

**Legislative Assembly,***Thursday, 12th December, 1907.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at  
2.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

**REPORT—MUNICIPAL SUBSIDIES  
INQUIRY.**

Mr. H. BROWN brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into alleged overpayments of subsidies to municipalities. Report received, read, and ordered to be printed with the evidence.

**QUESTION—MEEKATHARRA RAIL-  
WAY PROJECT.**

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Premier: 1, Is Mr. Montgomery's report in connection with the proposed railway from Nannine to Meekatharra available? 2, If so, is it his intention to place the same on the table of the House immediately?

The PREMIER replied: I understand that Mr. Montgomery is engaged on the exhaustive report at the present time, but the preliminary reports he has submitted will be available and will be laid on the table to-morrow.

**BILL — METROPOLITAN WATER  
AND SEWERAGE AMENDMENT.**

Introduced by the *Minister for Works*, and read a first time.

**PAPERS PRESENTED.**

By the Premier: Death of Mignonette Coheny, papers asked for by Mr. Brebber.

By the *Minister for Works*: Public Works Annual Report for 1906-7.

**BILL—MOUNT MAGNET-BLACK  
RANGE RAILWAY.***Second Reading.*

Resumed from the 24th October.

Mr. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison): It is not my intention to violently oppose the passage of this Bill, but I would not be doing my duty if I did not point out exactly what my opinions are in regard to this measure. Of course there is one question that can be settled easily. It has been said in certain portions of this State that this railway should be built from the Eastern Goldfields, starting from Leonora and passing through Lawlers to Black Range; but it would be madness to undertake a work of that description, and I do not think the project would be considered for a moment. At the same time, when it comes to a question of giving railway communication to any goldfield, it is necessary for us to consider from what centre the railway should start to tap the best country, because the matter of an extra few miles of railway carriage is not an important factor. If we can open up a belt of auriferous country that will employ a considerable number of men, it should be a matter for consideration. The Premier has said that he realises that it is essential that these outback places should have railway communication. I am of the same opinion, but at the same time it seems to me that before railway communication can be given to any mining district there must be some powerful company operating in the district. For instance, take the goldfields railways that have been promised and built by this Government. There is the Phillips River Railway. We know that while the prospectors held that portion of the State, and while the State owned the smelter and when it would have been in the best interests of the State itself to build the railway, there was little consideration given towards the immediate construction of that railway.

The *Minister for Mines*: Your own people suggested building a line by private enterprise.

Mr. HOLMAN: I know what my own people suggested very well; but I know that when Mr. Kaufman secured at very low figures hundreds of acres in that part of the State from the prospectors, for whom the railway should have been built, the railway was immediately taken in hand. It was the quickest construction of any of the mining railways on record.

*The Premier:* It was not started nearly so promptly as the Coolgardie-Norseman railway.

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, it was; because the Coolgardie-Norseman Railway has been a matter for consideration for the last ten or twelve years. It was practically passed in this Chamber many years ago.

*The Premier:* What, a Bill?

Mr. HOLMAN: No, a resolution. We know that it was only the fact that Esperance might have taken away a portion of the Western Australian trade from Fremantle and given it to South Australia, that prevented the construction of the railway many years ago. But it was altogether different at Phillips River. Immediately Mr. Kaufman secured the smelter the railway was taken in hand at once. Some twelve months ago when I opposed the construction of this line, speaking under great disadvantage, I put forward certain reasons to justify my opposition which I considered was in the best interests of this State, and I defy any member to say that I brought forward any matter that has not proved to be practically correct at the present time. When I entered my protest against rushing into the construction of that railway, it was about midnight, but I gave my reasons, and what I said has been borne out by facts. Our oracle, the Premier, has drawn attention to the construction of the Coolgardie-Norseman Railway. Let me say that for many years the people at Norseman asked for the construction of this railway, but they have to thank the efforts of Mr. Graham Price, who secured a big interest at Higginsville, for the early construction of the line. Though I supported that construction and would support it to-day, had it not

been for the splendid work put in by Mr. Graham Price, the building of that line would not have been carried out so early as it was.

*The Premier:* What work did he put in?

Mr. HOLMAN: I attended a deputation with him.

*The Premier:* Is that the work you refer to?

Mr. HOLMAN: I consider that really good work, and I assisted him to do it. In any case where I think a railway should be constructed I will do what I can to get it built. If, however, I think a line is not warranted, I shall always speak against it. It is immaterial to me who I please or offend. We know there are good companies formed in Black Range, and the Premier in his speech quoted the cost of cartage of machinery to that place, and the amount of money expended there. I would ask him, however, not to take too much notice of the sum spent in the carriage of machinery to a new goldfield like that. We have had a previous example of this in Lake Way, where the Lake Way Goldmining Company spent a large sum of money in the purchase and carriage of machinery many years ago. After all this expenditure they did not make a goldfield of it. All they did was to lock up the ground and keep it idle by exemptions. I do not infer that this is going to be the case with the Oroya Junior at Black Range, but I cite the example in order to show that the mere fact of so many thousands of pounds having been spent in the carriage of machinery does not in itself justify the construction of a railway. To my mind there is no justification for the construction of a line from Leonora to Black Range. If the line is to be constructed, it should be from the Murchison fields.

*The Minister for Mines:* From Nannine, for instance.

Mr. HOLMAN: The State Mining Engineer, in referring to the question of routes, said that if the line went from Nannine it would open up the greatest quantity of good country. I said that months before he did. Therefore the sneer of the Minister is uncalled for.

*The Minister for Mines* : There was no sneer, and I did not speak in any way offensively.

*Mr. HOLMAN* : If I could justify the construction of a railway from Nannine to Black Range, there would not be much chance of my carrying it here. However, I would not be doing my duty if I did not place all the facts before the House and leave them to decide which route the line should follow. If my persuasive powers are not great enough for the construction of the line from Nannine, I shall not act the part of a dog in the manger and try to prevent the line from going from some other place. As to the three routes proposed, in the first place there is the route from Mount Magnet to Black Range, which can be constructed, it is estimated, at £134,000 or £135,000. The construction of a line from Cue would cost £167,000. These are the Premier's figures. Then there is the proposed construction from Nannine to cost £155,000.

*Mr. Underwood* : What about Dowerin?

*Mr. HOLMAN* : It would be a good scheme if the Government took it up seriously, so that it would operate against the Midland Railway Company. If the line is started from Mount Magnet to go to Black Range, practically the whole distance will be traversed in country which has not been worked at all. There are a few men at Paynesville and a few others at Windsor Castle, but at present I do not think we can rely on traffic in large quantity right from Mount Magnet to Black Range. Therefore the whole stretch of 90 miles of railway will go through country without touching anything. Looking at it from the point of view of opening up fresh or good country, there is not a very good prospect to look forward to from that route.

*Mr. Troy* : Are you sure of your facts?

*Mr. HOLMAN* : I have been through the country. Paynesville and Windsor Castle have been deserted for a good many years. Whether during the last month or two men have gone there I do not know. I am only referring to the country as I know it. Then take the

route from Cue. If the line is extended from there, it will traverse a considerable amount of country without opening up fresh mining centres. There is an auriferous belt at Cue, and the line would touch Errols and Barrambie, going thence to Black Range. To my mind the suggestion of building the line from Cue to Black Range is not a good one. Then there is the other route from Nannine to Black Range. Even the State Mining Engineer himself has said that the question of this route should receive every consideration. The Premier, when introducing the measure, read a portion of the report of Mr. Montgomery and left out that portion dealing with Nannine. He has kindly invited me to read that portion, and I will do so. The State Mining Engineer says, with regard to the route from Nannine via Burnakurra, Barrambie, etcetera, "This route is without doubt the best of the three proposed, from the point of view of opening up mineral country." The route would embrace not only Barrambie and Burnakurra, but it would also bring railway communication 20 miles nearer to Gum Creek and Wiluna, and it would also serve Gabanintha. The line would go direct through Quinn's, Erroll's, Barrambie, and bring the railway nearer to Montagu Ranges and Birrigrin. It would open up in all nine or ten different centres and would go through districts which have been proved in the past as fair gold producers, with good prospects for the future. It is not a question of distance I am arguing now, but as to the best route to open up the mineral country. We know that the distance as to construction will be practically the same to within a few miles. One is 94 or 95 miles, and the other five or six or ten miles longer.

*Mr. Collier* : How long is it since that report of Mr. Montgomery's was made?

*Mr. HOLMAN* : Not so very long ago. It is the report the Premier quoted a portion of. Then of course there is the question of distance as between Mount Magnet and Nannine.

*Mr. T. L. Brown* : Yes; the difference is about 126 miles.

Mr. HOLMAN: No, it is only about 90 miles. If we can open up a large auriferous country, I consider it would be better to spend money in that way than leave this country practically untenanted. The report by Mr. Montgomery as to the Nannine route is as follows:—

“Route (3)—From Nannine via Burnakurra, Barraubie, etc.—This route is, without doubt, the best of the three proposed from the point of view of opening up mineral country. It would pass near enough to the Gabanintha field to be of much assistance there, and would go over a likely greenstone area to Burnakurra and Quinn’s and thence on to Erroll’s Find and Barrambie, where it would join the previously discussed route from Cue. The distance from Nannine to Barrambie would be about 61 miles, or 14 miles less than from Cue. This route has also geographical advantages when looked at as a means of sending sheep and cattle from the pastoral districts of the Gascoyne and Ashburton Rivers to the Eastern Goldfields, the route from Nannine via Black Range and Lawlers to Leonora being a fairly direct one. A connection between the Northern and Eastern Railway system will become sooner or later very necessary, and it is readily seen from the map that this proposed route, with a junction at Nannine, would be very suitable in the event of any considerable extension Northwards of Geraldton-Nannine line towards Peak Hill and the Ashburton.”

This, to my mind, is a fair report, and I know the district pretty well. I have been over it, or at all events a good portion of it. The question to be determined is as to the railway which would give the greatest facilities to the greatest number of people, and also have the best prospects of opening up good auriferous areas. We should open up the country lying between Nannine and Black Range, as by that means we could give facilities to a much greater number of people than by any other route. The difference in the cost of construction

would not be much more, only amounting to a few thousand pounds. The country is very level, as is shown by the reports of the engineer, there being but few engineering difficulties to encounter.

Mr. Troy: Read the engineer’s reports on that.

Mr. HOLMAN: I have not got them. I do not expect to get the route changed, but I would not be doing my duty if I did not place before the House the other point of view. The Premier has not been through that country, although he knows a good deal about it; but he has to a slight degree misled the House in dealing with the question. In his speech in moving the second reading, he said:—

“The State Mining Engineer has pointed out that Barrambie, Burnakurra, Redcastle, Paynesville, and Birrigrin would benefit by the construction of this line. And it must also be borne in mind that there is promising country between Black Range and Lake Way.”

That is absolutely incorrect. It will not bring either Barrambie or Lake Way into any closer communication. All the traffic, or a great part of it, now goes from Nannine to Barrambie.

The Minister for Railways: Black Range is closer to Wiluna or Nannine.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister ought to know what he is talking about. It is closer in one respect; but to reach Wiluna from Black Range one has to go through a barren spinifex desert, trackless and almost impassable. The Minister’s statement is absurd; because one could never find a track unless one got down to Lawlers. The Premier, doubtless unintentionally, misled the House when he made that statement. The project will not, practically speaking, bring Wiluna into closer railway communication. As the crow flies the distance is a little closer to Black Range than to Nannine; but it is not nearly 55 miles. When we talk about bringing a place into closer communication, we must surely mean communication by means of a route which can be used. The distance from Mount Magnet to

Nannine will be practically the same as from Mount Magnet to Black Range. There is no material difference. [Mr. Troy: Ten miles.] The Premier stated also that Barrambie, Burnakurra, and other places will benefit by the railway. That is absolutely absurd.

*The Premier:* On what page of *Hansard* does that statement appear?

Mr. HOLMAN: This session's *Hansard*, No. 3, page 354, where you say: "The State Mining Engineer has pointed out that Barrambie, Burnakurra, Redcastle, Paynesville and Birrigrin would benefit by the construction of this line." The Premier did not intentionally make that statement. He evidently misquoted the extracts given him. The route between Black Range to Wiluna will never be passable, as it must lie through spinifex country. With a team or even in a trap it is impossible to get there at the present time. The distance by the proposed line will be some 96 miles, and the distance to Nannine slightly over 100 miles. I have already mentioned the cost of carting machinery for the Oroya Black Range Company; but that matter need not be considered at all, for, as I have previously stated, the same expenditure has been incurred before, and almost double the sum was spent in carting machinery to Wiluna. The Premier quoted the area of the leases in the Black Range district. There are some 195 gold-mining leases, comprising 2,039 acres—a fairly large area. But I brought before this Chamber a project for the construction of a railway from Nannine to Meekatharra.

*The Premier:* I fancy I have heard you speak of it.

Mr. HOLMAN: Probably the Premier will hear me again pretty often on the same question, until the matter is settled; and I believe he will lend a favourable ear to my proposal. Exactly the same area is held in the districts I mentioned, there being a difference of only ten acres. In the Nannine and Peak Hill districts 2,027 acres are held under lease, and would be served by the Meekatharra line, while the acreage in the Black Range district is 2,039. One railway would be 24

miles long and the other about 100; one would cost £130,000 or £140,000, and the other £30,000 or £40,000. A most vital difference is that one district has an ample supply of mining timber and firewood, while the other has not a scrap of mining timber. The Premier, when he brought forward his proposal, quoted the gold production of "the Black Range goldfield." But I wish to point out that the district comprises a number of centres, and he bunched the whole of them together. In my speech on the Meekatharra railway project I quoted the returns of one centre, practically Meekatharra. A line to Meekatharra would benefit Peak Hill also, and the whole of the country at the back of Peak Hill. The member for Mount Magnet said he would quote the figures for Meekatharra. I wish to point out that ever since the Meekatharra goldfield was discovered it has suffered seriously owing to absolute want of water for crushing operations. Even now batteries are hung up for want of water, and they have never been able to work more than half time on the average. With proper crushing facilities the output of gold in the Meekatharra district would be practically doubled. Even so, with the disadvantage of having to cart the timber from Three Springs to Nannine, 400 miles, and to pay an extra £2 10s. to have it taken to Meekatharra, the gold output at Meekatharra is doubling year after year. This year shows an increase of a hundred per cent. on the total output of last year. At Black Range we find a similar increase; and it is a good job we have gold-mining districts improving and showing increased returns. The gold output at Black Range, we are all pleased to see, has doubled and more than doubled during the past year. Had the north-east portion of this State received proper consideration, the gold output, instead of dwindling as it is to-day, would be on the increase. It is time the Government turned their attention to that portion of the State, which will give a fair return for the expenditure of public money. Members will probably say that we goldfields representatives occupy

a parochial standpoint; but had they to live at Black Range, Meekatharra, Peak Hill, or Wiluna, and experience the difficulties of the people there, we should not have so much trouble in getting railway or road communication to those centres. Although I am here to do my duty to my constituents, I am placing before the Chamber the merits of the two rival routes. But nothing I place before the House will be used by me, nor do I desire it to be used by anybody else, as a lever to prevent the construction of the necessary work embodied in the Bill. I have not been at Black Range; but the information I have gathered leads me to believe that the line is absolutely essential for the encouragement of the whole Northern portion of the State; and be the route from what centre it may, I hope the construction will not be long delayed. I intend to place before the House the absolute necessity for a line from Nannine, a line that will open up the richest auriferous belt of country that remains unprospected in this State. Right through the whole of that district boundless wealth remains to be brought to light for the benefit of the people. Every centre the railway will traverse has proved itself to a great extent, and the auriferous belt will compare favourably with any other in the North-West or any in the Eastern portion of the State. [Mr. Stone: That is our big reserve.] Probably it will be, and it will be operated on when, perhaps, other goldfields have sunk into comparative insignificance, though I hope the time is far distant when they will sink into that condition. There are also copper propositions at Gabanintha, which are well worth prospecting. So far, the prospects are not convincing, but very fair. If we get a copper field at Gabanintha, railway communication will be absolutely necessary. To my mind there are as good prospects for copper at Gabanintha as at Phillips River. The field needs only opening up and fair encouragement. I do not think I should be in order if, when in Committee, I moved for a change of route—that the railway should start from Nannine.

That would be altering the title of the Bill. But I rose merely to enter my protest against constructing this line from Magnet to Black Range instead of from Nannine to Black Range, to my mind the most suitable route, and the route which, according to the State Mining Engineer's report, would open up the best part of the country. I shall not delay the Bill. I have now done my duty by placing before the House the alternative proposal; but if the majority decide for the route in the Bill, I will abide by their decision, and do my best to push forward the work.

Mr. P. STONE (Greenough): I can conscientiously support the construction of this line, believing it is in the best interests of the State. It will, as it were, bring the consumers in the North Murchison district 300 miles nearer to a port, thus reducing the price of their supplies. The route is through a level country with few engineering difficulties, and water can be obtained all along at shallow depths. This railway project is not new. For ten years it has been publicly discussed. Time after time I have heard Sir John Forrest speak of the extension from Black Range or Mount Magnet to Lawlers, before there were any developments at Black Range. He considered that the circuit should be completed to enable the northern part of the Eastern Goldfield to be brought within closer touch of a seaport, to enable the goldfields to get their machinery and other supplies at a reduced cost. If the line is taken to Black Range, several other districts will be accommodated. Before the railway was brought to Leonora, the merchants and farmers in the Geraldton district supplied the Lawlers district; and it seems unfair to make people in that far out district pay for so long a time such high haulage rates as are charged on the Eastern Railway. If this section is completed the Lawlers people and the mining districts in the vicinity will be able to get the supplies to a port which is nearer to them; that is the desire of the people living in the district. There

are other members who are desirous that the line shall be extended to other districts: they desire to see the line built from the districts they represent. That may be pardonable, but it is not in the best interests of the State. The mining throughout the district has proved itself for a considerable time, and it is carried on to the advantage of the people living there. If by this line cheaper means of transit is provided many more mines will be worked and employment found for the mining community, thus good will be done. In the Windsor Castle district mining has carried a large population, but having no conveniences from a railway point of view, the population has dwindled down. The great supply of stock, sheep and cattle produced on the Murchison, if we had a railway from Magnet, could be trained from there to the Eastern Goldfields, which would have a cheapening influence on the meat supplies of the Eastern Goldfields. The rainfall in the district is very fair, and a great deal of the country is adapted for pastoral pursuits. The timber is much better than in many other parts of the Murchison and the Eastern districts, which shows that the lands are subjected to thunder-storms and a rainfall which does not occur in other parts. There is the probability of getting mining timber from Mullewa and the Midland line delivered much cheaper in the mining districts, which is a big item in mining matters, particularly as the mines become farther developed. We have also got plenty of coal close to Geraldton and Irwin. Only last week I saw a train running from Perth to Geraldton with this coal; I inquired as I went along, and the conductor said that the coal was giving satisfactory results. The time will come when we shall want fuel for that part of the country, and the closer it is to the mining districts the cheaper it can be supplied, and we shall be able to develop the coal mines in the Geraldton district. I have much pleasure in supporting the construction of the line. It is not a new proposition; it has been before the public for 10 years, and I have never heard from

any side opposition with any valid reason why the line should not be constructed. It is the opinion of most people in the North that in consequence of there not being many members representing that part of the State, and the districts being so much larger, this work has not been undertaken and carried out before now. I hope members will give the measure fair consideration and honest support, and not let local interests interfere with the general good of the community.

Mr. J. BREBBER (North Perth): Before this Bill is passed I would like to say that as far as I am concerned I think we have quite enough of these speculative goldfields railways in hand at the present time, without entering on another one just on the back of those already passed. We have approved of Port Hedland-Marble Bar line, and it is yet very doubtful whether the mines in that district will warrant the expenditure. We have passed a railway from Coolgardie to Dundas, and another mining railway from Hopetoun to Ravenshorpe, and now we propose to pass another railway from Mount Magnet to Black Range. My opinion is that these goldfields ought to show much better prospects than they do at the present time before we commit ourselves to the expenditure of a large sum of money. In considering this railway I cannot bring any personal experience to bear which others can who have been over the ground, therefore I have to look at the Mines report and see if that report justifies me in giving a vote for this railway. On looking at that report I find that there are not many shafts down more than 100 feet, and many bottom before they reach that distance; and looking at the width of the reefs there is only one, as far as the report shows, a little more than four feet through; the average runs from 6 inches to 15 inches and 24 inches. The returns of gold from this field are from seven to 15 dwts.; the principal reef returns four or five ounces, but no one can say that a reef only four feet thick, and a surface show at that—and the returns from

that reef included the specimens got from the reef when it was first discovered, and anyone who has a knowledge of mining matters knows, that the specimens of a reef which have been exposed for ages are generally richer; also when sinking on a reef it is a curious thing that instead of the returns becoming greater they get smaller—justifies the construction of the railway. The railway will be 86 miles long, and for the first 75 miles there are no prospects either in agriculture or mining to make the railway pay, so we are practically making a railway through a desert for 75 miles. At a distance of 86 miles there are goldfields; but the reports in hand will not justify us in saying there are permanent fields. I hold it is not right that the money should be spent on this sort of speculative railway. We ought to know exactly how it is going to turn out; we should hold our hand and see whether the fields already served by railways are going to be a return to the State or be a burden on the State. If they are going to be a burden on the State it is high time we stopped these railways until there is greater justification for them. I would just like to refer to one or two mines, taking them haphazard as we come to them, in the report. Take the Lady Jackson. The report says:—

“It seems likely that the reef will be of fair size, but it has not yet been seen in solid country, and neither strike, dip, nor size can be yet made out.”

