

the railways point of view, especially if the coal traffic to the goldfields is developed. Another argument in favour of the surveyed route is that it would be shorter to the extent of about six miles from Collie towards the goldfields."

I have a plan here and there is another on the table showing the country through which this railway will pass. I do not think I need add anything farther. I think I have said ample to justify the construction of this railway. The extracts from the reports bear me out, but if hon. members desire any more information I shall be pleased to give it. There is a mass of information here besides that which I have already furnished to the House to the same effect. I have shown that the railway will open up 200,000 acres of good land, which is now being subdivided, and also 100,000 acres of poorer land situated this side the rabbit-proof fence. The construction of the railway will be a continuation of the policy of settling the land and increasing the area under cultivation. If we are to go on with our land settlement policy, then we must continue to build these light railways whenever we have country. In this connection the country justifies the construction of a railway. As I mentioned in the beginning of my speech, the Government were last year thoroughly satisfied that this area around Wickepin was deserving of a railway, but they did not introduce the Bill last year because there was a certain amount of controversy as to the route, and it could not be decided before the House adjourned. Since then, to make assurance doubly sure, they have had farther reports and have had the line reported on by a board whose report I have just read. This amply justifies the construction of the railway. The usual powers are taken in Clauses 4 and 5 of compulsory purchase, but I do not think they are likely to be exercised in this case, because there are no large estates through which the line goes.

On motion by the *Hon. S. J. Haynes*, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at eight minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next afternoon at 2.30.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th December, 1907.

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

Prayers.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the *Premier*: Return of Railway Passes issued to Public Servants, moved for by *Mr. Scaddan*.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Nedlands Park Tramways; 2, North Fremantle Municipal Tramways; transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—BUNBURY HARBOUR BOARD.

Third Reading.

The PREMIER moved—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. ANGWIN: Before the Bill passed its third reading, he expressed regret that the Attorney General was not present to give a legal opinion on the question raised at the last sitting, that the appointment of a member of Parliament to a position on the Bunbury Harbour Board would be to

an office of profit under the Crown. The Speaker had ruled that this Bill was not an amendment of the Constitution Act, and that the Constitution Act would not apply; this appeared to be a distinction without a difference. The Bill did deal with the Constitution Act, and the second reading had not been carried in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution Act, which provided that an absolute majority of members must be present. He hoped the Premier at an early date would see if the Bill did amend the Constitution Act, and if so would take steps to have it amended in another place.

The PREMIER (in reply): Already he had pointed out that this clause was exactly a reprint of a section in the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, and if the provision was all right in that Act it would be all right in regard to this measure. The Speaker had given a ruling that this Bill did not contravene the Constitution Act.

Mr. Taylor: The point was never raised when the Fremantle Harbour Trust Bill was before the House.

The PREMIER: It had been repeatedly raised during the past two or three years, and no action had been taken.

Mr. Angwin: Did the Fremantle Harbour Trust Bill pass with a majority present?

The PREMIER: The member could see for himself by looking up *Hansard*.

Mr. Angwin: *Hansard* did not say.

The PREMIER: It passed on the voices, perhaps.

Question (third reading) put and passed.

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

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1907-8.

Message from the Lieutenant Governor, with Estimates of Expenditure from Loan Funds for the current financial year, now considered.

In Committee of Supply.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £59,674 :

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson): In presenting these Estimates to the Committee, I do so with a full know-

ledge that the items contained therein may be subject to some amount of criticism which of course I and other members of the Government welcome. At the same time I wish to point out that every item on the Estimates was considered and fully debated on the Loan Estimates of 1906 except perhaps one or two small items I will refer to later. The complaint that we are rushing headlong into works of which Parliament has no knowledge, a complaint which I think the member for Subiaco made the other night when debating the Black Range Railway Bill, is unfounded. Also the complaint by the hon. member that we are embarking on this expenditure blindfold and that the House should have ample opportunity of having the whole programme of loan works before them, as if they do not have that opportunity, is also to my mind without any foundation whatsoever. It is passing strange to me to notice that these complaints come along at this late stage in Parliamentary history, for when looking back over three years' production of Estimates of this description, one cannot but be struck with the fact that the same course has been pursued. Indeed seldom or never has so much information been vouchsafed to any Parliament as has been in connection with the programme of this Government in its developmental policy. I took the trouble to look back at the 1904 Loan Estimates introduced by the then Premier, and I noticed that on the motion of the Premier the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply and with no farther comment immediately went on with the consideration of the items. No explanation was given; none was expected. The items were passed item by item without any explanation.

Mr. Johnson: It is a reflection on yourself, as you were then sitting in Opposition, to allow it.

The TREASURER: I mean that no explanation was given by the Minister introducing the Estimates. The Loan Bill of 1904 for £750,000 was introduced by a speech which I have carefully perused and in which I cannot find anything concerning a programme or an explanation of a programme to be carried out.

Mr. Angwin: That was for works authorised by a previous Parliament.

The TREASURER: Exactly. I want to point out that these are works which have already been authorised by this Parliament last year. On the other hand, when introducing the Loan Estimates and Loan Bill of 1906 the fullest details and fullest information were given; the items were fully considered and debated; and I may point out that the present Loan Estimates are merely a second chapter of the public works policy of the Moore Government, a continuation of the expenditure which was then provided for and at that time initiated. The only new undertakings, if hon. members will carefully consider these estimates, to be found in them are the Denmark purchase for £50,000, for which a resolution was passed in this Chamber a few days ago, and the Point Sampson tramway, £10,000. These are the only two specifically new items. Of course in addition to them we have buildings provided for under the general heading of "Public Buildings." These are principally additions to schools, such as the Perth Technical School. These are very needed additions. [*Mr. Angwin:* Very expensive buildings.] I admit that. It is a couple of thousands to go on with needed additions, and there is an outlay leading to the ultimate scheme. There is an item also for the Perth Secondary School which was mentioned when the Budget was introduced, and there is provision for additions to schools at Kalgoorlie, Northam, Hawthorn, Mundaring and Redcliffe and to the Training College. These are the principal items which members will see are new or foreign to the Loan Bill of 1906 and the Loan Estimates of that year.

Mr. Johnson: What about the Newcastle-Bolgart Railway? Is that not a new proposal?

The TREASURER: No; that was mentioned. It will be readily seen that if there is any rush in connection with this policy the rush has been taken with the full knowledge of Parliament; and it has not been done blindfolded, because members have had the fullest information before them. And it will be seen that the programme is that programme of

works which has from time to time been put before the people of this State by the Premier in his policy speeches and which has on more than one occasion been ventilated in this Chamber.

Mr. Scaddan: The Newcastle-Bolgart Railway has never been promised.

The TREASURER: Yes; it has been specifically referred to in the Premier's policy speech. I want to point out to hon. members that these Loan Estimates are the authority to expend loan moneys raised and are known as appropriations of such funds. On the other hand a Loan Bill is the authority to raise or borrow money, known as the authorisation. It takes careful study of a Loan Bill or Loan Estimates to get at a true knowledge of the position. Of course I recognise it is a difficult thing to explain the intricacies of a large financial problem in sufficiently clear language and sufficiently concisely to enable members to grasp it unless they take the figures and study them in conjunction with the Public Accounts that are printed in full and placed before hon. members. However I shall endeavour to put the position as it appears to me this afternoon as clearly as possible; and I venture to think that the information which has been supplied to this Parliament from time to time during the past 18 months in connection with our programme and our policy is not so meagre as some members would have us think. It is a very easy matter when you do not quite grasp the position—I have often done it myself when a Minister is speaking—to complain that you have not sufficient information. Hon. members must however be prepared to put some study into the figures which are printed, and it requires some study to get a grasp of them to understand what they mean. Members must be prepared to give some hours of close study and attention to the figures, not only to the Estimates and loan authorisations, but also to the financial returns which are published each year, before they can hope to get an absolute grasp of the financial position as it is at the present time. I propose to turn briefly to the Estimates which are our authority to spend loan moneys, and afterwards to

consider the loan authorisations or the authority to borrow. If members will turn to the Loan Estimates they will find on page 3 a summary which gives the full position of the loan expenditure for 1906-7. In the first column is the vote passed by this House, £1,332,100. In the second column is shown the total expenditure for the financial year ending 30th June last, amounting to £869,978. And on reading the foot-note members will see that of this amount £145,362 was expended in 1905-6 and was charged to Loan Suspense Account. The next column shows the liabilities under Section 36 of the Audit Act; that is, at the termination of the financial year we were committed in the shape of contracts or works in progress to an expenditure of £617,585. The two columns on the right hand side, columns 4 and 5, give the estimated requirements for the present financial year, including the liabilities in the third column; and the total requirements for the year are £1,095,988 from General Loan Fund and £236,133 from Loan Suspense Account, making £1,332,121 in all.

