

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Apparently the country members do not want the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It would look like that. It will relieve the financial problems of the Government if the Bill is not passed. We do not want to force it on the agricultural community. Only last week I gave alarming figures as to the amount spent on agricultural water supplies, and I then explained that requests for more were still coming in. Judged from previous experience, if the amendment be insisted upon and passed, a water area will be constituted and then there will be the protest that the supply is not capable of meeting the reasonable requirements of the settlers, and that protest will be fortified by all sorts of evidence. In those circumstances it is not to be expected that the Government will spend hundreds of thousands of pounds in providing supplies, unless the interests of the taxpayer are safeguarded.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do you say the Bill could not be applied to small wells or tanks?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It could be, but what Government would make it apply? It is a ridiculous suggestion.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If we were to strike out those words which have been inserted in Clause 2, it would mean restoring the very words that were objected to. I believe the Chief Secretary when he says it is not intended to include the small water supplies.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Well, why not put that in the Bill?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the words that were inserted here and objected to in another place be struck out, we immediately reinsert the very words that gave rise to all the previous controversy. Any assurance the Chief Secretary may give us would not protect the unfortunate settler. If the Government or a board found they were in need of money, and had the power to impose a rate in respect of the supply of water, they would impose that rate. The Chief Secretary's assurance would not have the force of law, and would not afford the protection the amendment would give. So we should have some safeguard. If it were possible to provide for the reasonable requirements of the persons rated, it would be a good thing, but I can see the difficulty explained by the Chief Secretary. So I suggest for

his consideration that we leave in the clause as amended, but also amend the wording by inserting the words "in constructing works" before the words "providing a water supply." We shall then dispose of the controversial words "sufficient capacity to supply the reasonable requirements of the ratepayers."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am inclined to agree with the previous speaker. The words to which I object are those inserted by Mr. Hamersley "of sufficient capacity to supply the reasonable requirements of the ratepayers."

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out that the effect of agreeing to the Chief Secretary's motion will be to reinstate the following words.—"Whenever wells, tanks, and other similar waterworks have been or may hereafter be provided by the Department of Public Works in agricultural or other areas."

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.3 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 29th November, 1928.

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

QUESTION—LAND SOUTH OF NORSEMAN.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH (for Mr. Thomson) asked the Minister for Lands: In view of the Press statement that the Trustees of the Agricultural Bank have re-

fused to make advances on land south of Norseman, will he make their report available by placing it upon the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (for the Minister for Lands) replied: The trustees have not submitted a report, but recommended that no more mallee land south of Salmon Gums should be made available for selection at the present time. The ordinary bank policy still applies to settlers already on their holdings, and to land north of Salmon Gums. The trustees are visiting the district next week to make a thorough investigation of the Esperance area.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. M. F. Troy (Mt. Magnet) and Hon. W. D. Johnson (Guildford) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2.)

Introduced by Mr. Sampson and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Licensing Act Amendment.

2, Stamp Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HOSPITAL FUND.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

Postponed Clause 13—Contributions by companies:

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Last night the member for West Perth raised the point that insurance companies other than life insurance companies would have to pay tax on transferred liability. If they accepted a risk of £10,000 and re-insured with another company for £5,000, he said they would have to pay on the £10,000. I consulted the Crown Solicitor and the Commissioner of Taxation and both assure me

there is not the slightest doubt that they would be exempt. I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph be added:—
“This section shall not apply to shipping companies.”

There is only one local shipping company—the Swan River Shipping Company—and we would collect from them. The other shipping companies would receive no benefit from local hospitals and therefore I have no desire to tax them. The Merchant Shipping Act distinctly lays down that a ship is responsible for the payment of hospital fees and medical expenses for any member of the crew.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You could not make a shipping company pay twice over.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No. If a seaman falls sick and is put into hospital, the ship is liable and, so far as I can ascertain, the shipping companies have always met their responsibilities.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The amendment is quite right.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not oppose the amendment. As regards the point raised by the member for West Perth, I assume that the Minister has satisfied himself his information is correct, and that there is no necessity to pursue the matter.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Dr. Stowe, Mr. Walker, and Mr. Sayer all confirm what I have stated.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—GROUP SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—LAKE GRACE-KARLGARIN RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.52] in moving the second reading said: It will be remembered that the report of the Railway Advisory Board on this line was presented to Parliament in 1926. A decision in the matter has been delayed by differences

of opinion. The second committee appointed by the Government to inquire into the probable routes of main trunk lines caused the Government to delay in deciding which route they would recommend Parliament to adopt. Cabinet has now decided to recommend the adoption of the route suggested by the Railways Advisory Board; and that is the proposal which the Bill contains. The board's report stated that they had inspected the Karlgarin, Jilakin and North Newdegate districts with a view to reporting on the best means of providing railway facilities for the country east of Kondinin and Kulin, and had been given considerable assistance by the local organisations. A mass of interesting information and statistics has been supplied. The board point out that considerable development is taking place in the newly settled district east of Kondinin and in older districts in that area, and that there is now settlement over 40 miles out from the railway. In the opinion of the board the best means of serving the district would be an extension of the line for approximately 54 miles out from Lake Grace. There was a local difference of opinion as to which route should be taken, but the people of Karlgarin, where the main settlement is, did not seem to mind which route the railway took so long as they were served. They did not become a party to the battle of routes, though the Jilakin people strongly urged the route proposed by the Bill. The board point out that a line running eastward from Kondinin for a distance of about 34 miles would serve an area of about 502,000 acres, of which about 96,000 acres are alienated, but would leave unserved about 224,000 acres in the Jilakin district, of which about 62,000 acres are alienated and are being worked. On the other hand, a line running northeasterly from Lake Grace to a point east of Kondinin and thence to a point about 34 miles east of that centre, a total distance of about 52½ miles, would serve an area of about 726,000 acres, of which about 158,000 acres are alienated, and would at the same time serve both the Karlgarin and Jilakin settlers. After the report of the second committee that dealt with main trunk lines, the report on this railway was referred back to the board. On the second occasion a majority of the board still held to their first recommendation. In their second report they point out that in view

of the large amount of settlement in the Jilakin and Karlgarin areas, a railway to serve these districts is essential, and they recommend that the line be constructed from Lake Grace northwards about 50 miles to a point about 25 miles east of Kondinin. They also stated that in their opinion it would be necessary to extend this line in the near future to junction with the main line at Southern Cross. The country between Lake Grace and Southern Cross is now in course of classification, which has disclosed that there is a large area suitable for settlement. The board also state that the construction of this line will not affect the proposal to build a line from Kondinin to Salmon Gums, should such a line prove to be justified when the nature of the country has been ascertained. In view of the development which has taken place in the district, the Government think it will be necessary eventually to take the proposed line right up to the Eastern Goldfields railway, junctioning at Southern Cross. Even to-day there is much settlement out east from Narembeen, and that district will have to be served by a railway sooner or later. The natural thing would seem to be to take the line right through to Southern Cross. Many miners are settled along that route now, and the surveyors are out in the area. In all probability there will have to be a second line coming away from Southern Cross further inland, and taking a detour to link up with Salmon Gums. It is not thought, however, that the present proposal will in any way interfere with the original suggestion that a trunk line should eventually be constructed to link up Kondinin with Corrigin, thus giving that area more direct access to its nearest port. The other railway will be considered on its merits when the question of constructing main trunk lines comes up for decision. What the Bill proposes is rather an extension of the railway system to serve country further east from the existing line. It has not yet been determined what weight of rails will be used. The matter is now being examined, and a recommendation will be submitted to the Government. A ruling grade of one in 80 is aimed at, and also a 20-chain minimum radius of curves. It is thought that the line will be approximately 54 miles long. The estimated cost with 45-lb. rails will be approximately £3,700 per mile, or a total

of £200,000; with 60-lb. rails, £4,300 per mile, or a total of £232,000. Railway construction to-day runs into big money. The cost of rails, sleepers, and all other requisites has risen. However, some of the settlers whom this Bill proposes to serve have been out there for many years without railway facilities, and are carting as far as 40 miles. They were given a definite promise of railway communication when they took up their land, and the Government must live up to that obligation. It has therefore been decided to adopt the recommendation of the majority of the Railways Advisory Board, notwithstanding that that body was divided in opinion. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1928-29

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 27th November; Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £232,804:

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.59]: The Loan Estimates really disclose the policy of the Government. The Revenue Estimates provide largely for the carrying on of services which have been established over many years, but the Loan Estimates do disclose the difference between parties in the matter of policy as no other proposal submitted to the House by the Government does. The Government, I daresay, will declare that they have been carrying on the policy of their predecessors; and I suppose some of the people will deceive themselves into thinking that it is so—that is to say, those of the people who want to deceive themselves. If the position is examined, however, it is seen that while it may be easy to say, “We will carry on your policy,” it is quite another matter to adopt the methods of other people, the ideals of another Government. It is a very difficult matter in every detail. I say this because there is a sort of feeling abroad that there is no rivalry between the parties, between the Premier and me. Of course there is rivalry; a generous rivalry if you like, but still a rivalry.

Mr. Pantom: I am sorry to hear that

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Oh no. It is on my part a generous rivalry. I remember that when the Government came back here with a majority I hoped they would carry on my policy. Perhaps they have not quite done that, but they have endeavoured to do so and I hope they will continue that endeavour. For with me the country counts for more than party, and I think it should be so with everybody. But I do not think it right that the people should deceive themselves into the belief that the policy of the previous Government is being carried on by the present Government as the previous Government would have carried it on. Neither do I think the people should regard the methods of the present Government as being the methods of the previous Government, or conclude that the ideals of the previous Government are being carried out by the present Government. The fact that there is no open hostility and that we do not have from time to time accusations made against this Government by us sitting on this side, does not mean that we are in accord with the present Government or approve of what the Government are doing.

Mr. Pantom: I think you are a bit with us.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I daresay, a little bit.

Mr. Teesdale: But not too far, like.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member will go much further with me than I can possibly go with the Government. Of that there is no doubt.

Mr. Teesdale: In growing flowers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Even growing flowers is a very useful occupation. It is much better than being in Parliament and supporting wrong proposals. We have endeavoured to help the Government here in this House to carry on the work of government, and sometimes I think we are a little misunderstood, because in the past things were so very different. Then there were made against the Government accusations of all sorts of diabolical motives. We never hear that sort of thing to-day. The people believe, indeed there can be no doubt about it, that the country would be better served by us than it is by the party in office. But of course we must have a majority, else we are not permitted to carry on. These Estimates show how much better could the work of the country be carried on by a Government such as that which this Government succeeded than it is being carried on

now. All one has to do is to turn to the Estimates of our time and compare them with the Estimates now before us. We are spending a lot of money and we ought to see that we get value for our expenditure—I mean real value. We have had that value in the past; we have done that for many years, but it has not been attained during the last few years. Our job is to use borrowed money as an individual ought to do. We must ask ourselves where is the money to come from to pay interest and sinking fund on this £4,817,200. That is a simple question that every member ought to ask himself—where is this £264,000 per annum, which will be the cost of this money, to come from? Obviously it cannot come from increased taxation; there is no room for that. We have used up our every right to tax the people, and indeed have done a bit beyond it.

The Minister for Railways: Increasing prosperity will help the people to pay their taxes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And increased prosperity can only come from the wise expenditure of these enormous sums we are borrowing. I make no allowance for the 1 per cent. money when I speak of £4,817,200, because I do not know what amount of 1 per cent. money will be included in that sum. But I show that we are slipping in the useful work we have been doing from borrowed money. For the four new railways £498,000 is provided. The Minister has told us that if we use 60-lb. rails, as we should do, it will pay for a little over 100 miles of railway. On agriculture we are to spend £1,753,500. But as to the £800,000 for group settlement—which is £400 for each man on a group block—it is obvious that a great deal of this £800,000 is to be taken into revenue to recoup the Government the interest on the money advanced to group settlers. So for this portion of the £4,817,200 to produce increased wealth, the amount must be very considerably reduced below £1,753,500. Certainly not one-third of the money we shall borrow this year will be loaned to increase production of wealth. The Minister is right in saying that increased prosperity will make it easy for the people to pay the interest bills. When you set out to establish a country you have to spend a good deal of money that is not directly interest-earning. We have all the public buildings in the metropolitan area and scattered throughout the

State. They had to be provided for the purposes of government, and at very great cost. Then we have the harbours. People must have harbours, whether at Fremantle, Geraldton, Bunbury, Busselton, Albany, Esperance or in the North-West. We must have them. In establishing a country there is a great deal to be done that is not directly interest-producing. But when the country is well-established then we can say we must invest our money wisely and bring about an increased production of wealth. If we spend £5,000,000, we ought to increase the production of wealth—having established all the utilities I have referred to—by at least pound for pound. We shall have to increase the production of wealth, the real wealth, the national income, by at least 2½ million pounds if we are to pay comfortably the £264,000 on this £4,817,200. By that we will have to increase the production of wheat and wool and will have to hope for an increased production of gold and coal, and increased sales of timber. All these things will have to produce more wealth; otherwise we shall have to call upon the taxpayers, already overburdened, who pay the interest bill. I hope that will be remembered, that you cannot have this money unless you pay for it. It is not a question of borrowing £4,817,200, but a question of what you are going to do with it when you get it. Really it would be better to borrow £10,000,000, if we could be certain that it would earn interest and sinking fund without imposing any new burden on the taxpayers, than it would be to borrow £2,000,000 of which £1,000,000 would be spent on dead work. It is not a question of the money owing, but a question of what we have done with the money borrowed. A great deal of money is to be used in additions and improvements to existing railways. Probably the department will save interest by this work. It may pay the department, of course.