Then we have another mine, the Black Range. The report says:—

“The reef was cut in the crosscut only a very short time before my visit, and had not been driven upon. The quartz vein was from six inches to two feet wide where cut, but the hanging wall seemed much shattered, and the whole width of the lode-channel is probably a good deal greater.”

There is nothing definite about that. If we are going to be guided by anything in connection with this railway we should be guided by the evidence of the officers of the Mines Department; and

the evidence to-day before us from the Mines Department does not justify me in giving my vote in favour of the railway. In the face of the report this House ought to hold its hand to see if this goldfield justifies the expenditure of money more than the report that is before the House at the present time. Speaking about figures, last night I was told that the traffic from Mount Magnet to Black Range will only amount to 400 tons a month; would anyone build a railway to serve traffic of that sort? In reporting on the proposed railway the mining inspector says that when the line is completed the population in the district will be 3,000, and he gives us to understand that is the utmost the field will maintain. We do not make railways through a desert on the off chance of 3,000 people finding gold to support them, and in all probability there will never be so much gold there. I am not losing sight of the fact that the railway is supposed to be constructed to the Black Range goldfields; members may say it is going farther, but the only thing I have to look at is that the proposal is to build a railway from Mount Magnet to Black Range, and I do not think the expenditure is justified on the reports before us.

Mr. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet): I do not want to say too much regarding this railway, because the Premier in moving the second reading has told the House all that is required in justification of the policy of the Government to build the line. There have been a few points made by the member for Murchison, and what may be called an attack by the member for North Perth. I will deal briefly with the hon. member. First of all his remarks are absolutely ridiculous and absurd. He quotes from a report made by Mr. Montgomery, the State Mining Engineer, two years ago, when Black Range was in its infancy. Let me disillusionise the member and give him some information, which he badly needs, if one may judge by his remarks. During the last two years Black Range has increased its gold production per month threefold; there have



been four or five mines floated, and on one mine alone £100,000 has been spent on development work and machinery. Also in the same period three towns have been built and the Government received £14,000 for the sale of 96 blocks in one of the towns. Is it likely that the people would have bought that ground if there had not been progress? The people are satisfied with the district. They have expended £60,000 in buildings during the last twelve months. That should be sufficient to show the hon. member that some progress has been made, and that farther progress is likely to be made. The hon. member says that some of the mines have been shut down. Undoubtedly some have been shut down, but hundreds of others have been opened up. The number of stamps has been increased from 20 head to 91 since Mr. Montgomery's report was made. The hon. member should be satisfied from these figures that some progress has been made, and that this is not a speculative concern. I really must congratulate the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) on speaking very eloquently from his imagination. First the hon. member told us there were no engineering difficulties between Nannine and Black Range. The hon. member says that is in the engineer's report, but as a matter of fact the engineers have never reported as to whether there were any engineering difficulties or not.

*Mr. Holman:* I was speaking of Mr. Montgomery's report.

*Mr. TROY:* I travelled with Mr. Montgomery through that country. Mr. Montgomery did not travel over the route. He simply travelled from camp to camp. If a railway were built from Nannine to Black Range, instead of being 115 miles in length it would be nearer 160 miles.

*Mr. Collier:* It would be a zigzag concern.

*Mr. TROY:* Yes, it would be a zigzag concern. To touch the centres mentioned by the member for Murchison the line would run east to Gabanintha, west of Quinns, south to Barrambie, north to Montagu Range, and then south to Birrigrin and east to Black Range. If any hon. member should know the country I

should. I have been in the district dozens of times. I am not speaking from hearsay information like the member for Murchison. Mr. Montgomery did not recommend the line from Nannine. He visited the district to sketch routes from several localities, and he certainly does say that undoubtedly a railway from Nannine would open up more country.

*The Minister for Mines:* He was asked to report on the three routes.

*Mr. TROY:* Undoubtedly. But later on he pointed out that a railway from Mount Magnet *via* Black Range and Lawlers was undoubtedly justified. He says the others may come in the future. At the time Mr. Montgomery reported, the locality to the north of Black Range was opening up, that is Birrigrin and Montagu Range. But things are very different to-day. That country is not opening up. Unfortunately it has not borne out our anticipations. The returns from Birrigrin and Montagu are infinitesimal. There were five head of stamps erected there some years ago and there has been no progress since. The progress of the Black Range district is being made to the south and south-west. Some members have expressed the opinion that there is nothing between Black Range and Mount Magnet. That is absolutely incorrect, and hon. members who made the remarks did so because they did not know anything about the country. The member for Murchison has been out 38 miles as far as Paynesville; that was some years ago; but the hon. member knows nothing of the prospects of the country since, so I deem it my duty to tell him something of them. There has been a good deal of gold produced between Mount Magnet and Black Range. From Paynesville the returns have been 1,679 tons for 1,527 ounces.

*Mr. Holman:* When?

*Mr. TROY:* That was when Paynesville was in full swing. Paynesville is in quite as prosperous a condition as Quinns, which the hon. member puts forward as a prosperous field.

*Mr. Holman:* There has been no crushing there for seven years.

*Mr. TROY:* Mining returns show that there are six men employed at Quinns and six men at Paynesville. There is another

promising district opening up between Mount Magnet and Black Range which will be served by this railway. It is known as the Youanme country or Koo-yong. There have been something like 300 or 400 tons of stone brought in from this district and treated at the Boogardie battery during the last eighteen months, and the crushings have been up to 40 oz. a ton. This district during the past few months has progressed very materially, so much so that 180 acres of mining leases have been taken up and the Minister for Mines has seen fit to send out a party to find water. There are 70 prospectors on the field, and from the returns received the success of the district is assured. Another district that will be opened up is the Rangeview or Redcastle country. Mr. Montgomery reported on this district a few months ago, and he found the prospects so encouraging that he telegraphed to the Minister for Mines recommending the erection of a public battery. Would Mr. Montgomery do that if he did not think the prospects justified it? We could not imagine him making such a recommendation if it were not warranted. The progress has been so good that the Minister has already promised that battery. The Premier gave the House the State Mining Engineer's report concerning the Black Range route. It was not made two years ago, though even two years ago Mr. Montgomery recommended the railway, but it was made quite recently. Mr. Montgomery said:—

“Present inspection confirms report of last year re Magnet-Black Range railway. Good progress made, field considerably extended, developments at deep levels Sandstone mines generally satisfactory; Hancock's district much improved, several recent new finds Maninga Marley district; railway terminus best near Sandstone.”

Hancock's was not discovered when Mr. Montgomery went there two years ago. All this shows that the field has prospects and that it is a better field to-day. It is during the last eighteen months that the great developments have taken place. As I said, 91 head of stamps have been erected, and they have been kept continually falling, with the result that

the gold production has enormously increased. I will give some figures in regard to the gold production, to compare the progress made. The gold production has been as follows:—July 1906, 2,387 oz.; July 1907, 4,012 oz.; August 1906, 3,015 oz.; August 1907, 7,516 oz.; September 1906, 2,815 oz.; September 1907, 6,119 oz. So the gold production is more than double within one year, and there can be no doubt regarding the developments. At the time the member for Murchison was speaking of the gold production at Black Range was only 35,000 oz. Since then it has increased to 100,000 oz. There is not another field in the State that can show the same progress. The member for Murchison says that the produce from other localities is included in this production, and the hon. member speaks of Birrigrin and Montagu Range. The return from Birrigrin has been 7,000 oz. and the return from Montagu Range 1,000 oz., making 8,000 oz. in all—hardly worth speaking of. It must not be forgotten that the whole of the produce the Montagu Range and Birrigrin fields require comes from Mount Magnet via Black Range. If those districts are served by Nannine, as the member for Murchison says they are, why does not the produce required go from Nannine? It does not because Mount Magnet is the natural point of connection. A few years ago there were few men employed on the Black Range field, but to-day, according to the mining returns, the number employed in the districts is 972, whereas there are not more than 872 employed in the districts embracing Lawlers and Mount Sir Samuel, that is the East Murchison Goldfield. We must also remember that every man employed carries seven or eight in the locality, and there are hundreds of prospectors working, so many that the Minister for Mines is going to erect another battery at Sandstone as well as the battery at Bellehambers or Rangeview. During the last 12 months 40 head of stamps have been erected on the Oroya-Black Range mine, and the Black Range gold mining company, which the member for North Perth said was going to shut down, has erected another 20 head of stamps, making 30 head in all; there are

10 head at Maninga Marley, or 60 head altogether between the two districts, making in all 91 head of stamps erected during the past twelve months. This would never have been the case unless the future of the district was assured. Since Mr. Montgomery returned from Black Range, the sum of £70,000 has been paid in dividends by the chief mine there. [*Mr. Taylor*: Where has it gone to; Victoria ?] I do not know where it has gone. There has lately been a decided increase in the wages at Black Range, given because the Judge of the Arbitration Court was satisfied that the progress and prosperity of the field warranted it. The previous President of the Court said that the field did not warrant it and refused to grant an increase, but Mr. Justice Burnside, when the matter was brought before him, was satisfied that the progress of the field demanded that there should be an increase in wages. Then again at the time of the Premier's visit the Oroya was the only big mine, but since then the Sandstone Development Company, adjoining the Oroya, has struck a reef at a depth of 185 feet, and to-day in the *Murchison Times* appears a statement to the effect that, in the shaft, stone has been found averaging 40 dwts. per short ton. No one can deny there has been great development throughout the whole district. The member for Murchison referred to Meekatharra. I do not want to say anything derogatory or disparaging to that district, but the gold production of the Black Range District has been greater in the last three months than at Meekatharra in the last nine months.

*Mr. Holman*: Do you know they have not enough water there to keep the batteries working half the time?

*Mr. TROY*: They are always in trouble there with something or other. They do not appear to have the gold; that is the chief trouble. I do not want, however, to run the district down, for it is a promising little locality although it does not stand on all-fours with the Black Range District. Meekatharra is only about 25 miles from the railway, and a line out there would not cost much. I hope it will be constructed as soon as possible, and when the proposition comes up in the

House I will support it. Black Range is a very different proposition altogether and one of much greater magnitude. I have already pointed out the increase of population, which is now 3,000 as against 1,000 two years ago. The field has extended greatly and new towns have been established, while progress is general. It is only fair that the district should receive railway communication. I have never opposed railway communication to a goldfields locality which shows proof that it is progressing. If any locality shows that progress it is the Black Range District. There is the finest timber country there in the Murchison, although it is rather a dismal kind of scrub.

*Mr. Holman*: There is nothing so good there in the way of timber as a line from Nannine would pass through.

*Mr. TROY*: The Premier knows where that scrub is. It is the best belt on the Murchison, and we want to tap it badly. At present Cue and Day Dawn have to get their supply from 30 miles south of Magnet; but if that timber country is tapped, they will be able to get all their supplies from there. At Mount Magnet the St. George mine was recently floated and they are now erecting a 20-head battery. Bewick, Moreing & Co. I hear have taken over the Morning Star mine. There will be 50 head of stamps in that district before very long, and they will want plenty of wood there. It will be a splendid thing that they will be able to get their supplies from along the new railway line. In addition to all these advantages there is very good pastoral country in the district. The Lands Department have supplied me with figures which go to show that there are over a million acres of pastoral country taken up between Mount Magnet and Black Range. All this country is being utilised and the rents have been paid. I hope the House will be satisfied as to the progress made in the locality. In conclusion, I desire to say that the revenue from Black Range during the past three years for mining leases has been greater than that from any similar locality in the State outside of Kalgoorlie. It has amounted to £25,039. That proves conclusively that great progress has been made and shows

that, if the line is built, it will not be the loss that some people anticipate. A much needed facility will be given to the district by the construction of the line.

MR. T. L. BROWN (Geraldton): After the figures and facts quoted by the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy), it is unnecessary for me to enter into details or to speak at any length in adding my arguments in favour of the railway. To my view it is absolutely necessary that the line should be built. The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) advocates a line which would necessitate all goods going to Black Range being carried over a very much greater distance by railway. It does not seem to him to be a matter of great moment, but it is a matter of very considerable concern to the merchants residing at Black Range who, if the line were constructed from Nannine, would have to pay railway rates for the carriage of goods over some 125 more miles of railway. [Mr. Holman: Why do you not quote accurate figures?] The figures are accurate, for the distance between Magnet and Nannine is 90 miles, while the difference in distance between the proposed routes from Mount Magnet to Black Range and from Nannine to Black Range is between 20 and 30 miles. No wonder, therefore, that the merchants at Black Range are all in favour of the line coming from Nannine, as it will mean a very great difference to them in the cost of landing goods there. The argument which the member for Murchison used in connection with the Esperance Railway can be very well used against himself. He said that the reason why there was opposition to the Esperance Railway in the past was that Parliament did not want to open up a port which would be in opposition to Fremantle. Now in connection with this railway it is evident that the reason why the member for Murchison does not want the railway to go from Mount Magnet is because it will defeat the possibility of Nannine becoming a railway junction. The statement made by the hon. member that there is a far better belt of timber country between Nannine and Black Range than between Mount Magnet and Black Range is totally

incorrect. The best belt of timber on the Murchison after passing Mullewa exists between Mount Magnet and Black Range.

MR. HEITMANN: Why do you speak with such assurance? I do not think you know much about it.

MR. T. L. BROWN: I have been through the country and if members who interject did the same then they would have some authority to speak. It might be said I advocate the line from Mount Magnet from a Geraldton point of view. I do so for this reason, that any member who looks at the map will endorse the remark that Geraldton is the natural port for the Murchison. That being so, and considering the big agricultural district there is around there and the possibilities generally for a large population and big trade it is necessary that the fields should have a market as near as possible to them. There are now about 60 teams carting produce through the district under discussion. The teamsters want fodder for the horses and mules and if there is a market near them they will reap a considerable advantage. It will mean that the commodities of life will be procurable much cheaper than they are at present. Something like 13 years ago the people of Geraldton were promised that when Black Range developed they would have the line. It has developed beyond all anticipations as shown by the figures quoted by the member for Mount Magnet. The Government in introducing the measure are only doing what other Ministries have promised. They are keeping faith with the people and the country will endorse their action. The member for North Perth (Mr. Brebber) objected to the line, but he did not know what he was speaking about. Had he known the conditions there and the promises which were made in the past, he would have been one of the last to oppose it. I regret that one of the Murchison members should attempt to hinder the passage of the measure. I trust the House will endorse the Bill and assist the Government to get the measure through.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): In connection with the proposed construction of this railway, I

think for many reasons the proposal before the House is quite justified. The report of the State Mining Engineer in connection with the resources of the district was made public some time ago, and full records of the development of that field have been published from time to time. So far as we can judge—of course there is always a certain amount of speculation in regard to the construction of any goldfields railway—this field bids fairly well to equal most of the fields we have north of the Kalgoorlie belt. In fact I think there is a possibility of its being even more prosperous than many of those fields which at the present time have railway communication, and which are commercial successes so far as the railway is concerned. Objections have been raised in regard to the proposed route to the field, and it has been urged that there are other railways which it is more important to the State should be built now than the one in question. The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) advocated a railway to Meekatharra as being a more important one and as one which would open up better country. He says that line is more justified than the one from Mount Magnet to Black Range. I join issue with him as to that. I wish to say at once that Meekatharra, a small but good field, is within 25 miles of a railway, and Meekatharra has the advantage of a good road. It has not any great difficulties of transit which would entitle it to railway communication.

*Mr. Holman:* The main difficulty is the want of mining timber.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : Good timber is essential to the working of those mines. I visited the Eggleston Extended mine, and found that the country is very greasy and slippery, and that to develop it without good timber is dangerous. But probably there is the same class of country in the Black Range district; and in any case, Black Range wants timber for mining purposes just as badly as Meekatharra.

*Mr. Holman:* But there is timber closer to Black Range

The MINISTER: No; it is a great distance off. It must be remembered that when there is a railway within

20 or 25 miles of a mining centre, that centre is to a great extent supplied with railway communication. And in this country of magnificent distances, when a railway is so close as that, the people in the district have not much to complain of on the score of transit. It is when goods have to be carted eighty or a hundred miles that it is difficult for mining operations to be profitably carried on.

*Mr. Holman:* Goods have to be carted 125 miles to Peak Hill.

The MINISTER: If Peak Hill were as prosperous now as it was in the past, and employed as many men and had the same trade, the construction of a railway to Peak Hill would probably be warranted. I am sure everyone in Western Australia is exceedingly hopeful that in the near future we shall find many big mines working and employing large numbers of men outside the Kalgoorlie belt. We have had too few good mines opening up of late, and I am exceedingly anxious for more. Let us compare the gold being produced in these two districts, without considering the great distance for which the people of Black Range have to cart their machinery and supplies. The Meekatharra district, although the older, having been opened up in 1900, has not produced anything like the quantity of gold won in the Black Range district. In 1905 Meekatharra produced 7,255 fine ounces, while the Black Range district produced 15,765. In 1906 there was found in the Meekatharra district a rich pocket which helped to swell the total, but it cannot be considered as having any bearing on a railway question. The total yield for that year was 15,000 ounces, and for Black Range 34,000 ounces. For the first six months of this year the figures are: Meekatharra, 11,000 ounces; Black Range, 20,000 ounces.

*Mr. Holman:* Tell us how much time has been lost owing to want of water for the thousands of tons waiting to be crushed at Meekatharra.

The MINISTER: In the debate on the hon. member's railway proposal I tried to treat his district fairly. I have always admitted that the Meekatharra is a very promising field; but the proposition be-

fore the House is the better one at this time, and for that belief I wish to give my reasons. We must consider the number of men employed and the quantity of machinery and supplies required. Mr. Montgomery, in reporting on the cost of carriage from Mount Magnet to Sandstone, says it is £5 or £7 a ton, averaging about £6, by express wagon about £7, and for heavy machinery special rates have to be arranged. There are 51 heavy teams regularly on the road, together with several light conveyances. Will the hon. member tell me what is the average number of teamsters on the road between Nannine and Meekatharra? Mr. Montgomery's report continues:—

"The list supplied to me, by Mr. Gladden, town clerk of Mount Magnet, showed thirty owners of horse teams, with 33 teams; five of camel teams with six teams; and eight of donkey teams with ten teams."

He says that the monthly tonnage of goods sent to the Black Range is about 510, and that until lately, while building was proceeding vigorously at Sandstone and much machinery was being erected at Black Range, the teams were said to have averaged a trip in fourteen days, equal to about 765 tons per month. Such was the State Mining Engineer's opinion regarding the traffic on that route. The hon. member says that Black Range is well supplied with timber. At the present time it gets timber at from 17s 6d. to 18s 6d. per cord. But the State Mining Engineer says that the timber will be soon cut out, and it will then be necessary to bring timber by rail from farther west, which will undoubtedly increase the railway revenue. He goes on to deal with the high cost of mining timber, and says:—

"While ordinary mulga mining timber is costing the Black Range G.M. Co. 5½d. to 6d. per lineal foot, long gum timber costs them 2s. 9d. per foot." When mining timber is so costly, the danger to underground workers must be great.

Mr. Holman: The timber would cost more than that at Meekatharra.

The MINISTER: I believe it would; but less mining is done there, and being

so much closer to a railway I say that a line to Meekatharra cannot be justified at the present time, like the proposed railway to Black Range.

Mr. Holman: You are speaking of the whole Black Range district. You must take into consideration the assistance a line to Meekatharra would give to Peak Hill.

The MINISTER: I am speaking only of the country within the radius of the Nungarra district. With regard to the centres that will be served by this line, I take very little notice of Paynesville, which is an auriferous belt midway between Mount Magnet and Black Range. Paynesville is an abandoned district. Something may happen there at any time, for rich gold has been won there in the past and may be won in the future. But I do not think it would be fair to induce members to think they had a mining district around Paynesville. So far as we know, it has completely petered out. But there is a magnificent belt of country extending in a north and north-easterly direction; and then again to the south country has been discovered which is still in the prospecting stage, but to the north in the ranges are some large lodes of low-grade ore at fair values, and there is a promise of good and big mines being developed. I consider that the district warrants the consideration we propose to give it. No less than three routes are suggested for the railway. The first route proposed is from Mount Magnet to Black Range. Then when I went to Cue, deputations waited on me asking that the railway should be constructed from Cue to Black Range. I do not remember whether the people of Nannine made any special request for a railway to Meekatharra. The member can say if I am wrong. A deputation did urge that a railway should be constructed from Nannine to Black Range. Now as the hon. member knows, that line would go through more auriferous country and would probably open up more mines. But have we not promised, as the member for Geraldton stated, to try to be fair to the various seaports of this State? We must recognise that a certain trade, the trade of the Murchison goldfields, rightly belongs

to the Geraldton people. If we built a railway from Nannine back to Black Range, presumably connecting subsequently with Leonora and Lawlers, should we not give the Kalgoorlie people the trade of the Lawlers and Black Range districts, a trade which rightly belongs to the farmers and merchants of the Geraldton district? A railway from Nannine to Black Range would involve a heavy additional charge on the development of the Black Range field, and I do not think the line would be justified in any circumstances whatever. I hope the time is not far distant when our mining conditions will grow so that we shall be able to connect from Black Range to Lawlers and from Leonora to Lawlers, thus connecting the whole of the Eastern Goldfields, and giving railway communication to many districts which badly need it for mining development. Mr. Montgomery was sent with a free hand to that district. I did intend going with him, but was called back to Perth, otherwise I should have been able personally to inspect the routes suggested. Mr. Montgomery went through that field, and sent in his report to the department; and from an examination of the map, which members will find in the annual report of the Mines Department, showing the three proposed routes, I do not think, provided that Black Range warrants the construction of the line, that we can for a moment consider as a starting point any other place than Mount Magnet. The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman), as usual, told the House that the construction of such railways was never considered until that thief and robber, the capitalist, came to the district, and then the Government were very anxious to provide that personage with railway communication.

*Mr. Holman:* I did not mention thieves and robbers. The words I used were "influential companies."