Mr. Bath: Where do you get that money from until you negotiate a loan? Do you take it from the trust funds?

The TREASURER: Loan Suspense Account? We take that from all funds.

Mr. Bath: From the Savings Bank?

The TREASURER: No; the general funds of the State are in one account, except the Savings Bank funds. If we utilise the Savings Bank funds they are utilised against loan authorisation, that is certain sums are borrowed from the Savings Bank and utilised against loan authorisation on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. Taylor: It does not go into the Loan Suspense Account.

The TREASURER: No, not the Savings Bank funds. If we draw a certain sum from the Savings Bank as a loan, it goes into the general account. That is repeatedly done. I borrowed recently from the Savings Bank to fulfil requirements in London. Of course it must be recognised that the Savings Bank funds are there to be utilised. If they are not utilised, that is lent out at interest, then the Treasurer will be in a poor position at the end of the year, inasmuch as he has

to find three per cent. on the deposits in the Bank amounting as it did last year to £60,000 or £70,000. The Treasurer must utilise the funds in some shape or form to earn the necessary money to pay interest on deposits.

Mr. Johnson: If you had not it to fall back on, you would be in a very bad way.

The TREASURER: I do not know. We always recognise that we have that money to fall back on. It is utilised in more ways than one. The hon. member knows that the Agricultural Bank depends on the Savings Bank funds to provide it with capital, and the Metropolitan Waterworks Board carries out its work on Savings Bank funds, while hon. members utilise the Savings Bank funds to carry on with sometimes by borrowing on good security. It is an institution which of course is part and parcel of the Government institutions of the State, and one which we know we have there. If we had not it there we would of course have to look in other directions to get the money we require. That is the position.

Mr. Taylor: You want plenty of customers on good security.

The TREASURER: At present I do not want any customers. I can utilise all the money we have at the present time. Of this Loan Suspense Account, the estimated amount that will be expended by the end of the present financial year, I want hon. members to fairly understand, shows expenditure for which we have no authority to borrow. It is expense which is not covered by previous Loan Bills, and therefore it will have to ultimately covered by a new Loan Bill, or by reappropriations as the case may be. Of course it consists of new items in some instances, in this instance principally of the items I have mentioned. The Denmark purchase, £50,000, is provided for under this heading, and the Point Sampson tramway and certain buildings to which I have referred; and of course it provides for any excess over and above the amounts, which may not be sufficient, provided in the Loan Bill of last year.

Mr. Johnson: Could you not make special arrangements about the Denmark purchase?

The TREASURER : I cannot say anything about that at present, but we are negotiating the matter already and the probabilities are that we shall be able to make such special arrangements. If members will turn to the pages 4 and 5, they will find set out the details or individual items agreeing with the summary on the previous page. They will find each railway marked there that we have expended money on or propose to spend money on, and the harbours and rivers. I need not read the totals; members can read them for themselves; they agree with the totals in the summary. One item there, roads and bridges, is only the balance of payment of works authorised on last year's Estimates. As shown on page 6, the details of items 3, 4, and 5 on the previous page under "Departmental" are given. These are details of Mines, Lands, and Agriculture, showing the details of salaries under "Departmental" on page 4. The salaries in connection with Public Works and Railways are shown on the Consolidated Revenue and Expenditure Estimates submitted to the House earlier in the session. On pages 8 to 23 the usual information is given, and members will find a fund of information of every description. In the first column are particulars of the Acts under which authority was given to borrow money; members will also find mention under different headings of any amount reappropriated from time to time. In the second column is the unexpended balance of loan appropriations on the 30th June last, and the loan moneys raised or authorised to be raised. In the third column is the estimated expenditure for the year ending June 1908, the year we have entered on. In the fourth column, opposite each item is the unexpended balance estimated on the 30th June, 1908. In the fifth column, opposite each item is the estimated expenditure from Loan Suspense Account, these being the authorisations for which there is no loan authorisation, such as the new items I have referred to, or works insufficiently provided for. For instance, for the rabbit-proof fence, an amount of £15,000 is set down, this being over and above the amount provided for last year. Then in

columns 6 and 7 we have the usual information set down very fully in detail, with particulars in column 6 of the work which has been performed, or on which progress has been made during the last financial year; and in column 7 we show what may be expected to be achieved during the present financial year, the condition of the works at the end of June, 1908. That is a brief explanation of these Loan Estimates, and I think members will agree that as a whole it is a moderate estimate, considering the great number of works we have to handle, and of course considering the fact that there is a stringent money market to face. As to being cautious, I do feel that caution will have to be exercised in providing for these works—this is a matter for Cabinet—we have to move cautiously and see that we have money available before we embark on large undertakings, we must cautiously see that the stringency of the market has passed away, so that we may safely go on the market for the raising of our loan authorisations.

Mr. Bath : How do you think you are going to get on in the money market ?

The TREASURER : I think we shall get on very well indeed, if we do not make too great a song about it, and if we watch our opportunity. To be a good financier you do not want to be calling out on the housetops that your banking account is diminishing, or that a black day is coming.

Mr. Angwin : You should have thought about that when you prorogued Parliament last year.

The TREASURER : What we have to do is to sit tight, and not answer too many questions; keep an eye on the market, and we shall come out all right. I have every confidence that with due watchfulness this country will be all right so far as that is concerned, and we shall be able to raise all the money we require to carry out this programme of works to a successful issue. I want now to draw attention to the condition of our authorisations to borrow. When we introduced the Loan Bill of 1906 to this House, members will recollect that all the then existing authorisations were exhausted; that is, we had raised all the money under

those authorisations. The position was that we had a Loan Bill of £2,467,000, and since that Loan Bill was passed we have raised during the last financial year in London £1,000,000, and have raised locally by what is called locally inscribed stock £170,185 to the end of June last, leaving to be raised £1,296,815. After allowing for the estimated amount of the cost of flotation of the loan authorisation, we shall probably have, if we can raise the money on moderate terms within the next six months, about £1,246,004 cash in hand ; and to this has to be added the unexpected cash balance of loan moneys I had in hand on the 30th June last, amounting, as in the Public Accounts, to £885,235. This is the total amount available and to be available, supposing we have been successful in floating the balance of our loan authorisations. That, as members will see, agrees with column 2 in these printed Estimates, the unexpended balance of loan appropriations on the 30th June last ; so that we shall have sufficient in this amount to complete the whole of the works embodied in the Loan Bill schedule of 1906, so far as therein provided for. Of course members will naturally want to know how far the works programme of the Government is provided for under that Loan Bill. I can only give a rough approximation of the position. I have had an estimate made, as near as we can get it, to show what the total expenditure would be to complete the whole of the works laid down in these Estimates. If we stopped to-day our obligations on new undertakings, and set to work to complete the whole of the undertakings laid down in our works programme as provided for from time to time in these Loan Estimates up to date, it is estimated we would require £1,269,224 to complete the whole of the works mentioned in the Loan Bill and Loan Estimates, in addition to the provisions made in these Estimates. But against that expenditure we have an amount shown in column 4 on page 22, namely £1,035,291. That is the estimated unexpended balance of our loan authorisations on the 30th June next.