The Minister for Railways: And pay the settlers too.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But not so much as it will pay the department. Sidings have to be constructed for the convenience of the settlers.

The Minister for Railways: And there is the provision of trucks.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Trucks are provided for under another heading. I am speaking of permanent improvements. I do not say you could not spend a great

deal of money on additional improvements to opened railways without loss to the department. But it is a question whether at this stage, when we want money for increased production, we should not be careful about spending it on improvements to establish utilities. Then a large amount is to be spent in the metropolitan area on works, including water supply and sewerage.

The Minister for Railways: You committed us to that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This Government can always say that I put them on the road, but I do not admit that I put them on the road to destruction. Of course I committed the Government to going on with this work of providing water. I think it became the duty of the Government years ago to serve the people of the metropolitan area with water and sewerage, and of course that work is going on. To-day the Minister is advised by his officials that we shall have to enter upon still bigger schemes if we are to meet the requirements of the near future.

The Minister for Works: There is not nearly enough money to provide what is wanted.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have frequently said that you require to keep your eye on the experts. Again, the users, the people who benefit by this expenditure, will pay the interest. Whilst we might be able to escape the expenditure on the provision of a water supply in Perth, and while they will pay because we tax the land to pay for this special service, yet we do not increase the production of wealth. Even the interest on this money has to come from the wealth produced by people elsewhere.

The Minister for Railways: You are not objecting, are you?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Since we undertook the responsibility many years ago we have to go on with the work, just as we have to go on with the development of the electric light plant. There we have established a monopoly, and we have to continue giving the service to all. We cannot say to one man, "You are free to switch on your light" and to another "Unfortunately you cannot switch on, because we have not sufficient current to supply you." We have to keep on adding units to the power station, and it will be a never-ending job. But that

is all right so long as we get interest on the money involved.

The Minister for Railways: We are supplying a lot of current for industrial purposes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course some current is used for industrial purposes, but our industries are not very extensive and so we do not get the benefit that we might. The power is used and I do not complain about that.

The Minister for Railways: We ought to be encouraging primary production by way of irrigation, for instance. Take the work in the Swan district.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know all about that. Power is also used for the conversion of old iron into steel. We get our interest from this expenditure in the metropolitan area on facilities that are given to it, and also on the enormous expenditure on electricity. The point is that, whilst that money does not cost the general taxpayer anything, it does mean that we have to pay interest on the money. We want to devote a great deal of the money we borrow to increasing production, which is the master word. It is the production of the national income we ought always to have before us. It is now over 30 millions a year. In the old days of the gold-mining industry it was not half that. We have borrowed money and invested it wisely in the establishment of farms and in other directions. Because of that our wealth to-day is over 30 millions a year. We discussed finance fairly fully on the Revenue Estimates, and there is no need to repeat what was said then. I merely wish to utter a word of warning, because I think it ought to be uttered and never forgotten. Up to this point we have created an asset equal to the amount of our public indebtedness. Probably we could sell our assets for a great deal more than our indebtedness. We shall have paid off £12,000,000 from our loans when we disburse the sinking fund we now hold. We have really a very excellent asset for every farthing we owe. Properly handled I think the assets would earn interest on every farthing we owe. I do not know that is so to-day. We must spend with care. A further loan of £4,800,000 is an enormous sum for a handful of people. We are not increasing our population as rapidly as we are indulging in the expenditure of borrowed money. The general taxpayer cannot

afford to pay any of the interest which must be found for this money. The investors must do that. We must keep that point before us. If we can lend two-thirds to agriculturists who pay the interest on the two-thirds, and who pay taxation, provide freight for the railways, work for the harbours and our people generally, to an extent which comes to more than enough to pay interest on the other third, that is right and well. Nothing could be better for the people of the State or for the Empire. If we reverse the position, as was the case last year, and spend two-thirds on works and one-third on increased production, we are asking that third to do too much. It cannot be done. Two-thirds of the money invested to increase production is what we ought to aim at in our borrowing. Every member must make it plain to the people that they can not have things they cannot pay for. It is no use expecting that we can spend enormous sums of money on facilities that may mean a great convenience and comfort, until we increase the production of wealth. Our production of wealth ought to be £40,000,000 on the standard that now obtains. Last year we reached within £3,000,000 of paying our way between our imports and exports. The previous year the difference was £6,000,000. This year we are not likely to get quite the wheat crop we expected. The difference between the 40,000,000 bushels we anticipated and the 30,000,000 bushels we shall get will be represented by money borrowed in the Old Land.

The Minister for Railways: Surely not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The 2½ million pounds which we shall probably not get, but had a right to expect we would get for our wheat, will be borrowed in London. It is most important that we should increase the production of wealth.

The Minister for Railways: If we could get the 40 millions we should nearly have turned the corner.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I wish we could get that. It would not be so bad if we could pay our way. We look upon England as a country that is suffering horribly as the result of the war, and paying more than any other country is paying. Notwithstanding this, England pays her way, and pays interest she owes to America, besides lending £100,000,000 to the nations of the world, including the Dominions.

The Minister for Railways: England had a great accumulation of capital.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The £4,000,000,000 invested when war broke out has all gone. Since then England has invested £5,000,000,000 on which interest is being paid. We have a better chance than England has of paying our way, a forty-times better chance. Here the production of wealth per individual can be greater than it is in the Old Country. There is no reason why we should be in the position of having to borrow money to make up the difference between our exports and our imports. The fact that we shall get less for our wheat this year is so serious that we shall have to borrow the difference between the crop we expected and the crop we shall get. We should aim at breaking down all that. It is no good talking about the imports of butter and other things that we should be producing here. We must take the position as we find it.

The Minister for Railways: You cannot build up an asset and have a big income at the same time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am talking about the national income.

The Minister for Railways: The national asset is appreciating.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The national asset must increase the national income, otherwise it is not an asset. That is the point about this borrowing. Within the last four years we have borrowed £17,000,000, a quarter of all we owe. Now we are going to add another £5,000,000. If it were not for the fact that we got revenue from unexpected sources, and for the work that was done when we were in office bearing fruit in the way it is doing, and for the 1 per cent. money that we are getting under the Migration Agreement, the first steps in which were taken by my Government, I do not know where we should be. The present Government are reaping the benefit of the work that was done before them. We are transferring too much money from loan to revenue under various headings. Last year the departmental expenditure under the Loan Estimates was £180,000. This year with the same expenditure of loan money the amount will be £232,000. How can we want more to recoup departmental charges, that is for work done by

the permanent officials in the department, this year than we wanted last year?

The Minister for Railways: We are building up a big national asset.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not by that means. No one is so blind as he who will not see. If it took £180,000 last year to provide a recoup on departmental works on account of loan expenditure, how comes it that £52,000 more is required this year, seeing that the Loan Estimates last year were the same as they are this year. It is merely boosting the revenue. I have already referred to the Auditor General's report on this point and have no desire to go over the ground again. Money we get at 1 per cent. for group settlement has been taken into revenue at the full rate. I warn Ministers that they cannot go on spending money unless they can find some means of paying the interest without making further drains upon the general taxpayer. We have put nearly 10 million pounds into works in the last four years, and this costs us over £500,000 a year. The increased revenue to recoup interest from public utilities was £98,000, so that we are about £400,000 down. I hope some of this money will be picked up this year. There will be time for these investments to give results. It certainly takes time to get returns even from our wheat lands. The fact that we get money at 1 per cent. should not make us reckless. I do not think we are carrying out the conditions under which we get these wonderful advantages. I do not think we are bringing in the people we ought to be bringing in, having regard for the money we are borrowing.

The Minister for Works: That has been carefully checked.

The Minister for Railways: It would be better if we had not so many foreigners, for whom we get no subsidy.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: As we are a white race, it is not convenient to have them just now, when there is unemployment.

The Minister for Railways: They will break down our capacity to absorb migrants.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is not convenient to have them now, but they are good people.

The Minister for Railways: That is the only point in regard to migration.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is used as an excuse for everything. We have spent this 1 per cent. money on railways, water

supplies and land settlement. In some cases we are paying 1 per cent., and are charging the full rate of interest against the work, and paying that into revenue. That is wrong and a day of reckoning must come. On group settlement this year we have an expenditure of £800,000, and in addition something has to be allowed for roads and railways. This works out at £450 a man. The group settlers cannot draw more than a third of that sum. The rest is largely debited for interest on the enormous amount that has to be spent. A number of these areas are ready to be brought into production. At the Peel Estate men have been taken off the land, but it is quite evident that the value of the land there has been under-estimated. Our job is to develop this country, and in the territory where it is proposed to establish the 3,000 farms, we had better get the land ready before we say too much about it. Already many people have come from the Eastern States expecting to be able to walk on to blocks. Latterly, I dare say, we have had far more people from the Eastern States than from Europe, and all expect to be able to take up areas of land soon after they arrive. But when surveys have been made, and there are people of our own who are waiting for land, they should receive first attention and then the people from the Eastern States can come in. I think it would be wiser not to say too much about the 3,000 farms scheme until we know more about that country. When surveys have been made and when the Government have decided where the railways are to run, then will be time enough to talk about it. I believe that a great deal of our second-class land will yet become permanent wheat fields. It is all a matter of the price we get for wheat. It looks to-day as if the price were going to be satisfactory, whereas the September telegrams were rather disturbing. Fortunately the outlook is very much better now and the latest advice is that we shall probably get a good price. Then there is the south-western part of the State in which I hope the people will have still greater faith. The South-West is just now responding as well as the most optimistic man in Western Australia could expect. It is responding well to fertilisers and seed. Pastures have been laid down with great success. For 90 years, though we did not forget vegetable seeds, we forgot the cow. We thought that the cow would

live on the natural pastures, and consequently did not bother about artificial grasses. Seeds have been taken to other countries of the world to provide pastures, and now we have done it, with the result that the pastures of the South-West are better than they have ever been. The result is that at the present time we are making 50 tons of butter a week. That is something to have accomplished, and a little later on when we have settled more of that part of the State we should not hesitate to extend the railway system through it. Reference has been made to the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook line and another from Bridgetown to Mt. Barker. A line is being built also from Pemberton to Nornalup. All these railways will help materially to open up the South-West. Unfortunately I do not see very much about them in the Loan Estimates. Then there is the Yarramony railway which was authorised a long time ago. That certainly ought to be built, and I do not know why it is being held up. At least I do know that it is because other lines are being built with one per cent. money. In any event the Yarramony line could be a light railway similar to those built on the goldfields to carry firewood. By the way, I hope the Minister will not buy any more 45lb. rails. Then there is also the Dale River railway, the authority to construct which was obtained before the present Government assumed office. Whilst we have set aside something under half a million for the construction of new railways, we have done very little for the North-West. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) will pardon me for again mentioning King's Bay Harbour. The Premier told us that he would include an amount for the work there in the Loan Bill. I think, however, that that work should find a place on the Loan Estimates, and that the Estimates ought to be altered. There is an amount on the Estimates for repairs to Point Samson jetty, which jetty, of course, the Government have no intention of repairing. That is probably a mistake on the Estimates, and may be intended to represent an amount for the opening up of King's Bay Harbour. I do not know whether the Estimates can be altered, but if it possible to alter them, the Premier should do so.

Mr. Teesdale: I don't mind what he has done, so long as we get the work carried out.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is all that it is proposed to do for the North out of this expenditure of £4,800,000. It is a very old settlement and a well-stocked district, and therefore I hope the harbour will be started forthwith.

Mr. Teesdale: They have not shipped a hoof from there for over four years. Stock are dying in the paddocks.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: From Norseman to Esperance we have built 120 miles of railway, half of it with one per cent. money. That low rate of interest, however, will operate for only five years. Therefore we should get on with the work rapidly if interest is to be earned by the lines. The land being served by the railways must be developed promptly. We have spent £90,000 on the water supply at McPherson's Rock. That, too, is money borrowed at one per cent.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Not £90,000.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I understand that is the amount that is being spent.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: The water supply cost about £20,000. That has been spent on the reservoir and the necessary masonry work. There is no reticulation other than the connection between the reservoir and the railway siding.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I thought you were reticulating the whole district, and I understood the cost was about £90,000. Perhaps that amount covers road clearing as well.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: The water supply itself will not cost more than £20,000.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But there has been cleared 100 miles of road. I am sorry I got the impression that the whole of the £90,000 was spent on the water supply. Still, we have not settled the district, although such a large sum of money has been spent there. We shall be paying the full rate of interest at the end of 10 years and we must get on with the work so as to be prepared when the time arrives for the payment of the higher rate. With regard to the Esperance dis-

trict, I am satisfied that it will yet become a valuable asset to the State. As mallee country it has not so far proved as good as people hoped it would, that is, for wheat growing. I am certain, however, it can be converted into a valuable and highly-profitable territory by growing crops for stock and subsequently growing wheat.

