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If it is first class land and there are no settlers there, it is very strange.

Mr. Gardiner: I will explain that.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is a New Zealand company that holds that land.

The Minister for Works: What I stated was in accordance with the report of the Advisory Board.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If it is intended to encourage settlement there, it would have been a good idea to have constructed the railway in connection with the soldier settlement scheme. In the Peel estate in the Fremantle district they are using money from the soldier settlement scheme to build a tramline and the same thing could have been done here.

Mr. GARDINER: The 35,000 acres of good land is probably the land held by the New Zealand Australian Land Company.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: That is correct.

Mr. GARDINER: It would be idle to resume the land which has been referred to for soldier settlement. There is some bonny land in the New Zealand Company's property. If the State desires to get that land for closer settlement it can do so. There is power to resume. I do not think the owners of the property would have any objection. The land has to be cleared in order to be of advantage for grazing purposes. The company does not sit on the land and we desire to use it. Regarding the Midland railway company's land, which the member for Williams-Narrogin has spoken about; I will sell him the lot cheap if he likes and that is some of the land through which this railway will go.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Going, going, gone!

Mr. GARDINER: It is not fair to the Midland company to criticise them in connection with the land. When the Belgart line was spoken of and a desire was manifested to have the line extended, I cut up the areas in that district for the company and did not wait for the railway to get the increased increment. I insisted that the Government should have the first offer, and the Government turned down 9,000 acres of the bonniest land in the district, offered to them at 12s. 6d. per acre. The same land was also turned down by the Repatriation Department. It has since grown four excellent crops. I do not like sneers, especially when they are not justified.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 8—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

Message from the Legislative Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Assembly.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with requested amendments.

BILL—LOAN, £3,870,000.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the Bill.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—GRAIN ELEVATORS (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Order read for the resumption of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Dividends under Wheat Marketing Acts charged with calls:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This clause is very difficult to understand.

Hon. P. Collier: It seems to have been drawn with a desire for ambiguity.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Subclause 1 of Clause 2 reads—

The dividends payable under the Wheat Marketing Acts to any wheat grower who is a shareholder, or an applicant for shares, in the Western Australian Grain Growers Co-operative Elevators, Ltd., on the distri-

bution of the surplus proceeds, in excess of interim advances made prior to the commencement of this Act, of the 1919-20 wheat harvest, are hereby charged, to the extent of a sum equal to sixpence per bushel, in respect of all wheat delivered by such wheat grower to the 1919-20 season's wheat pool, with the amount payable to the said Company by such wheat grower on the application for, on the allotment of, and as calls in respect of his shares.

I expect that the surplus of all the money received by the Government for the 1920 harvest has been already distributed and that the outside creditors have had their share.

The Premier: Yes, it has all gone.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier might tell us the total amount he has received. Of course, there are other dividends to be paid in regard to the 1920 wheat, but the dividends which are to be paid will not cover the liabilities of an overwhelming majority of the I.A.B. clients to the Government. The surplus of the moneys paid to the Minister must have been divided in accordance with the Act, and therefore there can be nothing left. Subclause 2 refers to Section 21 of the Act which provides that after paying the Government's instalment the surplus is to be divided amongst the various creditors pro rata. Whether that has reference to the Government debts, I cannot say.

The Premier: Of course it has.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In the Act of 1915 was a schedule, and the surplus had to be divided in accordance with that schedule.

The Premier: So it has now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Nothing of the kind. Under Section 21 it has to be divided pro rata. The schedule has been struck out. What I want to know is, to whom do the wheat certificates handed to the board belong, whose property are they?

The Premier: The farmer's, subject to the board's discharge.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is so. But he must have paid everything that he owes to the board and must have met the Government's obligations as trustees for the outside creditors.

The Premier: That is all protected in the clause.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not quite sure about that. The Premier might tell us whether all debts owing by the farmers, including the Government debts and the amounts owing to private creditors, have to be met prior to any advance under the Bill? I want to know whether everything has to be clear, whether the farmer has to be a free man in respect of the Industries Assistance Board. I am going to move for the addition of a proviso to Subclause 3 providing that no application for shares prior to the passing of the Bill shall be entertained. We have evidence that a large number of applicants have asked the Government to get them out of the position into

which they have been drawn as the result of statements made to them by interested persons. They have been misled by sheer eloquence.

Mr. Johnston: Including that of W. D. Johnson.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not care a hang about W. D. Johnson. He is a director of this company. It makes me all the more careful.

Mr. Johnston: He is a very good director.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not care whether he is or not. I do not give a hang about W. D. Johnson or E. B. Johnston either.

The Attorney General: But surely there is sufficient safeguard here.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It would be so if the Attorney General had the administration of the Act, but I know the pressure that has been brought to bear in the past.

The Premier: Does that mean that I am not to be trusted with the administration?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It means that you have not time to administer it, and so have to delegate your authority to others. If you were looking into it, I would not mind. I want to know the meaning of this Subclause 3. This is a most important Bill. It should never have been introduced.

Mr. Davies: Who suggested it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A deputation representing the Westralian Farmers and including W. D. Johnson.

Mr. Johnston: No, not the Westralian Farmers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But it was. I have here a copy of the Federal Bill entitled "The Westralian Farmers Agreement Act, 1920."

Hon. P. Collier: They are all the same people in different clothes.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Here is the Federal Bill, including a copy of the agreement in the schedule; yet hon. members say the Westralian Farmers have nothing to do with this. I know that there is another company, supposed to be a different company, the Westralian Grain Growers' Co-operative Elevators Company, but it is only a dummy company. The company here was not established in accordance with this Federal Act when it was passed. To enable the Act to be passed wrong information had to be given to the Commonwealth Government, which we have in "Hansard."

Hon. P. Collier: Not wrong information; false information.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was stated that the West Australian Government did not have sufficient votes to allow them to take up the scheme. That is the explanation of the Minister who introduced the Bill in the Senate. I have it here in "Hansard." But I want to know whether Subclause 3 relates to the certificates issued to the Minister under the Industries Assistance Act as security for the indebtedness of the farmer to the board.