Mr. Johnson : Is this assuming that the whole of the works are completed ?

The TREASURER: Yes; and I should like to put that position before hon. members. Assuming that the works in hand and projected on the Estimates are completed, I should want £1,269,224 over and above the provision in the Estimates; but against that I have the unexpended balance of our loan funds, estimated to be at the end of June next £1,035,291; leaving a sum of £233,962 to be provided for. That is the difference I have allowed for in possible reappropriations of excess authorisations. I have taken the excess authorisations and the under authorisations, and I want to raise a farther sum over and above the present authorisations of £233,932. But in addition to that, I must provide for the expenditure which is shown on the Estimates as having been incurred against Loan Suspense Account, namely £236,133; so that the total amount which the country is committed to beyond the authorisations to complete all these works, including the Fremantle Dock, the Pilbarra Railway, and the Black Range Railway, is £470,066. That is the amount I shall have to provide under a new Loan Bill next year, assuming we have not any additional works projected and sanctioned at the time.

Mr. Johnson : What is the actual amount you have to raise on the authorisations ?

The TREASURER: I have given that already. I have to raise a balance of £1,269,224. Members must not confuse the raising of a loan with the expenditure of a loan. This sum of £470,066, to which I have referred, is to be provided in addition to the expenditure under the Loan Suspense Account at the end of the present financial year, and is mainly composed of the following items which have not been fully provided for, or not provided for in our last Loan Bill. For instance, an item of £50,000 for the Marble Bar Railway, which was under-estimated or not fully provided for; also £175,000 for a Dry Dock at Fremantle, which was not fully provided for—that is to say, it was intended that these farther sums should be provided by Parliament at a future time; also £15,000 for the Port Hedland Harbour, and £90,000 for the Sewerage of the Metropolitan District,

not previously provided for. These are the principal items besides the Denmark Railway and Estate Purchase. These items account for the £270,066 which we have to raise, probably next year, and in order to complete the works which Parliament sanctioned last year, and which we ask the Committee to sanction the farther progress of this year.

Mr. Scaddan: The amount to be borrowed will not suffice to complete the whole of the works.

The TREASURER: The amount will complete the whole of the works.

Mr. Butcher: Have you taken into consideration the amount required to complete all the works we are about to pass?

The TREASURER: Yes. I have here an estimate from the Public Works Department, of course only an approximate estimate. I wished to know how I stood as Treasurer, and believing the Committee would desire the same knowledge. I asked the Works Department to give me an estimate, carefully excluding all the moneys provided on these Loan Estimates, and showing only the balance required to complete the works, over and above our loan authorisation, that is over and above the expenditure portion of the Loan Estimates. This is the result, and it shows clearly we shall have to raise about half a million of money, apart from any new works and merely to complete the whole of the works we are putting before the country and before Parliament. I am speaking of works mentioned on the Estimates.

Mr. Butcher: The Estimates show only progress payments, and not the sums required to complete the works.

The TREASURER: The total sum I mentioned will complete the whole of the works we have in hand, and all the railways and other works mentioned on these Estimates, some sixteen or seventeen works in all.

Mr. Butcher: Half a million of fresh authorisations?

The TREASURER: Half a million of fresh authorisations will be needed to complete the whole of the works. Of course, as the hon. member has pointed

out by an interjection, we shall have to raise about £1,700,000.

Mr. Foulkes: That will wipe out all the items in these votes, including the Railway Bills we are to pass this session?

The TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. Johnson: Will the Treasurer make that return available for the perusal of members? It will be interesting to criticise the return.

The TREASURER: I am sorry I have not any formal return. The accountant took out the figures, and wrote them on my copy of the Estimates. Members can look at them. It is unnecessary to take up much more time. I have endeavoured, as I promised at the outset, to put the position concisely before members, so that they may understand exactly where we are financially. I venture to think that the financial position is perfectly sound, and that there need be no fear whatever. It is true we may have some little delay. Owing possibly to the stringency of the money market, works may not perhaps be started so expeditiously as one would like; but I have not the slightest doubt that we shall successfully negotiate our loans. We may have to wait a little while for them; but we shall successfully carry out the public works policy which has been the policy of the Moore Government ever since we took office. Before I sit down I wish briefly to point out, especially to members opposite, the results which have accrued even at present from our agricultural railway policy. Notwithstanding the fact that these railways have not yet had the full advantage of a harvest, nevertheless by ascertaining the applications for land in the different centres since that policy was publicly announced at Bunbury by the Premier, one can form a conclusion, and a fairly correct conclusion, as to the beneficial results of that policy. I have a note here, made up by the Lands Department, showing that in the district tapped by the Goomalling-Dowerin Railway about 68,000 acres of land under conditional purchase have been selected since that railway formed part of the Government policy. In the district

served by the Wagin-Dumbleyung Railway about 20,000 acres have been selected; in that served by the York-Greenhills Railway about 25,000 acres; in that served by the Donnybrook-Upper Preston Railway about 20,000 acres have already been applied for. In the Din-ninup area, to be served by the Kojonup-Upper Preston Railway, a probable through line, 18,000 acres have already been selected out of the surveyed area; and between Katanning and Kojonup, the area within the influence of the railway connecting these towns, 25,000 acres have been selected. In the country to be served by the proposed Narrogin-Wickepin Railway, recently authorised, the whole area eastward was temporarily reserved pending the survey; a large portion has been surveyed, and about 30,000 acres have already been selected. The total is about 207,000 acres. When members complain that we have had no direct result from these railways, I reply that here we have a direct result from either the proposed or the actually constructed railways to our agricultural centres. And we have a result that is bound in the near future to bring a direct result to our railway system. Of course we cannot expect a direct return the moment the settler goes on the land or applies for land. That stands to reason. But I wish members to realise what return we are deriving from our agricultural railways whilst we are building railways to mining centres away out back, railways which will cost considerably more than the agricultural railways; railways to mining centres which may peter out. There is no getting away from that risk; for many mining centres have petered out in the past, and I suppose others will in future. They may look promising for a few years, and may then sink into obscurity. But once we have an agricultural area tapped by a railway and settled by producers, we shall never find that district going back. It goes steadily onward, increasing in productiveness, and bringing an increased tonnage to the railway system. So I can claim for the policy of the present Government that it is a wise policy, and it is a wise Parliament which has

endorsed that policy of doing all we can to open up our agricultural areas and to settle the land; because, as the years go on, we must receive an enormous benefit from that settlement, not only a direct return in payments for land and for carriage of material, but also an enormous benefit from the large quantities of produce being sold in our midst and exported from our shores, a benefit which will be felt by the country as a whole. I wish briefly to state that when members complain that goldfields centres are being starved as compared with our agricultural centres, they are making a most unjust complaint. I claim for the Government that so far we have had the interests of the goldfields well in mind right through our term of office. We have had the interests of the goldfields just as much in mind as the interests of the agricultural districts; and we have proved that unmistakably. Here we have the Norseman Railway in course of progress, 107 miles at a cost of £161,000; the Ravensthorpe Railway, of which 34 miles have been constructed at a cost of £57,000; the Black Range Railway, for which we have just passed a Bill, 93 miles at an estimated cost of £141,000; the Pilbarra Railway, 115 miles at an estimated cost of £215,000; or 349 miles of railway, tapping different goldfields centres, at a total estimated expenditure of £574,000. True, as against that we have numbers of agricultural lines. But the Collie-Narrogin Railway was inaugurated, I believe, by the James Government—at any rate, a Bill was passed during the James régime, and the Daglish Government commenced the work. With the exception of that railway, in the whole of the other agricultural lines we have only a mileage of 312, constructed or to be constructed at a cost of £419,850. Surely that is ample evidence to show that the interests of the goldfields are absolutely safe in the hands of the present Government; that we are prepared to embark not only on what is certainly a good business venture in the shape of agricultural railways; we are prepared to take a fair risk in our endeavour to give proper facilities of transit to the outback centres of our gold-

fields. With these few words I commend these Estimates to the Committee, feeling sure that they will receive the same generous treatment at their hands, without any party consideration or any personal application, that Estimates of this description have always received from this Parliament. I beg leave to move the totals, the first item—

General Loan Fund, £1,095,988; Loan Suspense Account, £236,133.