The MINISTER: True, but he said that as soon as the capitalist came to those places, the Government were anxious to give him railway communication. The hon. member quoted Phillips River. He knows perfectly well that nearly two years before any foreign company thought of going there, and before there was any

great development, and simply on account of the promising nature of the field, the State Mining Engineer recommended the construction of the Philips River railway; in fact, he pointed out that in dealing with the copper ore it was impossible to exploit the rich chutes of the mines, or to work those mines on commercial principles, without railway communication. When the Daughish Administration were in power a proposition to construct that railway by private enterprise was brought before them. Even at that time the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) himself recommended that money should be provided for the construction of that railway. Then when I took office, a distinct offer to build the railway, and to hand it back to the Government at the end of thirty years free of charge, was made to me. I replied to the effect that I thought the railway should be controlled by the State, and said it was my intention to recommend the Government to construct the line; and that was before any of the companies mentioned had any connection with that field. With regard to the Norseman property, I am satisfied that, when the Premier visited the field, the fact that Mr. Graham Price happened to have a small interest at Higginsville had no influence on the Premier, except that between Widgemooltha and Norseman a new field was being opened up of good promise, and that was an incentive. Mr. Graham Price was one of the principal persons concerned in opening up that field. It is not a question whether our own people or others are building up these districts, but whether the development is such that it will warrant the building of a railway. If we simply have a few people scratching the surface, no matter how rich the country may be, it will not pay to run a railway; but if there is large development work going on, and a large population employed, and large machinery at work with all the requisites of mining propositions there, then only can a railway be made a commercial success. I need not say more. The Premier, in introducing the Bill, dealt fully with the resources of the district, and I think quite justified the construction of the railway. The pros-

pects of the field are much better than on many mining fields which have been opened up in the past. This railway is warranted to open up country, and I trust it will be constructed and that the district will be developed then as in the past. The line will give greater facilities, and will encourage the employment of more people.

Mr. W. C. ANGWIN (East Fremantle) : I am pleased the Government intend to advance the Murchison district, and for that reason I rise to support the Bill. Unfortunately for the State we cannot get over the difficulty that a large number of the best of our mines are owned by those living outside the State, and while it costs a great deal of money to open up districts, the profits go outside the State. That is unfortunate for us, but no doubt the time will come, as it has done in Victoria, when these difficulties will be removed, and that a greater number of our mining propositions will be owned in this State. There is no doubt that the districts on the Murchison field require opening up. Mention has been made to-day of the Meekatharra area. I would like to see the Government bring down a Bill to extend railway communication to that district, but everything cannot be done at once. I trust the time is near at hand when Bills for the construction of railways to open up other mining districts will be introduced by the Government ; if so, the Government can always rely on support from me. The advancement of the country is bound up in the public works policy ; once we cease the development of the State we immediately go backward, and I hope the Government will pursue the policy initiated here and improve the State by building railways.

Mr. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) : I have very few words to say in connection with the measure. I have listened to the optimistic speeches delivered from both sides of the House in favour of this railway. I have supported for a considerable time railway communication to this country before Black Range had been revived the second time. Black Range

is one of the oldest fields between Cne, going towards the Mount Margaret fields. Black Range was prospected, I think, nearly 13 years ago ; it is 12 years since I first went through that country myself, and it was then a very promising place. A large amount of money has been spent in prospecting that country ; one prospector has spent in and around that area £20,000 in prospecting, and that man's name is Owen Daly, the original prospector. [Mr. Johnson : Micky, the priest.] That is the name he was known by amongst prospectors. That man spent more money in legitimately prospecting new country than any other man in Western Australia. I dare say that man spent more money in opening up mines by sending out prospectors with horses and camels loaded with provisions to go through virgin country than any other man. For many a year there was not a soul in Black Range, only an odd prospector going through. Six years ago the place revived and it is progressing, and according to the battery returns it has made great improvement during the last 18 months or two years. Too much credit can be placed on the output ; there are many old fields which at one time were equally as prosperous as Black Range. If anyone tried to say a word against Kanowna not being a flourishing centre when it contained no less than 30,000 people on a small area, no one would have believed it ; to-day there are very few people there. [Mr. Collier : It was largely alluvial.] It was largely alluvial, but there are some very fine reefs, and one or two are being worked yet. I noticed from the report of a deputation last week that Mr. Walker, who headed that deputation, pointed out that there were only one or two mines capable of treating ore in that locality through want of water, and the deputation appealed to the Government to reduce the price of water ; and I feel certain there must be gold in some of the reefs which would make that place look up. I am sorry the Government could not give that small assistance to the deputation by cheapening the water to enable the people to try some of the old properties. I have centres in my electorate that years ago



were flourishing, and for every ten men there now, there were twenty or thirty years ago. The same thing obtains throughout the length and breadth of the goldfields of Western Australia, and generally throughout the goldfields of Australasia, the only difference between the goldfields of Western Australia and the goldfields of the East being that when the gold gave out to such a degree in the East that it would not keep a large population on the fields, the land was so good for agricultural and pastoral purposes that there was left behind a large population of agriculturists. That is what the goldfields of Western Australia have not yet done, so that when diggers leave a district it becomes bare, the population has gone, but a very large population on the Eastern States goldfields have been left behind. Black Range is not a digger's field: it is owned practically by Victorian syndicates, and the only money the people get there is the wages, and of course that received by the business people. The member for Mount Magnet pointed out that £60,000 had been spent in public buildings in Black Range. He meant public buildings erected by the public. I am not aware the Government erected £60,000 worth of public buildings there. From the land sales in that district last year the Government received a large sum. The people bought land from the Government at a high price for it was a rising township, but many could not realise to-day; only those who bought corner blocks and obtained public house licenses could obtain value for their holdings. Some of the blocks had increased tenfold, but there were many blocks which would not sell for the money paid for them at the sale. While not opposing this line, I intend to move an amendment to enable the member for Murchison to reply to statements which have been made by speakers who followed him. When Ministers get up and make the hon. member (Mr. Holman) call people thieves, robbers, and speculators, it is only right he should have an opportunity of replying. The hon. member simply said financial speculators from Victoria. That is quite another matter. I intend to move that the word "now"

be struck out, with the object of adding to the motion the words "this day six months," to enable the member for Murchison to make it clear to the House and the country what he did mean. I am one of those who will always help a member to get a fair deal in Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member is not reflecting on the Chair. I heard the Minister say that the member for Murchison said "these capitalists—thieves and robbers," but I understand the Minister put that construction on it himself, and did not quote the member for Murchison's words. He did not say the member used those words at all. I take it the words were used in a sort of casual way that capitalists were by some known as thieves and robbers. If I thought the Minister meant the remark in an offensive way I would have called him to order.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have no intention of reflecting on the Chair. The Minister made use of the words, and other members have made an attack on the member for Murchison, which in my opinion it is necessary he should reply to. The member for Murchison has known the country for years; he has been in the district a long time and he should place his views clearly before the House. Members have spoken as if they knew as much about Black Range as others; but they did not know that country when it was opened up. So far as the amount of money spent there having proved the stability of the place there is no proof at all. The member for Mount Magnet pointed out there were 91 head of stamps there; I want to tell the member that something like 100 heads of stamps are to be found at Wiluna, not all falling on stone, but more or less; there were 40 head of stamps put up at Wiluna at one slap. If the Wiluna country had been boomed for a railway at that time there would have been ample grounds for constructing it. We did build a telegraph line there and there have been many complaints about it. When a company puts down 40 head of stamps without locating a reef and without knowing the value, and when a place is boomed for all it is

worth, it is no real argument for building a railway; but it seems that once the country gets into the hands of a syndicate a railway should be built. There was no talk of Black Range having this railway until a Victorian syndicate got hold of some of the mines.

*The Premier* : Does not that apply to nearly all mining communities?

Mr. TAYLOR : It should not. It does not apply to Meekatharra. It applies in other places. Where there is a burning desire to connect with the railway, we find there influential syndicates holding the land. When the Ravens-thorpe country was held by prospectors there was no desire to build a railway line, but as soon as a company bought the smelter and the prospectors sold out to that company, a railway was decided on. The same thing applies in most cases. All the country gets from the Black Range district is the wages paid to the miners. The dividends go away. It has cost the country a considerable sum already to develop that district, but the dividends go out of the State. At Meekatharra it is different. It is a small district; whereas the Black Range is an area covering anywhere from just beyond Mount Magnet practically to Lawlers. It is about 90 miles square, but Meekatharra is covered by two of three miles unless there has been an increase since I was there six or seven years ago.

Mr. Heitmann : Is that any argument?

Mr. TAYLOR : It is a fair argument, because the Minister made a comparison between Meekatharra and Black Range. He compared one centre held by genuine prospectors keeping the money in the State, with a whole goldfield held by Victorian syndicates, and the dividends going out of the country.

*The Minister for Mines* : Do not talk nonsense. How many companies are there at Meekatharra?

Mr. TAYLOR : Meekatharra is principally held by the prospectors. All good shows at Black Range paying dividends are held by companies. The argument advanced by the member for Geraldton (Mr. T. L. Brown) is fallacious. No one representing farmers would use such an argument in favour of railway construc-

tion. The hon. member pointed out that there were 60 or 70 teams between Magnet and Black Range carting provisions to Black Range, and that those teams needed fodder, and that it was necessary for the railway to go through to give Geraldton and the farming land around Geraldton its natural mart. But as soon as the railway goes through there will be no need for the farmers' produce for teamsters. The railway will carry the goods. It is no argument to use against railway construction that it will replace teamsters. We had thousands of teamsters carting to Coolgardie when the railway was just beyond Northam. They are gone now. We cannot argue in favour of sticking to team traffic because the teams consume fodder, but that is the idea some farmers would like us to adopt. The member for Geraldton was perfectly correct when he said that Geraldton was the natural port for that portion of the State. The same argument has been used ever since the railway was built past Mount Magnet, and there was a desire to get it extended to Lawlers before Black Range was anything. The trouble was in Sir John Forrest's time that there was nothing between Magnet and Lawlers to justify the construction of a line, because the distance was something like 160 miles and there was no place between Mount Magnet and Lawlers which could be made a terminus to warrant a railway construction. However, since Black Range has prospered it has been an argument in favour of the construction of the line from Mount Magnet to Black Range as a terminal point; so much so, that there is no force that can prevent it. No matter what Government is in power, it would feel justified in constructing that line. If Black Range had been in the same position ten years ago when Sir John Forrest was pushing on with his railway policy, a line to Black Range would undoubtedly have been built.

*The Attorney General* : From where?

Mr. TAYLOR : From Mount Magnet.

*The Attorney General* : From Leonora.

Mr. TAYLOR : Ten years ago there was no line to Leonora, but there was a line being pushed on to Cue through Mount Magnet. At that time the line would have been built, because Lawlers

was in so flourishing condition, and all the back country from Lawlers, and there were thousands at Lake Darlôt, that it would have even warranted a line being pushed across the stretch that is now being broken by Black Range. As I said before, I hope Black Range will be successful. I hope the district will last, and I hope it will give greater results in its big area than the Golden Mile at Kalgoorlie has done ; but I want to say that if all our fields were taken at the same stage of their prosperity as Black Range is to-day, the same argument could have been used to justify expenditure of this nature. I have no desire to oppose the construction of this railway, though I recognise that a railway from Nannine to Meekatharra would be of greater advantage to the people of Meekatharra than this line will be to the people who are at a similar distance beyond the terminus of the proposed railway. The people twenty miles farther on will be in nothing like as bad a position as the people of Meekatharra are in to-day. The people of Meekatharra are very energetic people, they have done good work, but they are handicapped in many ways, particularly in regard to firewood and mining timber. They are worse off than Black Range is, because the timber around Black Range cannot have been cut out yet.

*The Premier* : Not the firewood, but the mining timber is.

*Mr. TAYLOR* : The same thing applies in every district, in my own and in the Menzies district. They have to go out for miles for firewood.

*Mr. Heitmann* : There is timber going from Moora to Black Range at present.

*Mr. TAYLOR* : Even if the railway line is built it will be necessary to cart timber to the railway, but perhaps they will be able to get timber from the coastal districts where it is plentiful. The people on the North Coolgardie field have to send south to Coolgardie where it is plentiful. The Gwalia mines have run out a tramway 22 miles to get firewood. We have the firewood difficulty all over the gold-fields, but certainly a railway will facilitate the getting of timber. Most mines will have to run out their own tramways to where the belts of timber occur. I do

not wish to delay the debate, but my object in rising was to give the member for Murchison an opportunity of replying to some of the statements made by members in this debate. I desire to move an amendment, and when the member for Murchison has spoken in answer I shall withdraw it. I move as an amendment:

*That the word "now" be struck out and "this day six months" be added.*

*Mr. T. WALKER (Kanowna)* : It seems to me rather extraordinary that this debate should have taken the course it has. I listened very attentively to the member for Murchison, and although I heard him advocate the claims of Meekatharra for a railway and a different route for the Black Range railway, I heard him distinctly say that he was not opposing the construction of a railway to Black Range and that it would have his support. So I was rather surprised to hear him attacked as opposing this line, because he has not opposed it ; he has taken the occasion, while advocating this line, to draw attention to another very necessary line ; and I sincerely hope that both the Black Range line and the Meekatharra line will be constructed. I think there is room for both. Both are absolutely necessary ; and the claims of one do not interfere with the claims of the other. Unless words mean nothing, the hon. member is in favour of this Railway Bill, and I hope, therefore, we shall have a unanimous vote upon it, instead of going to a division. I was somewhat astonished at the member for Mount Margaret (*Mr. Taylor*), who also said he was in favour of the line, and wanted it, and then piled argument on argument to depreciate the value of a railway to Black Range. His action is rather extraordinary.

*Mr. Taylor* : I replied only to optimistic speeches.

*Mr. WALKER* : Optimistic speeches? Let us for goodness sake have some optimism as to the development of the mining industry. I felt slightly wounded myself when as an illustration he dragged in Kanowna as a deserted mining township. Let me tell the hon. member that in spite of the bad treatment the mining industry at Kanowna is receiving in some respects,

owing to the poverty of the State, I have absolute faith that Kanowna will again come to the front. It has outrun the first rush, as most mining districts do. Why, I remember thirty years ago being in Bendigo or Sandhurst, when the cry was that the place was ruined. It is more prosperous now than it was in its first and palmy days. The same may be said of Kanowna, Black Range, and other places—that there has been a depreciation. There is bound to be, for we are entering upon a new phase of mining in this State; we are passing through the early boom stage, the alluvial stage, and are settling down to solid work, settling down to applying machinery and up-to-date plant to the development of this industry: and what has been said of Kanowna may equally well be said of Kalgoorlie itself. That being so, we need not hesitate in spending a little money on the construction of a railway that will help the introduction of a new era of mining in this State, and will bring into operation that machinery and those processes without which our mineral wealth is difficult of extraction, but with which our mines will be of more permanent value. I cannot see why we should not support this railway project because a railway is wanted somewhere else. We can conscientiously support both. It is not necessary to bring them into comparison. The necessity for both has been established. I would respectfully suggest to those engaged in this conflict that this conflict should cease. Let us get this railway now, because it is the one before us, and then let us hasten to secure another.

Mr. J. A. S. STUART: I second the amendment.

Mr. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison): Speaking on the amendment I wish to make myself clear, though I did so when speaking previously. I asked the Speaker's ruling as to whether it would be possible for me to move an amendment to alter the route, and the Speaker said "No." I said, "In that case I will support this present railway project, and I hope it will be pushed through at the earliest possible moment." I stated farther that I should not be doing my duty to the

House if I did not say what I considered was the best route. I did so. Then we had members on this (Opposition) side making rather serious and incorrect statements, and putting them into my mouth. The member for Geraldton (Mr. T. L. Brown), for instance, says I stated that the only timber belt which the line would pass through was on the route to Nannine. That is an absurd statement. What is known as the Dismal Scrub extends for many miles, and runs through my own electorate. The railway would pass through that scrub on either the Nannine route or the Mount Magnet route. The scrub runs right through for scores of miles. I defy any member to say that I said a single word in opposition to this Railway Bill or to Geraldton. However, he (Mr. T. L. Brown) is a young member; and I will not take any farther notice of him. We had the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy) criticising my remarks, and expressing doubts about my knowledge of the district. I do not profess to have much knowledge, but I have yet to learn that he can teach me anything about the Murchison district. I have not visited Black Range, and did not speak of it from personal knowledge. But the Minister made some statements that are absolutely incorrect, and as is his habit, put words into my mouth. He is accustomed to sneering at and trying to make little of other members in this Chamber, and of the propositions they bring forward. When I spoke of influential companies, I spoke of them with respect; and I am sorry that the Minister should try to make me speak of them as thieves and robbers.

*The Minister for Railways:* I said you did not say that.

Mr. HOLMAN: I know; but the inference was that I meant they were thieves and robbers. When I mentioned influential companies I meant strong financial companies; and I regret to say that such companies have much more influence than the ordinary working prospector, who should have the first consideration from any Minister for Mines or from any other legislator in this State. I am sorry to think that the Minister characterises any influential companies as

thieves and robbers. Probably he knows more of them than I. The Minister made a most unfair comparison between Meekatharra and Black Range. He contrasted the production of gold in the whole of the Black Range district with that of the small Meekatharra centre, whereas the Black Range goldfield contains eight or nine centres. The £400,000 worth of gold is a return from the whole Black Range goldfield. A railway to Meekatharra would assist Peak Hill also, and the gold return from the districts which that railway would assist is three or four times greater than the return from the whole Black Range goldfield. The railway would reduce by £3 per ton the cartage to Peak Hill, and would probably enable Peak Hill to employ 400 men, employment there being now restricted owing to the high cost of carriage and the high cost of everything else. The total return of gold from the centres I referred to—Peak Hill, Abbots and other centres in the Meekatharra district—is nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions; whereas the total production so far of the whole Black Range goldfield is a little over £400,000. There may be something in the amendment of the hon. member (Mr. Taylor), that we should pause before authorising an expenditure of £150,000. Again, the Minister for Mines, when speaking of Meekatharra, one of the centres for which I desire a railway, mentioned the gold production of Meekatharra. He knows very well that even to the present day the scarcity of water at Meekatharra prevents any great increase in the gold production. One mine, with ten head of stamps, has closed down owing to the shortage of water. He knows that for years the Meekatharra State Battery was for the same reason compelled to work only six or twelve hours a day; that thousands of tons of stone were there waiting to be stamped; that to-day thousands of tons of cyanide sands are waiting there for treatment; and that with a sufficient water supply the gold output would gradually improve. I desire to place these facts before the Chamber, though not to oppose the Black Range railway. But when we are considering the two cases, there is some reason why we should pause before involving ourselves

in the expenditure necessitated by the line to Black Range. The amendment (Mr. Taylor's) has perhaps more in it than appears on the surface. Meekatharra is a small centre, and the Minister compared its gold production with that of the Black Range goldfield, which has many different centres.

*The Minister for Mines:* Name the other places in the Black Range goldfield of which you talk so much.

Mr. HOLMAN: Sandstone, Maninga Marley, Birrigrin, Montagu ranges, Nungarra—there are about seven or eight centres. We know the cause of the great increase of the production of Black Range during the last month or so. After mines have been working for some time, carting machinery, quantities of stone accumulate on the surface. They then crush the accumulations, and there is an increased return for one or two months. But within the last few months there has been a serious decrease of 7,000 ounces in one month and 6,000 ounces in another. Now with regard to the price of timber. If the railway was constructed to Meekatharra, timber could be provided at £2 10s. per ton less than the present price. But I will not use that as an argument. If there were influential companies at Meekatharra, the Minister for Mines would adopt a totally different attitude. He has not given that place the consideration it deserves: if he had, it would be in a different position. Even with the disadvantages under which it has laboured, the gold output has increased by a hundred per cent. every year during the last two or three years; and with fair and reasonable treatment Meekatharra will be second to no other place in Western Australia. I do not say that with a view to deerying Black Range, which I hope will rise and eventually take the place now held by Kalgoorlie. No one will be better pleased than I to see goldfields springing up, which by their good returns will enable us to keep up the output of past years. At the same time we should aim at supporting those now in the State and assisting to open up the country, and not wait until influential companies secure the plums, thus allowing prospectors to be driven out and replaced by influential

speculators. I recognise, however, there are prospectors at Black Range, and for that reason I shall support the Bill though the line is not to start from the point at which I consider it should. I desire to assist the passage of this measure, and will add whatever influence I may possess with the Government to urge that the construction of the line be pushed on as early as possible. Finding that the route I suggest is not to be adopted, I shall not for that reason attempt to obstruct the construction of the line. When members rise to criticise, I desire they should criticise on facts; and I defy anyone on either side of the House to prove that I have ever said a word in opposition to the Black Range railway. I have merely done what I considered my duty in pointing out that while one route would open up an extensive area of auriferous country, there is nothing to justify the construction of a railway over the route suggested by the Government. I think I have made myself clear on that point; if not, I shall do so when the question comes to a vote. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, and will not oppose it in Committee. I am sorry the Minister for Mines should, in his desire to boost Black Range, during his speech have belittled Meekatharra.

*Mr. Taylor* : I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Objection made ; leave not given.

*Mr. SPEAKER* : I desire to say that this is the first occasion on which I have permitted the rules of the House to be infringed to such an extent, and I intend not to again permit it. The hon. member admitted, when moving the amendment, that he did so for a specific purpose not within the Standing Orders ; and should that course be attempted on another occasion, I shall not permit it.

*Mr. Taylor* : I was at least candid with the House.

*Mr. SPEAKER* : Yes ; but I shall not allow the rules of the House to be abused. I allowed the breach on this occasion out of consideration for the member for Murchison, who appeared to consider he was labouring under an injustice ; but I have also to consider other members,

and I shall not again permit this action. Amendment put and negatived.