The Premier: It refers to the wheat certificates.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But does it apply to the certificates handed to the Minister or the board as security for debts already contracted by the Government on behalf of the farmer, or does it apply entirely to other certificates?

The Premier: It refers to all wheat certificates.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Handed to the board.

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If I were a lawyer I would be inclined to argue that point with the Premier.

The Premier: You would lose.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Subclause 3 sets out that the Minister is authorised to pay to the company dividends on production of an application for shares signed by the wheat grower and the certificates issued to him. "Issued to him" means to the grower, not certificates issued to the I.A.B. Therefore the only man to whom the 6d. a bushel may be paid is the man who has no money of his own. That being so, the Bill is not required. It is a dishonest attitude for anyone to adopt, whether he be W. D. Johnson or anyone else, to ask the Government to advance 6d. a bushel to start another company when at the same time that advance has to come out of the funds of the State.

The Premier: It does not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It does. A liability should be paid first.

The Premier: So it is.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then what do you want the Bill for? If I am under the I.A.B. and pay all my liabilities, why is it necessary for me to ask the Government to advance me 6d. on wheat? There is no need to do that. If I hold certificates, and the Bill is merely brought forward for the purpose of enabling the Government to advance me 6d. a bushel on the certificates which I present to them as security, it is a different matter altogether. If it is the intention of the Government to carry out the provisions of the Bill, the Bill is not worth the paper it is printed on. If it is not, it might be made an excuse for Parliamentary sanction to allow the Government to advance money which is owing to the State. The company have to find £100,000 before they can get their money from the Commonwealth. If the Bill applies to all wheat in the possession of the board, and the Government liabilities are not met, it will mean that the Government will have to provide about £150,000. The Minister has already told us that about one-third of the wheat goes to the I.A.B. So we see at once that the company will be financed by the Government.

The Premier: No; we do not pay any money.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I wish that were true. This 6d. per bushel to be advanced is a debt owing to the State, and if it were

not paid to the company it would be paid to the State. Therefore it is Government money.

The PREMIER: The Bill is perfectly clear; nothing could be more clear or more easily understood.

Hon. P. Collier: I have never had such difficulty in understanding a Bill before.

Mr. Johnston: But you have mastered it.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, but I have not placed the same interpretation on it as the hon. member.

The PREMIER: So long as money is owing to the I.A.B. and to outside creditors, by I.A.B. clients, no money can be paid over for these shares. But if there be surplus proceeds then the money can be paid over.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then you do not want a Bill.

The PREMIER: We have surplus proceeds in a number of cases. The I.A.B. is amply protected by the clause. Money owing to the Government must first be paid and money owing to outside creditors by I.A.B. clients will also be protected. There is a provision in the Industries Assistance Act which makes the board trustees for the outside creditor, charging us with the responsibility of distributing the proceeds after all payments have been settled as between the clients and the creditors. The outside creditor is not asked to take the slightest risk and the Government are not taking the slightest risk. The first payment upon these surplus funds must be paid to outside creditors, and every penny will be paid in satisfaction of their claims. There are I.A.B. farmers who have money to their credit by way of surplus proceeds, and probably many more will be creditors after the next harvest. They can take their money out and put it into this company.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why is this Bill necessary for that?

The PREMIER: It is not necessary for that. The form of application which has to be signed for the shares says that the applicant agrees to authorise the Government to take the amount due upon dividends and pay the same to the company. The Government in that case is the Wheat Board. It is provided in the Bill that not only must the application be presented, but the certificates must be presented to the Wheat Board.

Hon. P. Collier: That protects nothing and it is not important.

The PREMIER: It is important. The certificates must be endorsed. If the certificate is not produced the order for payment is of no avail.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Has the Wheat Board power to pay before the wheat certificate is handed to the I.A.B.?

The PREMIER: No. The board have the certificates now. They are in connection with last year's crop. There are no other certificates than these held by the board. They would have to be presented, by the I.A.B. before the Wheat Board could make any payments against them. If an applicant

withdraws, the certificate will not be presented and there will be no payment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Does the board hold the certificates?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And you want to pay on them?

The PREMIER: Not unless there are funds available beyond the amount needed to discharge the liability of the board and the outside creditors.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And the Government?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Under the Act?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This Bill is not worth the paper it is printed on.

The PREMIER: Yes it is. If the ordinary banks hold certificates the Wheat Board must endorse them before any payment is made against them. I do not know that the Bill is of great value except that it will be a convenience. The farmers have signed their applications for shares, which gives an authority to collect 6d. per bushel from the Wheat Board.

Mr. Pickering: This really secures that 6d.

The PREMIER: Yes. The member for North-East Fremantle said we would be contributing £150,000 towards this elevators company.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You said that you would do so on the second reading.

The PREMIER: No, the hon. member misunderstood me. Members will, I am sure, be glad to have a bulk handling and co-operative system established.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is the biggest bluff I have ever seen.

The PREMIER: The Bill is intended to provide a convenience for the payment of money which people have authorised to be paid.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is only a further advance.

The PREMIER: It is not an advance by the Government, directly or indirectly.

Mr. Wilcock: It is an indirect payment.

The PREMIER: Not by the Government. We cannot make any advance to the company because the securities will be with the Federal Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They want £150,000 direct.

The PREMIER: They cannot get it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Before any money is diverted or allocated towards the purchase of shares in this proposed company, the holder of the wheat certificate should discharge the whole of his liabilities whether to private creditors, the Industries Assistance Board, or the Government. Conflicting statements have been made on this point. The Premier has stated that all indebtedness to the board must be discharged before any money can be used for the purchase of shares. The Premier, as will be

seen from "Hansard," stated in his speech in introducing the Bill—

I say that so long as the farmer owes money to outside creditors he cannot apply for shares, but if the manager—meaning the manager of the Industries Assistance Board—

agrees and if the farmer only owes money to the board he can take shares.

That is a direct contradiction of the statement he has just made.