Mr. BATH moved—

That progress be reported.

The Treasurer: We must have some consideration for another place. These Estimates were tabled last Friday, that members might during the week-end make themselves conversant with the details and proceed with them to-day.

Mr. Bath: We could not immediately assimilate the Treasurer's statement.

The Treasurer: The statement was fairly clear. Suppose we adjourned till after the tea hour.

Mr. Johnson: It was true we had the Estimates before us; but the salient feature of the Treasurer's remarks was the estimate of the probable total cost of the public works policy; and we must realise—

The Chairman: A discussion of this motion could hardly be permitted. Some latitude had been shown the Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of 15 amendments suggested by the Legislative Council now considered in Committee; *Mr. Daglish* in the Chair, *the Treasurer* in charge of the Bill.

No. 1—Clause 21, Definition of improvements—insert at the end, "but does not include any railways or tramways constructed under any Act or any provisions thereof."

The TREASURER moved—

That the amendment be made.

Members could see at once the object of the amendment was to prevent lands held by a railway company such as the Midland Company being considered improved merely by the fact that the railway was built. It was not clear as the Bill left this Chamber that this land could not be considered as being improved by the railway, so the amendment was inserted in order to make it certain.

The PREMIER: Take the case of the Hampton Plains Syndicate. In the event of a firewood line being run through the property of that syndicate it would not do for the land to be entitled on that account to a rebate under the Bill. Were it not for the amendment this might be possible.

Question put and passed.

No. 2—Clause 2, insert at the end of clause, "year of assessment" means the financial year ending the thirtieth day of June for which the tax is imposed, and "the year next preceding the year of assessment" means the calendar year next preceding the said thirtieth day of June."

The TREASURER moved—

That the amendment be made.

Mr. H. BROWN: Under the amendment, would the tax be collected for twelve months or six months during the present financial year?

The TREASURER: Under the interpretation the assessment would be made from December 31st of this year, and would consequently only be collected for six months.

Question put and passed.

No. 3—Clause 9, line 5, page 6, strike out the words "ending the thirty-first day of December."

The TREASURER moved—

That the amendment be made.

This was merely consequential on the previous amendment which fixed the year of assessment.

Mr. ANGWIN: There was a good deal of discussion by members when the Bill was in Committee here, as to the absentee tax, and the Minister said the tax would apply for the longer period; now it

seemed the time was shortened by six months.

The TREASURER: The amendment was made in order to define the year, and was consequential on the previous one.

Question put and passed.

No. 4—Clause 11, subclause 3, line 1, after the word “all” insert “improved.”

The TREASURER moved—

That the amendment be made.

This amendment was of rather greater moment than those preceding. It was suggested farther down in the clause that the words “the unimproved value of which does not exceed one thousand pounds,” should be struck out. The position was this. The clause as it left the Assembly had a general exemption of £250 on land not valued at more than £1,000. That would be extended to improved lands only—improved within the meaning of the Bill—and all estates, regardless of size, would obtain the benefit of the exemption; in other words, there would be £250 deducted before the taxable amount was arrived at. Doing away with the limit seemed to be in keeping with the general exemption passed by the Assembly in connection with the income tax. Members would remember we made that exemption general. It was proposed to make the exemption on improved lands, outside the boundaries of any municipality, bear the general exemption of £250. It might be argued that it would be hard on some owners, and that because they were not improved within the meaning of the Act they should not receive the exemption given to others who had improved their land. That was rather against the principle of the taxation proposals. Right through, although, our first object was to raise revenue, our next object had been that we should, as far as possible, impress upon the owners of land the necessity of improving their land; therefore this amendment was perfectly consistent with the principles we had advocated in connection with this measure. [Mr. Scaddan: You passed it, but forgot to put it in the Bill.] We put in what we thought was a proper provision, but the Council had thrown a better light upon the question. His first thought was

that by adopting the amendment it would mean decreasing the revenue, but on consideration it was found that it would not be very harmful. Improved land would in the majority of cases be earning an income, and the amount of income tax would in the great majority of cases be much higher than the amount of the land tax. There would be odd instances where a man would be unfortunate and earn no income, but the general run would be that the State would be getting just as much revenue from this clause, as amended, as it would if the clause had been passed in its original form.

Question put and passed.

No. 5—Clause 11, subclause 3, lines 40 and 41 on page 7, strike out “the unimproved value of which does not exceed one thousand pounds”—agreed to.

No. 6—Clause 11, Subclause 4, line 8 of page 8, after the word “contract,” insert “or from the date of survey in the case of land not surveyed before the date of contract.”

The TREASURER: This referred to conditional purchase lands, and it was a reasonable amendment. If the land had not been surveyed the five years should commence from the date of the survey and not from the date of the contract. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

The PREMIER: This would only apply to cases of free selection. In cases where land was surveyed before selection it was not necessary. This was a reasonable amendment as no person could start his improvements until the survey had been made. In some cases applications were approved, but a surveyor could not go to a place which was far distant to survey the land, so that the applicant could not start his fencing until the survey was made.

Question passed, the amendment made.

No. 7—Clause 11, Subclause 4, at the end insert the following, “of cultivable land or two thousand five hundred acres of grazing land, or of cultivable and grazing land mixed.”

The TREASURER: The five-years exemption would only apply to taxpayers

who proved to the Commissioner that they did not hold legally or technically 1,000 acres of cultivable land or 2,500 acres of grazing and cultivable land mixed. According to the Land Act passed last year, a person could not take up more than 2,000 acres of cultivable land or 5,000 acres of grazing or mixed land. It was a reasonable amendment, and he moved—

That the amendment be made.

Mr. BATH : While the amendment was a reasonable one, there was nothing in the Bill to define what was cultivable or grazing land.

The Premier : It was defined in the Land Act.

Mr. BATH : It did not say in this Bill that the definition in the Land Act should apply.

The Treasurer : The custom would rule.

Mr. BATH : It was advisable to make it plain in the Bill.

The Premier : As defined by the Land Act.

Mr. BATH moved an amendment—

That the Council's amendment be amended by adding the words "as defined by the Land Act and its amendments."

The PREMIER : The only objection to these words was that the whole of the land would have to be classified. In regard to conditional purchase land it did not matter; the only difficulty would arise in regard to freehold land.

Mr. Walker : The definition would have to be made under the Council's amendment.

The PREMIER : All land taken up was classified, whether cultivable or not. The trouble was in regard to freehold land.

Mr. Walker : But the classification would have to be made under the Council's amendment.

Mr. SCADDAN : This provision only applied for the first five years after the contract had been made, and did not apply to any other land.

Amendment (Mr. Bath's) put and passed.

Question (Council's amendment as amended) agreed to.

No. 8—Clause 16, subclause 3, line 3, page 11, strike out "ending the thirty-first day of December," agreed to; also a consequential amendment made.

No. 9—Clause 18, strike out the following at the beginning of clause, "the use and enjoyment of any house or portion of a house and."

The TREASURER : This amendment must be considered in conjunction with the striking out of Clause 19, which had referred to the value of premises occupied be taken as portion of the income. The subsequent wording of the clause would carry out the intention of the Government. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed, the amendment made.

No. 10—Clause 18, strike out the last sentence—agreed to.

No. 11—Clause 19, strike out the clause.

The TREASURER : This was a debatable matter, and one that was debated at considerable length in this Chamber. The clause as amended by the Council permitted people living in our own State and investing their money in Government bonds to have the interest derived from that investment free of income tax. Before this amendment, it was provided that residents outside our own State investing in Western Australian securities should not be mulct in the income tax. The argument put up that we should not treat our own people differently to our treatment of outsiders struck him very forcibly. He wanted to encourage our own people to invest their money with us, and he wanted to discourage their investing their money in other countries in order to avoid paying the income tax. If that could be done he was willing to have the words struck out. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Mr. ANGWIN : It was pleasing the Treasurer had been converted to this view, and it was to be hoped the Attorney General, who had strongly opposed this proposal previously, was also converted. The amendment should be the means of inducing large business concerns, such as insurance companies, to

invest their money in Western Australian stocks.