The Minister for Railways: You are thus building up the land all the time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is an extraordinary amount of limestone in that country and probably lupins would have a considerable effect on it. I have no doubt about its future, but the thing is to persevere. I am glad to hear that the Agricultural Bank Trustees are going down there. Courage will have to be displayed in the handling of the situation. The bank, we know, is a business concern and is giving effect to the policy of the country set up by Parliament. Naturally the bank will not lend money unless it sees a prospect of getting it back. A lot of money has already been advanced, and a great deal more will have to be lent before we can expect the district to earn interest and sinking fund. Our road expenditure is considerable, but we must admit that everywhere the roads are being improved. We are spending a lot of money, but we are getting results and a lot of experience. We must not forget that we have changed over from slow to rapidly moving traffic, and when we remember the great lengths of roads to be built and to be kept in order, we cannot possibly expect to have good roads built everywhere almost immediately. We can, however, expect continual improvement in road building and maintenance. I have been over some wonderful roads about the country lately.

Hon. G. Taylor: Good or bad?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Good. I have also been over some bad roads, but the roads that are being handled at the present time are very good indeed, and the work is being well done. The plant that is employed is making our earth roads very useful thoroughfares and they will remain so for many years until we can make them more permanent. At the same time, we cannot forget the Canning-road and its cost. We cannot afford to build many roads like that. I was over it the other day and, by the way, I noticed that a lot of the new streets are being named after mem-

bers of the Ministry. I noticed that Mr. Collier, Mr. Willcock and other Ministers have been immortalised about there.

Mr. Marshall: It is not much of a recommendation for them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Eight miles of that road have cost £120,000, and the interest works out at £900 per mile of road per annum. When so much money is spent on a work, those responsible for it must have had the same idea in mind as the Czar of Russia had when he ordered the construction of the railway across Siberia.

The Minister for Railways: Caesar built such roads in England 2,000 years ago, but labour was pretty cheap then.

Mr. Angelo: There is enough material on the Canning roadside to construct another road.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The construction of this road is bound to have the effect of still further reducing railway revenue. It will be used for heavy motor traffic and thus there will be additional competition with the railways. It seems to me we have provided a splendid road solely for transport and to compete with our railway system. But the road will open up that country and a considerable price will be obtained for it. A lot of people will settle there who would otherwise have settled between Perth and Fremantle to the north of the river. Some mention has been made of the drift of population to the city. That regret has been voiced right down the ages. If we wish to stop it, we must work to stop it, and the way to do it is to make it possible for people to live easily and comfortably in the country. We have been surveying a considerable area of land for years past. Last year we surveyed a record in acreage, though not in blocks. Last year, too, the area of good land sold was the smallest for years. It was just about half the area sold five years ago. That, however, is bound to happen. When we are selling thousand acre blocks, we can soon sell a million acres and we cannot sell the same land twice over.

The Minister for Railways: We shall soon sell it all.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and I hope that every acre of good land will be taken up as speedily as possible. I am not censuring the Government for not having sold again land that was sold previously;

we cannot sell as much good land in the wheat belt as we were accustomed to sell in the past. It is not available. If we take gold out of a mine, the quantity of gold remaining in the ground is proportionately less. If we sell a thousand-acre block of land, there is at least one farm less in the hands of the Government. If we want to stop the drift of population to the city, we must work for it. We can give good service over a period of years, but it is useless unless we work for an idea. Many of us talk for years and fail to achieve our object. What we need to do is to cut up land, give the people a chance to secure it, and thus take married people from the cities and put them into the country districts wherever possible. A considerable amount is being expended in the city—too much, I think. I daresay the money goes in so many ways that it is hard to check expenditure.

The Minister for Railways: You cannot deny some facilities to half the people of the State.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, but it is better to find them an abundance of food at a fairly cheap rate by spending the money in the country districts than by dissipating it in the city. The people in the city have to live by the work they do for the people in the country, and it is in the country we build, not here. We spend too much money in and around the city. I realise that pressure and demands are brought to bear on the Government all the time, but Ministers must stiffen their backs and explain the position to the people. Every member should explain to the people that they cannot have things for which they cannot afford to pay.

The Minister for Railways: It takes a lot to knock that into the heads of some people.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This vote-catching business is the trouble, and I am afraid we shall never get rid of it.

The Minister for Railways: When we get rid of a lot of the utilities to boards, there will not be any vote-catching.

Hon. G. Taylor: I wish you would start to get rid of them.

The Minister for Railways: The Premier has announced the policy.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not aware that anything we do for the people is not necessary, but we are not in a position to do it now.

The Minister for Railways: Some works are necessary and some are essential.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister interjected something about handing over utilities to a board. Is it not extraordinary that we took over the tramways at a considerable price some years ago, whereas had we not taken them over, the City Council would have been possessed of them before this?

Hon. G. Taylor: They would have reverted to the City Council last year.

The Minister for Railways: In 1935, I think.

Hon. G. Taylor: No, in 1927, they would have reverted to the City Council free of cost.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The City Council would have possessed them by now and meanwhile we would have had a tramway service, though I do not mean to say that all the lines being operated to day were in existence when the Government bought the trams. However, there was a considerable mileage of tram lines laid. Now, apparently, the Government are going to ask the City Council to take them over.

The Minister for Railways: Not the City Council.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Well, the local authorities.

The Minister for Works: Who said the local authorities?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Perhaps the people of the metropolitan area. What is the use of the Minister splitting straws? Is anyone fooled by the statement that the Government are not going to hand them over to the City Council or to the local authorities? If it is intended to hand them over to a trust and if it is to be a Government trust controlled by the Government, they will not be handed over with my consent. A trust controlled by the Government will not meet the situation. It would be giving the Government a toy to handle and relieving them of all responsibility. If they are to be taken over, the people of the metropolitan area, whose concern they are, should take them over. They should not be the responsibility of the Government. For years we have suggested that they should be handed over, but up to the present the parties have not been able to reach an agreement. The water supply and sewerage schemes must be the concern of the people in the areas served, and the same applies to

ferries and trams. Perhaps the electricity supply, too, would come in the same category, although I am not certain about it. At any rate, the other things obviously could be managed by the people themselves through the local authorities or through a trust responsible to the people. I should think the people could manage those concerns in that way quite as well as the Government manage them. Of course it has been cheaper under Government control to borrow the money for those concerns as we have borrowed it, and it has saved a great deal of expense for engineers to control them in the days of small things, but now the concerns are big enough for the people of the metropolitan area—one half of the people of the State—to take control of them. When we tell them they will have to foot a bill for half a million of money for the blessed trams, I do not know what they will say. I understand that in New South Wales, almost on the very day the Financial Agreement was signed, a great many utilities in the metropolitan area were handed over to the local authorities so that they would be free to borrow untrammelled by the Federal Parliament or by control of the Loan Council. Of course they did not value the 5s. per cent. sinking fund on loans that the Federal Government are going to pay to the State. We cannot all afford to adopt that attitude because the handing over of public utilities to local authorities or boards would lose us 5s. per cent. on the loans. At the same time it would increase our borrowing powers, because I suppose it would decrease the £4,800,000 of loan money required this year to something in the region of £4,000,000. I am entirely in accord with the idea of handing them over, but I do not know that the people will be quite so ready to take them. I think they have had an opportunity for years to take them over.

The Minister for Railways: In Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, schemes have been evolved that are satisfactory to everybody.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the trams are to be handed over—

The Minister for Railways: Perth has reached a size when they can be handed over.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the people must have the right to manage their own affairs and be fairly free to exercise their judgment, consistent of course with the preservation of the security for which we

have pledged the credit of the country. I hope some thought will be given to the electricity supply. If we add unit on unit to the East Perth power house—

The Minister for Railways: The agreement with the City Council makes it necessary for us to do that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I would not say too much about that agreement, though the Minister was not responsible for it. I confess I do not know anything about the possibilities of the proposed scheme to generate electrical power at Collie.

The Minister for Railways: The City Council now take one-third of our whole output.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and have done so for a long time. I do not know whether it would be wise to consider generating electrical power at Collie as against continuing the expenditure at East Perth. It is a matter for experts and not for laymen like myself to decide. I do not know how the Morwell scheme in Victoria is progressing, what it has cost and what the result is.

The Minister for Railways: It has cost millions and millions—2½ times what was expected.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The experience at Morwell might be of some advantage to us. Perhaps some of the engineers who have been at work there could be of assistance to us if we decided upon a scheme at Collie. It is a question of what is best to be done. With the East Perth power house we are just drifting along and have been doing so ever since the works were erected. We have been adding and adding on and on without end. As we have created a monopoly in the generation of current, we have to meet the demand. I think we would be wise to get an expert report that would satisfy us as to what might best be done for the future.

The Minister for Railways: I think you had better reserve a few of those remarks until we discuss the resolution sent to us from another place.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That resolution was not in my mind. This is the time and place to discuss the question. We have to find money for the power house and considerable expenditure has been incurred there.

The Minister for Railways: I think the last unit cost £160,000.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If I remember rightly, we put in two units in five years and I think the present Government have since added another. We have set up a monopoly and we have to meet the demand for current.

Hon. G. Taylor: Much to the advantage of the City Council.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The manager of the power station (Mr. Taylor) is a very capable man, but it might be well to obtain a report as to what would be best for the future. I can see the City of Perth with a population of 150,000 people before many years are passed and in the not far distant future with four times 150,000, and if the State is then to be responsible for the supply of electrical current, as I suppose it will be, we should consider future requirements without delay. I do not know what can best be done or whether we have men in Australia capable of advising us. I am afraid I cannot carry any reduction to these Estimates; I have not the number of votes to do it.

The Minister for Railways: Tell us what you would cut out.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I should say that £50,000 should be transferred from loan to revenue on account of departmental expenditure, and I would insist upon at least two-thirds of the money being spent in the country to secure increased production—some for Wiluna, some for the South-West and some for the wheat belt. I should say that at this stage and for the present year, I could not ask the people to undertake further expenditure except in works on which interest would be earned. I do not consider the £500,000 allotted to the Minister for Works for building new railways a sufficient proportion of £4,800,000. In my opinion these Loan Estimates are not wisely framed.

Mr. Griffiths: I thought we were to have a greatly increased amount for railways this year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No doubt the Minister will ask, "What would you cut out?" If I were the Minister, I would cut out something quickly, but if the Minister asks that I should indicate what ought to be cut out, he is asking too much. The taxpayer can only afford to have things for which he can pay. If the Government provide work which will not mean increased

production of wealth, the taxpayer will find that he has got it in the neck. I should stick to the principle of 60 per cent. of funds of this nature being loaned, and the other 40 per cent. being applied to the provision of transport and marketing facilities and those other things for which the Government are responsible. I do not know whether the Committee will vote the full amount of £4,800,000, but they ought not to approve of the Estimates in this shape. If I could alter them, I would. They will have to be re-cast. There is something for harbours. The Geraldton harbour must be completed. Albany, being a natural harbour, does not need much expenditure; but something should be done at Busselton and Fremantle.

The Minister for Railways: And Esperance will have to be tackled.

Hon. G. Taylor: That will mean a big expenditure.

The Minister for Railways: Several hundreds of thousands.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We get so little for our £4,800,000. To spend money on things that do not beget work is wrong. It must be obvious to everyone that loan moneys should be spent on work that will beget work. We should practise rigid economy in expenditure, and spend our money wisely and in the right places. I am afraid that I have taken up considerable time in expressing views I hold strongly, and have not given much criticism of items. I began by pointing out that there is rivalry between parties—generous rivalry, I hope. Now we come to finding work, the Minister says the Government are trying to do the right thing. They had better change places with us, and let us try. We would make a much better job of it. If I thought that by moving a reduction of the item I could bring about that change, of course I would do so. The public ought not to believe that the policy of this party is the policy of the other party, or that the ideals of this party are the ideals of the other party, or that it would not be better for the country if this party were on the Treasury bench. Of course it would be better, and the sooner Ministers realise that, the sooner will they recognise that the short and easy step would be to change places. That is another idea I present to Ministers, and I hope they will

think it over to-night and make an announcement to-morrow.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [6.7]: The Leader of the Opposition has well said that in considering the Loan Estimates one must take into account whether moneys are being allocated to works of a reproductive nature. That has been said again and again, but it cannot be said too often, especially when one finds on the Loan Estimates little items like that for the Canning-road reconstruction. According to the figures given here, the cost of the work is about £129,000 for eight miles of road. That represents roughly an interest charge of £1,000 per mile per annum. The country districts are waiting for transport facilities, and it is galling to see money expended wastefully on the Canning-road. Many country residents have been without transport facilities for years. The country borrows the money for the Canning-road reconstruction, and the people pay for the work.