The Colonial Secretary: That is, provided the manager agreed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The manager cannot agree if what the Premier says now is correct. The Bill says that no money can be used for the purchase of shares if the person concerned is a debtor. I assume that when the Premier made that statement he had some foundation for it in the provisions of this Bill. None of these persons should be allowed to put money into a company so long as they owe money to the Government or to creditors, whether for arrears of rent, taxes, advances under the Industries Assistance Board, or any purpose whatever.

The Premier: I was wrong; they cannot do so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then I take it that so long as money is owed to any person it is not competent to use the dividends to purchase shares. The clause seems to be comprehensive enough. The statement was made in reply to an interjection, and might have been inadvertently made.

Mr. Pickering: I think the Premier meant only those debts to the board, but not to outside creditors.

Mr. Piesse: The Bill gives all necessary protection.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think it does. The Bill does not affect anyone except those who would have dividends to draw as a result of the last harvest, and who owe no money to anyone. This being so, does it not prove that the Bill is unnecessary? If I have a dividend to draw and I owe no money, I should draw my dividend and be free to buy my shares.

Mr. Pickering: But this makes the Government the holder of the money in trust.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why?

Mr. Johnston: There are farmers outside the board.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They want the Government to do the financing.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If there are farmers outside the board and they have dividends to draw, why should not they draw them and purchase their shares? Why bring in the aid of the Government? When the money owing to the farmers is paid over to them, surely they should be free to purchase whatever shares they like.

Mr. Piesse: This Bill is really a security to the company.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Bill apparently appoints the Government as agents to collect money for the company. Why should the Government act as collecting agents for the

company? We have narrowed it down to this: the Government accept no liability; they are merely acting as agents to pay this money over to the new company.

Mr. Piesse: Hence the greater security to the company.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Is not it most extraordinary that the Government should act as collecting agents for the company? This is a new business for the Government to undertake. Where is it going to end? If I float a mining company, will the Government accept the position of agents? The Bill should not be before us at all. It is not the business of the Government to act as agents to collect money for shares for an outside company with which they are not associated in any way whatever. It is a new line of policy.

Mr. Griffiths: It was a new policy to take control of the farmers' wheat.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That was essential. If I have 1,000 bushels of wheat in the pool and the dividend is 1s. a bushel, why should not I receive my 1,000 shillings and buy my shares if I so wish? Instead of that the Government deduct 500 shillings and pay it over to the new company.

The Premier: We pay it over to the man who holds the certificates now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why should the Government act as collecting agents for the company?

Mr. Griffiths: Why should they have acted right through?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It was essential to market the wheat, but it is not essential for the Government to act in this new way.

Mr. Griffiths: I am sure the farmer would have been more satisfied to have handled his money freely rather than go to the Government.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If so let us throw the Bill out. This is an interference with the liberty of the farmer. It is coming between the farmer and his rights.

Mr. Griffiths: It is only a continuance of the interference.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We interfered with the farmer to his infinite benefit, and because it was essential. Now it is proposed to interfere where there is no need whatever. According to the member for York we are doing something to which the farmer objects. The Bill is not wanted. This House is asked to spend its time and devote the whole of the machinery of Parliament to pass legislation which will enable the Government to act as collecting agents for an outside company. That is entirely outside the function of Parliament.

Mr. Piesse: It is the wish of their shareholders.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That does not make it right. Is it right that the State should act as agents, taking their orders and paying some of their money to another party?

Mr. Griffiths: Why should they have done it at all?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Good God! cannot the hon. member understand I have told him a thousand times already that it was essential to the farmers' existence.

Mr. Griffiths: Is not this essential?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. Has not the hon. member any understanding? This does not help the farmer in the slightest degree.

Mr. Willcock: Even if it did help, have we the right to do it?

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is a point for consideration. Should Parliament legislate merely for the purpose of constituting the Government an agency for the collection of money to pay over to a company?

Mr. Griffiths: Why not—

Hon. P. COLLIER: Oh shut up. What is the good of talking to a man who cannot understand English? What is the use of these idiotic interjections?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. P. COLLIER: I welcome interjections if they are made by a man with any capacity to understand. I object to these idiotic interjections. I cannot understand the hon. member.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Mr. Griffiths: Have another go!

Hon. P. COLLIER: I for one am not prepared to embark upon a policy of passing legislation merely to set the Government of the day up as a collecting agent to gather in money for an outside company. A number of private individuals have formed themselves into a company for their own benefit.

Mr. Johnston: And for the public good.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Every company is formed for the public good but the Government is not called upon to act as a collecting agent in order to secure their funds. Why is Parliament engaged in this way? This is foreign to the work of government altogether and I protest against the Bill being before the House at all.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I honestly think the leader of the Opposition might well reconsider the attitude he has adopted towards this Bill. We have a co-operative company established for the purpose of providing a public utility of the utmost value to this State.

Hon. P. Collier: We are not stopping it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The object is to assist in the establishment of bulk handling.

Hon. P. Collier: This does not assist at all.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The machinery of this Bill forms an essential feature of the scheme.

Hon. P. Collier: Not if the farmers are genuinely anxious to become shareholders.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Surely the leader of the Opposition will not object to saving the company the duplication of the work of collecting. It was the very basis of the scheme that only wheat growers should come into it and that they should subscribe 6d. per bushel towards the shares from the amount of advances they were to receive from the wheat.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the good of that. The money is there. Let them buy the shares themselves.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Many of these certificates are in the hands of private banks who have collected them. These certificates will be sent in to the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, of course they will be sent in because the Government will give them the 6d.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The establishment of such a public utility will be for the benefit of the whole State, and surely the leader of the Opposition should not indulge in factious opposition in view of the benefit which will accrue to the State. It seems to me to be inconsistent with the ideals of the leader of the Opposition. From time to time there seems to be a desire to throw cold water on schemes of this nature, and one would have thought the co-operative societies would have been encouraged. This is a matter which the Government could well have taken up.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They would have done so in good time.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes, after the present generation of settlers have passed away.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are only hounding and hoodling on them.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am honestly putting this matter before the House and I think the hon. member should be ashamed to say what he did.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Oh, I agree that you may be acting innocently.