*Mr. E. E. HEITMANN (Cue)* : Speaking on the motion, I have very little to say except that I am pleased to see the measure introduced, but am sorry that members representing a particular portion of the State are inclined to be warm on the subject. When two or three years ago the question of the construction of this line first came up, the people of Cue were of the opinion that the railway should start from Cue, in much the same way as the people of Nannine now think it should start from that town. In the then prospects of Cue, in view of the possibilities of Errols, Berrambi, Berrigrin, and Montagu Ranges, I think we were justified in agitating for the construction of the line from Cue. Unfortunately, the prospects of those centres have not brightened as was hoped at that time ; and I feel I am now justified in supporting the building of the line from Magnet. [*Mr. Holman* : Berrambi and Errols are looking up.] True ; but there are only one or two companies working. I was sorry to hear so much reference this evening to the fact that the mines at Black Range are largely held by Victorian companies. The member for Mt. Margaret (*Mr. Taylor*) seemed to make much of that fact, and used it as an argument against the railway, complaining that the dividends were going out of the country. If it were possible by not building the line to keep that money in the State, I should counsel that it be not built ; but the non-construction of the railway will not prevent the dividends going out of the country. And this much at least must be said for the mines held by companies, that had the companies not acquired the properties, Black Range would not have progressed at the rate it has done. I would like to point out also in fairness—I admit Meekatharra is a good mining centre—that there is not one privately-owned mine in Western Australia that would continue to be privately owned if the companies would pay the prices asked for them ; not even in Meekatharra, although I hope we shall always have there, as elsewhere, mines held by the prospectors. At the same time I recognise that

the progress of a field is retarded by the absence of companies; and I suppose every mine in Meekatharra to-day that is privately owned is on the market, and would be sold if the companies were to offer the owners their price. Therefore that the mines are owned by companies and the dividends are going out of the country is no argument against the construction of this or any other line. To some extent it is even an argument in their favour. Had the companies not acquired the mines at Black Range, the results achieved to date from the mines would not have been so great. I am prepared to support this Bill and hope the line will be commenced at an early date. I am convinced the Black Range district is destined to become one of the most prosperous of the mining districts in Western Australia.

Mr. J. A. S. STUART (Leonora): I have thus far refrained from speaking on this proposition; but one point has been overlooked. While I have no desire to do anything that would retard the development of the country or to prevent the people of Black Range from getting their railway, I think in this case the line is to be constructed from the wrong end. The construction from Magnet will result in the line during construction, the most payable period, becoming merely a feeder to the privately-owned Midland Railway. Believing as I do in the State ownership of railways, I would strain any point to have this line during its most remunerative period as a feeder for the Eastern Goldfields Railway, or any other Government line. I have made a rough calculation, and it seems to me I am well within the mark in saying the benefit to be derived by the Midland Railway Company in having this line as a feeder during construction will amount to about £100,000. We have had a Ministerial utterance to the effect that this line will be continued through to junction with the Eastern Goldfields Railway, making through connection between the Eastern Goldfields and the western coast. Taking for granted that this will be done—

*The Minister for Mines:* I said I hoped it would be continued through at some future date.

Mr. STUART: I would remind the Minister for Mines that he is not the only Minister.

*The Minister for Mines:* I understood you to say I had promised the line would be continued through.

Mr. STUART: It was not a promise to which I was referring, but an utterance by the Premier at Lawlers some nine months ago. Taking for granted that this Ministerial utterance was not mere idle talk, and that the through line will be constructed some day, would it not be wise to begin the construction of the line at that end which would feed the Government railway rather than feeding the Midland Company's railway? The through connection is only a matter of time, and at this stage the money consideration is the greater and more vital one.

Mr. Bath: The Midland Company would not reap such immense benefit. Most of the traffic would go by sea to Geraldton.

Mr. STUART: I am satisfied I am putting forward an absolutely sound proposition. The Government's proposition is to spend £150,000 on the construction of a railway from Magnet to Black Range. To that I have no objection, except to say that if the interests of the State are to be conserved, the line should be started from the Eastern Goldfields end. For fear anyone may suppose I say this now because I represent a constituency in the Eastern Goldfields, I may say that I wrote five years ago in terms similar to the words I am now using. I went farther and said that rather than that the Midland Company should reap this income which should go into the coffers of the State, I would favour the starting of the line from Goomalling, a proposition which was met with derisive laughter when put forward here the other day by the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Underwood). I recognise that in this matter there is no chance of the Government taking the sensible view, and studying the interests of the State, by beginning the construction of this line

from the Eastern Goldfields end. I would, however, point out to the Government that this railway proposition leaves a certain portion of the East Murchison Goldfield in an unenviable position. I refer to Lawlers, which is surrounded by low-grade propositions that to-day are putting forward the best exposition of the treatment on low-grade properties yet seen in Western Australia. Since these people have been working under these disadvantages for so long, I think the Government should have extended to them consideration at least equal to that shown to Black Range. Under this railway proposal, Lawlers will be in the unenviable position of being midway between the two *termini*, 80 miles from Leonora and 96 miles from Black Range—both distances too great to permit of their carrying on under present conditions and showing a profit, having regard to the expense of transport. I hope therefore that the Ministerial promise given, backed up as it is by the departmental reports, will be carried into effect; that not only will the Magnet-Black Range Railway be constructed, but also that the missing link, so to speak, in the railway systems of the Murchison and Eastern Goldfields will be constructed also. I would point out that many of the arguments used to-night in support of the construction of this line might have been used in favour of the construction of that section of the through line to which I have referred. For example, the State Mining Engineer in his last report asks the question, "Will a railway to Black Range pay?" And he goes on to answer it in these terms:—

"This is a question that cannot be answered positively, as no one can say with any certainty what will be the extent of the development of the district. We can only look at the position of the various mines and form an opinion as to what magnitude their operations are likely to attain, and go upon that estimate. I have above said that in my opinion a population of 3,000 or 4,000 people would soon be settled at Black Range if the railway were made, and I do not think that the estimate is too high by any means. The cost of con-

struction of the railway and the frequency of the train service would affect the question of the paying nature of the line very much, and will be best dealt with in the reports of the Engineer-in-Chief, and of the Railway Department. For my own part I am doubtful if the line would pay directly if carried only from Mount Magnet to Black Range, though I think it would be well worth making on account of its indirect benefits to the district and to the State, but the position would be much improved by running it through Lawlers to connect with Leonora or Mount Malcolm."

Perhaps the grounds I have stated will not have sufficient weight with the Government to induce them to alter their intention; but I say a Government having due regard for the welfare of the State should be largely influenced by the fact that to a certain extent this line will be a feeder to the Midland Railway. As I know it is useless urging that consideration on the Government, I wish merely to place on record my opinion on this point. We have heard much as to the ownership of the mines at Black Range; and I desire to say, without disrespect to this House or anyone in the House, there has been far too much lobbying and whipping. When a few farmers come here with a petition for an agricultural railway and interview one or two members of Parliament to place before them their wants, the fact is enlarged upon. I would take those people into consideration and strain a point to do them justice and afford them facilities, before I would consider Bewick, Moreing & Co., or Kaufmann, or Hans Irvine. These people are largely interested in the line. The prospectors in the old days had to be content to travel out on a brumby or a camel or even walk, but now when the gilt-edged crowd have got in they must have their railway with its Pullman car, dining car, etcetera; and this while other districts are being starved for want of communication. If there were a delay in the construction of the Black Range railway it would not militate against the output of the field.



*The Minister for Mines:* Would you support a railway from Leonora to Lawlers?

**Mr. STUART:** If the departmental returns warranted it. If any person in my electorate were to bring me a wild-cat line and asked me to support it, I would refuse to do so. If the construction of this line were delayed for a reasonable time it would not mean the closing down of any of the mines. We know that the mines at Black Range are essentially high-grade propositions. There are other places in the country where there are low-grade propositions which would be of permanent value but cannot be worked at present owing to the want of railway communication. It is a pity, perhaps, they have not Mr. Irvine or someone else to put their case forward for them.

*The Minister for Mines:* What are those other places?

**Mr. STUART:** There is Peak Hill which has been languishing for years. [*Mr. Collier:* And is likely to be.] There is also Lawlers. In the Minister's own district there are many localities which would be much better with a railway. I was about to refer to the gilt-edged mines at Black Range. Although I have no intention to oppose the construction of the line, still I hope it will only be looked upon as preliminary to linking up right through. The member for Geraldton (Mr. T. L. Brown) put forward his side of the case. I consider, however, that he is really shortsighted, for I look upon Geraldton as likely to become one of these days, if we act wisely and adopt a sensible attitude in our railway construction, the Brindisi of the West. This will not occur, however, if railway lines are run out and terminate nowhere. These ideas may be regarded as visionary, but when we get a line through from the Eastern States to Kalgoorlie, we will have it linked right through to Geraldton, with the result that the port will come into its heritage and will be the first port of call in Western Australia. Members may laugh, but I am not far wrong in this idea. These are the views I hold in regard to railway construction in Western Australia, and I hope to see them given consideration. The Minister has asked

me whether I would support the construction of a line to Lawlers. If that district stood by itself I should not do so, but as being one of the landmarks that will serve as a connecting link between the two systems, I consider it is entitled to more consideration than it is getting. Black Range is gilt-edged and I will show how by the following anecdote. Sometime ago a friend of mine opened a hotel, and he was asked if he were doing well. He said, "Unfortunately I opened on Saturday. I took £70, but on the Sunday, as I had to close, I only took £40."

*Mr. Scaddan:* Like the hotel at Guildford which advertises especially for Sunday traffic.

**Mr. STUART:** I hope the Government will give consideration to Lawlers, which has been languishing under adverse conditions for a long time. I regret the incident between the Minister and the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman), and I am convinced there was a misunderstanding. I am sorry that in a discussion of this kind so much heat should be displayed. So far as I am concerned, if anyone in my electorate wants a railway and I think it is justified, I will advocate it with all the force, and perhaps venom of which I am capable. If anyone comes to me with a wild-cat proposition I will refuse to advocate it. Considering the present financial position of the State I think the Black Range district can wait a little while longer, and until some of the other places have been served. I do not intend to oppose the second reading.

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan):** It is a matter for regret that, when examining the merits of the Bill now before the House, members should allow themselves to be led astray by comparing certain other proposals which to their minds are much more meritorious, and deprecating in comparison the present proposal. I say that particularly in connection with the possibility of a railway between Meekatharra and Nannine.

*Mr. Holman:* There is no detractor there.

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL:** It is not because Meekatharra deserves it

railway that Black Range should be left without one. It may be that the merits of Meekatharra only shine in comparison with the greater merits of Black Range. I have no idea of supporting this Bill on the ground of comparison, but simply on the ground that the district itself merits railway communication. It is perfectly true that one might reasonably criticise the proposal from the point of view taken by the member for Leonora, although perhaps in not quite the same strain. It might be argued that because the mineral belt is known to extend north and south, the railway should, if possible, run in the same direction and not across it. When the railway runs east and west, you can only tap the mining belt at the spot at which it is crossed. [*Mr. Bath*: There may be parallel belts.] I know that for years it has been a prominent idea that there should be a trunk line running north and south along the line of the mineral belt, with connections running east and west for the purpose of joining with the coast. This proposal might have been criticised from that point of view, but the reply is that in order to give communication to Black Range from the nearest seaboard, the line to Mount Magnet should be built, as the total distance in that case would be 310 miles; whereas, if there were a north and south railway going from Leonora to Lawlers and thence to Black Range, it would mean from the seaboard to Black Range a distance of 780 miles.

*Mr. Bath*: Lawlers is north-west of Leonora.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is approximately north and along the line of the mineral belt, although, unfortunately, it has not yet produced any great results. When one remembers that if the north and south line were constructed, it would mean calling upon those working at Black Range and developing the country there to bear the cost of transit for 780 miles as against 310 miles by the proposal now before the House, one realises it would not be justifiable to put that burden on the people unless the line were some part of a great scheme to go right through to the point where the mineral belt joins the coastline about

Roebourne. Although for many reasons I would like to see communication with the Eastern fields, the State is not justified in providing it now. The argument that the proposed line will fatten the Midland Company has no weight, for I cannot conceive it possible that, if there is a large demand for supplies at Black Range, those supplies will not be carried by water to Geraldton, the natural port. It looks like hunting for some absurd reason to suppose that people, merchants and others, will send their goods over an expensive railway when a cheap water carriage is at hand. I should not think people would be foolish enough to do that at present, nor would they in the future.

*Mr. T. L. Brown*: All heavy machinery goes by Singapore and Geraldton.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We would all be glad to see Geraldton flourish and to hear that its future was all that pictured by the member for Leonora (*Mr. Stuart*), who suggested that it would become the Brindisi of the West. I have been at Brindisi, and a more miserable, dirty place I have never been in in my life. In comparison to it Albany is a magnificent city. While the member for Leonora wishes the town well, it is not a wish I should like to see realised that Geraldton should become like Brindisi. There is one other feature I refer to and it is the supposed lobbying that has taken place in regard to this measure. I know of none. I know this much that the member for Mount Magnet naturally is keenly interested in connection with a proposition of this character, and on several occasions has had informal discussions with me on the matter. I have never been asked, nor have I heard of any other member being asked, to support the Bill. The measure has been left to be dealt with on its merits, and it is unfair that continual charges should be made which reflect on the honour of every member of the House. The lobbying was said to have taken place on a colossal scale on a Bill recently before the House. Until members are certain of their ground they should hesitate before impugning the honour of members. In this instance I am sure there is no justi-

fication for the remark as to unfair lobbying, for nothing of the sort has been done by any member interested in the construction of the line. I hope the Bill will be dealt with on its merits, and if it is its construction will be authorised.

Mr. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Pilbarra): I intend to support the line as I believe it is the best railway proposition in the State to-day, not even barring Pilbarra. I have been convinced of this for some time. As to the field itself, we do not want the report of the State Mining Engineer nor anyone else, for anyone who reads the history of the field since it has been opened up and looks at the gold returned from it, must be convinced that it is a really good field and the most promising district in Western Australia. Another thing is that any man who looks on the map must be positively convinced that Mount Magnet is the proper place to run a line from. The reason I rise to speak is to deprecate so far as I can the narrow, miserable, backyard politics we are treated to whenever a proposition of this kind is brought forward. I think we should endeavour if possible to deal with things from a State standpoint, and not pass everything because it is not in our electorate. I have held for many years that one of the worst features of Australian legislation is the immense amount of roads and bridges politics that enter into it. I wish to enter my protest on this occasion against that. We have had to-day speeches made by several members opposing the line because it does not go through their particular back-yard. The House should endeavour to deal with the question fairly and squarely on its merits. I wish to say a few words regarding Meekatharra. It is a fair place I believe, but what are the advantages of Meekatharra? Meekatharra after all is 24 miles from the head of a railway, and when you come to talk about difficulties, 20 miles from a railway is not a difficulty. I have carted stone to a battery half that distance, and mining timber considerably farther than from Nannine to Meekatharra. And after all said and done we have heard a good deal too much of Meekatharra to-

day. As to the prospectors, I with others have a great appreciation of prospectors who own their own shows. I have my own show; but at the same time I say mine is for sale, and I am pretty certain that Meekatharra shows are for sale, and if the owners can get buyers, whether the buyers come from Victoria or China they will sell. A few remarks were made by the member for Mt. Margaret that were not exactly correct. He said, the provisions to open up Black Range district were carted through Cue in the early days. If they were, the people carted them 50 miles past Mt. Magnet and back again. The hon. member said they got them from Cue; that the railway went there thirteen years ago. But the railway was not there thirteen years ago.

Mr. Taylor: I said Mt. Magnet was opened up thirteen years ago.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The member said that Cue was the centre of the district, and that thirteen years ago they carted their stuff from Cue.

Mr. Taylor: They used to serve Magnet from Cue also.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Anyone who has been in the district knows that Magnet is 50 miles on the Geraldton side of Cue, between Geraldton and Cue. How on earth they could get round to Cue and back to Black Range passes my understanding.

Mr. Taylor: They were prospectors.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They must have been prospecting for a job. Again, we have Black Range compared with Lake Way. There is no comparison between the two places. Lake Way was almost one of the first fields discovered in the State after the first discoveries of gold, and has been a doubtful proposition ever since. Lake Way has never been a prosperous centre. It has had its mild booms now and again, and some very heavy slumps; but Black Range has never slumped since gold was found 5 or 6 years ago.

Mr. Taylor: Thirteen years ago.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was found thirteen years ago and lost; another man came out and found it again; since then

the output of gold from that centre has been increasing.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have called the member for Mt. Margaret to order on several occasions. I am going to insist on better order being maintained than we have had. There are too many interruptions, and apart from the Standing Orders it is grossly vulgar. I hope members will desist.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Ever since Black Range was re-discovered six years ago the output of gold has been continually increasing. There has never been a semblance of a slump there. In this it is almost unique in the history of gold districts in Western Australia, and to compare it with Lake Way is not fair.

Mr. Holman: There is no comparison.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Lake Way is a place that is a very doubtful proposition; whereas Black Range is one of the most promising centres in Western Australia.

Mr. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I intend to say only a few words, and I desire to state that in my opinion this House is rushing hastily on new railway propositions and is not giving adequate consideration beforehand to their effect, particularly on the working expenses and on the revenue of the Railway Department. Instead of bringing down these propositions in this piece-meal fashion and individually, and working on the requirements of a district's merits and the possibilities of a district, we ought to have an interest in the finances of the State. We ought to have from the Government every session a complete list of public works proposed to be recommended to the House, and a complete statement of the aggregate cost the Government requests the House to sanction on the various Railway Bills and public works, so that members may know when voting on each public works proposition exactly what the total is to which they are asked to commit the country. We have a large number of public works proposed during the present session, all brought up and dealt with as individual items, and we ought not to lose sight of their bearing

one on another and the total bearing on the future indebtedness of the State; on the total amount of the increased sinking fund; and increased interest which will have to be provided by the State as a result of their construction. And we likewise lose sight, when there are railway propositions before us, of their effect on the working costs of the railway. I contend the present system of voting on and discussing these public works is entirely wrong, and it is in the interests of the country that we should adopt some new method so that the Government, in regard to the loan proposals and the public works to be constructed out of loan, should adopt a particular method enabling every member of the House to know what it is proposed the country is committed to and the way the increased borrowing will work out. We have now no knowledge of what the country is to be committed to. Let us take a few of the propositions which have been discussed during the present short session. We have the Fremantle dock which we are told will cost about £285,000. We are told that the Denmark railway—we know this is a fact because it is a purchase—will cost £50,000. The Black Range railway is estimated to cost £130,000 for construction, without stock. Then we have the Nannup railway, the second reading of which is a little later down on the Notice Paper. Then we have the Narrogin-Wickepin railway, authorised last night, which is to cost £36,000. We have the Pilbarra railway authorised very recently, the estimated cost of which is £223,000 for construction only, and there are the working expenses of which we have very little knowledge indeed, and no knowledge in regard to the traffic. Then we have likewise to be submitted for second reading the Pinjarra-Marrinup and the Newcastle-Bolgart railways. We are rushing headlong with a policy of railway construction in the direction of adding to our working expenses, and in the direction of adding to our indebtedness, and we are doing it blindfold. The Black Range railway may possibly be a railway deserving construction; but I would like members to bear in mind that any goldfields railway—if

it be purely a goldfields railway—is a proposition that will have to be very carefully considered indeed, the result of which has to be very closely thought over, for the reason that a goldfield after all has but a limited life, and if there be no agricultural country and no pastoral country which may be expected to keep alive the traffic when the life of the goldfield passes away, the country is saddling itself for all time with a heavy indebtedness in order that it may gain a temporary advantage, or that the persons resident and following the industry in a certain part may have a temporary advantage. I do not intend specifically to discuss the railway at any length ; but I desire now to urge on the Government that the practice of this session should not be continued, but that the time has come when loan expenditure should be systematised when these propositions cannot be carried out in the interests of the State in a blind fashion such as at present prevails. Members will fail in their duty if they continually vote for these new authorisations, these new public works, without considering them on the whole, and the effect on the finances of the day, and of the future. I believe in a public works committee or a committee of finance ; but if there is to be no committee at all, the Government of the day should bring down their financial proposals as a whole for the consideration of the House in bulk, and then the House could authorise a specific amount to be expended from loan funds. Not to be expended, but authorised with a certain number of specific works and we could weed out the least desirable. We consider propositions now independently of one another. We may think a sentimental claim has been made out, or sympathy aroused in connection with one district, and we vote that district a railway. Another district comes along and makes out a claim for a dock which wins our sympathy, or we have a desire perhaps to complete a harbour ; and without sufficiently weighing the financial conditions or the expenditure that will be incurred, we vote from a sympathetic desire to complete the harbour and authorise the Government to construct the dock ; and

so on with one proposition after another. The House cannot do its duty to the country unless it has an opportunity of considering the whole amount to which it is committing the country when these Bills are brought down one after another. We have already adopted a heavy expenditure in the railways authorised to date. We are encroaching on very dangerous ground. It is proposed this afternoon to pass another Railway Bill that will involve a big expenditure in lengthening a railway that is not a paying proposition, and the new length of which is not likely to prove payable in spite of the figures with regard to the traffic on the line, the traffic to Black Range. Members must bear in mind that the big mining propositions at Black Range have, in the last couple of years, had conveyed to the field a large amount of mining machinery, and that the traffic has been considerably swelled recently by the cartage of this machinery ; but this is a non-recurring item. This item therefore, the railway, when constructed, will not get the advantage of, unless there be some new and as yet undiscovered proposition that can be worked on a very large scale indeed. The idea that by constructing a mining railway we lead to greater activity in prospecting, is an altogether false one. I do not think any member of this House can quote an instance in Australia where a gold discovery has been made as the result of the construction of a railway. [*Mr. Taylor* : Not one in this State.] I do not know of any case where gold discoveries have followed the construction of a railway.