The Minister for Works: No. The metropolitan area pays for it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Then there is the question of the Fremantle harbour. Referring to the calls made upon the Treasury, the Premier explained that there were undertakings like the Fremantle harbour, for which the Government had to find £100,000 annually. The correct figure is £83,250. The Premier complains that he has to find money for that undertaking, but the Auditor-General's report shows that the Fremantle Harbour Trust during the past year paid £133,849 into Consolidated Revenue. Thus the Treasurer benefits to the extent of approximately £49,750. The country borrows money at Home for upkeep of the harbour, and any profit after payment of interest and sinking fund goes into the Treasury and swells the revenue, incidentally reducing any deficit. The necessity of finding money for such undertakings was advanced by the Premier as a reason for delay in the construction of such railways as the one of which I am understood to be the advocate. That is a great joke for the Minister for Works and the Premier, but it is no joke for people who for 20 years have had to cart their wheat 22 miles to the railway. The Premier suggested to me that the fact of his having to find money for such things as the Fremantle harbour caused the provision of railway facilities for set-

ters to be put on one side. However, I have pointed out that from the Fremantle harbour the Treasury benefited to the extent of about £49,750 last year. Thus there is not much force in the Premier's excuse for the delay in providing much-needed railway facilities. The list of railways in course of construction or to be commenced includes the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook line, the figures referring to which are applicable to the case of the railway to which I have alluded. There is a sort of promise, something to keep the people quiet: £5,000 is put down as likely to be expended during the current financial year. For the Yarramony Eastward railway £30,000 is put down as an unexpended balance, and £5,000 is shown as likely to be used for preparatory work. The line has been about to be constructed for the past four years, and I suppose the Government thought they would put down something additional in order to hush the people concerned into a belief that some day Ministers may make a commencement on the work. The same old £30,000 appears, with a promise of £5,000 to be spent during the currency of the financial year. When the railway was discussed last session, the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) asked what was the meaning of the item, and whether there was any intention of going on with the work during that year. The hon. member suggested that it was a farce to set down the item if there was no intention of spending the money. Year after year items appear on the Loan Estimates and are not expended. The object of putting them there is, apparently, to keep people quiet and induce them to go on waiting for necessary facilities. The Brookton-Dale River railway has been mentioned by the member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown), who is evidently in the same boat as I am in with regard to the Yarramony railway. The cheap money can only be spent in the opening-up of new country. The stretch of country through which the Yarramony railway will pass is not considered to be new country. Indeed, it can hardly be called that, seeing that the people have been there for 20 years.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We know the old story that loan money should be spent upon reproductive works. When I referred to that I heard a murmur about that being nothing

fresh. That is why I emphasised the fact that so much money was being wasted on works that were not reproductive, whereas those which would help to create wealth were being neglected. The money that has been spent on the Canning-road would have built the South Swan railway. Ministers and some members look upon the railway in which I am interested as a joke. It is not much of a joke to those who believed the promises that politicians, including the Premier, made to them. There is no joke about the long journeys they now have to make to the sidings. Probably if they have a sense of humour they will derive some solace from the thought that they are helping to build up the country. At the same time they are sacrificing the best years of their lives, and their wives and children, to make possible the great improvements that have taken place in the metropolitan area, including Midland Junction and Fremantle. It is a poor joke for the soldier settlers at Quelagetting who were told when they first went out there that they were going to have a railway. Some have been starved off their holdings, and others have parted with their properties at a sacrifice. The remainder have accumulated a debt that makes their position far from good. I presume they will either be starved off their holdings or their debts will have to be written off, whereby the country will lose further money as a result of this long delay. We say, "Go on the land young man." Some people add, "For God's sake stop there. We will remain here. A paternal Government will build us roads at a cost of £16,250 a mile. We will stop where we are, and where the white lights are. As you are foolish enough to go into the country you will stay there as long as we can keep you there." I notice amongst the items that the Guildford-road is costing £9,500. A sum of £30,000 is set down for salaries in connection with the main roads administration, and £30,000 for incidentals. Including the provision for pine planting, these various items run into nearly a quarter of a million of money. I cannot see why we should send to England, America or somewhere else to borrow £10,000 for pine planting. We are already making a profit out of the sandalwood monopoly, which was once referred to as the "sandalwood" monopoly. That money has now been paid into Consolidated Revenue instead of being utilised for pine planting. I would draw the

attention of the Minister for Water Supplies to an item in regard to the further extension of the Belka service. The people at South Hines Hill are on a larger extension. A charge of so much per acre is imposed, and this is based upon the capital cost. The South Hines Hill people pay 2s. 6d. per thousand acres for excess water. A few miles further to the east is the Belka extension. These people agreed to pay 1s. per thousand, and the rate was subsequently reduced to 10d. They maintain that what they are paying is really based on the capital cost, including interest, etc., and yet instead of being charged 2s. 6d. per thousand for excess water, they are paying 6s. 8d. As they are only two or three miles further to the east, and no further to the south, than the other people, they do not see why there should be this difference in the charge. They agreed to pay the ordinary rate but they object to the charge for excess water. There is a dam at Knungajin, and a fine water supply there. The settlers, however, have been deprived of their riparian rights, and have been prevented from filling their own dams so that all the water might run into the big dam. They are now in a bad way for water. If the Minister cannot get pipes for reticulation purposes I hope he will have a standpipe fixed so that these people may have the use of the water.

Mr. Lindsay: That is being done now.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am glad to hear it. I must protest emphatically against the action of the Premier with regard to the Yorkrakine railway. He wrote a letter to Mr. Diver of Yorkrakine and condemned the past Administration for not carrying out their promises. He said when he got into power he would see that something was done. This House passed unanimously a motion that the railway should be built. Up to the present we have had the Elanding North, the Kulja extension, and the Karlgarin railway brought forward. We also hear rumours that other railways from Southern Cross are going to be built, and yet this 20-year old promise is still unredeemed. This so-called cheap money is being used to open up new country, but no attempt is being made to get other money with which to redeem these old promises. Mr. P. McMahon, Mr. Angwin and the Leader of the Opposition persuaded a number of unemployed lumpers to settle in that country 20

years ago. They were told they would have a railway almost immediately. Owing to political manipulation, equivocation, evasion and broken promises, these people are still without their railway. The excuse is, we have so much to do that it is a question of doing the greatest good for the greatest number. It does not matter about honesty or about fulfilling promises. Honour and honesty go by the board. All the time it is only a matter of political expediency.

[Mr. Panton took the Chair.]

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [7.40]: The Loan Estimates are of considerable interest to every member, more especially when we have been waiting a long time for some particular work to be carried out in our electorates. I am pleased to see an increase in the loan expenditure on railways and tramways. That will be money well spent, for it is reproductive work. There is also to be greater expenditure on water supplies and sewerage. Work of that nature is certainly required. In the development of agriculture there has been an increased monetary allowance. I should have liked to see more money devoted to that purpose. Undoubtedly agriculture is the backbone of the country. Whatever money is spent upon it will be of assistance to the country. A fair amount of money is provided for roads and bridges. There are always roads to be repaired and bridges and culverts to be constructed over watercourses. People have been obliged for some time to get along with what they had. Our road boards should be assisted in carrying out this work, for the local people have been inconvenienced for many years owing to the lack of expenditure in this direction. I am sorry to see the same old £5,000 provided for the Brookton-Dale railway. This sum has been provided every year since I have been in Parliament. A permanent survey was made for a certain distance, and an aerial survey was carried out but it was not satisfactory. I understand the Minister intends to have another aerial survey made by a competent man using a camera. I hope that work will be done before winter sets in. In the ranges it is impossible to get good visibility except on clear summer days.

The Minister for Works: The job depends on our getting a competent man; that is the trouble.

Mr. BROWN: If we have no competent man in the State we should go outside for one.

The Minister for Works: He must have experience.

Mr. BROWN: If the settlers know that the Government are anxious to carry out this work, they will be gratified. They have agitated for a railway for 30 years, and their position has not advanced a jot in all that time. Agricultural development in the district is being hung up. The sooner the Government get on with the work the better. It will be some encouragement to the local people to know that the Government do intend to build the line. The Bill for the construction of the Karlgarin line has been introduced, and I shall have nothing more to say on it for the present. That line and the through cut from Karlgarin to Fremantle must always be considered part and parcel of each other. I am glad to see a certain amount of money set down for the development of agricultural water supplies. In Pingelly we have had a water supply for 25 years. The people are paying 3s. in the pound for it. The last analysis of the water showed 416 grains of soluble salts to the gallon, 407 of sodium chloride, and 22 of magnesia.

Mr. Stubbs: They will all be cured down there soon.

Mr. BROWN: The report we got back was that the salinity was too great even for the growth of grass. That is what we are paying a rate of 3s. for. I am glad the Minister has had an inspection made of the weir, and also an inspection of our lawns, greens and gardens. I hope something will be done in the near future to give us a better water supply than we now have. For that I am thankful. At the same time I mention this in case a certain amount of money has to be written off, so that the House may not object to it when they realise that for 30 years those people have been paying 3s. in the pound for water that it is impossible to use. There is another question that I have been bringing before the House at every possible opportunity, namely, the necessary improvement to our railway station at Pingelly. I see on the Estimates something like £200,000 allocated for improvements to opened railways. No particular items are mentioned, but I notice a footnote, "See Commissioner's report"; and when I turn to that report, I find that it

states that £1,600 has been allocated for a new railway station at Pingelly. I should like to know from the Minister that that really means that this sum is to be expended as soon as possible. If so, I tender my thanks to the Government, because it will be money well spent. During last winter at 4.30 o'clock one bitter morning I counted 30 people on the railway platform at Pingelly. A heavy rain was falling and there was no place whatever for the people to stand under shelter. The station-master took pity on one or two of them and accommodated them inside the small station-house. Of those 30 people on the platform, 25 boarded the train when it came. Pingelly returns an annual railway revenue of over £10,000, the great bulk of which is made up of passenger traffic. The station-master informs me that this year not one bale of wool went away by truck from the Pingelly district, that the whole of the people are thoroughly loyal to the railways. If only because of that, the Government should give me the assurance that the erection of the new railway station will be proceeded with as soon as possible. I hope that this little work will be considered as a matter of urgency. I have here a photograph of the Pingelly railway station. It seems incredible that this miserable little shed, erected by the original company 40 years ago, still does duty as a railway station for Pingelly. I say that Pingelly deserves something considerably better. However, if the Government will but follow out the Commissioner's recommendation, we should see a new station at Pingelly in the near future. We are not asking for anything elaborate. The sum of £1,600 will not build a very elaborate station: but this is all we are asking for. I hope the Commissioner of Railways will have full power to spend part of his vote of £200,000 in building a new railway station at Pingelly. I do not intend to say any more on the general discussion, although later I may have a little to say about the railways. I sincerely recommend the Government to go on as early as possible with these works I have mentioned.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.49]: I have had the privilege of taking part in discussions on the Revenue Estimates and the Loan Estimates for the past 14 years. Slowly but surely they are mounting up

and increasing every year. It will be admitted that side by side with the increase in our revenue and loan expenditure there is proceeding a considerable amount of development. But it makes pause when we consider the enormous amount of money we are handling to-day. Already this session we have passed Revenue Estimates totalling £10,317,000, and now we are being asked to authorise loan expenditure to the tune of £4,817,200, or a total of £15,134,210. It certainly does seem that we are going the pace in the expenditure of public money. When dealing with the Hospital Fund Bill, I drew attention to the fact that from 1924 to the present year we had increased our loan indebtedness per head of the population by £20 10s., or an average of £5 2s. per head per annum since the present Administration came into office. I admit that the financial agreement, which now has every indication of being put into effect as the result of the overwhelming majority that voted in favour of it at the referendum, will enable the Federal Government to make agreements with the States. In view of that new position, the Treasurer and the State can look forward to a certain amount of relief. Without in any way wishing to be classed as a pessimist, I view the future with some concern, having regard to the large amount of money we are spending. The Premier, in dealing with the Loan Estimates, drew attention to the fact that while our debt per head of the population is high, it is of necessity higher than that of any of the Eastern States because we have a very large area of territory to develop with a small population. The Premier also drew attention to the fact that in the Eastern States many of the public utilities such as tramways, water supplies and harbours are under separate boards empowered to go on the London market and raise loans for the construction of their work, and that those loans did not show in the indebtedness per head of population. He also suggested that it might be wise to consider adopting that system in Western Australia. It is gratifying to us of this party, for we have advocated that system in season and out of season and have made it a plank of our platform, namely, that the public utilities in the metropolitan area should be in the hands of the people themselves.

The Minister for Works: Why do you not apply that in country districts?

Mr. THOMSON: We do apply it there and have accepted it, for we have taken over the water supply for the Katanning district and are paying the interest and sinking fund.

The Minister for Works: What about Narrogin?

Mr. THOMSON: There is no reason why they should not do the same.

The Minister for Works: And what about the Albany water supply?

Mr. THOMSON: I do not blame the Albany people for not taking over those water works. An estimate was submitted to them and tenders were called, but the work was done by day labour and cost considerably more than the estimate. I say in all fairness, as the member for Pingelly said just now in reference to the Pingelly water supply, that that capital cost should be written down. In view of the cost of those works at Albany proving to be so much greater than the estimated cost, I hold that the Government must treat that municipality with liberality and agree to write down that over-capitalisation.

The Minister for Works: Would you apply that to the people of the metropolitan area also?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, I would be prepared to do so. It is our policy. We say the metropolitan area should have the control of its own water supply. After all, we are levying upon the people a sufficient charge by way of rates to pay interest and sinking fund on those works. When the people living in the metropolitan area arrive at the position that they have materially reduced the capital cost—and that means less interest—they should derive a direct benefit by having their rates reduced. But under the present system, if there be any profit it goes into Consolidated Revenue and the people of the metropolitan area still continue to pay by way of rates, interest and sinking fund on the full capital cost. The same thing applies to the tramways. If the metropolitan tramways had been left to the City Council, I understand that this year the council would have taken them over free of cost. If the tramway company had continued to operate the tramways, of necessity they would have supplied the wants and requirements of the people using them.