Hon. P. Collier: Fancy the member for Williams-Narrogin doing it innocently.

Mr. JOHNSTON: This is a scheme which the Commonwealth Bank have agreed to assist financially.

Hon. P. Collier: Good luck, we are not stopping it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Only wheat growers are permitted to be shareholders. I have no interest in the scheme at all. Why should the opposition be indulged in against this small machinery Bill?

Hon. P. Collier: It is entirely outside the functions of government. That is why.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Such a movement should receive the assistance of this House.

Mr. PICKERING: I am prepared to admit that the contention of the leader of the Opposition is a correct one, and that we are really asking the Government to act as bankers seeing they acted in that capacity regarding the wheat pool.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am glad that you admit that.

Mr. PICKERING: The company was floated with the idea that the money would be obtained in the direction set out in the Bill. It was understood that the money should be collected through the wheat pool and that was agreed to by the Government. Seeing that it is a matter of agreement, what objection can there be to it?

Hon. P. Collier: Simply that it is outside the functions of government.

Mr. PICKERING: We admit that, but these people know they will receive only 6d. instead of 1s. on account of these shares. We

went this bulk handling scheme in the interests of the State as well as of the farmers.

Hon. P. Collier: We have thousands of Government employees in Western Australia who are unionists and we are endeavouring to establish a Labour daily paper. Will you support us in asking the Government to act as a collecting agent in order that we may secure the money for the shares?

Mr. PICKERING: That is hardly the same as this instance. In any case this scheme has met with the approval of the Prime Minister, the State Government, and the associated banks.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The associated banks and the Prime Minister have nothing to do with it.

Mr. PICKERING: We desire to secure sufficient money to go ahead with the scheme and I admit that the method of collection is unusual.

Mr. Willcock: It is the only way you could get the money.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Regarding the position of creditors, the criticism which has been levelled by members of the Opposition has not been well founded. The point raised by the member for North-East Fremantle regarding the right of the farmers to withdraw their application for shares has raised a doubt, when I look at the first three or four lines of Clause 2, as to whether they actually can withdraw in the ordinary way before allotment. In ordinary cases, an applicant, however, offers to take shares and the allotment and acceptance of those shares constitutes a contract. Unless there is an acceptance by allotment, application can be withdrawn, because there is no contract. When I look at the first few lines in Clause 2, which deals with the charge on the wheat certificates, it is open to doubt whether the withdrawal would not hold good. That is the doubt which occurs to my mind. The difficulty is got over to some extent by Subclause (3), which provides that the Minister administering the Wheat Marketing Acts is authorised, subject to Subclause (2), to pay to the company "such dividends as aforesaid to the extent as aforesaid, on the production of an application for shares signed by the wheat grower." When an ordinary bank holds a certificate, that bank will not produce the certificate without the applicant's signature. Confusion might arise in the case of the Industries Assistance Board. That point certainly requires consideration. I do not think this case is exactly on all fours with the ordinary case of application and allotment under company law. Dealing with the question of charges on certificates in the hands of the Industries Assistance Board, Subclause (2) provides that the charge created by this Bill "shall be subject to all charges under the Industries Assistance Act, 1915," and subject to anything due to the Board under that Act, and subject to anything due under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act, and also subject to all prior

encumbrances. Many of the lands were encumbered before they ever came into the hands of the Industries Assistance Board. But the subclause provides that, the charge "shall not have effect against any person to whom, at the commencement of this measure, the certificate on which the dividend is payable has been bona fide for value transferred by the wheat grower, and by whom the certificate is held; and if the crops of any shareholder, or applicant for shares, are charged to the Industries Assistance Board under the Industries Assistance Act, 1915, the surplus proceeds of such assigned crops shall be applied under Section 21 of the said Act to the discharge of the duties and obligation of such shareholder, or applicant for shares, in priority to the charge created by this Act," that is to say, this Bill. Section 21 of the Industries Assistance Act practically constitutes the Industries Assistance Board a trustee, after the discharge of liabilities due to the board, for creditors. It is only the surplus, after payment of those creditors, which could be applied towards payment of the 6d. per bushel. All those things would take priority over the charges made by this Bill. I do not think that in many of these cases the 6d. could be paid. The board would have to be very careful, before handing over the money, to see that there was provision made for all these liabilities, and for encumbrances, and for debts due to outside creditors. On the question of withdrawal of the application, I say at once that a doubt has certainly been raised in my mind as to whether the protection given by Subclause (3) goes far enough.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am glad the Attorney General dealt with the point raised by the member for North-East Fremantle in regard to applicants desirous of withdrawing their applications. As one of those associated with the placing of this scheme before the farmers, I found, wherever I went, that the farmers turned up practically to a man, and lodged their applications without any pressure at all. If any applicant wishes to withdraw, right up to the present, his application to withdraw will, so far as I am concerned, be granted; and in saying this I believe I am also speaking the views which the directors of the proposed company would hold. Personally, I would not stand for anything of a coercive nature on the point. I would welcome an amendment accordingly from the leader of the Opposition, or from the Attorney General. However, if a large number of settlers withdraw from the company, there will be no bulk handling scheme. No one who is not a wheat grower can become a shareholder in the company.

Mr. PIESSE: It is safe to assume that our friends opposite are satisfied that the State is not committed to any extent by this Bill. With a view to expediting matters, I suggest that the words "or an applicant for shares" should be struck out. Then we could amend Subclause (3) so far as to make it agree with Subclause (2).

Hon. P. Collier: On the explanation of the Attorney General I doubt whether that would effect what is wanted.

Mr. PIESSE: An applicant should not be committed to the liability of the 6d. dividend; so why not delete those words?