*Mr. Troy* : Mines have been floated as the result of the construction of a railway.

*Mr. DAGLISH* : I can quite understand that the passage of a Railway Bill looks very well on a company's prospectus, but I do not think it is altogether justification for the construction of a railway that a mine may be floated. I admit that working costs of mining must be considerably reduced by the construction of a railway, and that to that extent the industry may be stimulated, but the State has not only to consider, when launching out on expenditure, the reduction of

working costs ; it has also to consider whether the State will get sufficient return on the outlay to warrant the expenditure. I think all will admit that we must get a direct return in the shape of traffic or railway revenue to warrant us in developing the mining industry in any one quarter by the construction of a railway. I question whether, in this particular district, there is that likelihood of development to enable this line, not to be a paying proposition, but to be anything but a very heavily losing proposition. While one might agree to the construction of a railway that would lose out little year by year in working expenses, we must be satisfied before we vote for a railway of this description that the loss will not be for very long, but I am afraid, in view of the length of the line and of the prospects of development, so far as I have been able to judge by the public returns and by information supplied to me from those who are on the field, the prospects of this line are not at all satisfactory. I will say no more on the question, except again to urge upon the Government and upon the House that in future we should insist upon having a complete yearly programme of public works proposed to be authorised by Bills submitted to us before voting on any of them. Although I know that though these Bills are passed the country is not definitely committed to go on with the works immediately in any given year, or in fact until the Loan Estimates are brought forward, yet once the construction of a railway or a dock is on the statute-book there is a strong justification for a local agitation and for strong local pressure to be brought on the Government of the day to have the work hurried on. I speak after experience of a strong local pressure for the construction of a railway already authorised, and I think the member for Collie will be able to localise the source from which that pressure came. I hope the House will follow a policy of consideration and caution before launching into new works on loan account.

Mr. J. EWING (Collie) : I have listened to the speeches delivered on this

Bill ; and although I have no local knowledge of the district to be served by this railway, I feel it my duty to give my support to the proposal. Of course the speech delivered by the member for Leonora (Mr. Stuart) is perhaps one that he is justified in making as the member for Leonora ; but I think the best position for that hon. member to take up is that this line from Magnet to Black Range will very considerably lessen the distance for the carriage of machinery and merchandise to that field, whereas if the line were built from Leonora the goods would have to be carried over 800 miles of railway. I feel justified in saying that the Government in starting from Mount Magnet are doing the right thing. The member for Subiaco has just made a speech which is, of course, characteristic of a cautious man, but it is slightly pessimistic, and I would feel sorry if the Government paid much heed to the hon. member's remarks. If they did, we would not have any great development in this State for many years to come. In looking at the Notice Paper one cannot but be struck by the large number of public works put forward for our consideration. We should not regard these works so much from the point of view indicated by the member for Subiaco, on the point of view of finance as to whether these railways are going to pay interest and sinking fund and whether we are going to pile up the public debt, but we should regard them in the light of the development of this State. We must all admit the fact that there is hardly one proposition on the Notice Paper from which we can expect to get interest and sinking fund for many years to come.

Mr. Bath : Who is going to pay ?

Mr. EWING : Unless we are going to open up this country by railways we will not have the revenue in years to come to pay the interest and sinking fund of the State. The member for Subiaco has suggested that a committee should inquire and report to this House on the various projects placed before the country, but if we waited for that we would be many years behind, and hardly any of these railways set down for our consideration would be built for two-

or three years. We are fortunate in having at the head of this Government a practical man who has a large knowledge of this State. I do not suppose there is a single railway line for our consideration of which he has not a personal knowledge. That is a great advantage. The Premier can give us his experience as a worker, and he has travelled through the various districts to be affected by these railway lines, and I think he has pointed out in any railway he has introduced so far that each will justify any money expended. I think we should all be unanimous that in the near future we should be prepared to expend three-quarters of a million in pushing out railway lines into agricultural districts and into mining fields to assist the people on the land and to make low-grade mining propositions pay. I am not taking into consideration whether the railways are going to pay or not, because I am satisfied that they are not going to pay. If we were to make up our minds that we are going to stop the development of the State until these railway lines are likely to pay, it will be a bad look-out for Western Australia. I do not agree with the member for Subiaco that there is not every hope of this line paying, in say six months. I believe that the result of building this line will be a large increase in the expenditure on machinery in that district, where a large amount has already been expended; and we will find that many mining propositions that cannot possibly be worked to-day will be opened up. I have great pleasure in giving my earnest support to this Bill.

Mr. H. BROWN (Perth) : I heartily endorse the remarks of the member for Subiaco; and I think, although not pessimistic, we should at all events go a little slow in regard to carrying out public works. It should be the duty of the Government to bring forward only sufficient work that they can carry out. They should not pledge future Governments to carry out their policy. It is my intention to vote against this Bill and any other Railway Bill brought down this session. I feel there has not been suffi-

cient evidence for any railway brought down so far to warrant us in voting for it, with the present heavy indebtedness and the huge deficit. Before we launch out on the huge expenditure forecasted by the member for Collie we are bound to consider our financial position. No member can tell us within a quarter of a million what we are pledged to for the construction of new works proposed this session. I do not say this in any offensive spirit, but there are so many railway and public works for various parts of this State that have not been given the consideration they should have received. Members are getting some expenditure in their particular localities, and possibly they are afraid to vote against any public work for fear of having their own work objected to by hon. members.

Mr. Walker : I think that is a bit unfair.

Mr. H. BROWN : I do not say it in any offensive spirit, but there has been that fear that opposition to a particular work would possibly jeopardise another work in which an hon. member was interested. I think if there had been few public works and railways brought down this session it would have been better. At any rate within the next few days they cannot get that calm and deliberate consideration they should receive. It would have been better had the Bill been brought down earlier, and plans made available. Two or three years ago large plans of railways were put around the Chamber when certain Bills were considered, but it has been only within the last few days that plans and particulars have been given of the various lines now proposed. I do not think we have been shown the settlement and the acreage taken up in the particular districts, or the land available for settlement along the various agricultural railway lines. The House should be very careful and should not commit any future Governments to farther expenditure. I think the Treasurer, before launching out on this large expenditure, should bring some big scheme to convert our present loans and do away with the sinking fund. We would then be in a better position to construct these railways, which the mem-

ber for Collie says are hardly expected to pay.

The PREMIER (in reply as mover) : I have listened with a considerable amount of interest to the various speeches delivered on both sides of the House concerning the Bill. I am glad so many members have spoken on these railway proposals. I consider it is the duty of every member on an occasion like this to give utterance to his opinion, whether he considers any proposition brought forward is justified or not. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) has certainly made a most extraordinary statement, and I am rather surprised he should consider that the country has not had an opportunity of considering these various proposals. He says that they should always be brought down in a schedule so that members may have an opportunity of seeing what railways will be brought down, and also what they will cost. But we must remember that last December a Loan Bill authorising loans to the extent of £2,450,000 was brought down, and there was a schedule attached, while in the Bill was set out not only every railway but also its cost of construction. I can hardly think the hon. member realised that he might have had an opportunity of perusing that schedule and satisfying himself as to the cost of the various proposals brought down. The schedule to that Loan Bill included £1,193,000 for railways; harbours and rivers, £224,500; water supply and sewerage, £319,000; development of goldfields, £138,000; development of agriculture, £248,000, making with other items a total of £2,467,000; so the hon. member must have been aware of the proposals the Government intended to submit to Parliament. The answer to the question whether the survey was complete should fix the order of priority of these various railways. In May last, when I made my policy speech, I outlined the railways which I from my experience considered essential to the development of the country; and I am glad to say that with the exception of three of these railway proposals I have been able to bring them all before the House for consideration. The hon. member is un-

doubtedly very cautious, and probably it is wise on some occasions to err on the side of caution; but at present in Western Australia it is well for us to be optimistic. The hon. member says these fields have a limited life and the country should be satisfied before we commit ourselves to such an encumbrance. If Sir John Forrest had waited till Yilgarn was a paying proposition before he authorised the construction of the Northam-Yilgarn railway, where would Western Australia be to-day? That is the position we have to face. If we are to lift this country along, we must be prepared to take risks. I much regret that the hon. member has delivered himself of such a pessimistic utterance.

*Mr. Daglish:* Caution is not pessimism.

The PREMIER: Well, the hon. member says we must wait a while—mark time.

*Mr. Daglish:* No.

The PREMIER: It is practically the same thing. If the hon. member had not marked time when he had an opportunity of running the country, he would be Premier here to-day. The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) has stated that no undue delay was apparent after the Phillips River railway was authorised by Parliament; that we pushed it on with extra speed, in comparison with any other proposal. I should like to point out that the Phillips River project was considered by the Government of which he was a member; and I believe that the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) recommended that a sum should be placed on the Estimates for the construction of a railway from Ravensthorpe to Hopetoun. If I am not correct the hon. member can put me right. But I may say that both the Coolgardie-Norseman and the Ravensthorpe-Hopetoun projects received the Governor's assent on the same day, the 14th December. For the construction of the Coolgardie-Norseman railway tenders were received on the 30th April, and the first section of the line, ending at Widgeemooltha, is practically complete. For the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe railway tenders were received on the 6th August; so the hon. member will understand that his remarks in that connection were hardly jus-



tified, for there was no unseemly haste in the construction of the railway.

*Mr. Holman:* I objected that Mr. Kaufmann had the preference, whereas the prospectors had no chance of getting a legitimate price for their properties.

*The Minister for Railways:* The railway was promised long before Mr. Kaufmann visited the field.

*The PREMIER:* The member for North Perth (Mr. Brebber), who, being a Scotchman, is naturally rather cautious, says we are not justified in constructing this railway, and quotes some very ancient reports of the State Mining Engineer in support of that contention.

*Mr. Holman:* Do not forget that you quoted one.

*The PREMIER:* When I quoted that report I said you would have an opportunity of quoting it, and the hon. member was not satisfied with doing so, but took the opportunity of making a second speech on the Bill. I do not know whether his object was to satisfy the people of Meekatharra that he is in earnest; but by this time they must be pretty well satisfied that if he has not Meekatharra on the brain he has it very near his heart. I put this Bill on the Notice Paper so as to give the member for the district (Mr. Troy) an opportunity of taking part in the discussion, and of voting in the division; and I will not detain the House longer, as I understand he wishes to catch a train. I do not wish to repeat the arguments I have already used. Briefly, the port of Geraldton is undoubtedly entitled to the trade of the Black Range district, inasmuch as if Black Range were connected by rail with Leonora goods would have to be taken some 698 miles from the coast as against 312 miles from Geraldton. That is an excellent argument in support of the Magnet connection as against the Leonora connection. But I hope that the development of both the Lawlers and the Mount Magnet districts will be of such a character that within the next session of Parliament the Government will be obliged to bring in a Bill for construction of a railway from Black Range to Leonora. There is no doubt that excellent work is being done at Lawlers. I believe that

some of the most economical working in Western Australia is done by the East Murchison United, the management having for some time been paying working expenses out of less than four-penny-weight ore, notwithstanding that they have to cart their stone between six and eight miles, and have to put down their own tramways and bring their firewood eight or ten miles. It is only a question of time when Black Range and Leonora will be connected by rail. Instructions have been given for a flying survey, but I do not anticipate any engineering difficulties. Most undoubtedly the people in those districts deserve encouragement, and as regards the return to the Railway Department, about which the member for Subiaco is much concerned, I think a very good case can be made out. There is a certain population in the district, requiring a certain tonnage per annum; and the freight and passenger rates will go to the Railway Department instead of to the teamsters. But there is no reason why the teamsters now carting between Leonora and Mount Magnet should not extend their operations to some of the mines that are opening up at such places as Birrigrin. I feel sure that this railway is justified. I have had an opportunity of going through from Leonora to Black Range, and although the Meekatharra district does labour under some difficulties owing to shortage of mining timber, still, as was pointed out by the member for Pilbarra, Meekatharra is only twenty-five miles from a railway. The firewood supply is pretty well cut out within eight or nine miles of Sandstone, but the construction of this railway will enable timber-cutting to be carried on in the country referred to by the member for Mount Magnet—the Dismal Scrub—while some of the mines at Mount Magnet will be able to secure firewood much cheaper than is possible under present conditions.

Amendment (six months) put and negatived.

Question (second reading) put, and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	34
Noes	..	..	..	3

Majority for .. .. 31

## AYES.

Mr. Angwin  
Mr. Bath  
Mr. Bolton  
Mr. T. L. Brown  
Mr. Butcher  
Mr. Collier  
Mr. Cowch r  
Mr. Davies  
Mr. Eddy  
Mr. Ewing  
Mr. Gordon  
Mr. Gregory  
Mr. Gull  
Mr. Hayward  
Mr. Heitmann  
Mr. Holman  
Mr. Hudson  
Mr. Keenan  
Mr. McLarty  
Mr. Mitchell  
Mr. N. J. Moore  
Mr. S. F. Moore  
Mr. Price  
Mr. Scaddan  
Mr. Stone  
Mr. Stuart  
Mr. Taylor  
Mr. Troy  
Mr. Underwood  
Mr. Veryard  
Mr. Walker  
Mr. Ware  
Mr. F. Wilson  
Mr. Layman (Teller).

## NOES.

Mr. Brebber  
Mr. H. Brown  
Mr. Monger (Teller).

clause to permit a continuance of that brand.

Mr. TAYLOR : The clause itself was dangerous, as he feared that favour might be shown if the Minister were given discretionary power to permit the use of any existing brand. Ministers were likely to be subjected to pressure in the interests of large stock-raisers. The Amending Act of 1904 was passed only after careful attention at the hands of members experienced in the subject. It was a difficult matter to pilot a Bill of this kind through Parliament and he would rather support the amendments made by another place than risk its defeat. Even with those amendments the measure was an improvement upon the previous one. It would be the small man with a few brood mares who thought the brand was the main factor in selling the animals, who would try and bring pressure to bear upon the Minister.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

At 6.15, the Speaker left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

On motion by the Premier, Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

## BILL—BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Council's Amendments.*

In Committee, Mr. Ewing in the Chair.

No. 1.—Clause 1 (amended verbally as to Minister's permission to use an existing brand) :

The HONORARY MINISTER (Mr. Mitchell) : This clause amended the principal Act by empowering the Minister in his discretion to permit a stock-owner to continue using a brand after the 31st December 1908, the date specified in the Act of 1904, upon which the existing registration of brands should expire. It was felt that where an owner's brand had become known it would be a hardship to compel him to register a new brand ; and where confusion was not likely to occur, the Minister was given power by the

*[Mr. Daglish resumed the Chair.]*

The HONORARY MINISTER: What he desired to obtain by the Bill was a thoroughly good register, and this would be achieved if the measure became law. Under the provisions of the amending Bill no registration would be allowed which was likely to lead to confusion. What was desired was that the register should be perfectly clear. The Government had no desire whatever to depreciate the value of any man's stock.

Mr. TAYLOR : The object of the parent Act of 1904 was to prevent cattle stealing. If everyone was made to brand anew under the Act, it would be a departure from all the old brands, for two letters and a numeral had to be used, and any stock bearing that style of brand would be recognisable even in 10 or 12 years, for it would be known that they must have been branded since 1904, when the parent Act enforcing this system of branding came into force. If some of the old brands were permitted to be retained it would be no more difficult to "fake" brands than before the measure was passed.

Mr. STONE: The Council's amendment improved the Bill. The Government ought to take steps to arm the in-

spectors of brands with sufficient power to prosecute offenders against the law. He had known people who had used brands that were prohibited, but the inspectors had no power to prosecute. The brands as registered should be continued unless the Minister saw that the brands were somewhat similar or easily altered.

Mr. GORDON: Brands of a similar nature which were subject to alteration had been used. A man could make a P into a B. That was the reason for the amendment. If there were two stations adjoining with similar brands the Minister had power to decide which station owner should retain the original brand.

Motion passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

On motion by *the Honorary Minister*, amendments numbers 2, 3, and 4 made by the Council, were agreed to.

Resolutions reported; the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

## BILL—PINJARRA-MARRINUP. RAILWAY

### *Second Reading.*

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) in moving the second reading said: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact, that during last year the member who represents the district to be served by this railway introduced a motion to the House to the effect—

"That in the opinion of this House, in order to open up the agricultural and timber lands lying between Pinjarra and Marradong, the Government should consider the advisability of proceeding with the construction of a railway at an early date."

This motion after being spoken to by various members on both sides of the House, and favourably commented on, was eventually carried on the voices. I stated the Government did not intend to oppose the motion because they realised the advisability of opening up this vast jarrah forest lying to the east of the South-Western railway, and in the neighbourhood of Pinjarra. While many of the other lines which we have passed have served a dual purpose, the

first section of this line may justly be termed a timber line; while it will serve a good many settlers in that district, we must look for a return in traffic from timber. There is one large area known as the Flora and Fauna Reserve which lies in this vicinity, consisting of about 160,000 acres. This reserve was vested in the interest of some society, but no rights were given over the reserve, and it has been practically shut up for the last 20 or 30 years. No timber has been cut on the reserve with the exception of a small area in the north-west portion which has been milled by Messrs. Whittaker Brothers. I must also exempt a certain portion which has been cut over by the hewers and carted to the railway line in the vicinity of North Dandalup. While the Daglish Government were in power I occupied the honorary capacity of chairman of the Forestry Board, and the question of opening up the Flora and Fauna Reserve came up for consideration on several occasions, and we recommended to the then Minister for Lands (Mr. Drew) that a survey should be made with the object of locating a line to serve that district, and many applications for milling permits were received. A trial survey of the country was made by Mr. Muir, but it stood at that. Many applications were made for saw-mill permits on the area, and several offers of railway construction were made by different companies, but we realised that it was of the utmost importance that the Government should control the railway that would open up this area, inasmuch as if any particular company were given the right to construct a railway it would practically secure the monopoly, as the whole of the timber trade would have to come over the line, and consequently it would not have been in the best interests of the State generally. The area applied for was three times the amount of the reserve. These different companies and individuals were anxious to secure timber land and no doubt it was rather tempting inasmuch as it was the nearest jarrah forest to the metropolitan market. I maintain it was a very good policy that the Government should keep the reserve, because owing to the fact of its prox-

imity to the metropolitan market we at any time are in a position to throw certain lands open to millers who may be out of any combination that may exist for keeping up prices of the local building timber. Any small mills that may work on the Flora and Fauna Reserve would control the price for timber that would be required for the building trade in the metropolitan area. I may say there are only two means of access to the area, first from Dandalup and secondly by Murrinup Creek as proposed by the present line. It is a good many years ago since a resolution was passed in the House, on the motion of the member for York, that a line should be constructed from Pinjarra to Marradong, a distance of about 30 miles. The line was afterwards surveyed, but no more was done. A sum of £4,000 was placed on the Estimates, which was expended in surveying and making an examination of the district lying between Pinjarra and Marradong. I realised that if the line as then surveyed was to be constructed it would entail an expenditure greater than could be found at the present time, and in speaking at Bunbury in May last I stated:—

“The question of the construction of the first section of a line to connect Pinjarra with Marradong is now under consideration. This line was surveyed during the Forrest regime, but if it is decided that it shall be undertaken, I do not consider that it would be advisable to follow too closely the survey then made, as the Government would not feel justified in committing the country to the big expense that would be entailed owing to the nature of the earthworks on the original survey. We consider, however, that a light line with a steeper grade would well serve the purpose of opening up the southern portion of the Flora and Fauna Reserve and other timber land, whilst at the same time serving settlers now located in the district. It would also give selectors an opportunity of taking up some of the rich valleys existing in the Darling Range, and be of great value to settlers in the rich Marradong Valley.”

As I pointed out we must look to the tim-

ber for the greater portion of the traffic over the line, because as those who have had an opportunity of traversing the Darling Ranges know, there is only a small amount of good land on the ranges, generally found in the pockets and on the edge of most of the creeks and gullies. The Government have had practically the whole of the area between Pinjarra and Marradong classified, and in a good many cases we have surveyed blocks, so that if the line is built selectors will be in a position to at once go and examine the country, and if they consider it is good enough they can select the blocks already surveyed. In regard to the timber trade, whilst most of the other lines we have constructed are for the purpose of serving agricultural interests, it is interesting to note what an important factor timber is to the trade of the State at the present time; and that trade has gone up largely owing to the fact of lines being constructed in various portions of the State. In 1907 the export of timber was £192,451. It went up gradually until 1900 when the export was £458,461. Last year the export was £708,993, exclusive of the exports to places within the Commonwealth. I am glad to say there seems to be every possibility that the timber trade during the next year is practically assured. Most of the mills have large orders, and I have been informed quite recently that it is expected the export next six months will be the heaviest in the history of the State. At the present time they are cutting something between two and three thousand loads per week at the various mills, and they are all full handed, while it is expected that the trade will entail putting on an extra shift at some of the mills. A few years ago Mr. Teesdale Smith had some leases out from Pinjarra and he proposed to construct a line there. In fact the line was surveyed and something like six miles of earthworks was built, but it was afterwards abandoned on Mr. Smith assuming the management of the Combine formed by the timber companies. It was a very light line, and I do not suppose the expenditure on the earthworks which were abandoned would be more than £400 or £500. In the loan

schedule last year £13,200 was allocated for 15 miles of railway from Pinjarra to Marrinup Brook Valley. The ruling grade proposed is one in 30, and the rails will be 45lbs. The total cost will be somewhere about £20,000. At one train per day it is estimated that the working expenses will be £2,184, and that the revenue, charging local rates for timber, will be £3,740; while it is anticipated that with the opening up of this country under saw-milling permits 35,000 tons of timber per annum will be carried over the line. One advantage of this country being thrown open under saw-milling permits, is that the permit holders must of necessity erect their mills or lose their permits. As members are possibly aware, under the old Act it was possible to take up leases and, providing certain nominal conditions were complied with, hold them for a considerable time, but the new form of tenure provides that the person must cut in proportion to the saw-milling capacity he possesses; that is to say, if a man puts down a plant capable of cutting 30 loads a day he will be allowed to select an area that will provide him with ten years' cutting, and he will pay to the revenue at the rate of one shilling per load instead of, as in the old system, £20 per square mile; and as the timber is cut out the area reverts to the Crown, so this land is again reserved; and it is anticipated that possibly by the time all the area is cut over they will be able to go over it again and cut certain timber which was previously left. Under the new timber regulations it is provided that no timber can be put through the mill of a smaller diameter than two feet.