However, I am not blaming the present Government for the purchase of the tramways, since the fault lies with a previous Administration. Still, a distinct injustice was done to the metropolitan area when the Government acquired the tramways. The Premier mentioned also the Harbour Trust and said that in Melbourne there was a metropolitan harbour trust, the whole of whose funds were raised by special loan, which did not appear in the Victorian debt per head of population. We have before us a return laid on the Table recently, the annual report and balance sheet of the Fremantle Harbour Trust for the year ended 30th June, 1928. There we find that after liquidating the whole of their statutory obligations by payments to the Treasury of interest of 4 per cent., £97,563, and a sinking fund of one per cent. amounting to £23,170, and an annual contribution to the renewal and replacement fund of £2,000, there remained a surplus of £133,849, which was handed to the Treasurer to be added to Consolidated Revenue. The money raised for the construction of the Fremantle harbour shows in the total indebtedness per head. If we had a harbour trust such as they have in Melbourne, which would go on the London market or the local market for their money, after having provided interest and sinking fund, instead of coming on to loan funds as is done here—we find that in the Loan Estimates there is an amount of £220,500 for harbours and rivers, after a recoup to loan suspense account of £13,215—there would be no necessity to increase our loan indebtedness this year by £83,000 for harbour improvements at Fremantle. That amount would have come out of their revenue. Ours is a most convenient way of financing. We put everything possible into revenue and we charge everything possible to loan account. The policy that the Country Party have so strenuously advocated during the last four or five years, namely, to give various authorities control of utilities and power to borrow and act as bodies corporate, would be much better in the interests of the State and in the long run would tend materially to reduce charges. If we had a metropolitan harbour trust similar to the bodies in the Eastern States, that body would be able to reduce the charges for the harbour and yet provide for additional work out of the profit made. Let me direct attention to page 15 of the Auditor-General's report for

the year ended the 30th June, 1928, dealing with the Fremantle Harbour Trust. He pointed out that certain sections of the work were completed on the 30th June, 1927, at a cost of £218,442, regarding which the Engineer-in-Chief estimated that the loan portion would represent 56 per cent. and the revenue portion 44 per cent. The Auditor-General commented that the loan portion had been charged out but not the revenue portion, the amount of which was approximately £96,000. Of the work done to the Fremantle harbour to the value of £218,442, on the advice of the Engineer-in-Chief £96,000 should have been charged to revenue. Not one penny piece was charged to revenue. The loan portion was charged to loan and the balance, I presume, is still in suspense. Yet the Fremantle Harbour Trust last year paid into the Treasury a sum of £133,849. According to the Auditor-General, the Engineer-in-Chief also estimated that the work in hand would probably represent a fifty-fifty allocation as between loan and revenue. An amount of £72,376 had been charged to loan, but again nothing had been charged to revenue. The financing of the Fremantle Harbour Trust is not satisfactory. The Engineer-in-Chief has distinctly stated that revenue should have been charged with two large amounts, and yet not a penny piece has been charged against revenue, though the whole of the profit made has been taken into Consolidated Revenue. That is not sound finance.

[Interruption from gallery: "What about the unemployed? The unemployed are starving."]

The CHAIRMAN: The gallery will be cleared if there is any further interruption. The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. THOMSON: Last year there was a slight deficit. The Auditor-General, on pages 16 and 17 of his report, mentions three items totalling £67,643 that rightly should have been charged to last year's expenditure. The Auditor-General directed attention to the following items:—Interest on London bank overdraft, commission paid to the Westminster Bank Limited, and stamp duty on transfers of stock. The sums represent expenditure that will have to be met from revenue during 1928-29. The Auditor-General proceeded—

As it was known that payments of this nature would arise in London arrangements should have been made to enable the year's expenditure being charged.

He was referring to a sum of £26,037 that should have been charged against last year's revenue.

In the case of collections arrangements were made, and items such as interest on credit balances £438 5s. 10d., rent £290, and trade facilities grant, m.s. "Koolinda" £7,591 1s. 7d., were credited to the revenue fund.

Apparently it was convenient for the Treasurer to omit £26,037 that should have been charged against the year's revenue, but he was only too pleased to credit revenue with an amount of approximately £8,000 of collections. I have said before and I intend to repeat it even at the risk of being considered a bore—on the principle that the constant dripping of water will wear away a stone—that I hope sooner or later to be able to convince the House that it would be in the interests of sound finance to appoint a public accounts committee. If we had such a committee, many items referred to in the Auditor-General's report would immediately receive close attention.

[Interruption from gallery: "What about sustenance for the unemployed? The unemployed are starving."]

Mr. THOMSON: I think, Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope that ultimately we shall be able to get a public accounts committee that will more closely scrutinise the finances of the State. Last year we spent under Loan Estimates a sum of £4,680,260 and this year the Treasurer is asking us to approve of £4,817,200. The salaries under the heading of departmental for the Works, Water Supply, Main Roads Board, Tramways, Group Settlement and Immigration Departments show an increase of £62,641. It is time we were in a position more closely to scrutinise expenditure when, with a small increase of less than £150,000 of loan funds, we are charging up to loan for salaries an increase of £62,641. The amounts seem altogether disproportionate, and one wonders whether as regards salaries we are not drifting into the same position into which apparently we have drifted in the matter of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, where costs that in the opinion of the engineer should legitimately be levied against revenue are being charged to loan account. According to the public accounts there is charged up to group settlement £5,584,536. Last year the expendi-

ture was £895,902 and this year it is £800,000, or £95,000 less. I know that the Government are in a very difficult position as regards group settlement. They appointed a board to see if the scheme could be put on a proper footing and settlers have been transferred to other holdings to give them a reasonable chance of success. This House has recently passed a Bill for the appointment of another board to value the properties and assess the amount to be charged against group settlements. To-day I travelled along the Rockingham-road and passed portion of the Peel Estate where I saw house after house with the windows falling out. I saw so many empty cottages that if anyone could view them without feeling, as I did, a degree of bitter disappointment and a greater degree of sadness, he must be very differently constituted. Those houses are vacant and are falling into disrepair. I regret that the Minister in charge of group settlement is suffering ill-health. I believe the enormous strain imposed upon him to straighten out the awful mess into which group settlement generally drifted, materially helped to undermine his health. I wish to impress upon the Government the imperative necessity for doing something with those blocks on the Peel Estate which to-day are lying idle. If they are not to be used for settlement purposes, the Government should sell them by auction. Many people would be willing to bid for them as seaside residences or camps, and in that way the Government would recoup themselves for some of the expenditure from which there is apparently no hope of other return. I appeal to the Minister for Works, the only Minister present, to make a note of my suggestion.

The Minister for Works: The buildings might be shifted to other groups.

Mr. THOMSON: The sooner that is done, the better, because any property standing empty and visited by picknickers and campers undergoes serious deterioration.

Mr. Sampson: Some of the buildings are being stolen.

Mr. THOMSON: I believe so. Under the heading of group settlement the Revenue Estimates show an amount of £14,670 transferred to Loan. The amount represents salaries and other expenses for the work of the board and various officials. I have endeavoured to ascertain, and would like to ascertain, how much of that amount is being charged against the settlers. or

to what account the money is being debited. Instead of continuing to load the remaining group settlers with more and more overhead charges, we should endeavour to get the blocks capitalised, so that the settlers may know where they stand. A large amount of money spent on roads and drains should not be charged against the settlers. Last year the State expended £895,902 on group settlements, and this year an expenditure of £800,000 is proposed, making a grand total of about £6,300,000 expended on group settlements. We are enabled to finance at present thanks to migration money, the so-called cheap money; but the time is not far distant when we shall find ourselves faced with a serious financial position. Were it not for the benefits to be derived from the Financial Agreement, increased taxation would have to be resorted to in order that the State might pay its way. I repeat, in my opinion it is absolutely necessary to appoint a public accounts committee. I have repeatedly asked in this House whether the State is getting full value for moneys expended on public works. This year some £4,800,000 is asked for, and a large proportion of that amount is to be spent in the construction of railways and roads. Like the member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) I am disappointed at the absence of provision for the construction of the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway. If the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) were present, he might ask, as he did the other night, why I am interested in the South-West. A considerable portion of the railway in question traverses my district, although the line begins in the Nelson district and ends in the Albany district. The settlers are most anxious to know what is the position regarding that railway, and they are extremely disappointed because it has not been possible to arrange a tour for a Parliamentary party to inspect the route and become acquainted with the wonderful possibilities of the district, as well as the urgent need for the railway. We had hoped to get the Minister for Lands to traverse the country with us, but unfortunately, owing to the absence of that Minister and to the fact of the House being in session, we have not been able to secure the attendance of a representative of the Government. Consequently the tour has been abandoned for the time being. We had hoped that the Premier when journeying to Bridgetown would be able to comply with

the request of the settlers to inspect the route, catching a train at Cranbrook; but unfortunately the hon. gentleman could not spare the time. The settlers are also greatly disappointed at the fact that no provision is made for the railway beyond the amount of £5,000 which has appeared on previous estimates. As regards development of new areas it has been stated in the Press that the Agricultural Bank have refused to make advances to settlers. I do not blame the Agricultural Bank trustees, who are entrusted with a large sum of money which they must advance so as to further land development, subject to the settler having a reasonable chance to make good. The policy which the Country Party laid down for land development by means of cheap money has largely been carried into effect by the Government, and that is a matter of gratification to the party, who have a knowledge of the best means of developing the lands of the State. We suggest further that in new areas it is not fair to ask the Agricultural Bank to advance money beyond what the trustees consider the safe limit—namely, 20 miles. The Government are now throwing open blocks of land—and in respect of them asking settlers to comply with the residential conditions—while there is no possibility of getting to the blocks, not even an axe track to them being available. Neither are there any water supplies on the blocks. As regards the Government's big development scheme, I suggest that they place in the hands of the Agricultural Bank trustees a sum of money to be advanced to settlers in new areas for the purpose of assisting them in clearing and fencing. The amount should not be regarded as money of the Agricultural Bank, but as money to be advanced side by side with the expenditure of public funds in the provision of roads and water supplies. Advances under this head should be on the same conditions as advances to clients of the Agricultural Bank located within 12½ miles of a railway. If the land is good enough for the Government to send out surveyors to subdivide it, and if the Government are right in accepting deposits for survey fees, the State of Western Australia should back the Government's opinion of the land by advancing money to assist settlers on it in the same way as settlers on other areas have been and are being assisted. I do not suggest that the procedure should be as in the

case of the group settlements. I have been severely criticised, and so have members of my party, for contending right from the beginning that the methods adopted were foredoomed to failure. It is no satisfaction to us to be able to say, "We told you so." I would much rather be in a position to congratulate the Government, and say to them, "I am glad we were wrong." I am glad that the group settlements are a success. I commend you for your foresight." But we knew that the conditions involved failure.

Mr. Teesdale: Why stress it? It has been put right. Let the dead past bury its dead.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Teesdale: You foretold all this, and it has come off. Well?

Mr. THOMSON: I was not aware that the member for Roebourne had anything to do with group settlement. I really thought that was a matter introduced by the people of Western Australia and supported by this Parliament.

Mr. Teesdale: I have something to do with loyalty to party, and that is more than you have.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. THOMSON: I am dealing with group settlement, which has cost the State some five millions sterling. When we have next year's Estimates before us, together with the Auditor-General's report, we shall find that six millions have been spent.

Mr. Teesdale: But do not suggest that the six millions were all spent by one Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must keep order.

Mr. THOMSON: I suggest to the hon. member that when my completed speech has been printed in "Hansard," he should be good enough to read it. Then I think he will be man enough to apologise to me for—

Mr. Teesdale: I shall never apologise to you for saying that the six millions were not spent by one party.

Mr. THOMSON: It will be found next year that over six millions has been spent. I recommend the hon. member to read the Public Accounts. Perhaps, like some other members, he does not read them. I have a duty to perform to the State, and I shall perform it to the best of my ability. I am merely expressing a wish that the same principle should not be adopted in connec-

tion with the settlement of new areas as unfortunately was adopted in connection with the group settlements. Therefore let us deal with them through the Agricultural Bank, and I feel sure that from the experience the officers of the bank have had, the amount of money that will be made available by the Government for the development of those areas will be well spent, and that the State will get a reasonable return. In my opinion we are not getting value for the money we are spending in connection with our public works. We passed a Bill recently to authorise the Kulja Eastward railway extension. In reply to a query by the Leader of the Opposition the Minister for Works stated that the estimated cost of that line would be £4,600 a mile. I have stated that that figure, in my opinion, is too high. The Minister told us that there were no engineering difficulties and consequently it is hard to understand how such a high estimate is arrived at. Before I resume my seat I intend to move that these estimates be reduced by a substantial sum, as an indication to the Government that they should call for tenders for the construction of railways, so that at least we may have an adequate check upon that work being done by the State and on the expenditure of enormous sums of money every year. The estimated cost of that railway, as I have said, is £4,600 a mile. I have been informed—and perhaps the Minister for Works will again charge me with listening to tittle-tattle and which, according to him, I am only too pleased to repeat—

The Minister for Works: You have that reputation.

Mr. THOMSON: You would like to give it to me.

The Minister for Works: You have it.

Mr. THOMSON: I drew the Minister's attention to the fact that I am no more critical than he was when he was sitting on this side of the House.

The Minister for Works: I do not mind your being critical.

Mr. THOMSON: I claim that I am only as critical as the Minister was when he was on this side of the House, and I am only exercising the privilege that he exercised. He accused me of listening to tittle-tattle when we visited the Fremantle harbour.