Mr. FOULKES : One could not accept the arguments the Treasurer used previously, and while he congratulated Ministers on their versatility in being prepared to support one case one day and the opposite another day, he could not approve of this change of front. The greatest proportion of our loans was raised in Great Britain, and one of the best inducements we had to offer was that if investors loaned money to us they would not have to pay income tax to us. We should not depart from that principle.

The Treasurer : We did not. This amendment merely provided that we exempted our own people as well.

Mr. FOULKES : It was quite excusable for one to misunderstand the point when we heard one state of affairs one week and the opposite another week.

Question passed, the amendment made.

No. 13—Clause 21, insert the following as Subclause 4 : "In respect of the stakes won in any horse race on the racecourse of the West Australian Turf Club or any other club or company, incorporated or otherwise, registered by the Western Australian Turf Club by the secretary of such club or company ; and in respect of the stakes won in any horse race on any racecourse belonging to any unregistered person by the proprietor of such racecourse."

The TREASURER : This was an amendment of which he heartily approved, because it would bring in some little extra revenue. The secretary of a racing club or the proprietor of an unregistered course would deduct income tax before paying away stakes. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed, the amendment made.

No. 14—Clause 27, Subclause 4, line 31 of page 15, after the word "assumption" insert "subject to adjustment within the prescribed time at the instance of the Commissioner or taxpayer."

The TREASURER : These words were included so that non-resident traders could be taxed on an assumed profit of five per cent. of the gross turnover. It

was a reasonable amendment. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed, the amendment made. No. 15 (consequential)—agreed to.

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

BILL—NEWCASTLE-BOLGART RAILWAY. *

Second Reading.

The Premier presented a report by Mr. Terry on the project. Report laid on the table.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) in moving the second reading of the Bill said : I hardly anticipated this measure would have come on so early, and thought I might have obtained a little more information. The report I have just laid on the table is the result of an investigation recently made by Mr. Terry, one of the inspecting surveyors of the Lands Department, in regard to a proposal to extend the railway 23 miles northwards from Newcastle to Bolgart, for which railway the sum of £25,000 was placed on last year's loan authorisation. The question of the construction of this railway was brought under the notice of Sir John Forrest in 1900, and he had a rough examination of the district made, and an estimate prepared for the proposed extension of the line as far as Beejoording. Repeated requests have been made by people resident in the district for railway communication, and I think it was in June, 1905, that the member for Guildford, the then Minister for Works, approved of the vote for the survey of new lines being excessed to provide a sum to enable this survey being carried out from Beejoording as far as Bolgart. The matter of rival routes cropped up, and after a careful examination of the routes proposed, the engineer, Mr. Muir, reported that the Toodyay route was immensely superior to the rival route from an engineering point of view, and from the point of view from the cost of construction and the amount of settlement to be served. While I have been Premier I have received one or two deputations in connection with this proposal to

afford railway communication. Some of these deputations have pointed out that the railway has been practically promised for many years ; and in fact, some have gone almost as far as to say that if I did not bring down this proposal I would be guilty of a breach of faith. I had to point out to them I was not responsible for any promise made by my predecessors, nor was I aware from the file that any definite promise had been made, although a sympathetic consideration had been promised on more than one occasion to the request of settlers for railway communication. I took occasion last year to journey over the proposed route, accompanied by several members of Parliament, and we had an opportunity of seeing what had been done in the district, also of viewing the land adjacent to the proposed terminus of the line. The district has been kept back from expanding to the immediate north owing to the fact that much of the land had been in the hands of the Midland Company, and the fact that the Government in 1905 decided not to purchase at the price asked for that property. It becomes the duty of the State to open up this country, even if it is found that the Midland Company will benefit to some extent by the construction of this railway ; for it must be conceded that the benefit must ultimately accrue to the State. In regard to the routes that have been considered, I have a report from Mr. Muir which goes to show that of the two routes examined the one selected is much to be preferred. [Extracts from Mr. Muir's report read.] As I have stated, the route of the proposed railway has been selected after full trial and consideration, and I am satisfied it is the best route that could be adopted. A clause has been inserted in the Bill providing that blocks of land of not less than 1,000 acres may be compulsorily resumed by the Government, at a price to be arrived at by arbitration, within 12 months of the railway being opened for traffic. This is a provision which has been inserted in all the Railway Bills recently dealt with ; and in this case if the line is to be made reproductive, the powers of that clause must be put in operation. Some time ago I obtained an

option for certain private land adjacent to the railway, but the price asked then was to my mind prohibitive.

Mr. Collier : We shall have to pay more when the line is constructed.

The PREMIER: With the compulsory clause in the Bill, it is provided that the value must be arrived at by arbitration and on the basis of the value existing prior to the construction of the railway ; therefore any unearned value resulting from the construction of the railway will not be reaped by those owners of private land, should it be deemed necessary in the interests of the State to acquire the land by compulsory purchase. Within a 12-mile radius of the railway it is estimated there will be about 70,000 acres of first-class land, a portion of this being included in the private estate. It is termed "Midland land," but most of the land is not held by the Midland Company, but held by persons who have taken it up instead of debentures, as I understand. The length of the line will be between 23 and 24 miles, the ruling grade 1 in 40, and the total cost without rolling-stock is estimated at £40,000, being at the rate of £1,667 per mile. Within a 12-mile radius of the proposed line, 133,375 acres are alienated (excluding the Midland land) and 76,000 acres are open for selection. The total of the Midland land within this radius is 216,000 acres. Thus the land will influence a total of about 426,175 acres. The Crown lands available are mostly second-class, but it is considered that with the advantage of railway communication, one-third of the area, or about 25,000 acres, will be taken up as first-class land. The Midland Company's land within this area may be classed as 70,000 acres first, 60,000 acres second, and 85,000 acres third-class. Of the alienated land, 56,000 acres are ringbarked, with a daily increasing area ; and 33,000 acres are cleared, one-fourth of which is under crop or in fallow. To this can be added 83,000 acres, making a total of 116,000 acres suitable for cropping, and capable of producing from 12 to 20 bushels of wheat per acre, or 20 to 30 cwt. of hay.

Mr. Collier : How far is that land already from the railway ?

The PREMIER : The land referred to is within the 12-mile radius of the line, also within 12 miles of the proposed terminus.

Mr. Taylor : Then the land within 12 miles of the proposed railway is already taken up ?

The PREMIER : Yes. It is estimated as I have said, that a total of 116,000 acres is suitable for cropping and capable of producing 12 to 20 bushels of wheat, or from a ton to a ton and a-half of hay. There are about 200 acres of orchard and vines planted, and no doubt with the advent of the railway this will largely increase. In fact, I had an opportunity of sampling some of the wine produced on the land, and I am satisfied it compares very favourably with wine grown in other portions of the district. The Toodyay Valley with its tributaries is eminently adapted for the production of any of the stone fruits, such as apricots, nectarines, plums, etcetera, and of course vines, for which this district is already well known. The population is estimated to be 1,108. The live stock is set down as 39,000 sheep, 1,100 horses, 670 cattle, and 1,300 pigs. The produce that went out of the district last year was 7,000 carcasses of mutton, 7,000 lambs, 2,000 pigs, together with 400 bales of wool. The land is well within the 20-inch rainfall belt, and this fact alone with the advent of the railway should ensure the inferior lands of the district being settled and made to yield their quota of national wealth. The proposed line will provide railway communication for three re-purchased estates—the Coondle, through which it directly passes, the Norman, a little to the east of the line, and the Bolgart, where the line terminates. A few remarks about these estates may not be out of place as showing that these re-purchased estates in the Bolgart district have been a very remunerative investment for the Government. The Coondle estate, comprising 7,700 acres close to Newcastle, was a few years ago bought by the Government and subdivided and sold again for £12,500. The whole of it is occupied, and there are now in full work upon it about 40 separate holders, engaged chiefly in wheat growing. The improvements put on this