Hon. P. Collier: I want to see the whole Bill deleted.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I must thank the Attorney General for making the position clear. I hope hon. members now realise that no person who is indebted to the State or to any outside creditor, or whose land is mortgaged to an outside creditor, can have the 6d. per bushel advanced to him against his wheat. Therefore, under this Bill about 3,000 farmers of this State will not be able to take shares in the company. In view of the Premier's statements, I thought I might have overlooked something in the Bill. However, a legal gentleman earlier in the day gave me the same assurance as the Attorney General has given the Committee to-night. I fail to see why the Government should take any part at all in the financing of a company.

The Premier: We are not doing so.

Hon. P. Collier: Or in the formation of a trading concern.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Western Australian Government are about the only Australian Government who have a big overdraft in connection with the Wheat Marketing Scheme.

The Premier: That is because we have sold our wheat and the credits have gone elsewhere.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Government have not got the money for the wheat, and therefore they have a big overdraft. We were told previously that the wheat was the farmer's wheat and not the Government's wheat. The trouble is that the Government are asked to find the proceeds of the wheat before they receive them. Thus they are compelled to make advances out of loan funds, pending the receipt of payment for the wheat. If the Government had received the money for the wheat, a dividend would be declared. The Government have to find this £150,000 until they are paid for the wheat.

The Premier: That is not so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then what is it? One hon. member said the associated banks were agreeable to the proposition. Of course, they have not to find the money. It makes no difference to them.

The Attorney General: It makes a difference if a man is owing the bank money.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But in that case the bank would not let the certificates go. Instead of its being a good thing for the farmer, I believe the Bill will do him an injury. When the time arrives I will be prepared to support bulk handling conditionally on its being carried out by the State. It will then be done very much more cheaply than it can be by the company. It is wrong that the Government should have to find £150,000 to enable this company to start

operations. I think progress should be reported so that we might make further inquiries. The Government have been appealed to by farmers who wish to cancel their applications for shares in this company. However, the Attorney General says that if the shares have been allotted, there is a liability.

The Attorney General: That is so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If it were not for that, I would move an amendment that no applications made prior to the passing of the Act should be considered.

The PREMIER: I want to clear up the statement made by the hon. member that the West Australian Wheat Board is over-drawn. Deliveries will be made of Western Australian wheat, and the credit will go to the board. It does not mean that we are actually over-drawn, because all our wheat is away out of the State now, and the pool is a common pool and all the balances are amalgamated in the end.

Mr. Willcock: You will not declare a dividend on the last pool until you get the money from the Australian Wheat Board.

The PREMIER: No, we do not pay the dividend at all. It is paid by the central authority.

Hon. P. Collier: But they soon pass it back.

The PREMIER: Not necessarily. It is current account, and adjustments are made. The Attorney General has pointed out that it may be desirable to amend the wording of Clause 2, and so I think perhaps we might report progress.

Progress reported.

BILL—GRAIN ELEVATORS (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 10th December.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.38]: This is the No. 2 Bill on this subject. I believe there is another to come yet.

The Premier: No, that is the lot.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If ever there was a dishonest Bill introduced into the Assembly, this is it.

The Premier: What is dishonest about it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will tell the hon. member presently. This is a vote-catching Bill. It will be almost impossible for this House and another place to grant any other company the right to engage in bulk handling of grain unless the company provide for the State of Western Australia. That is a monopoly. This is a monopoly Bill pure and simple. No other company, co-operative or otherwise, can during the duration of this measure, engage in the business of bulk handling.

The Premier: You cannot have two systems.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, and much cheaper. I said this was a vote-catching

Bill. The State has been divided into districts, Albany district, Bunbury district, Fremantle district, and Geraldton district, but at the same time there is no intention to construct elevators for the bulk handling of grain outside the Fremantle district.

Mr. Griffiths: Not at the moment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Nor within the next five or ten years.

Mr. Griffiths: Do not believe it!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know what I am talking about or I would not make the statement. There is no intention whatever of constructing elevators outside the Fremantle district, and if the company got the Bill through Parliament, they would provide for the Fremantle district and the Fremantle district only.

The Premier: Do you honestly believe that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do.

The Premier: Then strike out Geraldton, Albany, and Bunbury.

Mr. Willcock: Oh, no!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I say that these districts have been inserted for the purpose of catching votes.

Mr. Griffiths: Does the hon. member seriously think that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do; in fact I know there is no intention to construct elevators outside the Fremantle district for many years. The great bulk of these works would be erected in my district, and if I were a little bit selfish, I would advocate the construction of these elevators. The greater proportion of the £800,000 to be expended would be expended on the North Fremantle side of the river, where the Government have given one of the best sites in its possession. The Government are handing over as a monopoly to one company the best sites on our harbours and near to our railway stations for bulk handling purposes, and while doing that they are providing that it shall be unlawful for any other person or company to engage in the business of the bulk handling of wheat for 25 years, the term of this agreement. To prove my statement with regard to the districts being put in for vote catching purposes and in a dishonest manner, let members refer to the bottom of page 2 of the Bill, where they will see the following provision—

In the event of the failure of the company to perform or observe all or any of the conditions hereinbefore expressed, it would be lawful for the Governor, after at least three months' notice to the company, by Order in Council, to revoke the right conferred by this Act.

A similar clause is put in almost every Act of Parliament which grants a concession to any person. It is merely a right of forfeiture and cancellation in case the work is not carried out. In some instances the company are asked to put up a deposit, even if they have not a feather to fly with. There

is a proviso in this Bill which I guarantee will not be found in any other similar Act of Parliament in this State under which concessions have been granted. It reads—

Provided that if the company shall have duly constructed elevators within any district and in all other respects shall have complied with the conditions hereinbefore prescribed, the revocation of the right conferred by this Act shall extend only to such districts in which the company shall have failed to construct elevators as aforesaid.

Mr. Willcock: Let us cut that out.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This shows clearly that the intention is to provide elevators at Fremantle only. The amount of money at the disposal of the company and likely to be at their disposal for a considerable time will only permit of the erection of elevators at Fremantle. This scheme will cost 2½ to three millions of money. In 1914 it would have cost a little over 1½ millions, and there is no possibility of a company with a limitation of 1½ millions carrying out the works proposed in the Bill. The Government lay down in the Bill the right to cancel the company's agreement unless they carry out the works. Yet, in the next paragraph, they provide that so long as the company carry out the works in one district, they shall be left alone and the cancellation shall apply only to the districts in which they have failed to construct elevators. That is why I say this is a dishonest Bill.