*Mr. Holman:* They will be compelled to employ labour to cut 30 loads a day.

The PREMIER: We permit them for 30 loads a day, and to hold the permit they have to cut at least 60 per cent., otherwise the permit becomes forfeitable. Provision is also made that none of these saw-milling permits can be combined or transferred without the permission of the Minister.

*Mr. Holman:* Each lease must stand on its own.

The PREMIER: Yes. I may say that these new conditions are the re-

sult of a Royal Commission of which Mr. Hastie, Mr. Atkins, Mr. Harpe and myself were the members. After going thoroughly into the question and considering this form was the most equitable and in the best interests of the country. Surveyor Sainsbury, who carried out the classification, estimates that the jarrah on the Flora and Fauna Reserve will average 14 loads per acre. Accepting his estimate, there will be 2,240,000 loads of timber; and assuming its value at the stump to be one shilling per load, the timber alone in the reserve should be worth £112,000. I think members will see from these figures that the Government are quite justified in bringing this proposition forward, more especially as there is now a good demand for timber. It is essentially a timber line; and while it may possibly fall short of the objective of many of its supporters who believe it should be extended to Marradong, yet the farmers around Marradong have at least the satisfaction of knowing that they have to cut 16 miles less, and especially as this railway covers the worst portion of the road up the face of the range. Some 480,000 acres, 213,000 of which are alienated, will be influenced by this line. Of this 43,000 acres have been cleared, rung, and cultivated, and 30,000 acres are open for selection in the vicinity of the railway apart from 40,000 acres of pastoral land. These are within a radius of 12 miles of the line. Other agricultural land will be made available by resumption from timber leases in the neighbourhood.

*Mr. Scaddan:* How far is it from the main line?

The PREMIER: I could not say just now. I shall get that information. We have power under the Land Act to resume land from timber leases. During last year where timber had been removed we immediately, provided the land was suitable for settlement, gave instruction to the surveyor to survey the land in the locality and send in a plan so that it could be registered in the office as being available for selection. Power is also reserved in this Bill for the acquisition by the Government of any blocks of land not less than 1,000 acres within a cer-

tain radius of the line within 12 months after the line is declared open for traffic. I do not know that it is necessary for me to deal at any farther length with this line. I think a good many members have had the opportunity of inspecting the route. Several members availed themselves of an invitation from the member for the district and inspected the country. On the Dividing Range between the watersheds of the Murray and the Dandalup is to be found some of the finest timber in Western Australia. The jarrah stands up like candles in a box. It has always had the reputation of being the best timber in the State. Some years ago the Hannans Company had a mill there and carted in timber to the South-Western Railway. They supplied most of the timber used on the goldfields at that time, exclusive of that supplied by Millars. They carried on operations for a considerable time until, owing to the keen competition, prices were reduced so low that they could not carry on. There was the fact that they had to cart something like 13 miles, which prevented them from competing.

*Mr. Bath:* Are there any areas for timber outside the Flora and Fauna Reserve?

The PREMIER: Yes, there is a considerable area that could be taken up. The hon. member will see from the plan that any timber land taken up by these people will have to be reached by a spur line to the north. This railway just touches the reserve on the south, and it is comparatively easy to run any line in a northerly direction, because you are fairly on top of the ranges, and there is no engineering difficulty. The difficulty of access to the Flora and Fauna Reserve is owing to the fact that there are only two openings in the hill you can go up, that on the far north and that on the far south.

*Mr. Bath:* This is not the route Mr. Muir recommended and marked on the plan.

The PREMIER: This practically follows within a mile or so of the original survey, with the difference that we have adopted a line with sharper grades to make it less expensive. I think the

ruling grade on the original line was, if I remember rightly, 1 in 50, while the ruling grade on this line will be one in 30. Several members have had the opportunity of inspecting the country. I believe the member for the district will be able to give some interesting information in regard to this project. I am satisfied it is only a question of a very short time when some of our smaller millers, such as Ferguson's and others, will establish mills there, and that this railway will also serve the settlers at the extremity of the line.

Mr. J. P. McLARTY (Murray): The Premier has fully explained everything in connection with this railway so that there is not very much for me to add; but as member for the district, I desire to say a few words in support of the measure. As the Premier stated last year, I brought a motion before the House, and before it was discussed 12 or 14 members inspected the route; and subsequently, when the motion was discussed, I spoke pretty fully on the subject and the motion was favourably received. As regards agricultural settlement, this will be mainly a timber line. It will extend only fifteen miles from Pinjarra, and will not quite reach the good agricultural country. Owing to difficulty of transit there has not been much settlement along the route, although there are now within two miles of the line twenty-one settlers whose names I can mention if necessary. I look forward to the time when, the timber being cut out, there will be far more land settled by agriculturists, because to the north there is the fine fresh-water stream, the Dandalup, and to the south the larger and finer stream of the Murray, with numerous running brooks and springs. That country is an ideal spot for a homestead, well suited for orchards and vineyards, for the land all along the route is very rich. To the eastward beyond the terminus there is the fertile valley of Marradong, thickly settled by prosperous farmers. To the eastward of the terminus is the homestead of Mr. Wilkie, who has effected considerable improvements, and spent over £70,000 in clearing poison leases, fencing, and

sinking dams. He has now 20,000 sheep in his paddocks. Mr. J. M. Hopkins, Mr. Hales and others have also taken up land, and all these people, including the Marradong settlers, are anxiously looking forward to the construction of this fifteen miles of railway, which will mean much to them by saving cartage over the route. As regards the timber, I believe the Pinjarra-Marradong line will pass through what is probably the finest belt of timber in the State; and in anticipation of the line, numerous applications have come in for the timber country. Every foot of it has been applied for, most of it half a dozen times over. Mr. J. M. Ferguson's name has been frequently mentioned as a gentleman who was himself willing to construct the line, provided he were given certain concessions. Some people doubted whether Mr. Ferguson was in earnest; so recently I wrote to him and received a reply dated the 26th November last, as follows:—

"With regard to the Pinjarra-Marradong railway, if the Government construct the railway for 15 miles from Pinjarra and grants me the timber permit for the 20,000 acres of the Flora and Fauna which I have applied for, it is my intention to erect a jarrah mill there, capable of putting out 40 loads of timber per day. I should be prepared also to make the short line which would be necessary to connect the mill with the Government line. I am exceedingly glad to learn that this matter is being brought forward, and trust that the railway will be authorised."

That is a very important point to recollect. If the Government do not construct the line, there are plenty of other people willing to do so. The Premier has mentioned that a line was at one time started; and a few days ago I was speaking to Mr. Franklyn, who told me he had applied for country along the proposed Marradong line, and that he was willing to put up a mill; and I am sure that a number of small mills will also be erected. The Premier referred also to the Timber Commission's report. Last year I said the project ought to commend itself to the members of the Opposition, because the railway would open up avenues

for timber-hewers, sleeper-hewers, and others. Members frequently complain that when such railway Bills are brought down the information given is insufficient. That can hardly be said of this measure. It has been frequently debated in Parliament, and the Press have for years past been dealing with the matter. In 1896 Sir John Forrest had a sum placed on the Estimates for the survey of the line, and in 1898 it appears that the Government generally were not very flush of money, and they were willing to receive offers from private people to construct a railway. The member for York (Mr. Monger) moved a motion authorising the Government to negotiate for its construction by private enterprise. The motion was spoken to by Mr. Monger, Mr. Morgans, the seconder, Sir John Forrest, Mr. A. Forrest, Mr. Ewing, Mr. Leake, Mr. Oldham, the Hon. S. Burt, Mr. Kenny, Mr. Moran, Mr. Frank Wilson, and Mr. Lyall Hall, and was carried on the voices. On being transmitted to the Upper House the resolution met with some opposition from Mr. R. S. Haynes, who was altogether opposed to construction by private enterprise. He spoke on the question till the Governor entered the Chamber to prorogue Parliament, and thus the subject was talked out. But the project has never been allowed to slumber. When Mr. W. J. George was member for Murray he frequently spoke of it, and his successor, Mr. Atkins, frequently moved in the matter. I have done what I could. The Premier mentioned the project in his policy speech. There is no battle of routes, or anything of that kind. The people of the district are and have been anxiously looking forward for years to the railway, and they are experiencing that hope deferred which maketh the heart sick. There are along the line a number of large orchards, and much land suitable for other orchards. Those who visited the district will recollect that we stayed at the homestead of a Mr. Fisher, who had a small but very good orchard, which was sold the other day for £850; so land in that quarter is increasing in value. [Mr. Bath: How many acres had he?] I suppose there were about three acres of orchard, though he had

other land. While speaking on the subject I do not think it will be out of place to refer to comments made in the Sunday Press of Perth, and in the Bunbury newspaper. These papers stated that I am trying to get this railway because it will pass through my property. As a matter of fact, I have no property in the Murray district, except a few town grants. People seem to think I have a lot of property there, but I have not, nor will the line benefit my family in any way. The property belonging to one of my brothers is on the other side of the Murray; and though the railway will certainly pass through a small farm belonging to my other brother, he would rather it went miles away, because it will seriously injure his farm. Having made these remarks, I will satisfy myself by endorsing what the Premier has said.

MR. G. S. F. COWCHER (Williams): I have pleasure in supporting the construction of this railway. After the remarks of the Premier little remains to be said. The line will assist people living 20 or 30 miles from the terminus, who have now to cart 15 miles to Pinjarra, 60 to Armadale, and 40 or 50 to Williams.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member should speak a little louder. *Hansard* cannot quite hear him.

MR. COWCHER: Cartage to the people in the Marradong Valley will be reduced by about 15 or 16 miles. There is much good country there, though there is a certain proportion of poor as well as of good land. There is a fair amount of settlement, and the railway, though only 15 miles in length, will greatly assist the settlers.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): I am not surprised at the member for the Williams speaking softly on the second reading of this Bill, for I think it necessary that he should do so in regard to some of these proposals, for fear the infant may come to some harm while passing through the House. I am afraid that in this session at least we are becoming afflicted with what may be called railway madness, which threatens to be a dangerous rival to the Limerick madness by which the

people of Western Australia are now affected.

MR. EWING: This will do more good.

MR. BATH: I do not know. Perhaps more will be gained from Limericks than from constructing some of these railways. I rather agree with the views which the member for Subiaco expressed this afternoon. I was somewhat astonished at the manner in which his remarks were resented by the Premier.

THE PREMIER: I do not resent them. I expressed sorrow at his having fallen from grace.

MR. BATH: The Premier did not express that sorrow with tears, but with rather heated words and furious demeanour. Great consideration is necessary before we adopt so many railway proposals which embody a considerable loan expenditure; and as the railways are not likely to pay, they will involve a considerable addition to our interest and sinking fund contribution. And although the member for Collie (Mr. Ewing), in discussing these proposals, talks glibly of spending four million pounds on constructing railways, and dismisses with an airy waive of the hand the idea of any risk attaching to such a policy, still, we have the experience of other States which have fared very badly indeed in similar undertakings. I have only to refer the hon member to the fact that some years ago Victoria was afflicted with a similar midsummer madness, and undertook to construct a large number of railways.

MR. W. B. GORDON: Of which she is now reaping the benefit.

MR. BATH: She has reaped the benefit only by closing many of those railways, tearing up the rails, and putting them elsewhere—using them on other lines. And if there is any benefit to be gained by borrowing money and involving the country in a perpetual obligation for the purpose of constructing railways for the mere pleasure of pulling them up again later on, the benefit is difficult to gauge. I know this, and it is known also to other members, that the policy pursued at that time not only brought depression to the State of Victoria from which she has only recently emerged—more by the



power of Providence than by any particular ability in the control of her affairs—but also ruin and sorrow to thousands of people in that State. And the member for Katanning will probably know that in addition it brought its trail of suicides in the same way as the recent financial panic in America. That is the result accruing from a misguided policy, and of the idea that you have merely to plank down a railway in order to bring prosperity to a community. The construction of railways requires the same qualities in those controlling affairs as are required in the embarkation in any business; and if a similar policy were pursued in business undertakings as in this higgledy-piggledy passing of railway undertakings the bankruptcy court in this State would have a great deal more to do than it has at present, which is a good deal. Therefore any member who in this House counsels ordinary wisdom, as the member for Subiaco has done, is deserving commendation from hon. members rather than an expression of surprise by the Premier, from whom we are entitled to expect caution and wisdom. The member for the district (Mr. McLarty) naturally supports this line; and it is almost unique to hear advanced as an argument that members who preceded him in the representation of the district have also advocated it. Naturally so. Apart altogether from any merits or demerits the proposition may have, it is natural that Mr. W. J. George and Mr. Atkins, when representations were made and a survey had been effected, would advocate the construction of their district railway. But that is not a sound or weighty argument in favour of the construction of this railway. I admit we have had more than that from the Premier in the facts adduced by him to-night. But I would like to remind members that although the Premier emphasises as a strong argument in favour of this railway it will open the Flora and Fauna Reserve, yet when Mr. Muir was asked for a report as to the best means of opening up this reserve by railway he submitted an altogether different route, to start at the opposite end of the reserve. Although it has been urged that

in the future the extension of this line to Marradong will be warranted, I am of the opinion that if it were a question of considering a railway which will tap the undoubtedly good land around Marradong, the proposition would be much more acceptable if it were proposed that the railway should go down on the eastern side of the Darling Range, because it would be then sure to tap good country all along the route. As now proposed, the line after crossing the range will run through poor land.

*The Premier* : What do you call the eastern side?

Mr. BATH : Practically an extension of the present line connecting Armadale with Fremantle.

*The Treasurer* : Such a line would have to cross the range.

Mr. BATH : At the start ; but it would get into good country on the east of the Darling Range, the country round Wandering.

*The Premier* : Where would you get your traffic from?

Mr. BATH : I freely admit that the first portion of the line would go through poor country; but that is precisely the position with the present proposed line. [*Member* : But there is good timber country.] The hon. member must know that timber freight is only a matter of some years; that the only warrant for constructing a line to carry timber is for a light railway to bring the timber to a market, and the cheapest possible construction. The Premier has pointed out that the construction of a line to the present proposed terminus is practically a proposition for the carriage of timber. [*The Premier* : Primarily.] That, primarily, is the hon. member's argument; and secondly that the line will serve certain areas of better-class land that happen to lie in the valleys and along the edge of the creek. But the great bulk of the land, after the timber has been cut, is such as will not be of much use for agricultural purposes. In those circumstances, if we are considering this line in the light of one ultimately to be extended to Marradong, then I think there is need for farther investigation as to whether this is the best route. I

am of opinion that it is not. The member for Williams (Mr. Cowcher) interjects that poor country would be served if the line were taken over the range and along the east side of the Darling Range. I have been through the Williams district and spent four or five days looking over the country; and as one proceeds from Wandering to Marradong the quality of the land improves all the way. Such a line would serve not only the Wandering settlers but others farther out who were some years ago promised a railway by Sir John Forrest, and have sat down contentedly waiting for that railway. While I was there, I advised the settlers not to rely on a promise, but to raise a noise if they wanted a railway. The member for Murray urges that members should support this proposition because it will create employment for sleeper-cutters and employees at timber mills to be erected. But I would impress on the hon. member that there is only a certain market for our timber; and if mills are opened up along this line, giving employment to sleeper-cutters and timber workers, they will be drawn from other districts; that there will be no increased employment unless there be a considerably increased demand for timber.

*The Treasurer:* We have got the world's market.

Mr. BATH: So have other countries, and they appear to get in ahead of us.

*The Premier:* There have never been so many orders for timber for export as at the present time. Timber-hewers are now looking for new country.

Mr. BATH: I am pleased indeed to hear that. But when it was recently a question of wages, we were told that because this country had no chance of competing in the world's market, the industry could not afford to pay a living wage. I am satisfied we are not going to see the big increase in demand sufficient to find this extra employment, which is now advanced as a reason why Opposition members should support the line. On all these grounds, and in the interests of the people of this State, I am not justified in supporting this railway and committing the State to this expenditure, in view of

the railways already passed and others now on the Notice Paper.

Mr. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): I shall support the Bill. I know many owners of timber mills, one in particular, who have been beseeching the department for the last five or six years to throw open the Flora and Fauna Reserve so that they might obtain more timber. I refer particularly to J. M. Ferguson & Company. It is openly stated that some timber mill proprietors are prepared to construct this railway themselves, if the State is not prepared to do so. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that it behoves us to be careful as to the number of railways to be constructed. We must realise that while it is easy enough for us to pass Acts of Parliament authorising the construction of railways, it is not so easy to find money wherewith to construct them. I submit however that this differs from other railway propositions in that it will pay practically from the commencement. It would be a great error on our part not to take steps for the construction of this line as early as possible—in fact it should be one of the first works undertaken so soon as loan funds are available. I would like to remind the House that the metropolitan and Fremantle districts are situated at some distance from the nearest timber mills carrying on business in this country; hence the establishment of timber mills within a reasonable distance of Perth and Fremantle must prove of very great benefit. [*Mr. Holman:* Jarrahdale is not far away.] True; but that mill centre unfortunately belongs to a Timber Combine which I believe charges the same rate for timber whether obtained from distant places or from mills close at hand. [*Mr. Holman:* One of the evils of monopoly.] This line will at any rate create a certain competition against the Timber Combine, and I hope the House will agree to its construction.

Mr. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison): Though I am unacquainted with this part of the country, I have listened with interest to the speeches made on the question, and was impressed mainly by the

remarks of the Premier in connection with the new system under which milling permits are to be granted. I am pleased that in the future timber leases are to be granted subject to labour conditions, the absence of which in the past was a great mistake. The conditions to be imposed appear to me fair and reasonable. I would like to see the day come soon when we will be able to compel the whole of the timber lessees to return the same output, then we would not have these areas of country locked up, and people running around trying to get land on which to erect mills and cut timber. Then we would be in a position when a company, no matter if they carried timber 100 or 25 miles, would receive the same price for the timber, although the cost would be so different. I am glad that even the member for Claremont, who is by no means a democrat or supporter of the worker, objects to the Combine having the monopoly of the timber trade, and admits that in such circumstances the position is a dangerous one. We look forward with pleasure to the time we shall have the hon. member ranged with us in a desire to enforce these conditions on the timber lessees. As to the railways on the Notice Paper, I recognise that it does not matter whether we oppose them or not, they are going to be carried through quite irrespective of the arguments against the propositions. I do not know the part of the country through which this line will run, but I think the argument used that the land will be utilised immediately the timber is cut hardly concurs with the statements by the Premier to the effect that the jarrah trees there are like candles sticking up in a box. If what the Premier says is correct the cost of clearing will be tremendous.

*The Premier:* Jarrah country as a rule is not good land for the agriculturist, as it grows best in ironstone gravel, which is not much good for anything but vines.

*Mr. HOLMAN:* The Premier's remarks do not coincide with those of other members as to the purposes for which the land can be used. I am pleased to know that other timber lands will be thrown open, and that workers will be

given a chance to go out and get timber land to operate upon.

*Mr. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne):* After the way the Premier put his foot on the neck of the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) because he presumed to question the wisdom of such a reckless railway policy as that the Government are now pursuing, it makes me cautious about saying anything in opposition to such a policy, but I would like to draw the attention of the House to a few figures I have prepared. I venture to say they will astonish members, but they will convince them that the Government are not running wild over this railway policy, but are absolutely running amok. When they take into consideration that, within the last 18 months, we have authorised and there have appeared on the Notice Paper lines for 547 miles of railways they will realise the position. [*The Treasurer:* Have you the details?] Yes, and the distances of the various railways. The particulars are:—Narrogin-Wickepin, 29.40 miles; Mount Magnet-Black Range, 96 miles; Wannerup-Nannup, 36.20 miles; Pinjarra-Marrinup, 15 miles; Newcastle-Bolgart, 23.54 miles; Coolgardie-Norseman, 107 miles; Donnybrook-Preston, 50 miles; Greenhills-Quairading, 30 miles; Hopetoun-Ravenshorpe, 34 miles; Jandakot-Armadale, 10.27 miles; Marble Bar-Port Hedland, 115 miles, total 546.91 miles. The country is practically committed to these railways in addition to other public works. There is about half a million pounds or so for the Fremantle dock, and there are numerous other works.

*Mr. Bath:* All these railways are not yet authorised.

*Mr. BUTCHER:* No; but they are going to be; they must be, with the majority behind the Government. These figures simply refer to the construction of the railways, but in addition there will be numerous other expenses; all know what it costs to equip lines with rolling stock, rails, etcetera. The Premier says we have rolling stock enough; but we have not sufficient for all the lines, and it means a great many other expenses, such as stations, sidings, etcetera. Of the new

railway proposals there are to be 352 miles for mining railways, and 195 for agricultural railways. I am not going to oppose the principle altogether of agricultural railways, but we are not going to induce a population to settle there simply because the railways are built.

*Mr. Taylor:* You have not included in your list the Denmark line.