The Minister for Works: Of course you did.

Mr. THOMSON: When I returned to this House I said that three members of the Fremantle Harbour Trust had imparted to me and to a colleague the information that I gave.

The Minister for Works: They denied it.

Mr. THOMSON: One of the men who gave me certain information was appointed by the present Government. The statement I made then I believe to be correct.

The Minister for Works: There were not three members of the Trust with us that morning.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Katanning will address the Chair.

Mr. THOMSON: The statement I made on that occasion was correct. I never make mis-statements to this House.

The Minister for Works: The members of the Harbour Trust denied it.

Mr. THOMSON: Let me deal with the railways under construction. When the Norseman-Salmon Gums railway was being extended towards Esperance a strike occurred, and a condition imposed upon the department by the union secretary was that only half a mile of rails per day should be laid. I am informed that that rule, if it can be so called, is in existence to-day.

The Minister for Works: You are entirely wrong.

Mr. THOMSON: I am informed that it is so.

The Minister for Works: Of course, you are informed. All the same, you are wrong.

Mr. THOMSON: I am informed that on quite a number of the railways that are being constructed under the present system very often by 3 o'clock the day's work is done and the men return to their homes.

The Minister for Works: More tittle-tattle that you have listened to!

Mr. THOMSON: Of course it will be called tittle-tattle.

The Minister for Works: It is in keeping with your history; facts are like a foreign language to you.

Mr. THOMSON: I am talking facts.

The Minister for Works: It is on record that you listen to every kerbstone yarn.

Mr. THOMSON: It was recorded in "Hansard" and the public Press that the Norseman railway extension was constructed at the rate of half a mile a day.

The Minister for Works: There was not a word of truth in that and it was never stated in this House. You are always wrong.

Mr. THOMSON: It was stated in this House and it appeared in the Press.

The Minister for Works: And it was strenuously denied.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister denied on the floor of this House that men were sent to work on main roads without tools.

The Minister for Works: Yes, and I deny it now.

Mr. THOMSON: Then what about the evidence that has appeared in the papers, as having been given before the select committee?

The Minister for Works: No such evidence has been given and no such evidence has been published. That, too, with your stacked select committee and your biased critics! No such evidence has come out.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the member for Katanning get back to the subject matter of the Loan Estimates.

Mr. THOMSON: I will do so if the Minister will refrain from interjecting.

The Minister for Works: Well, stick to facts.

Mr. THOMSON: On the Minister's own showing the estimated cost of the Kulja Eastward railway is £4,600 a mile. I have stated in this House, not once but scores of times, that we have no check upon the public works to-day so far as costs are concerned. I am going to supply the House with information which, in my opinion, will show the need for agreeing to the motion I propose to move. We are aware that there is a deposit of manganese at Horseshoe, and we know that a railway, 80 miles in length, has been constructed from Meekatharra to Horseshoe. So far as I know, that line has been constructed with rails similar to those used elsewhere in the country. I know that the freight on the sleepers was more than the cost of the sleepers themselves, and yet that line cost only £2,500 a mile to build.

Mr. Kennedy: And about the first train that went over it was derailed.

Mr. Marshall: I wish to God you would not talk about that line.

Mr. THOMSON: I suppose the hon. member knows how the derailment occurred. With our own boasted system and all our public conveniences, costing as much as they have done, we too have derailments.

Mr. Marshall: I wish you would not refer to that railway.

Mr. THOMSON: Eighty odd miles of railway from Meekatharra to Horseshoe was built at a cost of £2,500 a mile.

Mr. Kennedy: They used secondhand 45-lb. rails on that line. On the Kulja line 60-lb rails are to be used.

Mr. THOMSON: I will be generous and give you in the 60-lb. rails.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: The Horseshoe line was laid on the surface, while the other has engineering difficulties.

Mr. Teesdale: The hon. member knows nothing whatever about it. He never saw the railway in his life and probably never will see it. I happened to go over it just lately.

Mr. THOMSON: Here is a railway built at a cost of £2,500 a mile, and built with money advanced by the Government through the Industries Assistance Board, and yet the Kulja Eastward railway is to cost £4,600 a mile, a difference of £2,100 a mile in favour of the Horseshoe line.

Mr. Teesdale: The Horseshoe line has been passed by the Commissioner and four of his officers as being satisfactory, and they are not amateurs, either.

Mr. THOMSON: If the railway is good enough to be passed by the Commissioner and his officers, and if it is considered good enough by the people interested in the manganese deposits to carry their freight to Geraldton—

Mr. Teesdale: It will carry a load of 700 tons.

Mr. THOMSON: Then there is sufficient justification for us to ask the House to pass a resolution that will indicate to the Government that we desire to have an adequate check upon the cost of railway construction. At the present time the Government submit an estimate to us and we are not in the position, not having a public works committee, to check the figures in any manner, shape or form. It is not in the interests of the State, nor in the interests of the workers themselves, that the present high cost of railway construction should continue. I go so far as to say that if we can have railways constructed as we have had the line constructed from Meekatharra to Horseshoe, capable of hauling a load of 700 tons—

Mr. Marshall: I advise you strongly not to be too enthusiastic about that line.

Mr. THOMSON: I am prepared to take the opinion of the member for Roebourne before that of the member for Murchison on the subject of that railway.

The Minister for Works: That is why the member for Roebourne lost his job as a director; thy sacked him.

Mr. Chesson: The line has not even been ballasted.

Mr. Teesdale: If the hon. member had as much ballast as there is on that line, he would be all right.

Mr. Marshall: It might carry him, and that's all.

Mr. Chesson: I know what it will carry.

Mr. THOMSON: Anyhow, there we have an illustration of a line built by a private company at a cost of £2,500 a mile capable of carrying a load of 700 tons.

The Minister for Railways: It would carry 7,000 tons if it were running down hill. That does not signify anything.

Mr. THOMSON: If it is capable of carrying a 700-ton load of manganese ore, I think we can with justice say that if similar lines were constructed in our agricultural areas—

Mr. Marshall: God forbid!

Mr. THOMSON: —It would be of advantage to the country. We have large areas to open up and develop and if we could build railways in a similar way, it would be possible to construct about two miles for every mile we build to-day.

Mr. Marshall: I did not want this railway referred to at all. I know a bit more about it than you do.

Mr. Teesdale: You are an encyclopaedia on everything.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Murchison must keep order and so also must the member for Roebourne.

Mr. THOMSON: It rather staggers me to find, in view of the large revenue we receive from timber royalties, the sum of £10,000 set down on the Loan Estimates for reforestation. That money should come out of the funds of the Forests Department. The financial position of the State requires close scrutiny. I have grave doubts whether we are getting value for the money we spend. As an indication to the Government that they should call for tenders for all works in order to get a comparison of costs, I intend to move that these Estimates be reduced by £5,000.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member had better content himself with outlining his motion, and moving it at a later stage. If the motion is moved now there can be no discussion. I suggest that the motion be read so as to indicate its contents, and before it is moved other members may desire to speak upon the Estimates. When the motion is finally moved there will be no further discussion.

Mr. THOMSON: I have no desire to burk discussion. It is my intention to move "that in the opinion of this House the Government should call for tenders for public works."

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot move a substantive motion of that nature, but he can move to reduce the Estimates.

Mr. THOMSON: I intend to move later that the Estimates be reduced by £5,000.

The CHAIRMAN: The moving of that motion will mean the closing of the debate. If any member desires to reply to any statement that has been made about the Loan Estimates, he must do so now.

[Mr. Lambert took the Chair.]

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [8.48]: This State comprises approximately one million square miles. That which lies north of the 26th parallel covers about 600,000 square miles. The North-West, as we know it, therefore comprises about 60 per cent. of the State. I have gone carefully through the Loan Estimates and all I can find is provision for the expenditure in the North-West of £10,000. This runs out at .029 per cent. of the total amount of loan expenditure. I rise to protest against this continuous neglect of that part of the State. For years Governments have told us they acknowledge the necessity for peopling and developing the North-West. They realise the danger of not doing so, and every year they have promised that it will receive their early attention. I have been in the House for 12 years. I have seen in the Governor's speech about six references to the North-West, each of two lines.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is something to go on with.

Mr. ANGELO: Recently, even these small references have disappeared. Some 18 months ago when the last elections were being held, almost the entire Cabinet visited the North-West.

Hon. G. Taylor: They were trying out a new steamer.

Mr. Lindsay: It was election time.

Mr. ANGELO: Exactly. If only one-tenth of the promises that were made by them had taken tangible form on the Loan Estimates I would not have risen to my feet.

The Minister for Works: They have all been carried out.

Mr. ANGELO: I have not seen them.

The Minister for Works: You have not been in the North-West.

Mr. ANGELO: The Minister himself did not make many promises, but his colleagues made several that have not been fulfilled.

The Minister for Works: Those I made were not forgotten.

Mr. ANGELO: There is only one item on the Estimates, No. 42, that affects the North. This promises Onslow a tramway, a new locomotive, Beadon Point a jetty and a goods shed, yard etc., Carnarvon river draining works, new rolling stock and other works as authorised. This covers the expenditure of £10,000 out of a total loan expenditure of £4,817,200. Item No. 7 deals with water supplies, agricultural, and North-West districts. If we turn to the items themselves we find no mention of the North-West. Evidently that is put in as a bluff or as a solace for North-West members. I have risen to make my annual protest against the continued neglect of the North. The neglect is criminal when we realise the increasing danger of leaving unpeopled that part of the State. The Premier promised that before the session ended an opportunity would be given to discuss the latest proposals relative to the North-West.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in referring to that question.

Mr. ANGELO: When the time comes I hope members will note how poorly the North-West has been treated, not only on the Loan Estimates, but also on the Revenue Estimates.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [8.55]: No doubt we shall hear a good deal about the need for retaining control of the North-West.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That question cannot now be discussed.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Estimates do not indicate sincerity on the question of retain-

ing the North-West. Unless something is done to make it possible for people to live there and make a living there, we cannot hope to retain that part of the State. The figures show that the population is decreasing.

Mr. Angelo: It has decreased 12½ per cent. in the last ten years.

Mr. SAMPSON: I feel deeply the position of the North-West, which now constitutes a menace to the State as well as the Commonwealth. I regret to find no provision for the Brookton-Armadale railway. As has been shown by figures, it is a practicable proposition. Much saving would be effected in the cost of transport, and it would bring Brookton and districts east of Brookton very much nearer to Fremantle. It would also make possible the production of wheat on a more profitable scale in that particular area. Between Brookton and Armadale there are magnificent gullies which could be utilised if railway transport were available. It would also lead to the greater utilisation of the Jandakot or Armadale-Fremantle railway, which is not used nearly as much as it ought to be. In addition, the line would relieve the Perth railway yard. All things considered, the recommendations of the Railway Advisory Board are fully justified.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: It would cost £10,000 a mile to construct.

Mr. SAMPSON: The cost of construction may be heavy in certain parts, but on the figures submitted there would be a saving because of the reduced cost that would be effected in other directions. I thought we might hear something about water supply extensions and the proposed Canning reservoir. The Minister will, I hope, make a statement on this point. One would be welcomed not only by people in the metropolitan area, but by those outside it, because it would mean a great deal of work. The proposal must be carried out in the near future. A decision may be difficult to arrive at, but when the Minister is prepared to make a statement, I know it will be gladly received. I am pleased to note that the Narrogin School of Agriculture is being extended. The school is becoming more useful every year for the purpose for which it was established. I hope there will be some practical recognition of the fruit industry by the establishment of fruit experimental farms, and that funds will be provided for that purpose. When I was in London the importance of maintaining the continuity of supplies of

Western Australian apples was stressed by the fruit merchants of Covent Garden and also on the Continent, particularly in Vienna and Hamburg. If we gave greater attention to the production of fruit it would mean that in place of an intermittent supply we would be able to hold the market regularly. Last year, because of the short supply of apples our markets went to New Zealand. Those who had developed a number of customers for Western Australian apples found that that trade went to the New Zealand growers. Another matter, one which interests the Minister for Railways, is the need for refrigerated cars or trucks for the conveyance of fruit. At present louvered trucks are used, but countries that have had greater experience in the conveyance of fruit realise it is impossible to convey fruit in proper condition unless the trucks are refrigerated. That would materially help in regard to the pre-cooling of fruit; because if in place of the vehicles that are used to-day a properly refrigerated truck were used—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is digressing from the Estimates in discussing fruits and markets.

Mr. SAMPSON: Far be it from me to infringe upon the Chairman of Committees, his good nature or his judgment. I will refrain from continuing with the subject. Still, it would not be difficult to show that in the Estimates the carriage of fruit is referred to in respect of rolling stock, although not in the provision of refrigerating trucks, which is essential in a hot country such as this.

Mr. North: Would they be very costly to construct?