estate since subdivision are valued at considerably more than the total selling price. The Norman estate, of 7,000 acres, was repurchased and sold again in 1900 to 25 farmers, for £11,897. Extensive improvements have also been made on this estate. At the end of the railway is the Bolgart estate, of 9,312 acres, which was subdivided only in 1904 and sold for £9,477. The Land Purchase Board reported that this block was admirably adapted for agricultural settlement, and their prophecy that the land would be readily selected was fully borne out, as the whole area was selected almost immediately. There are now 18 farmers in occupation of this area ; and among whom is Mr. R. Camerer, an expert in dairy farming from Victoria, who readily selected at Bolgart with the object of prosecuting that industry, and who I believe is making a success of the experiment. The opening up of the Bolgart estate has been the means of directing attention to the land to the northward of the present line terminus, and selection is rapidly proceeding in that direction right on to the Wongan Hills, towards the first rabbit-proof fence. The Land Board's prophecy has been remarkably fulfilled, and we find that there are no less than 80 farmers now in occupation of this estate. Prominent amongst those farmers is a Mr. Camerer, a gentleman who has had great experience of dairying in Victoria, and whose present operations in the Newcastle district are an object lesson to settlers, showing what can be done in the way of dairy farming with a rainfall of approximately twenty inches. This gentleman has had an opportunity of travelling through most of our Eastern Districts ; and after carefully inspecting all the Crown land, he preferred to pay £2 per acre for the land he secured at Bolgart rather than take some of our conditional purchase land at 10s. per acre. That, I think, is an indication of the fertility of the land to be served by this railway. [Mr. Butcher : That is Midland land.] No. I forget the name of the owner. Anyhow, it was not land belonging to the Midland Company. This gentleman was one of the leading dairy farmers in Victoria, and he is making a

success of dairying in the Bolgart district. Unless the Newcastle line is extended farther northward, it will never be made to pay. It does not pay now ; but with the proposed extension the working expenses will not be increased to any great extent, except for maintenance on the additional twenty miles now proposed. I should like to point out that selection is rapidly proceeding in a direction due north of this line, up to the Wongan Hills; and I have no doubt that if the line is constructed it will prove a remunerative investment, provided that the Government exercise the right of resuming any blocks they may think fit for close settlement, of an area exceeding a thousand acres. Merely to build a line and take no farther action would not be, so far as I can see, a very remunerative investment. I do not know that I need say anything farther. A good many members have had an opportunity of inspecting the land in the Newcastle district. They are well aware of its capabilities. It was settled in the early days ; in fact, if I recollect rightly, one of the speakers at a deputation which waited on me said that the Newcastle farmers used to bait their horses at Perth on their way to Newcastle. For many years past Newcastle has been considered a highly important centre, and the fact that all the people in that district appear to be prosperous is also an indication that in settling at Newcastle they selected land which has proved highly productive; and I have no doubt that this railway will provide better facilities for settlers on land beyond the terminus, as well as for those situated in close proximity to the route. I have pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) : Having due regard to the long-continued wrangles, reported in the Press at the different gatherings held in the district which this line is proposed to serve, and finding gentlemen holding high positions in the State—the present Premier, his predecessors, and even Sir John Forrest, the first Premier of Western Australia—vilified by the residents of that district,

by men holding very high positions there, one feels some scruples in addressing oneself to this question at so late a period of the session, with so little time to discuss a matter of such great importance. Apart from the insignificance of the area it will pass through, and the small number of people it will serve, the work must nevertheless be important owing to the number of important people who have advocated it so long. And it must also be recognised as important when I read to the House speeches that have been delivered by prominent men, public and private, by members of Parliament, and also by members of the church. No railway in this State—at least since I have been taking notice of the measures before Parliament—has had such power and influence brought to bear in its justification. I recognise that the railway is passing through the district which you, Mr. Speaker, have the honour to represent ; and you as member for the district have taken a prominent part in the agitation for the railway, as I will show to the House. I recognise the invidious position in which you are likely to be placed—[*Mr. Gordon* : Why invidious?]—when presiding over this debate and listening to one who is opposed to that railway. That being so, I hope I shall be allowed the same latitude in discussing this measure as I should in discussing any similar measure. The Premier must have believed there was little or no necessity for a long speech when introducing the Bill. I suppose he considered that the matter had been thoroughly threshed out, and that the publicity which the project has been given in the Press was sufficient to warrant the passage of the measure through the Chamber. But the more I see of it—

Mr. Gordon : You have not yet seen anything of it.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order !

Mr. TAYLOR : It is rather strange that one cannot say a word here in opposition to a Government proposal without their hired servant, the Whip, trying to prevent one from speaking, if he thinks he can disconcert one by rude interjections, some of which are in no way worthy of reply. When I was rudely in-

terrputed by the hon. member I was about to say we have little information concerning the railway, other than Press reports of speeches at banquets in the district, and also the typewritten report of Mr. Terry, submitted to-day by the Premier. I believe Mr. Terry is an inspecting surveyor in the district. The Premier quoted a part of the report, which continues :—

"I have visited the locality, and collected such information as is likely to be of value to the Hon. the Premier when introducing the Bill to Parliament for constructing a railway from Newcastle to Bolgart. Taking a 12-mile radius as shown on the accompanying litho., the areas work out as under : (a.) Crown lands available for selection, 76,000 acres ; (b.) Midland lands within radius, 216,000 acres ; (c.) alienated lands, excluding Midland, 133,375 acres. Total amount of land as above, 426,175 acres. With regard to the Crown lands, they are mostly second-class ; but with the railway, I think one-third of the area, say 25,000 acres, would be taken up under first-class conditions. The Midland lands may be divided into 70,000 acres first-class, 60,000 acres second-class, and 88,000 third-class."

So that the major portion of the land to be served belongs to the Midland Company. The State has there but a few acres of unalienated land. I do not know whether I need weary the House by reading the whole report, which goes on to state that—

"In arriving at my estimate of the area of alienated lands, I have taken the ratable land other than that owned by the Midland Company, north of Toodyay, and 15 miles beyond Bolgart."

This line is to be constructed from Newcastle to Bolgart, a distance of 24 miles, and the area to be served begins 15 miles beyond the terminal point of the railway. That being so, it is wise for the House to consider whether the immediate construction of this railway is necessary, when we find that we have to go 15 miles beyond the present area to make some sort of improvement on existing

conditions—something, as this report says, "that may be likely to be of value to the Premier when introducing the Bill to Parliament." We have to go 15 miles beyond the terminal point to get something of value. I have never visited the district, but I venture to say that the major portion of the area which this line will traverse has been already taken up. A very large area between Newcastle and Bolgart is already settled. [*Mr. Gull* : In anticipation of a railway.] According to the statement of one gentleman in the district, the settlers have been there anticipating for a long time ; for they were settled there when Perth was only, I believe, a livery-stable, where settlers used to call to bait their horses when travelling from the seaport which was then the city. They called in at Perth as at a half-way house, and then jogged on in the afternoon to Newcastle and Bolgart. The country is one of the oldest settlements in Western Australia.

Mr. Monger : All the more reason for the railway.

Mr. TAYLOR : They have a railway within a very few miles of this grand area, and it belongs to the Midland Company.

Hon. F. H. Piesse : It does not matter to whom it belongs, so long as it is good country.

Mr. TAYLOR : There is any quantity of Crown lands already provided with railway facilities and ready for selection, without building a line to enhance the value of private property at the expense of the State. It is unwise for the Government to bring down legislation which will have this effect. He goes on to say :—

"According to the Toodyay rate book this area is 218,417 acres, including the areas supplied by Mr. W. Chitty, a former land guide at Bolgart. These figures may be accepted as a close approximation to the truth. There are about 56,000 acres ringbarked with area daily increasing. Area cleared, 33,000 acres, half of which is under crop or in fallow, and to this can be added 83,000, making a total of 116,000 acres suitable for cropping and capable of producing from 12 to 20 bushels of wheat per acre, or 20 to 30 cwt. of hay.