*Mr. BUTCHER:* No, and that will bring it to close on 600 miles. We must bear in mind that the population is decreasing, and rapidly, and that our interest bill is being worked up rapidly. The taxpayers are faced with this position, that they will have to pay the interest on all this money we are about to expend on public works. It is all very well for men who have no stake in the country to advocate these works for at any time they can put on their hats and clear out; but the poor unfortunate man who settles here cannot do that, and he will have to bear the burden of taxation.

*Mr. Bath:* The extra interest will amount to £100,000.

*Mr. BUTCHER:* Quite that. I appeal to the Government and members to be cautious what they are doing. Surely to goodness we have gone far enough now in railway construction. If the Government take the proper course, which I have advocated all through, and adopt some means of compelling the settlement of our unused lands within easy distance of the present railway system, the difficulty will be solved. We have enough land there to accommodate a million people. At present this land is in the hands of men, absentees many of them, who will not sell it. [*Mr. Ewing:* What about the land tax?] The land tax is infinitesimal as far as they are concerned. Any man who can afford to possess such large areas of land adjacent to railways without using them can easily afford to pay the tax; the tax is altogether too light to compel them to cut up their estates. The effect of the tax, contrary to what is desired, will be to create large estates, for it is just the sort of tax which will affect the small men and make them sell their properties, which will be then be bought up by the big men. I implore the Govern-

ment to be more cautious as we are really going too far.

*Mr. Bath:* We might see how some of these propositions turn out before constructing new ones.

The TREASURER (*Mr. Frank Wilson*): As usual, we hear from the Leader of the Opposition, in his pessimistic tone, of the disastrous results that will follow our railway policy. He gave some general instances with regard to Victoria. I am not going to enter into the history of the Victorian railway policy, but I want to point out that so far in Western Australia we have not run amok in granting these facilities of transit to our settlers. It is passing strange to me that, whenever a small agricultural line of this description is proposed for the consideration of members, we have the whole question raised as to whether we are by that means going to ruin the State or otherwise; but when we submit a large proposition in connection with mineral country, such as the Black Range railway, my friend opposite quietly sits still and says nothing about it.

*Mr. Bath:* The goldfields lines carry the burden of the others.

*The Minister for Works:* Does the Cue line do that?

The TREASURER: The Mount Magnet-Black Range railway has just been passed to serve a small mining centre. Certainly it is a very promising centre, and I think it will develop ultimately into a second Golden Mile. We are perfectly justified in taking the risk; but we hear nothing of these pessimistic utterances when we suggest spending about £200,000 or more in coupling Black Range with Mount Magnet. As soon, however, as mention is made of 15 miles of railway, as suggested in this Bill, to open up the country from Pinjarra, and ultimately to go a few miles farther and tap a very old and good agricultural settlement, we hear that the country is going to ruin, that we are verging on bankruptcy, and that we ought to stay our hands. Why is that not suggested when we propose a much bigger scheme? It stands to reason that perhaps some little

error might be made in connection with some of these lines, but I do not think so, for they have been well considered and threshed out, and each one of them has been before the Assembly in some shape or form during the last 18 months. They all appeared on the Loan Bill last session, and most of them appeared on the Loan Estimates. They were thoroughly debated on both occasions, and now they appear before us in the shape of Bills to authorise their construction. I do not object to criticism, but I object to general statements that will cause people to think we are acting in an incautious manner in introducing this measure. We are going to carry out the policy of developing our vast resources, mineral, agricultural and timber, which we believe is going to bring prosperity to our country, and which we are sure has already had beneficial results, notwithstanding the very short time that has elapsed since the Premier placed the policy before the country. Anyone who cares to take the slightest interest in the figures mentioned from time to time in the House, who likes to take notice of the large area under cultivation and the large increase in the output of our staple crops, and the fact that our farmers are looking farther afield and are going in for mixed farming and dairying which ultimately will lead to something greater, if members give these things consideration, and we know that our settlers are increasing in number in the agricultural districts, they must come to the conclusion that the future of the State is going to benefit by the policy we are advocating in a small degree in submitting this Railway Bill for the consideration of the House to-night.

*Mr. Bath:* It has not had much effect on the railway receipts.

*The TREASURER:* Whereas the traffic to the goldfields is smaller than in the past it is increasing in the centres referred to. If the member for Guildford were in his place to-night he could tell members of the enormous strides being made along the Great Southern Railway; he would tell members that he has been employed exclusively in these agricultural centres during the past two or three years in his trade as a contractor, and

the records tell of the immense increase in traffic from the cultivation of the land and the products of the soil in the shape of wheat and other crops. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the pulling up of the railways in Victoria. I am not sure of railways being pulled up. One or two may have been. One to a coal mining centre, I believe, was pulled up, but I should like to ask would that increase the prosperity of this State? I should like to say that standing still will not bring prosperity to the country. Pulling up a line which can be taken to some place elsewhere—I would rather run the risk of that than stand still. We must bring prosperity to the country. We have been told that there are stagnation and poverty. The member seems to think because we are carrying out this policy we shall bring the country to poverty, and he says it is poverty stricken now. I join issue with him there. There is no portion of the British Empire sounder to-day than Western Australia. It is true that in the Eastern States they have been having their spurt and at the present juncture are getting a larger volume of trade than we are, but for steady, solid progress Western Australia to-day is perfectly sound and is a great example.

*Mr. Bath:* That is why the people are going away.

*The TREASURER:* The population is not going away as largely as the member thinks. It is true we have not increased in population to a large extent, and there are a few labour men who perhaps are attracted by the little boom in business in the Eastern States to get employment over there who have left our State to seek that employment. But I may tell the hon. member on the other hand some have returned to Western Australia notwithstanding things are supposed to be so prosperous in the Eastern States; they prefer to come back to Western Australia and take their chance with us. A good many have come back. I only rose with the object of putting the other side of the picture to some slight extent before members and letting them understand from a financial aspect that although we have stringent times

from a financial point of view, the State is all right and we have no fear. With the member for Gascoyne I admit caution should be exercised. It is no use embarking on large undertakings until you know where to get your money from.

*Mr. Butcher:* That is all I am asking.

The TREASURER: I am quite with the member. The Cabinet are men of caution and at the same time they are men of confidence and progress. I hope we shall hear no more of these pessimistic utterances and that these small agricultural lines which are going to do so much for Western Australia will be passed by members without opposition the same as the larger undertakings to serve the mineral centres of the State.

Mr. A. C. GULL (Swan): As a consistent supporter of railways for Western Australia, whether for mineral purposes or agricultural purposes, I am pleased to give my support to this measure. I have a knowledge of the country to be served. We have, practically through having joined the federation, to rely more on the development of our agricultural resources now than we ever had at any other time in the history of Western Australia. When one avenue of progress is cut off, we must perforce turn our attention to other avenues. As far as this line is concerned, I know the country will benefit and I am pleased to support the proposal. Although the programme of railway extensions is very heavy, and although caution is necessary, still I want to call members' attention to the fact that all the years I have known Western Australia, and they are many, I have always heard the same old cry to every advancement proposed in the country in the matter of railway extension, that it would not pay. I think experience has shown that such a cry was not worthy of consideration for a moment. If it had been, there would have been no goldfields railways in Western Australia, no agricultural lines, and in many instances no trunk lines. I remember the time when it was foretold that the line from Perth to Fremantle was going to be a great failure. Even going back

to a few years, in modern times, we were told that there was no possibility of the tramway service in Perth paying; there was no possibility of anything paying. One only had to go into the street to know that. And the action of the Perth City Council in giving the concern to a private company instead of building it themselves proves this. That has been the case ever since Western Australia was Western Australia. I want to support this line and other lines. Although a Western Australian, and although that epithet is for ever hurled against us, I realise that under present conditions we have to face the inevitable; we have either to go forward or go backward, and I am for going forward every time. I say this advisedly: I would sooner fall over a precipice and die at once than die of starvation. [*Mr. A. J. Wilson:* You have a chance while starving.] Nearly all undertakings in a new country must perforce have a certain element of speculation in them. Whatever we have undertaken up to the present has proved a success, and I am not going to be one now to say we have reached a time when we should sit still and allow the population we have to drift away, because there is nothing doing in the country, thereby increasing the burdens of taxation on those who are left. I prefer to go ahead and take what risk there is and increase the population of the country by a developmental policy, thus reducing the amount of taxation per head on those who are in the country.

Mr. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): One certainly rises to address oneself to the subject of spur or agricultural lines with almost bated breath after hearing the big guns from the Treasury bench and the smaller pistols from the cross-benches; to dare get up and point at the large financial undertakings that the Government have in hand, and which they are proposing in the short space of time at the close of the session. I am reminded by the member for Collie that shows the Government are progressive. I like their progressive action when on the edge of the grave. This progressive policy cannot be discussed and investi-

gated in this Chamber when there are only four or five sitting days left, because if all be true it is the intention of the Government to close this session some day next week; and we are called on in the last days of the Parliament and the last moments of a tired Parliament to pledge the country to an expenditure of something like two millions of money.

*The Treasurer:* What nonsense. These proposals have been before the House 18 months.

*Mr. TAYLOR:* The Treasurer speaks in the way of caution. He says let us conduct the country by optimism; that is the tenor of the Treasurer's remarks. I want to tell the Treasurer and the Government that we have a deficit of something over £200,000, and the Government have endeavoured to bring in taxation proposals by which they will raise £80,000 to recoup the Treasury that is being depleted. We have proofs in this House and the country of the way in which the Government had to back down, humiliating themselves in the eyes of the people, to get taxation proposals through to the amount of £80,000. And the expenditure which the House is now incurring will require £100,000 for interest and sinking fund which must come from the revenue. Has the Treasurer pointed out to the House how he intends to cope with that? Will his taxation proposals now being discussed in another branch of the Legislature recoup or wipe out the existing deficit?

*Mr. Collier:* There will be interest and sinking fund on one million.

*Mr. TAYLOR:* The interest and sinking fund will amount to £100,000. There is no speaker in this House who has advocated any of the proposals as being payable or reproductive works. They have all pointed out that these lines will settle people on the lands, and that the State will ultimately reap the benefit. I am not going to disprove that; but I say that it will be wise for a Government with a big deficit, before increasing expenditure from loan funds to increase that deficit, to at least show how we are going to get the revenue to meet the expenditure that we are incurring. At this late

hour of the session, without members having the opportunity of examination and without having sufficient facts and details placed before them from experts in the Railway Department and the Agricultural Department to show by computed figures what work these lines will do, and what traffic they are likely to get, between the first, second, fourth or tenth year after construction, we should not be asked to pass these lines. We have none of this information. In the old House when railway Bills were under discussion, the walls of the Chamber were hung with maps showing, in the case of lines of this description, the land that was alienated, and that unalienated, and the amount of settlement, the quantity of stock, and the production of grain, and the land under cultivation, and the areas held by individuals, and the amount of land ringbarked, and the amount of land under virgin forest; all these details were brought down with the approximate cost of the railway. Without any knowledge of this country one cannot give any idea of how this railway will pay. I have listened to remarks about the line passing through jarrah forests, and that it is good agricultural country. The Premier has pointed out that where the jarrah is growing it is on ironstone ridges, and that the land is not much good for other purposes. Another hon. member who knows the district says that the land is good for fruit growing. There is a discrepancy between the two statements. Again the Treasurer pointed out as an argument that this was "only a small line," and the Treasurer accused members on this side of the House for sitting in silence "while they passed the Black Range Railway that would require an expenditure of £200,000." Those were the Treasurer's words. The Premier pointed out on the second reading of the Black Range Railway Bill that the estimated cost would be £134,000. There is a discrepancy of £66,000. The Treasurer said it would be £200,000 to bolster up an argument in favour of this other line. It is unfair to hon. members, and it will be unfair if it is printed in the Press. We all know that the utterances of Ministers are utterances which should

be recorded in the records of Parliaments, and in all probability they are recorded in the Press, because they are utterances of Ministers with responsibility that should be recorded. We find the Premier sets forth, with the object of influencing the House to pass the Black Range Railway Bill, that it will only cost £134,000, and then the Treasurer points out that it will be £200,000. There is a £66,000 discrepancy; but I suppose that is not much for a Treasurer. The Treasurer also points out that since these agricultural railways have been built, the earnings of the railways have considerably increased. I am not an authority on that, perhaps the Treasurer is, but I rather think the Railway report should be somewhat nearer the mark than the Treasurer. The Railway report for 1906-7, dealing with the losses on our railway system, says that in agricultural products there was a loss of £20,000 last year. There was a loss of £97,000 in various other things, but in agricultural products there was a loss of £20,000.

*Mr. A. J. Wilson:* The most accurate test was the tonnage. Was there a falling off in the tonnage?

*Mr. TAYLOR:* The Treasurer was not discussing the tonnage, he was discussing the finance. It naturally follows that the bigger the tonnage the bigger the profits. [*Mr. A. J. Wilson:* Not naturally.] The Railway report will prove that the goldfields lines are carrying the rest of the railways of the State. They are the only railways that are paying. I only object to that on the ground that the goldfields people are paying too high freights.

*Mr. Butcher:* Do not forget the benefits they get from the Goldfields Water Scheme.

*Mr. Scaddan:* And the rabbit-proof fence.

*Mr. TAYLOR:* I know they are getting great benefits from the Water Scheme and fence.

*Mr. Butcher:* I did not say from the fence.

*Mr. TAYLOR:* Well, I heard it said. At any rate the railway to Kalgoorlie is practically the only paying portion of the railway system. The member for Swan pointed out that if the Forrest Govern-

ment had been croakers like some members to-night who advise the House to go cautiously, there would have been no railway lines on the goldfields. But the position of the State then was totally different to the present condition. The Treasury was then flowing over with money. They could hardly shovel it out as quickly as they got it in. Every boat was landing crowds of miners, most of them with their pockets full of money they earned in other States.

*Mr. Collier:* They came here and built up this State.

*Mr. TAYLOR:* They came here and gave it a place on the map of the Commonwealth. The position is totally different to-day. What does our *Statistical Abstract* say? We have lost during the 10 months of the present year, 785 people; but we are told with all the calmness the Treasurer can muster up, that our agricultural lines have improved the earnings of our railways, and that we are gaining population. The Railway report speaks differently. It shows that we are £20,000 to the bad this year in agricultural products, while the *Statistical Abstract* says that we have lost 785 people in population. Let me here say that a great proportion of those 785 were wage earners who could not find work in our country. I know hundreds of men from the goldfields and timber areas who have left this State to seek employment in the other States owing to the depression here. [*The Premier:* And they came back again.] How could they have come back again when we are 785 short? There must have been thousands who went away if they are coming back as the Premier indicates. I am not in a position to discuss the merits or demerits of this railway except from what I have heard during the debate; but I have heard statements which I can correct in black and white from authentic records and statements; that is in regard to the cost of the Black Range railway and as to these spur lines giving greater work to the railways and settling more people on the land. I find there has been a falling off of £20,000 in agricultural produce, and that our population has decreased in 10 months by nearly 800, which will mean 1,000 by



the end of the year. In view of what I can contradict, because I have the material at my hand, probably if I probe the statements as to the necessity for this railway made by members on the Government side, I would be just as able to contradict them with the same force and effect and accuracy as I have the points I have already challenged. The figures given by the member for Gascoyne are startling.

*The Premier* : Have you not seen them before ?

Mr. TAYLOR : No ; but when we take the whole length of the railways proposed to be built, 600 miles, at the cost pointed out by the hon. member, it takes away that neat little statement that this is only a small line. As the Treasurer said : " This is only a small line of 16 miles ; it is nothing to pass." The Treasurer said this while accusing this side of the House for passing in silence a railway that would cost £200,000, but which the Premier, I believe with more accuracy, said would only cost £134,000. It is about time that we questioned these second reading speeches ; and this is all the more reason why we should oppose the suspension of the Standing Orders to pass such measures through all stages at one sitting. With the meagre information at our disposal, railway construction should proceed very slowly. None of these agricultural railways has paid. Some five years ago I opposed the Collie-Narrogin line, showed that it would not pay axle-grease, and pointed out a route which would have been better for agricultural purposes.

*The Premier* : Did you ever support a railway project ?

Mr. TAYLOR : I have supported railway projects, and I will support them again.

*The Premier* : Which one did you support ?

Mr. TAYLOR : I am talking about one that I did not support ; and that one is not paying axle-grease, and the settlers on it know that the forty odd miles from Collie to Darkan, or to the Williams River, cannot be justified as an agricultural railway. It was said when the line was mooted that it would ulti-

mately supply the goldfields with fuel from Collie ; but that argument was abandoned, and the project was afterwards introduced as being an agricultural line, which, however, passed over barren lands. I am told by those who have seen it that it is not good country, and I challenge the Premier to say that the forty miles referred to is good agricultural land. It is jarrah country, and that country is not good for anything but growing jarrah. It consists of ironstone ridges, possibly useful as railway ballast. In view of these facts, one who opposes reckless expenditure ought not to be twitted with his pessimism. Optimism may be carried too far. We can, as the member for Gascoyne points out, run amok, and call ourselves optimists. In some of these proposals the Government have practically run amok. I am not convinced that I should be justified in supporting this Bill.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) : One becomes astonished at the amount of criticism this proposal is receiving from members who have never visited the locality. We have had much criticism of the Premier's speech ; but last night we had before us another railway project, and two different opinions were ventilated by members who took part in the discussion. Last night I spoke both loud and long on the Wickepin-Narrogin proposition. I spoke because I had personally examined the locality. But I found that after all my trouble I received very little if any encouragement. To-night members waxed quite eloquent on a question they have never investigated, and the other side of which they do not know.

*Mr. Taylor* : There is no rival route to be considered in this case.

Mr. JOHNSON : No ; but there is a question of principle

*Mr. Taylor* : Rival routes were discussed last night.

Mr. JOHNSON : Yes ; but the main question was the opening up of the Wickepin Agricultural Area. Like the member for Mount Magnet, I was opposed to the Collie-Narrogin railway, because I was convinced that twenty or thirty years must elapse before we should need a rail-

way to carry coal to the goldfields, and that as an agricultural railway it could never pay; and I was farther convinced that the Williams and Darkan areas should be connected with their natural port, Fremantle. The route which I then thought should have been selected was the route now proposed, to open up Williams and the Darkan area through this timber country, connecting with Pinjarrah, Marradong, or some other port on the South-Western railway. We find to-day that my contention is justified. We built the Collie-Narrogin railway, but in doing so we made a mistake. In twenty years' time that railway may be justified, but it was when built an absolutely political railway. Possibly members may say that I built it. True, I was Minister for Works; but I built it against my grain. I had to do it, because the Bill had been passed by a previous Parliament, the rails and fastenings had been ordered, and there was no escape. I started the line from Narrogin, but I intended to take it only to Darkan, and I would have resigned my position rather than take it any farther, because the country between Darkan and Collie would not feed a bandicoot. Goodness knows the country from Narrogin to Wickepin is bad enough, but this land is considerably worse. But this Bill contains an altogether different proposition. The project now under discussion is to my mind sound, and I wish to see the railway constructed, principally to open up the timber country. We have in our midst a timber combine, ably represented by a member of this House. But we must realise that we have small timber firms—millers and merchants who are trying to compete with that huge monopoly. The difficulty of the small firms is that they cannot get timber areas on which to cut, and we find them bundled from pillar to post. In the vicinity of Mundaring Weir Messrs. Bunning Brothers are now cutting timber, lifting it by a crane in primitive fashion, landing it at a siding, whence it is taken by the Minister for Works to the Government railway, and thence delivered to the yards in Perth and at Maylands. We have Messrs. Whittaker Brothers, whose small concession will not last long. Mr. J. M.

Ferguson is in exactly the same position. It is to assist these small firms that I wish to see this railway built. It will open up a good timber area, and I believe the Government desire equally to see that these firms are thus enabled to compete with the Combine. Again, we must realise that the railway has some merits as an agricultural line. I have not visited the locality, but I remember the Forestry Commission, the members of which were of opinion that in the Flora and Fauna Reserve we have a valuable timber asset. This line will go within a reasonable distance of that reserve, and will give us an opportunity of allowing small firms to establish it in mills which will supply the people with timber at reasonable prices. I agree that the Government are going too far in the matter of railway construction. I agree with the contention of the Leader of the Opposition, that there is to-day a sort of mania for railway construction. Last night I made my appeal, and I will appeal again on another railway proposition on the Notice Paper, that members should go a little slower, should realise their responsibility for voting huge sums of money to construct these lines. This proposition, however, is justified from many points of view; consequently I will support the second reading.