Mr. SAMPSON: No, they are practically the same as the existing trucks, except that there is provision for the carriage of ice. As to the pre-cooling of fruit, there is the old subject of the erection of a pre-cooling store on the Fremantle wharf. Beyond reiterating that need, I will say no more on the subject. I am anxious to see the Albany-road at Cannington connected by a through road from Midland Junction. That could be done. There is a surveyed road over territory which is quite in accordance with the Federal-State conditions in respect of grades. If that road, the Hawtin-road, were constructed it would bring into use a large tract of country at present practically idle. I venture to bring this to

the notice of the Minister and I hope that under the Federal-State scheme it will be proceeded with. It has been recommended by different authorities, namely, the Gonnells, the Canning, the Darling Range, and the Swan road boards and the Midland Junction Municipal Council. It would be a very good thing if that road were constructed. I submit that the Hawtin-road alone justifies an expression of opinion in the House and I hope the Minister will give consideration to it.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [9.5]: I have but a few words to say. The Minister for Works will remember that about six months ago a large deputation waited on him in respect of level crossings. He promised to have an inquiry made and that there would be a routine scheme for constructing a few overhead crossings ever year. I should like the Minister when replying to tell us what action has been taken in the Claremont-Cottesloe district. I understand there were some negotiations in regard to it, and I know the public would be very glad to learn of the action taken, because there are many dangerous crossings in that district. I notice that at the annual meeting of the Claremont Municipal Council complaints were made regarding the water. To me that was rather surprising, because I understood that during the last few weeks or months the water has been very much cleaner in the Claremont-Cottesloe area. I should like the Minister to make inquiries. It must be pretty bad when the people come to the annual meeting of the council to complain, for generally those annual meetings are but poorly attended.

Mr. Clydesdale: Then it is very different from Cottesloe.

Mr. NORTH: Quite. Evidently there is some bad trouble in Claremont about the water. I want to urge that the Government during the summer months should prepare some scheme to cope with the annual recurrence of unemployment in the winter. Certain requests have been made in my district regarding the storm water in the depressions, such as Butler's Swamp. If the result of the report of the Engineer-in-Chief respecting the rising water table in the metropolitan area could be analysed and something of that sort dealt with, we would have there a volume of work that might last for years and years and could be carried on.

when unemployment was acute in the winter months.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is unemployment now.

Mr. Thomson: Yes, judging by the interjections from the gallery to-night.

Mr. NORTH: That may be only the aftermath of last winter's trouble. It is possible that if the Government during the summer time were to look into the matter we should have some concrete scheme for a programme of winter work, not absolutely pressing, but which could be carried out when unemployment was acute. At such times unless there is a definite programme of works there is an inclination to spend money in make-shifts that are subsequently regretted. It is natural when we have hundreds of men knocking at the door of the Government for employment that there is a tendency to start work that is not permanent work. Money spent on such work is largely wasted and causes unemployment later on, whereas if we had some permanent work prepared, such as the draining of our swamps, it could wait until things were bad and we had unemployment amongst us. As the result of that policy we would soon have some capital improvements in the metropolitan area.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [9.10]: I would not have made any remarks on these Loan Estimates but for what has occurred this evening. I have been here some 27 or 28 years discussing Estimates, and I have come to the conclusion that what one says upon them is not of much avail. We are called upon to vote £4,800,000 of Loan Estimates, and we have voted Loan Estimates of £4,000,000 per annum for the past four years. Yet we find that we have with us unemployed both in winter and in summer. We are spending this huge amount of money and still we cannot keep our people in work. There must be something wrong somewhere.

Mr. Thomson: That is right.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is no use talking about it; we ought to try to solve the problem. Talking in this Chamber, condemning the Government for loose administration, bad administration, will not help those who are looking for work, will not help the people who are more or less hungry. There must be some reason why with the huge expenditure of loan funds

and with Revenue Estimates up to ten millions, we are still in such a position. It is time the Government and Parliament sat up and took notice. It is all very well to say that this is the cause or that is the cause, but we ought to try to solve the problem. We are voting £4,800,000, in consequence of which we shall have to raise from revenue £264,000 per annum to pay interest, sinking fund and other charges. We can only do that by spending all this money in a way that will produce wealth, and we cannot produce wealth unless we have work for our people and can keep them employed. We cannot have a happy community of people while we have men coming into the State's debating Chamber and crying that the people are starving and want work. I have been in the House for 27 years, and I have never before seen that spectacle. In view of our huge expenditure it is a shame, and we must all accept our share of the responsibility. We have a wonderful credit on the money markets of the world, the best of all the States of the Commonwealth, and still this is the position in which we find ourselves—spending huge sums of money and yet unable to find employment for our people.

Mr. Clydesdale: Did not the business people of Perth call a meeting and try to solve the problem?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We must solve it. We must not spend huge sums of money without producing wealth and keeping our people employed. If we cannot do better than that, we ought to get out.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [9.12]: Before the Minister replies to the debate I have one or two points upon which I should like to say a few words. First I want to deal with the statement made by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) regarding the Railway Estimates. He said the union imposed on the department the condition of half a mile construction per day, and that the line was completed under those conditions. He said he had read it in the Press. I do not know where else he could have learnt it. His statement is just another in the long list that has secured for the hon. member the reputation of being the greatest possible garbage collector this country has.

Mr. Thomson: I protest against that. It is most offensive, and I wish it to be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister must withdraw that statement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I withdraw. I say that time after time the hon. member gets up in the House and repeats this tittle-tattle. No matter how strongly and forcibly a Minister denies it and produces the facts and the evidence, the hon. member brushes aside the Minister and listens to somebody on the street who has no evidence but all the inclination to deceive. Then the hon. member comes here and on the floor of the House repeats statements that have not in them any foundation of fact. It brands him as—

Mr. Thomson: I must request the Minister to withdraw the statement that I come to this House and make statements that have no foundation in fact.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will prove in two minutes that the statement has no foundation in fact.

Mr. Thomson: I ask that the statement be withdrawn. It is offensive and is not correct.

The CHAIRMAN: I point out to the member for Katanning that the Minister did not state that he made an untruthful statement. He said untruthful statements were made, which is quite a different thing.

Mr. Thomson: No; the Minister definitely said I came to the House and made statements that were without foundation and were untrue.

The CHAIRMAN: No; he said you repeated statements that were not true. It does not follow that you are being accused of making untruthful statements.

Mr. Thomson: If that is the intention of the Minister, I shall accept your ruling, so long as it is recorded.

The CHAIRMAN: I have given my ruling. The Minister may proceed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall explain just what happened. It appeals to me that if there is one man in this House whose support the Government and I as Minister should get for the stand that was taken, it is the hon. member. A certain section of men on the line being constructed adopted the attitude that half a mile a day was sufficient work and that they were not going to construct any more than half a mile a day.

Hon. G. Taylor: That would depend on the number of men you had on the job.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was their case.

Hon. G. Taylor: It might have been quite enough.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the men came to me I told them that there would be no go-slow policy, that the party, the trades union movement and the Government would not stand for any go-slow policy, and that it was a principle Labour in this country would not tolerate and I would not be a party to it. There was to be no limitation of output; if they said they would construct a quarter of a mile, 100 yards, or even three miles a day, we would accept no limitation. The Arbitration Court was called in and the whole case was argued as to the number of men to be employed on the different sections of the job. The engineer's evidence was before the court and the court fixed the number of gangs and stipulated the mileage to be done according to the number of men in the gangs. The balance of the line was completed at an average of three-quarters of a mile to one mile a day. Those are the facts.

Hon. G. Taylor: With a larger number of men.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The strength of the different gangs was fixed by the Arbitration Court. At no time, except during the day and a half over which the proceedings extended, was the half mile a day in operation. Yet the hon. member comes here and makes that statement.

Mr. Thomson: I repeat that it appeared in the Press.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not care what appeared in the Press.

Mr. Thomson: It was also stated in this House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Thomson: Attention was directed to it in this House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was never put to me as Minister in charge of the department. Yet the hon. member accepts a statement like that and says the line was completed under those conditions.

Mr. Thomson: That is the statement that appeared in the Press.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: After the Arbitration Court inquired into the case and fixed the conditions the job was

finished under those conditions. Yet the member for Katanning comes here and makes a statement of that kind. What limit is there to the hon. member? Is there any limit to what he will say? There is no limit.

Mr. Clydesdale: He will repeat it next week.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I dare say he will go out to-morrow and repeat it.

Mr. Thomson: If necessary, I shall repeat it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no doubt you will repeat it. You will repeat anything when you cannot be nailed down.

Mr. Thomson: And so will you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You will repeat anything when you cannot be caught, but you cannot get away with that kind of stuff in my presence.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the Minister to address the Chair, and not the member for Katanning.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member will go away down the bush where there is no one to nail him down and make him stick to the truth, and he will make all sorts of statements, but he cannot come to this House and make them without being challenged.

Mr. Thomson: On a point of order, the Minister has said that I will go down to the bush and make statements where he cannot hear them, and that I will not make them here. I ask that the statement be withdrawn. It is a reflection on me, and infers that I do not stick to the truth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You do not know what the truth is.

Mr. Thomson: The Minister is charging me with cowardice. He states that I will go to the country and make the statements in the bush.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the member for Katanning resume his seat? I have heard the statement of the Minister and the hon. member's objection. Although the Minister said the hon. member might go to the bush and make a statement there instead of here, it is merely a matter of opinion. I do not think he has said anything that I can ask him to withdraw.

Mr. Thomson: Excuse me!

The CHAIRMAN: I ask you to resume your seat. I say there is nothing in which you can persist.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That disposes of the statement about the Esperance line. I have not the least doubt that the hon. member will repeat what he has said, despite the denials and the evidence that a tribunal fixed the conditions. So far from the union having imposed conditions and the Government having submitted to a maximum of half a mile a day, no such thing ever operated. To come here and put up such a case, well no man with any sense of his responsibilities or with any desire of sticking to the truth would do it. Evidently the hon. member made no inquiry to ascertain the facts. Independently of the Government he could have gone to the Arbitration Court and obtained from official sources information of just what happened, but no, he would not do that. He comes here and makes a statement in the hope that it will be blazoned forth and not nailed down, leaving the public to believe that he has given the true facts. The other night he referred to the case of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. I wrote to the Harbour Trust Commissioners on the following day and asked whether the hon. member's statement was correct. I obtained a reply, but the hon. member was not present to hear me read it.

Mr. Thomson: You made a most ungenerous attack on me while I was absent.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Was it my fault that the hon. member was absent? I gave the facts as I have given the facts to-night. I asked the Harbour Trust Commissioners whether the statement was correct.

Mr. Thomson: And it was correct.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member was told at the time that it was not true.

Mr. Thomson: I beg your pardon: I was not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Albany interjected and tried to correct the hon. member, but he would take no notice of it.

Mr. Thomson: I would take a lot of notice of him.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member paid some attention to his seat last year.

Mr. Thomson: I am not worried about that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member was worried about it at the last election.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing in these Estimates about the last election.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member made his statements when discussing these Estimates. He repeatedly makes such statements and, when they are examined, they are found to be utterly devoid of fact. He drew a comparison between the Peak Hill railway, about which you, Mr. Chairman, know something, and the Government railways. Would you, Mr. Chairman, compare that railway with a Government line? Of course not. The Commissioner of Railways has refused to take over the Peak Hill line and work it because it is not up to Government standard. There was a time when light lines were built in this country for as little as £1,000 a mile. But nowadays the Commissioner of Railways will not have them built. It is against the policy of the department to build lines of that low standard. The wood lines on the goldfields were built at an even lower cost.

Mr. Thomson: Was not that line built so that the Government could take it over if they so desired?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That railway is not up to Government standard, and the Commissioner of Railways would not pass such a line.

Mr. Thomson: It cost £2,100 a mile.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have pointed out that at one time we could build railways for £1,000 a mile.

The Minister for Railways: Rails cost more than that now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes: rails alone cost £1,500 a mile now. The Peak Hill line is built with 45-lb. rails, whereas the Elandring line is built with 60-lb. rails.

Mr. Thomson: That is only 25 per cent. more.

The Minister for Railways: It means heavier material right through.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That shows the hon. member's knowledge. That is all he knows about it. Obviously he knows nothing about it or he would not make such statements.

Mr. Thomson: You are the only wise man in the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member gives voice to only the tittle tattle that he hears outside.

Mr. Thomson: Then I am surprised that you take any notice of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am surprised that anyone takes notice of the hon. member.

Mr. Thomson: You appear to be giving me a good deal of attention.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The trouble is that the statements he makes go out to the public who, not knowing the hon. member, may take them seriously. They may say that as the Government did not reply to the hon. member, the statements may be true. Consider the spectacle this evening! The Leader of the Opposition urged the Government not to buy any more 45-lb. rails. He stressed that we should build heavier lines and use only 60-lb. rails. Now the member for Katanning complains because we are building lines up to that standard.

Mr. Thomson: I am not complaining; I drew a comparison between the cost of the two.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What other deduction could be drawn from the hon. member's remarks than that we should build lines to the standard of the Horseshoe railway?

The Minister for Railways: Which has no stations or sidings, either.

Mr. Thomson: It has a telephone line.

The Minister for Railways: Only recently, then.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Regarding day labour on railway construction, it matters not which party has been in power, for many years all Governments have agreed that private enterprise could not compete with the Works Department in the building of railways. That goes back even to the time when the late Hon. Frank Wilson was Minister for Works. Everyone knows how prejudiced he was against day labour and what a friend he was to the contractor, but even he would not undertake to build railways by contract.