The Premier: You are not entitled to say that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No doubt when the Premier was asked to introduce the Bill, he received information that the districts mentioned would be supplied with elevators and he had a Bill drafted accordingly.

Mr. Griffiths: Will the farmers be content if elevators are not provided?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What say will the farmers have in the matter? The company will have their money. In Canada, when money was cheaper, the Dominion Government lent 85 per cent. of the cost of the elevators at five per cent. interest. Money could then be obtained at 3½ per cent. The co-operative societies had to put up 15 per cent. They constructed the elevators and managed them, but it was made compulsory that, if the people in a certain area deposited their 15 per cent., the co-operative company could be compelled to provide the facilities.

Mr. Griffiths: They could not demand that the facilities be provided.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They could. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Brown) will hear me out in that; he saw the copy of the Act brought to me by a representative of the Western Australian Farmers, Ltd. I wish to point out where the farmer is likely to sustain a considerable loss in connection with these elevators. We know the cost of machinery to-day. It was never higher. We know the cost of money. This money is to be advanced at six per cent. If there is failure to meet the

agreement, compound interest at ten per cent. will be charged and other provisions of foreclosure, etc., will be exercised. The time is not far distant when it will be a matter of necessity, not of choice, to remove the existing bridges at North Fremantle. When those bridges are shifted further up the river, very high ground will be available on each side of the river. Everything there could be worked by gravitation, and in machinery alone there would be a saving of many thousands of pounds in connection with these elevators. In consequence of the decision to place the works on the site which has been chosen, there will be a considerable loss to the farmers from this aspect alone, because of the heavier capitalisation charges for the erection of machinery to handle the grain and the capital cost on the construction of the works as well. Further, the foundation in that area would be much more suitable than at the present site. There is a solid rock formation, whereas at the chosen site there are a lot of sand holes which will have to be filled in and strengthened in order to carry the buildings and plant. It would be considerably to the advantage of the farmers if they paused a while to see whether the New South Wales bulk handling scheme is successful or not. We had a scheme of a similar nature proposed some time ago, and if it had not been for the Legislative Council declining to sanction it, that scheme would have been gone on with. The action of the Legislative Council saved the people a considerable amount of money, because that scheme, while suitable for storage, was not suitable for bulk handling. It must be obvious, seeing that there is a scheme on foot in New South Wales which has not yet been tested, that it would be wise to hesitate and see whether that scheme proves successful. There is a good deal of doubt regarding the matter at the present time. There is another aspect which may be referred to. It has been stated that the adoption of this method of handling grain will do away with the necessity for the farmers to purchase bags. This will not be so, and approximately a third of the wheat from Western Australia will have to be exported in bags. That is a statement which was made by the shipping companies trading in wheat between England and Australia. I saw that statement in a report, in the course of which a gentleman, named Walker I think, pointed out that a third of the wheat would have to be exported in bags. That shows that the farmers will have to continue purchasing bags as in the past.

Mr. Griffiths: Even then there will be considerable saving.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The price of jute is going down.

Mr. Griffiths: It will need to.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It has gone down by about £25 per ton. Members should remember that bags sent to England have realised half the cost of them, so that the bags have not been such a loss to the farmers.

Mr. Griffiths: That refers to those which were not cut open.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Under the pooling system the bags sent to America realised more money than was paid for them here in Australia. That money went into the pool and farmers did not lose anything. The contention put up now that the farmers will not have to spend money on bags when the bulk handling scheme is in operation is a fallacy, and the farmers will realise that in a little while after they have invested their money in this scheme. The farmers should wait for a while to see what will happen regarding the bulk handling scheme in the East. They should follow the example of Victoria. Mr. Oman, Minister for Agriculture in Victoria, replying, during the course of the Address-in-reply debate, to an interjection regarding bulk handling, is reported as follows:—

The Minister, amidst a running fire of interjections, denied there was any evidence that farmers would have benefited this year had the erection of wheat silos been commenced in 1917. He contended the present high price of cement and building material justified the Government's postponement of the scheme pending a more complete assurance that bulk handling was likely to be the cheapest and most effective method of handling the Victorian harvest. Despite an enormous expenditure, New South Wales had not yet shipped one bushel of silo wheat.

That goes to show that it is impossible to say yet what the result of the New South Wales scheme will be. I maintain that farmers here are under a delusion regarding the considerable amount it is alleged they will save on bags. As a matter of fact they will have to purchase their bags in order to get their wheat to the port of shipment. In many cases this will mean a hardship. There are many farmers who will not be served by the bulk handling scheme, and they will have to deliver their wheat under methods as they exist to-day. Yet they will have to take shares in this company although they will not reap any benefits from it and, in addition, they will have to bear the cost of the bags. We have heard several references to Canada. There is a great difference between the Canadian system and that which will operate in Australia. In Canada the silos are used six or seven times and even as many as nine times in one year. The silos are not used for wheat only but for other grains as well. As a consequence, the capitalisation of the Canadian scheme has been reduced very considerably. Seeing that the silos are used so often, the grain is handled so much cheaper and the services rendered cost so much less. In Western Australia our harvest is garnered within a few months, and in all probability the silos will only be used twice at most in the one year. As a result, the capitalisation charges will be so high that the farmers may not find it much cheaper than they do under the existing methods with bags. In these circumstances it would have been wise, be-