Mr. A. J. WILSON (Forrest) : I should not have risen to speak but for a reference which has just been made by the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson). There can be no doubt that I am the member to whom he referred as ably representing in this House a timber combine. I wish to tell the hon. member that there is nothing half so fishy in my representation in this House as the hon. member's connection with a Government quarry which he, I believe, leased in peculiar circumstances to some private individual. As for the railway and the Timber Combine, this is a question which I, like all other members, am able to consider entirely on its merits. I happen to know the country that the railway will serve, and to know also that this project has been investigated by a board which reported on the future of the timber in-

dustry; and amongst the board's recommendations was the construction of a line to open up the Flora and Fauna Reserve for the cutting of marketable timber. I believe the idea of the board was to construct the line from a point some eight or ten miles nearer to Perth than this Bill proposes; but the engineering difficulties in the way of getting to the top of the range from anywhere in the vicinity of North Dandalup were great. Those difficulties are materially reduced by starting as proposed in this Bill. Entirely apart from the question of opening up timber country on the route, this line will serve what is admittedly one of the oldest and finest agricultural settlements in the State; and that settlement is within comparatively easy reach of the terminus of the line. Just so surely as it has been found necessary to construct a railway from Bunbury to the Great Southern, so in the near future will the necessity arise for another line connecting the South-Western and the Great Southern Railways from Pinjarrah to some point on the Great Southern, whether Pingelly or some other point is immaterial. The progress of the Marradong district, one of the most fertile in the State, had been hampered by the difficulties of access to and egress from the portion already settled on. On either side of the proposed line is a wide belt of valuable land eminently suited for close settlement, which will be tapped by the line and thus made available. No one will hazard the assertion that this line will be payable from the start, even from a timber point of view; but I venture to say that the time is not far distant when it will be a paying proposition apart from the timber traffic, from an agricultural point of view alone. If we regard it in the light of comparison with other agricultural railways, it is an eminently more desirable proposition than many already passed, because there is extending on either side of the line almost from its commencement, to the north, south, and east, a certain return to the State in the standing timber estimated at anything from 5s. to a sovereign. That advantage does not exist in regard to a line built to a gold-mining centre, which may to-day yield gold and

in a month's time be treating stone showing not a fly-speck of gold. The strong point of this proposition is that there will be from a specified area through which the line will run a certain return to the revenue of the department, and which undoubtedly must add to the general welfare of the State as a whole. Whatever justification there may be for many of the goldfields lines, they are essentially speculative in character; but in regard to this proposition nobody can estimate the revenue it may earn. The timber people are prepared to construct this line free of cost to the State, if permitted to do so; therefore it cannot be such an unremunerative project the State is now asked to embark upon in authorising this railway. The member for Guildford made some reference to a combine; but I wish members to bear in mind that there has been for a number of years in this State a combine of small timber retailers, for the purpose of controlling prices at which timber is supplied to local consumers. I do not know that the granting of a concession to Mr. Ferguson, or any other small mill-owner will materially benefit the position so far as the utilisers of our hardwoods are concerned. I make the statement only in passing, so that the reference made to a combine may not be understood. [Mr. Johnson: That justifies my remarks.] It does not; because the hon. member used the argument in favour of Mr. Ferguson, who has for a number of years been part and parcel of a combine controlling the price at which timber is retailed to the people of Western Australia. What I should like to see done in this regard is that the Government, who are large users of timber, should reserve the most convenient and eligible site in close proximity to this railway for the establishment of a mill to supply their own timber requirements. We might then have an opportunity of testing the theory advocated so eloquently by some members of this Assembly, as to the advisability of extending the principle of socialism to the nationalisation of the timbers of the State. Here is a magnificent opportunity presented to the Government for putting the thing to the test. [Mr. Johnson: You

might change your mind when it came on, as you did on the land tax.] Whether I change my mind or not will not affect the position as regards the opportunity now presented of giving a practical demonstration of the principle so near and dear to the heart of the member for Guildford. Here is a magnificent opportunity. The State is a large user of timber—no one will deny that; then why not provide our own timber by availing ourselves of this excellent opportunity of starting a State mill under the most favourable conditions likely to offer for some time? I hope the Government will consider the advisability of making such reservations in regard to the timber within reasonable proximity to the railway, so as to demonstrate whether the Government are able to provide for their own requirements on more favourable terms than at present prevailing. If they can, I say it is their duty to do so; and at any rate it will be an opportunity for demonstrating what can be done on a small scale, and if successful I see no reason why the principle should not be extended. But to say that we should nationalise the timber industry as it stands to-day is a vastly different proposition, because certain vested interests would have to be handled, which would not be the case in regard to an experiment in connection with this railway. I hope members of the Opposition who might otherwise be inclined to oppose this railway will at all events give consideration to the possibility it presents of establishing a State mill on this practically unalienated area of 160,000 acres. The area is, with the exception of a small portion which somehow got into the hands of Whittaker Brothers, State lands; and before the area becomes alienated I trust the Government will consider the advisability of acting on my suggestion. I do not know that there is any crying demand, until this principle has been settled, for any farther alienation within the Fauna and Flora Reserve, except under conditions that will guarantee to the State a reasonable return for the asset handed over, enhanced by the building of the line and valuable for its proximity to a market. I hope the House will agree to this measure, as I am satisfied the time

will come when it will be demonstrated that this is one railway more justified than most of those now proposed.

The PREMIER (in reply as mover): The motion before the House, taken altogether, has been favourably received. With the exception of a little adverse criticism from the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mount Margaret, the Bill has been practically approved by members who have spoken. The Leader of the Opposition stated in the course of his remarks that we were becoming affected by a midsummer madness in rushing railways through. But as I have pointed out, the suggested railways now before the House have been before the country practically since May of last year; and the Loan Bill authorising the sums to be raised for the construction of these various works was considered and debated in December of last year.

*Mr. Bath:* But you promised then that no work would be undertaken until the Bills were brought down.

The PREMIER: That is so. I say now that members have had an opportunity of considering this question, and many of them have taken that opportunity and inspected the different localities proposed to be served by the railways. The hon. member held up Victoria as an awful example of a policy of railway construction run mad. Apparently, however, there is a recurrence of the old disease in that State, and the same recklessness is again being exhibited; because a day or two since the Standing Orders were suspended in the Victorian House of Assembly to permit of the passing through all stages of Bills authorising the construction of the Nyora-Woolamai and the Rupanyup-Marnoo Railways.

*Mr. Bath:* They have a standing committee to examine all proposed works; and in connection with proposed railways, the adjacent landowners must give a guarantee before the line is constructed. This is an altogether different proposition.

The PREMIER: I take it that the standing committee is composed of

members of the House, and the only difference is that the committee take the responsibility of recommending, whereas here the Government take that responsibility.

*Mr. Bath* : The committee recommend only after examination and investigation.

The PREMIER : I am aware of that. The present Premier of Victoria was for some years chairman of that board, and resigned the position when he took the Premiership. The member for Mt. Margaret (*Mr. Taylor*) counselled the Government to be cautious in their railway policy. The hon. member is not always himself cautious in his utterances, and has on more than one occasion stated that the Government when bringing forward measures of this description have been actuated by a desire to give railway facilities to different parts of the State without first giving the subject due consideration.

*Mr. Taylor* : I was not particularly referring to this railway.

The PREMIER : The hon. member said these railway proposals had not been sufficiently investigated; but I say this proposal is on all-fours with the railway proposition debated this afternoon. The hon. member took exception to the member for North Perth's criticism on the ground that he had an opportunity when the motion for the favourable consideration of the railway was before the House last session, to object to it. In return I may ask the Leader of the Opposition why, when the motion asking the Government to take this line into consideration last year was discussed, he did not take exception then?

*Mr. Bath* : Was it not at the tail end of the session?

The PREMIER : No, it was introduced in August and was carried in September. Of the lines constructed, no less than 352 miles are in mining constituencies, which are represented by Opposition supporters, therefore as far as the political aspect is concerned, the Government cannot be charged with giving spoils to the victors. [*Mr. A. J. Wilson* : It is buying off the Opposition.] If we are attempting to do that, we are

making a miserable failure of it. I think the arguments advanced in favour of this line, more especially one brought under the notice of the House by the member for the district, are excellent. The one which the member for Murray brought up was that one saw-miller had said he was prepared to give a guarantee that if the line were constructed he would erect a mill capable of cutting 40 loads per day. This would practically mean something like £80 per day spent in wages at the mill, and would also result in an assured freight for the railway from the start. There is every justification for the construction of the line.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

*Mr. Hudson* in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Authority to construct:

*Mr. BATH'S* advice to the member for North Perth did not recoil on his own head, for the motion of the member for Murray last year was urging the Government to consider the advisability of constructing the railway. There was no request for a definite statement as to the construction of the line. The Treasurer in order to make up for the poverty of his arguments or knowledge always talked about members who opposed his ideas as being pessimistic about the country. [*The Treasurer* : The hon. member was pessimistic.] One was only pessimistic about some of the country's advisers. The country would be all right if it were only run right.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 7, Schedule—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, the report adopted.

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

## BILL—WONNERUP - NANNUP RAILWAY.

*Second Reading moved.*

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) in moving the second reading said: In introducing these railway measures, one

feels at a loss to use language that will make them interesting to members. There is no doubt a great deal of similarity in regard to railway proposals, and I do not intend to detain the House at very great length in bringing before its notice the measure I am now dealing with. It seems to me, on certain days we run on certain subjects; for the other evening it was all nautical, and now it is all railway.

*Mr. Bolton:* It gives you a chance to see how members are taking them.

The PREMIER: It is a case of making hay while the sun shines. There are some interesting features about this line, which possibly are not known to members. In the early seventies a certain company desired to obtain the right to construct a railway from Wonnerup to open up the timber country in that vicinity. They were not satisfied with getting the consent of the Government to do the work, but they obtained a concession of 2,000 acres of land for every mile of the line constructed. They were not restricted either in the land, for they were allowed to select it in any portion of the State, and were permitted to take up town lots in various towns. This happened even in Perth itself. If they could only have remained solvent, they would have been the wealthiest corporation in this State to-day. Fortunately for the State, however, they became financially involved, and after having acquired a considerable area in different portions of the State, they had to forfeit their concession. There was the peculiar condition in the concession that provided they got up steam once a year on the mill, they could continue to hold the concession. This was not a very hard condition, and for some eight or ten years the land was practically held on these conditions. Eventually however, they sold out. This refers to the first 15 miles of the line we are now considering, and to that portion of it between Wonnerup and Maryvale. Later on a lease was granted to Mr. Porritt, who transferred it to the Jarrahwood and Sawmill Company, Limited, on the condition they should relay the line with 45lb. rails, to take the

place of the 25lb. rails which were the line should be built satisfactorily to the engineering authorities of the State. This gentleman, after having constructed the line to Maryvale found the timber was practically cut out by the old Ballarat Company, and that it was necessary to extend the line. The new company spent £26,000, and then extended the line eight miles to what is known as Jarrahwood. In my policy speech at Bunbury I said it was our desire to extend to the settlers of Nannup and district railway communication, and that provided we could acquire this line at a reasonable cost, we intended to do so, but if the price was too high we would construct a line from Busselton to Jarrahwood and continue it to Nannup. The distance would be about 25 miles. The length of this line is 24 miles, but it will junction with the present railway line six miles from Busselton, therefore the terminus of the line will be 30 miles from the port. After considerable negotiations the line was acquired. The price originally asked was £23,000, but as I stated on the Loan Estimates last year, the Government were not prepared after giving the matter every consideration, to offer more than £14,000. We remained firm, and after considerable negotiations they agreed to accept the £14,000.

*Mr. Johnson:* Was there not some arrangement with the James Government about eight miles of railway?

The PREMIER: I will explain that to the hon. member so that he will know exactly what we are buying in this connection. It is apparent by acquiring the line at £14,000 we made a good deal inasmuch as if an entirely new line had been constructed from Busselton to Jarrahwood at £1,200 a mile it would have cost £30,000; while at the same time we were in this position; we would have had the Government line and the company would have owned the other line, and the two lines would have been running in competition with one another; also the company's line would have been taking the timber, which otherwise would have gone towards the revenue of the Railway Department. The Government at the pres-

ent time are buying the unexpired portion of the 21 years lease of the Nannup to Maryvale line, the original concession together with eight miles from Maryvale to Jarrahwood, less the rails that were purchased by the James Government. That is the eight miles referred to by the hon. member. No doubt he has knowledge of the subject as both the then Premier and the Minister for Lands paid a visit to Nannup and made inquiries as to whether it was advisable to purchase the line, and from their utterances they considered it a good proposal. In 1904, a deputation was introduced by the present Treasurer to the James Government, and endeavoured to make some arrangement whereby they could use the line as a horse tram, but they were in this position, that the eight miles of that line belonged to Millars. It was then suggested they should pull up the 45lb. rails and put down 25lb. rails along the line. But after considering the matter the Government decided that it was undesirable to alter the weight of metals. The Treasurer introduced to the then Premier a deputation of leading citizens in the Sussex district, and urged on the Government the necessity of handing over the line to the Government and extending it to Nannup, thus opening up the Lower Blackwood. It was pointed out by the deputation that this extension would pass through excellent timber country, which would settle some 400 or 500 people. Large sums had been spent on the Busselton jetty, and it was contended there would be sufficient accommodation there for shipping, with every facility for an export trade in timber and other products. Mr. James did not commit himself beyond stating that he thought in the very near future Busselton should be connected with the Lower Blackwood by railway. Matters then remained practically *in statu quo*, until the visit of Mr. Daglish and Mr. Drew, when they expressed sympathy with the project. The line has been recently surveyed and located. On the line already laid down it is found the ruling grade is 1 in 40 and it is proposed to keep that grade on the extension as far as Nannup. The estimated cost of construction is under £20,000, and the es-

timated working expenses, allowing for six trains per week each way is £1,907 yearly; the estimated revenue is £3,237, that is allowing for local rates on timber. The line runs generally in a south-easterly direction, opening up some excellent timber country. The timber traffic for some time will be the main source of revenue, and it is estimated that there will be 30,000 tons of timber carried over the line per annum. The settlers in that district will have a market for their produce at their doors. [Mr. Johnson: Who is cutting there?] There is no one. The leases were held by the Combine. They were not working the line and simply held the leases and I forfeited the leases. Since then some country has been taken up under the new form of tenure that I referred to when speaking on the Pinjarra-Marrinup line. Under timber permits 100,000 acres have been taken up for saw-milling purposes by the W.A. Jarrahwood Company, that is the Kirrup Company, of which Mr. Shepherd is manager. When the line is constructed the company are prepared to start without delay. At the same time the Hewers' Union at Collie, who have got about 3,000 acres out of the original 12,000 acres left to cut, are anxious to look ahead so as to secure a farther area for cutting; and I have instructed the members of the Forestry Board to visit Collie and see if the conditions under which the reserve was granted to the hewers have been complied with; and to see that they are not wasting timber but are getting the best out of the country. If we are satisfied, and knowing they have only 3,000 acres to cut over—the combination is an excellent example of what can be done by the men under good management—they will direct their attention to this portion of the State and see if they cannot locate themselves there. The secretary, Mr. Jackman, waited on me last week, being anxious to look ahead, he wished to obtain my advice as to where would be the best country to take up land. They thought of going on the Flora and Fauna Reserve. I pointed out that as far as that reserve was concerned, it would be more for local market timber and their's was practically an export

trade. I thought this would be a good field of operation for them.

*Mr. Johnson* : Have they met their obligations in connection with the proposition?

The PREMIER : Yes; they have done very well; I am satisfied with them. They have been under careful management. The secretary seems to be a shrewd business man and is very careful. He has been able to meet his obligations. The contracts have been taken from responsible people and they have been able to get their money. It has cost them a good deal to build their line. These people are perfectly satisfied if they can obtain concessions somewhat similar that they will be able to go ahead again. An area of 360,000 acres will be directly influenced by the line, of which 31,000 acres have been alienated, 22,000 acres are either cleared, rung or cultivated within a reasonable distance of the line, and 110,000 acres are open for selection, and I may say, apart from the timber industry, the line is intended to assist in a direct degree the settlers on the Lower Blackwood. Inspector Harold Brockman, in reporting on the country in March last, recommended—

“That 30,000 acres to the south and east of Ludlow be subdivided into blocks of 160 and 200 acres. Two-thirds of this land he considered to be first-class, the rest fair second-class, suitable for cereals and root crops with red gum rises especially adapted for stone fruits. His opinion of the land is as follows, and as he is a native of the district such opinion can be accepted with respect:—He states: ‘The land is fairly open plain and is equal if not superior to the Boyanup which is proving so remunerative; my opinion of this country has risen considerably during the last two years from the results obtained by the various adjacent holders, which results have been obtained under the most primitive methods of working. This line of country was referred to by me some few years ago as being about the only portion of these large plains at that time worth the Government spending money on, but since then I have had some fair ob-

ject lessons to cause me to have an enhanced opinion of the country as a whole.’ He farther recommends that the principle of survey before selection be applied to this area. Apart however, from this, the area to be traversed by the proposed line opens up an immense possibility for the sheep and dairy farmers; the rich flats of St. John’s creek contains soil which should have no superior for fodder crops, and with the copious rainfall should be an ideal dairy country.”

It is stated on good authority this district will carry 10,000 cows that will produce at least one-fourth of the butter we require in the State at the present time. We know what dairying did for Victoria, it practically lifted that country out of the mud at a time when it needed assistance, and when her industries were being developed. And the dairying possibilities of that country are small compared with the possibilities of our South-West Division, and that trade can be taken from Victoria.

*Mr. Johnson* : Dairying left Busselton in the mud.

The PREMIER : At one time a butter factory was established at Busselton, but they started the butter factory before having the cows. In these circumstances we hope to have the cows first. The butter factory is now doing well since they have more cows there.

*Mr. Bath* : Was not the trouble that when they got the cows they could not feed them?

The PREMIER : No doubt the member for the district will be able to give all detailed information. I do not know whether they could not feed the cows or milk them. Notwithstanding the criticism levelled at the Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department as to the importation of dairy stock, he intends to continue in the policy of importing dairy cows. And with this inducement offered to farmers in the shape of cows and sheep on two years’ terms, it will give the dairying industry a good fillip.

*Mr. Bath* : What security do they give?

The Honorary Minister : On the cows and the land.



The PREMIER : I stated the other night in reference to the dairying industry that Mr. Ranford has lately been to Victoria, and he says he saw paddocks bare of grass, and that wheat was in no place more than six inches high. He is satisfied that with careful management there is every possibility in the very near future that we shall be able to meet our requirements for butter. As to timber near this line, two years ago we reserved 30,000 acres containing a large quantity of splendid timber. In fact for long beams and piles for deep water jetties this area is unequalled in the State. Some of the long lengths for South America were procured here and sent *via* Bridgetown to Fremantle and Bunbury for shipment. Under the new timber regulations the State will be able to derive more revenue from these timbers. Instead of a man being able to cut as many beams as he can cut for a license fee of £3 a month, the new regulations provide for a royalty on a sliding scale. The longer the beam the higher the price per foot we make the royalty charge. We also promise to make a reserve in the vicinity of Maryvale for the Railway Department. The ex-Commissioner of Railways before retiring said he was desirous of obtaining a reserve where the department could get sleepers, and this land was looked upon as suitable. Consequently if the line is approved of we will be able to get our own sleepers here for railway renewals. We have also a reserve of 12,000 acres for a pine plantation. On the Loan Estimates we have provided £3,000 for a pine plantation. A contract has been let for clearing the land and it will be ready for planting next year. The department hope to be able to arrange for planting considerable areas year after year, and eventually to have the whole area planted. I have already pointed out the success that has attended the planting of pines in South Australia. The *pinus insignis* seems to be especially adapted for our conditions. It has a quick growth. As an indication of what can be done, just prior to the Show an eight year old pine grown at the State Nursery was sawn up and converted into 42 fruit cases. The

height of the tree when felled was 54 feet and the mean girth was two feet seven inches. The log when ready for the saw contained about 200 superficial feet of timber. Another area was reserved some years ago for ringbarking when Mr. Richardson was Minister for Lands; that is the Tanjannerup Estate. It was ringbarked before being thrown open in 1897, and I will quote two reports which I have received, because it is interesting to note how the ringbarking has improved the land in that vicinity. Inspecting Surveyor Brockman in October, 1896, reported:—

"The Tanjannerup Estate is well grassed throughout, and is most suitable for farms and orchards. Ringbarking has made a marked improvement in the grass, and this should be still more noticeable after another year."

Inspector Thompson reporting to the Lands Department in 1899 said:—

"I inspected the remaining blocks on this area and found that the trees practically all died and few have shot up again from the butts, which is generally the worst feature in ringbarking in this class of country. I am of opinion that the present price, 12s. 6d. an acre, is most reasonable and should certainly not be lowered, especially as the payments extend over a period of 20 years. The area generally looks well and has well repaid the outlay expended on it for ringbarking, as it has proved a good object lesson to the settlers in the immediate neighbourhood who have gone in extensively for ringbarking with splendid results as far as grazing is concerned and the water supply has also considerably increased."

I do not know that I need say anything more in favour of the proposition. I had certain notes here in regard to dairying and in regard to what dairying has done for Victoria and other parts of the Commonwealth, but anything I have to say in that direction I will reserve for my concluding remarks. It is well for us at this stage to consider whether we should not by all means in our power encourage the dairying industry, and I do not know any district in the State more

adapted for it than this rich valley of the Blackwood. No doubt the country has been kept back owing to the fact that there has been no railway communication. The cost of making roads is a serious consideration. Whereas as in some of the eastern districts and on the goldfields one can practically drive anywhere with a buggy, it is a big consideration making roads in this district, and the cost of culverts is a big thing in railway construction, owing to the many creeks and rivers that traverse the area referred to. I do not know that I need add anything farther than to say that I feel satisfied that if the line is constructed it will do much to open up the area referred to, and it will enable those people who have taken up the 100,000 acres under saw-milling permit to get to work at once. It will also assist us in our proposals for pine planting, and will render available for the sleeper hewers a certain area, while an area will be made available for the Railway Department to put their hewers in to get their sleepers for renewals or for other railway construction which is being done departmentally. I have much pleasure in moving the second reading of this Bill.

On motion by *Mr. Bath*, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.52 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Council,

Friday, 13th December, 1907.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: The Land Act, 1898: Regulations. The Cemeteries Act, 1897: Davyhurst Public Cemetery, Statement of Receipts, etc. The Land Act, 1898, and Amendment Act, 1902: Permission to construct Timber Tramways.

#### QUESTION—CONDITIONAL PURCHASE LIABILITIES.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE asked the Colonial Secretary (without notice): When was it likely that a return would be brought down showing the amount owing by the conditional purchase holders of this State? The return was moved for last session, and promised by the Colonial Secretary. This session it had been again referred to.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must not debate it. He could only ask a question.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY could not give the member an answer without notice.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: Would it be necessary to give notice of another motion?

The PRESIDENT: If the information were desired, the hon. member must give notice, in the event of the Minister not being ready to answer the question forthwith.

#### QUESTION—RESERVE LEASE AT MINGENEW.

Hon. J. M. DREW asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Has any portion of Depot