Mr. Ferguson: Does that apply to the Piawaning extension?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, that was the last railway built under contract. I do not think the contractor made anything out of it, and yet it cost more than the department estimated for day labour. I regret I did not know that this matter would be mentioned to-night, or I would have brought along a report prepared by the ex-Engineer in Chief (Mr. James Thompson) for Mr. Frank Wilson when he was Minister for

Works. It was not a Labour Government that was in office at that time, and the then Engineer-in-Chief knew that his Minister was pledged to contract and was antagonistic to day labour. In his report Mr. Thompson gave facts and challenged comparison with private enterprise in any part of the continent. He wound up by saying that if the Government attempted to build railways by contract, the cost would be much greater than by day labour. Whatever is the position with regard to day labour in other Public Works activities, so far as railway construction is concerned there is no comparison between the two systems.

Mr. Thomson: You do not afford an opportunity to test that by the calling of tenders.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The opportunity has existed for many years, and the success of day labour as against contract has been proved in numerous instances. If only I had that report with me, I would quote it. I have had it here before, and no doubt quotations from it appear in the records. There was no sympathy on the part of either the Engineer-in-Chief or the Premier of that day for the Labour Party, but on that report Mr. Frank Wilson simply had to continue the day labour system. In view of the wide knowledge and great experience of the member for Katanning, who has shown his appreciation of the difference between the line built by your company, Mr. Lambert, and Government lines—

Mr. Thomson: I know the price, £2,100 per mile for 88 miles.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member knows nothing whatever about it. What does his statement mean?

Mr. Thomson: Oh, the difference is a mere detail!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can point to railways in this country and other parts of Australia which have cost twice that amount, but that fact does not show the one construction to be more expensive than the other. It is necessary to know the nature of the work, what material is put into it, what standard it is built to. The hon. member does not know what stations there are on the Peak Hill line, or what rails or what sleepers have been put into it. He sees merely the one plain, bald fact. It is as if you, Mr. Chairman, went to Kalgoorlie by train, and I walked there, and the hon. member then compared the cost of the two journeys. The hon. member is quite

irresponsible on that matter, just as he is with reference to the half-mile per day on the Esperance line. He says that was a condition imposed on the department. There is not the least word of truth in the statement. But it does not matter how often we deny these things and try to correct the hon. member. One can be as open and fair as possible with him, and supply him with all the facts; it does not satisfy him. He still gets up to repeat these wild and woolly statements. The building of railways by day labour is not peculiar to the present Government or any other Labour Government. It has been done here for many years by Government of all shades of political opinion. Every Minister has been convinced that day labour is the most economical method of railway construction.

Mr. Sampson: Do you not think that with competition one would get better results from the Public Works Department?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. If tenders have to be called and plans and specifications have to be prepared, the effort is to put up the cost, as in the case of the Main Roads Board.

Mr. Thomson: Are you constructing railways without having estimates?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When one builds by the day labour system, one saves 75 per cent. of the office work that is necessary under contract conditions.

Mr. Thomson: As you saved on the Canning-road.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not standing to the department as regards the Canning-road. If the hon. member knew what was on the file, even he, with all his bitterness and prejudice, would not take that point. No doubt some members on the committee of inquiry can give him information as to that. I am not standing to those heavy costs.

Mr. Thomson: With specifications that would not have happened.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Specifications have nothing to do with it. There will be something said about that matter when we come to the item of roads.

Hon. G. Taylor: The first estimate was about £35,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Never! I do not know where that originated. The estimate subject to which authority for the

road was given, was £91,000. The first estimate I saw was about £80,000. That was said to be a potshot. I asked that details should be supplied before the matter was submitted to Cabinet. An engineer was put on to get all details, measurements and quantities, and the price then put up to Cabinet was £91,000.

Hon. G. Taylor: But the first estimate was £30,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. Thomson: It was £50,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. It was never either £30,000 or £50,000. What appeared on the Estimates was the expenditure for the first year. The £50,000 was provided for the first year's expenditure, and the total expenditure was to extend over two years. Speaking from memory, the first estimate submitted to me was £80,000, or in the vicinity of £80,000.

Hon. G. Taylor: I think the first vote passed was £30,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am sure that is wrong.

Hon. G. Taylor: I am speaking subject to correction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am positive that the estimate on which Cabinet approved of the construction of the road was £91,000.

Mr. Thomson: My point is that with a specification—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The engineer in charge, instead of living up to the specification after approval had been given, widened the road by two feet and substituted granite for gravel lumps. He did those things without reference to the Minister. Inquiry that has since been made shows that those alterations, the widening by two feet and the substitution of granite for gravel lumps, practically account for the difference between the £91,000 and the £120,000.

Mr. Thomson: With proper plans and specifications that could not possibly have occurred without the Minister's knowing it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is right, but it is not an argument against day labour. If the engineer in charge—and one must have an engineer in charge whether the system is contract or day labour—look upon himself to make these alterations, is it not just as likely that

he would have agreed to them if it had been a contract job?

Mr. Thomson: No.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The man who took that responsibility on his own shoulders, who made those alterations without consulting me, is in his right place when he is no longer in the Public Works Department.

Mr. Thomson: How many of those things may happen when you have no check?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no more check over a contractor unless there is a departmental engineer living on the job to measure every shovelful that is put in. That is the experience of the department.

Mr. Thomson: You know that is not correct.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know it is correct. It has been reported to me by the engineers.

Mr. Sampson: On big jobs it would pay you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has to be so on every job, and overhead charges go on much the same whether the system is day labour or contract. But office expenses are nearly three times as much under contract as under day labour.

Mr. Thomson: My point is—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know it has been stated in another place that the original estimate of £30,000 for the Canning-road went up to £120,000, but that is absolutely and completely wrong. Cabinet authorised the construction of the road at £91,000. The Premier has explained the matter in this Chamber, it has been explained outside this Chamber, and it has been explained in the Press; and yet the statement is reiterated and the figures are re-quoted.

Hon. G. Taylor: I was referring to what we voted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That might be something voted just for the time being. The original idea was that the expenditure should be spread over two years.

Hon. G. Taylor: According to the last Loan Estimates, we voted £15,000.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot state from memory how the items were passed, but I am positive about the figures because I have looked them up in the file.

There is no mistake about what Cabinet approved of: authorisation was given for the construction at £91,000. If there is any doubt about my statement regarding the Esperance line, the records of the Arbitration Court can be consulted. As to comparing the Peak Hill line with Government lines, it is like comparing some of the roads built by road boards with the roads built by the Main Roads Board. There is no comparison. The latter roads are frequently wider and have curves and culverts and efficient drainage, matters the local authorities do not supply at all. It was pleasing to hear the Leader of the Opposition say that the roads constructed in the country are good jobs. They are costing money, but roads to carry modern traffic must be well constructed. Those roads set a standard to the local authorities, who will eventually build roads of the type of those constructed by the Main Roads Board. To compare the cost of one type of road with the cost of the other type is just as ridiculous as to compare the Peak Hill railway with the Government railways. If the Government were to get down to the standard of the Peak Hill line, they would also get down to the Peak Hill figure for construction. But the Leader of the Opposition urges the Government not to go in for any more 45-lb. rails. He urges them to build up to the highest standard, knowing that it is economically sound because of the saving to the working railways. Certainly the cheaper standard means regrading and relaying sooner or later. I admit that in the early stages I was much inclined to favour the building of light lines in new country, as the cheaper cost of construction would mean the building of a great many more miles of railway, and the furnishing of more districts with transport facilities.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is the difference in cost between 45-lb. and 60-lb. rails?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The difference between £3,700 and £4,300 per mile; about £600 per mile. That is not the only difference in this railway. The ballasting, the stations, the equipment all along the line, and countless other things have to be taken into consideration.

Mr. Clydesdale: One is a light tram line as compared with a railway.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The two railways cannot be compared. I am sorry I have not here the report of the ex-

Engineer-in-Chief, who had so much railway experience, and was so set in his convictions that no contractor could compete with him. He issued a challenge to the late Mr. Frank Wilson to the effect that no contractor could compete in railway construction with his department. The Commonwealth Engineer is in the same position in the Northern Territory. He has saved thousands of pounds in railway construction there. Costs are higher now than they were before. Instead of a line costing £1,000 a mile, the rails themselves are now costing more than that amount. We have had to pay more for the last lot of rails than we had for the previous lot. Labour, timber and everything have gone up in cost. Every item of railway construction has increased in price. To compare costs with what they were a few years ago proves nothing. It does not establish whether the costs now are more economical than they were before. I do not expect anything I may say to convince the member for Katanning. I am not deceived into that belief. I know that would be impossible.

Mr. Thomson: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The only consolation I have is that when the hon. member moves his motion it must be put without debate.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand the member for Katanning has intimated his intention to move for a reduction in this vote.

Mr. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That as a direction to the Government that tenders should be called for all public works, in order to secure an effective check on the Estimates submitted by departmental officers, the Loan Estimates be reduced by £5,000.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot preface his motion with remarks of that nature. He can only move that the vote be reduced.

Mr. THOMSON: I have indicated my reasons. It is the desire of our party to see that tenders shall be called for public works. I therefore move—

That the vote be reduced by £5,000.

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

Ayes	11
Noes	17
				—
Majority against	..			6
				—

AYRS.

Mr. Angelo
Mr. Brown
Mr. Davy
Mr. Doney
Mr. Ferguson
Mr. Griffiths

Mr. Mann
Mr. Sampson
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Thomson
Mr. Nott

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Chesson
Mr. Clydesdale
Mr. Corboy
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Cowan
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Lamond
Mr. Lutey
Mr. Marshall

Mr. McCallum
Mr. Millington
Mr. Munie
Mr. Pantou
Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Withers
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYRS.

Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Maley
Mr. Latham
Sir James Mitchell
Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Richardson

NOES.

Miss Holman
Mr. W. D. Johnson
Mr. Cunningham
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Collier
Mr. Rowe

Amendment thus negatived.

Vote put and passed.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Vote—*Railways and Tramways, etc.*,
£1,034,300—agreed to.

Vote—*Harbours and Rivers*, £233,715:

Item, Fremantle Harbour Works, £70,000:

Mr. THOMSON: I should like an explanation of the reason why in 1927 of the expenditure of £218,422 the sum of £96,000 was not charged to revenue, and also why so much was charged to loan and nothing whatever to revenue.

Progress reported.

BILL—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Town Planning Board:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of Subclause 2 the word "engineer" be struck out, and "surveyor" inserted in lieu.

It has been pointed out to me that a surveyor would be more valuable than an engineer. If the select committee had in mind the Engineer-in-Chief and the word "surveyor" were inserted, the Surveyor-General would take the place of the Engineer-in-Chief. I was asked to move this amendment.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: The select committee had in mind the Engineer-in-Chief. I do not know that anything would be gained by passing the amendment. This is not a job for laymen, but for experts. Personally I think an engineer would be preferable to a surveyor, because the engineer has surveying knowledge and experience. The man we had in mind was the Engineer-in-Chief.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: My informant suggested that as the Surveyor-General was handling all the lands of the State he would be more valuable on the commission than would the Engineer-in-Chief. The member for Canning has had all the evidence before him, and I have no desire to do anything to interfere with the Bill beyond complying with the request made to me.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. MARSHALL: I suggest to the member for Mt. Margaret that if he added after the word "engineer" the words "or surveyor," it would then be optional to appoint one or the other. The words could be added without affecting the intentions of the Bill. They would merely widen the scope of the clause, and such an amendment would fulfil the desire of the member for Mt. Margaret.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I move an amendment—

That after "engineer," in line 4, the words "or surveyor" be inserted.

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

Clauses 5 to 18—agreed to.

Clause 19—Planning of town and suburban lands:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have here a couple of misprints that have occurred in the redrafting of the Bill. I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause 2 the figure "4" be struck out, and "6" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 of Subclause 2 the word "five" be struck out, and "seven" inserted in lieu.

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

Clauses 20 to 28—agreed to.

Clause 29—Amendment of Municipal Corporations Act and Road Districts Act:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Here we have another misprint. We get the year 1927 instead of the year 1928. I move an amendment—

That in line 6 "1927" be struck out, and "1928" inserted in lieu.

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

Clauses 30 to 33—agreed to.

First Schedule:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in Clause 7, para. (e), line 2, the word "nine" be struck out, and "eleven" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed; the Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Second Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments

House adjourned at 10.13 p.m.

QUESTION—PILOTAGE ACCIDENTS, FREMANTLE.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Will he furnish the name of the pilot or pilots in charge of the vessels referred to by him in his second reading speech on the introduction of the Harbours and Jetties Bill? 2, Was an inquiry made by any competent or other authority regarding the various accidents referred to, and, if so, by whom and what was the result of each inquiry so held? 3, Will he also furnish a list of vessels which were in charge of pilots and which suffered or caused damage within the limits of Fremantle harbour during the last five years, and specify brief details of nature and extent of damage and names of pilot or pilots in charge of each vessel? 4, By whom, and on whose recommendation, were the respective pilots appointed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Honorary Minister) replied: The information sought by the hon. member has been prepared in the form of a return, which I now lay on the Table of the House.

MAIN ROADS BOARD ADMINISTRATION—SELECT COMMITTEE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by **Hon. H. Seddon**, the time for bringing up the select committee's report was extended to the 18th December.

BILL—QUARRY RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Read a third time and passed.

BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th November.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (**Hon. J. M. Drew**—Central—in reply) [4.35]: **Mr. Harris**, in the course of his criticism, read extracts from what purported to be a speech delivered by the Premier (**Hon. P. Collier**) at Boulder in 1924. The object of the hon. member in presenting the quotation was to prove that the Premier in placing this Bill before Parliament, had been inconsistent with his former professions. He credited

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 4th December, 1928.

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