There are about 200 acres of orchard and vines planted, and no doubt with the advent of the railway this area would rapidly and vastly increase. The Toodyay valley with its tributaries is eminently suited for the production of any stone fruits such as apricots, nectarines, Japanese plums, etc., to say nothing of vines for which this district is already famous. Stock may be enumerated as sheep 39,000, horses 1,100, cattle 670, pigs 1,300. The produce that went out of the district under review last year from the most reliable information I could obtain was mutton 7,000 carcasses, lambs 7,000, pigs 2,000, wool 400 bales. Population works out as landholders 200, wives and children 424, employees 484, total 1,108 persons. With a railway a great impetus would be given to this district in the employment of more labour, increased area put under cereals and hay crops, pig raising and increased area under fruit. Being within the 20-inch rainfall belt this is a very favoured piece of country and probably for the above reason the inferior lands, plains, and light white gum country will be settled upon, for my experience tells me that these so-called plains will safely produce good crops where they are as here subject to a good soaking."

This was issued on the 3rd December of this year. We cannot take into consideration the number of cattle and sheep and pigs as being of great use in increasing the railway revenue, seeing that there is only 10 or 12 miles distance to drive them. So far as the wool clip is concerned, the cartage of wool to a railway station in the greatest of wool growing portions of the Commonwealth is looked upon as being nothing out of the way if it is not more than 30 or 50 miles. In the Eastern States in many instances hundreds of stations which have been developed and stocked to the extent of 100,000 or 200,000 sheep are from 200 to 300 miles from the railway. I have had the pleasure of being in that country and on those stations and worked under those conditions, and I am positive so far as cattle, sheep, and horses are concerned

they will give this railway line no earning capacity. We have to go this long distance of 15 miles beyond the terminal point in order to make up all the cartage and all the population. It would be well for me to give some reasons for this Bill being brought before the House. I will now read the speeches delivered at various times within the last 18 months on the question. They are the bold utterances of people who are holding high positions, there are the threats as to what would befall the Government if they did not build the line. There are threats of losing supporters and of the fact being published far and wide throughout the Commonwealth and across the seas in a westerly direction, that the Government would not carry out the promises made by their predecessors. In regard to this latter threat, however, the Premier has said he has failed to find records of any promises having been made. The Minister for Lands (Mr. Hopkins) in the James Government visited the area, but he did not recommend the construction of the line. [Mr. Gordon: What did he do?] He visited the area but would not recommend the line to the Government. His reasons for that were given at the time. I have here a copy of the *Morning Herald* of the 6th November, 1906, in which appears an article with the headlines, "Newcastle-Bolgart Railway." "Public Meeting at Newcastle." Before proceeding with that article, however, I wish to read an article from the same paper of 29th October, 1906, and headed "Railway extension, Newcastle-Bolgart." I am not going beyond the last and the present year in dealing with this question. These two reports have been selected by me from the *Morning Herald*, for I consider there can be no question about the accuracy of that paper in reporting functions that take place in the country districts, and in describing the attitude of the people in the districts with reference to questions of this kind. This paper is one of the leading, if not the leading, daily paper in the State, and its general respectability cannot be questioned. I could have brought down reports consisting of short criticisms of those meetings, descriptive of how they were conducted,

the conditions under which the speeches were delivered, and the heat and fire which were thrown into the discussion, in addition to the exhibitions of party prejudices, etcetera. I have, however, selected a *verbatim* report published in a respectable journal. The report bears the headings, "The visitors entertained," "Banquet at Wyening." There are reports there of speeches delivered by the Hon. Mr. Quinlan, the member for the district, Mr. Horan, M.L.A., Mr. Brebber, M.L.A., Mr. Heitmann, M.L.A., and Mr. Chitty, also the Hon. V. Hamersley. There was also a speech delivered by Father Hallinan. Then we come to the Premier's reply. I will start with the speech given by the member for the district, who I am sure knows the requirements of his people and the necessity for the construction of the line. In speaking to the toast of "Parliament" Mr. Quinlan said:—

"The Premier's remarks that evening in reference to the line must be gratifying to those who have been urging its construction for so many years. He trusted that at last their hopes would be realised, and that the line would be the first on the loan schedule, seeing that it had been so long promised, and was so strongly urged by the engineers who did the surveying of it. Those gentlemen (Messrs. Dartnall and Kelly) had assured him that that was the best line of railway they had yet surveyed in the State. He knew that the line might be a little more expensive than usual, but it was justified because of the fact that it led to a considerable quantity of Government land. As to the objection that a railway would benefit the Midland Company there was a moral obligation on the Government to set aside the owners of the land and consider the benefit of the district generally. The mere holding of that land by the Midland Company should not be an obstacle to the construction of the line. To-morrow the State or the settlers might be the owners. He hoped that when the Government brought forward the Bill for the construction of the line they would include in it a clause similar to that in the railway Bills of last session, giving the Government the right to

resume any land through which the railway passed at its actual value without a railway. The fact that the land was held principally by large holders was no argument against the construction of the line. Those people had had to bear the heat and burden of the day, and surely, after forty or fifty years' residence, they were entitled to some consideration. In regard to the question of compensation, while the Government could retain the right to resume the land at its actual value in cases where compensation was claimed, he hoped, and, indeed, he was assured by Mr. Hamersley that he and several neighbours were prepared to admit the railway through their property without asking for compensation. He personally would be the most affected in that way, but he was prepared not to ask for any compensation. (Applause.) He hoped that that would be an incentive to others along the route to do likewise. Those who contributed in that way would never regret it."

Then other members spoke and other toasts were proposed. In the speech I have read it was pointed out that the land was principally owned by private people and that the line would pass through areas held by private people; the speaker at that meeting had pointed out that certain members of Parliament held their land along the route which they promised to make no claim for if the line were constructed. Taking the statements made in that district, they bear out conclusively the report made by Mr. Terry that a large area of this land was private property. Although Mr. Terry only gave the land owned by the Midland Company, I suppose he thought it was not necessary to speak of the small holdings owned by private individuals. But the member for the district pointed out that the railway would pass through private land, and he urged the owners of that land to make no charge to the Government for it, with the object of inducing the Government to build the line, thus decreasing the expense of building it. Now I come to speeches delivered by Mr. Quinlan, and Mr. Hamersley, pointing out the area, the stock, and the people

who would be served by the line. I have read the report by Mr. Terry, principally on the same lines, and I will not weary the House by reading these remarks. Then the toast of the Bolgart settlers was proposed, and at a gathering of this description the toast of the Bolgart settlers was by no means unimportant. We must admire the chairman, or those responsible for getting up the banquet, in placing the toast of the Bolgart settlers in such capable hands as Father Hallinan. What did that reverend gentleman say? Here is the extract:—

"The toast of 'The Bolgart settlers' was proposed by Father Hallinan, who expressed disappointment that the Premier had not been more definite in regard to the line. He need not have come there to tell the settlers that he hoped the line would be built; they knew that. They wanted him to say that the line should be built. That was the final fight, and if the railway was not constructed, he would endeavour to expose that matter in such a manner that it would redound to the eternal disgrace of the Moore Ministry.—A Voice, Go on, Father; you are on the right track."

Mr. Scaddan: He has gone on another track since.