fore entering into any agreement regarding the bulk handling of wheat in this State, to see what is the experience in the East. If it is necessary for the introduction of such a scheme in Western Australia, the Government should have put up a scheme themselves and controlled the handling of wheat throughout the State. It is not only Fremantle which will require the erection of these elevators, but Geraldton, Bunbury, and Albany as well. I protest against the introduction of this Bill. I know there is no intention of carrying it into effect. I oppose giving a monopoly of this work and regard the Bill as a dishonest one, brought forward for the purpose of vote catching and not with the intention of carrying out the conditions embodied therein.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [10:50]: The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has referred to the position in Canada. When that dominion first instituted the bulk handling system, they exported no more grain than we did five years ago. The hon. member made a great point regarding the possible over-capitalisation of the scheme in Western Australia, and referred to the greater number of times the silos would be used in Canada than will be the case here. From the outset there was a great deal of controversy regarding Canada as to whether the scheme would be a success there or not. For some considerable time it was not altogether a success. The Government of that Dominion have leased nearly all the elevators there, including a large terminal elevator, to the co-operative companies at Port Arthur and Port Williams. The member for North-East Fremantle has referred to the expensive system installed in New South Wales. The authority he quoted, Lindley Walker, stated that had these silos been in operation during the war two-thirds of the cost of installation of the silos and the elevator system of New South Wales would have been paid for by the saving from the ravages of mice and weevil. The same thing would have applied to Western Australia. The hon. member also referred to the cost of bags. For this State the cost of bags is £200,000. He said a great deal about the price of jutes and remarked that a bag cost eighteen pence but when it went to London it had the knife put into it, and that this represented a tremendous waste.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That would be done with bags used in connection with elevators here.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: A proportion of the bags would have to be used for binding the wheat. That would suit a certain proportion of the farmers of the State who would send their wheat in that form. The bulk handling system cannot be brought into operation simultaneously everywhere. A certain quantity of bags will have to be used, but if one-third of £200,000 is spent on bags the other two-thirds will be saved. Better handling and more economical handling of the wheat would be brought about. It would also be handled more quickly. A good deal has been said about the necessity for extending the berthing accommodation in our Australian ports. In the use of the bulk handling system a great deal is saved in the loading of the wheat

into trucks. Where it will take an hour to load a truck, under the bulk handling system it will only take five or six minutes. A ship may be loaded in eight or nine hours as against eight or nine days under the present system. That represents a considerable saving of time, when we consider the various trains that are required to haul the wheat on to the various wharves. That saving will largely obviate the necessity of increasing the berthing accommodation that we are supposed to require. There is also the avoidance of waste.

Hon. P. Collier: Will you be able to get ships that will carry the grain in bulk?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That is one of the old bogeys. It was inquired into eight years ago at the time I represented the producers' union in Kellerberrin. We made a trial shipment. We were able to get a ship then. We had an assurance from the shipping people that if we could provide the business they would find the facilities for handling it. I do not think New South Wales would have embarked upon this scheme if there had been any doubt as to finding ships' bottoms for conveying the wheat in bulk. Argentina is 1,000 miles nearer to the English markets than we are, and is our closest outside rival. They have found no trouble in getting ships to take away the wheat in bulk to the old country. Another bogey which has been trotted out is that there will not be bulk handling facilities provided at the various outside ports. We have been sending wheat to Japan, Java, and China under the bag system, and we are told there will be no facilities there for the bulk handling system. The respective Governments of those countries are prepared at any time, when the wheat can be shipped in sufficiently large quantities, to establish these facilities.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has not been done in England.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It is at almost every port.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Only at one or two.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Such facilities are provided on the Mersey, in Edinburgh, on the Avon at Bristol, in Hull, and in London. Most of the principal ports of England that have direct trade with Australia have provided these facilities. It is rather the exception than the rule not to find these facilities provided.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Agent General told me there are only one or two ports in England where that state of affairs exists.

Mr. Pickering: That is wrong.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Hon. members have seen the fearful waste which occurred at the various sidings during the war through wheat being allowed to lie exposed to the weather and the ravages of weevil and mice. When I was in New South Wales I saw a deplorable sight so far as the weevil was concerned. They had re-conditioning plants there in operation, which restored what to me appeared to be an accumulation of rubbish, but it was restored into stuff which was marketable for Japan. At all events it could be used in some form. Nevertheless the waste was deplorable. Had there been a proper system of handling with silos the greater part of this waste, if not all, would have been avoided.

Hon. W. C. Angwin : No, it would not.

Mr. GRIFFITHS : When the wheat is in a silo the mice can do no damage and the weevil have no effect, for it can be treated when stored in that way. So far as the financing of the crop is concerned, there is simplification all round. The entire system is simplified. The weight and the quality of the wheat are determined by an outside authority. One is able to arrive at a proper system of dockage and to get at the real quality of the wheat. Negotiable certificates which are as good as money are issued to the farmer. I have been asking questions on the point in this House to-day. I demur to the system of dockage in this State. On 10 million bushels handled by the Western Australian pool last year a dockage of over £10,000 has been taken off the individual farmers. Admittedly, any gain resulting from the dockage went back into the pool. However, comparing the position here with the position in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, on a basis of 10 million bushels, South Australia's dockage was only £1,400 as against over £10,000 here, and the New South Wales dockage—

Hon. W. C. Angwin : South Australia has not got the bulk handling system.

Mr. GRIFFITHS : Shortly, the position is that the dockage here has been £10,000 as against £1,200 to £1,400 on like quantities in the other States. I advance that as an argument to show that our system of dockage is haphazard.

Hon. W. C. Angwin : What has that matter to do with bulk handling ?

Mr. GRIFFITHS : Everything. In regard to bulk handling there is a system of grading wheat. The wheat is graded scientifically and exactly. In this respect the pooling system is simply a matter of guess-work half the time. Moreover, the bulk handling system will simplify operations throughout the length and breadth of the country, thereby releasing an army of men who to-day are engaged in lumping wheat. At Kellerberrin an Anglo-Canadian visitor who, with me, was watching the system of handling into the Kellerberrin mill—some 10 or 12 men being employed—turned to me and said, "What adjective waste! There are 10 wagons there unloading wheat, and they will probably be there for the better part of the day. In Canada those wagons would have gone to a little country elevator, and in three or four minutes they would have been unloaded by the man on the wagon and the man at the weighing machine." At Kellerberrin there was a little army of men at work. One was on top of the wagon pushing the wheat down. Another was getting it on to his shoulder. Another was checking the weights and marking the truck. Yet another was waiting to have the wheat put on his back. Still another was helping him. Up the gangway they went, to three or four men on top. The bulk handling system would require only two men for that work, not 12 men. By adopting bulk handling, we shall release a very large number of men who would be better employed in producing than in lumping wheat. The work they are doing now represents wasted labour.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [11-14] : I take the same objection as the member for

North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin has taken to the proviso at the end of Subclause 3 of Clause 2. When a monopoly is given for the bulk handling of wheat, the terms of the monopoly should be observed in their entirety; otherwise there ought to be no monopoly. The member for North-East Fremantle suggests that it is not the desire of the Government to have bulk handling adequately established in Western Australia as indicated in the first part of the Bill. The hon. member also said that it would be impossible for the company with their present finances to instal an effective system of bulk handling here. Unless the company are prepared to raise considerably more capital, the operation of bulk handling will be restricted to Fremantle, notwithstanding the fact that the ports of Albany, Bunbury, and Geraldton are mentioned in the Bill. Despite the fact, there will be no bulk handling facilities at those ports for a very considerable time to come unless the company's financial position is very much strengthened. I cannot see my way to give the Bill any support unless the proviso to Subclause 3 of Clause 2 is struck out, and I shall move in that direction during the Committee stage. Again, I want to know how the buying of wheat is to be conducted ? By the company ? What is to take place in that respect has not been explained to the House. In connection with the buying of the wheat there will be required the services of some official in whom everyone has the utmost confidence. Such an official is needed in order to check the wheat into the silos.

Hon. W. C. Angwin : Canada has a Grain Act providing for inspectors to that end.

Mr. WILLCOCK : The inspector's salary would be a charge on the company. In America the owners of the elevators are the people who traffic in wheat. They buy wheat according to grade. Although they purchase only from 10 to 15 per cent. of first grade grain, they sell about 50 per cent. of first grade grain. Practically all the wheat bought by the American elevator companies is sold by them as either first grade wheat or second grade wheat. If the bulk handling system here is to be controlled by a board, it is just as well to know how such control is to be conferred and exercised. A Bill for that purpose should be brought down as soon as the bulk handling system has been instituted here. I want to know who is going to be responsible, under the Bill, for the purchasing of wheat ? Who is going to acquire the wheat ?

Hon. P. Collier : It is a very incomplete Bill. There are many things missing from it.

Mr. WILLCOCK : The system is not outlined in any way. The Bill merely says that the company are not to deal or traffic in grain. Who, then, is going to deal or traffic in grain ?

Hon. W. C. Angwin : If wheat is damaged incidentally to the operations of the bulk handling system, who will be responsible ?

Mr. WILLCOCK : There is no completeness about the Bill. It is a half-bred measure which nobody can understand.

Hon. P. Collier : I heard that it was proposed later on—not this session—to introduce another Bill making the certificates for wheat put into the silos negotiable documents, against which the Government would grant advances. There

is something behind this business. These people are not showing the whole of their hand.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I object to the Bill on the score of its incompleteness. We do not know where we are in this business at all.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We want a Grain Act.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I cannot grasp who is going to do the trafficking in wheat, or how the wheat is to be checked into and out of the silos. This latter work will have to be done under the supervision of a Government inspector, or of some other person in whom the wheat growers will have implicit confidence. Otherwise, no farmer will send his wheat to the silos, because, if he does so in the absence of a check of that kind, he will not know whether his wheat is to be paid for as first grade, or as second grade, or as third grade wheat, and therefore will not know how much he is to receive for it. On the other hand, if the company are allowed to do the supervising—

Mr. Pickering: The company will not deal in wheat at all.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Somebody will have to decide what is the grade of the wheat being put into the elevator.

Mr. Griffiths: Inspectors will have to be appointed here in the same way as they have been appointed in Canada.

Mr. WILLCOCK: We have had no information as to how long the scheme will take to carry out. The only place where any considerable measure of success has attended the bulk handling system is the United States. The system is practically new in Canada. In the United States the system is controlled by companies, and it has worked most detrimentally to the interests of the United States farmers.

Mr. Griffiths: This is very much better than that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Only because there is nothing here at all.

Mr. Griffiths: The company have nothing to do with the buying. This is merely for the erection of the elevators.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I want to know something more about it before I vote for it.

Mr. Pickering: You did not even know that the company were not to deal in grain.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, I did: I specially referred to it. This is an ill-conceived measure, not deserving of consideration.

Hon. P. Collier: Who is to advance the money against the certificates?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Nothing is known, no information is given. There will be no responsibility about it. If we knew how it was going to operate, we might be induced to vote for it. I am prepared to accept the estimate of the member for North-East Fremantle that it will cost over two million pounds to instal bulk handling throughout the State, and that therefore the outports will not be supplied with silos. If we are to give any company a monopoly in bulk handling, they should be made to carry out all the conditions provided in the Act. But under this they could merely explain that they did not find it convenient to erect silos at Bunbury or at Geraldton, and the Government would say, "Oh, you need not bother, we will simply cancel your monopoly rights in those districts." I should prefer to see this under Government supervision.

Mr. Griffiths: Everything carried out under Government control is a failure.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, institutions such as the Agricultural Bank, the Industries Assistance Board and a few other schemes for the benefit of the farmer. I require to know something more about the Bill before I can support the second reading.

On motion by Mr. O'Loughlen debate adjourned.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH ENDOWMENT LANDS.

Council's Message.

Message received from the Council notifying that it did not insist on its amendments to the Bill.

House adjourned at 11.24 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Friday, 17th December, 1920.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—STATE FINANCES.

Hon. A. SANDERSON asked the Minister for Education: 1, On the 30th September, 1920, what was—(a) the total public debt of the State; (b) the total amount of the sinking fund; (c) the amount of inscribed stock issued—(i) in London; (ii) in Australia? 2, How much was paid to the sinking fund during the last financial year? 3, How much is outstanding in—(a) Treasury bills; (b)