Mr. TAYLOR: Father Hallinan also said:—

"The people had been told time after time that they would get that line, and yet it remained unbuilt. Men had spent the declining years of their lives in making homes for their children, and instead of leaving them a heritage of abundance they would leave a sink into which to throw their money without prospect of a return, simply because of perjured promises. The settlers, many of them from the goldfields, had been absolutely deceived. The line might cost two or three thousands more than others, but it was no pettifoggish spur-line—things which drew blood as they did in Victoria—but a main trunk line which they hoped to see some day pushed on from Newcastle to the Murchison. That was not only a good idea, but experts proclaimed it a feasible

project that was bound to come to pass. It had been said that the Railway would benefit the Midland Estate. The railway from Newcastle to Bolgart would not traverse a foot of the company's ground, and were the settlers in the district to be left there because, perchance, the company might get 10s. more for their land? Why was the Midland Company there at all? Why was not the land in the possession of the Government? Because of the James Government and their successors. Because of a political trick the Midland Purchase Bill was thrown out of Parliament, but he gave a meed of praise to the *Morning Herald* for the powerful articles published in advocacy of the purchase. The *Herald* was right in the stand it then took. Continuing, he said that if the proposed line from Goomalling to Wongan Hills was built that from Newcastle to Bolgart would never be constructed. The latter had the first claim, because it was the first in the field and because every advantage lay with it. The Northam people had taken up 10,000 acres at Lake Hinds and now wanted a line from their residences. They were justified in expecting that, because all along they had been benefiting at the expense of Newcastle. This was the last fight, and if Newcastle went down this time it would go down for ever. He would not threaten, but if the line was not constructed the facts of the repudiation would be published in the *London Times* and the *Daily News*—

The Minister for Works: Who said that?

Mr. TAYLOR: Father Hallinan, and he went on to say:—

"— and immigrants would be warned against a Government which invited settlers and then neglected to fulfil its promises. It would not be revenge, but just retribution."

I am reminded by interjection that that is all in favour of the construction of the line. It is in favour of its construction inasmuch as the clergyman said it was first in the field. He has said since that it was an old settled place but be-

cause it was early in the field that is no justification for the building of the line. If the other route has merits to recommend it without defects, I think it should be placed on the table side by side with this proposal so that the House can discuss the battle of routes and see which route is most entitled to be served by railway communication.

Mr. Scaddan : They have a surveying party up there now.

Mr. TAYLOR : I am not in the know.

The Premier : That paper looks as if it had been on the file.

Mr. TAYLOR : Yes, I looked to see if the paper was on the file and it had been preserved on the file, which goes to prove, *Mr. Speaker*, that the remarks you made the other day that the files should not be mutilated are important. This paper will be again placed on the file. It was removed by my request by those who supply members with information; but the papers will be placed back on the file as soon as I have finished with them. I recognise when we hear members holding these opinions, urging on the Government the construction of the line, that we should know all sides. I have no objection to any section of the community advocating their just claims from the Government, whether in the way of railway communication, the conservation of water, or the opening up of goldfields. But when we find the great powers possessed by some people used in favour of the construction of a small railway line, there must have been something against the construction of that line or it would have been completed before now. When we find the gentleman who replied to the toast of Parliament speaking in the terms he did—and may I say I could not give members an idea of how that member reached the flights of eloquence when delivering the speech before the Premier and the Press at that gathering—when we find the power being used we should make full inquiries. May I say even the power of the church was solicited to bolster up the construction of this line. We hear a clergyman saying, “I will send telegrams to let the people of England know through the leading journals how the Premier of this country has broken

his promise and deceived the people”—these are practically the words that gentleman used. [*Mr. Scaddan* : Where is he now ?] I do not know. I would not have known he was at Bolgart only through reading it in the Press. I do not know whether he has been removed since making that speech. If he is in any other part of the country where a railway line is wanted, the Premier will be sorry if the Bill passes that the gentleman was not left at Bolgart. If this reverend gentleman has been shifted from Bolgart, then an inquiry should be made whether any railway lines are necessary where he is now, and they should be constructed. I have no doubt that that great speech materially altered the position of the Government in the matter of the construction of this line. I will now read a speech delivered by the Premier immediately after that delivered by the reverend gentleman whom I have already quoted. We all know that the Premier is not usually angered or in any way inclined to ruffle people up the wrong way. He is disposed differently. His disposition instead of hurting people is to soothe them and to be kind and generous. But when I read the utterances of the Premier, members will realise that there was more in the speech of the reverend gentleman than appears in the Press. We have heard speeches delivered by the Premier in the House, and we know he is not easily angered; but the speech delivered on this occasion, I may say raised the military instincts of the Premier. He wished for his charger and he was inclined to say “where is my corps; where is my charger; instead of a railway I will use my sword.” The report says that on this occasion—

“The Premier rose in some warmth to support the toast. He said he did not keep railways in his pockets to throw here, there, and everywhere, and he questioned whether the reverend gentleman had adopted a tone which helped the railway forward.

May I be permitted to say here that I believe the reverend gentleman had adopted a tone to help the railway forward.

He had never yet made a promise in

politics that he had not redeemed. He had made no promise that evening and he did not intend to make one, notwithstanding that the reverend gentleman had endeavoured to force him at the point of the bayonet."

This was the time the military instincts of the Premier rose. At that time he felt for his bandolier and every cartridge in that bandolier was loaded.

Mr. Bolton : He sought for his running shoes.

Mr. TAYLOR : No running shoes about the Premier. It is easier for him to fight than to run. According to this report the Premier proceeded:—

"Why did not the champion of Goomalling step into the breach, seeing that they had had the Don Quixote of Bolgart ? He was pretty well used to those arguments about rival routes, and, in a responsible position, it was absolutely necessary that any man worth his salt should give every important question due consideration. They must not be one-eyed, and think they were the only pebbles on the beach. In Western Australia there was a large area to develop, and it was essential that due inquiry should be made before they put the seal of their affections upon any proposal. Than he nobody in Western Australia had had greater opportunities of knowing what the settlers had to put up with, and he had not learnt what he knew from sitting in a club smoking a good cigar, but by travelling through the country with a theodolite over his shoulder. They complained of promises being made, but did they expect him to make a promise and not keep it ? *Mr. Hamersley* had spoken of the assistance he would give the Government. If they were going to build those railways, they would want revenue to pay interest and sinking fund, and if the people in the Upper House wanted the Government to build railways they must give them more money. In regard to the land tax, the Government had had the greatest opposition from the three gentlemen who represented that district, for they had voted against the Bill on

every occasion. Until the Government knew the fate of that Bill—

This is a most important utterance on that most important occasion—

they could not say how many railways they were going to build. It was only a fair proposition that if railways were to be built the people in the Upper House should take their share of the responsibility also."

This was responded to by several others—of less importance, I suppose—according to the Press report. We find, however, that even on this insignificant railway of 24 miles in length we had all the powers possible brought forward to secure its construction, that the banquet was the battle ground of a severe fight in the interests of the line, and that it was at this banquet that the Premier took the opportunity of telling the electors that three of their Upper House representatives were the greatest opponents of the Land Tax Bill. At that time the fate of the Government was hanging in the balance as to whether they would remain in office or not. They would not have remained in office had their land tax proposals received the same rebuff on this occasion that they received on the last occasion, so we can see that the Premier with all his military instincts had one eye on statesmanship, on keeping his party together and on forcing another place to recognise the revenue proposals which the Government were about to send up, by pointing out to the farmers that they could not get railways built unless they would allow themselves to be taxed. That is the position in a nutshell. I cannot help saying that I have never yet in the history of railway construction in this State seen so much influence brought to bear to force a Government into any position such as has been utilised in this case. I will now read a short remark of a very prominent person in this Chamber. It is a report on a meeting held in Newcastle on Monday, 6th September, 1906. It is headed, "Newcastle-Bolgart Railway—Public Meeting at Newcastle." The report reads:—

"The indignation meeting held in the council-chambers, Newcastle, on Friday, November 2, was adjourned to the fol-

lowing evening to obtain the presence of the member for the district (Mr. Quinlan). On Saturday evening Mr. Quinlan was present. The chair was taken by Cr. R. W. Davidson, in the absence of the Mayor. The chairman, in opening the proceedings, said that having on the previous evening forwarded a strong protest from its meeting to the *West Australian* they were now met to confer with their member regarding what farther action should be taken."

Then you, Mr. Speaker, as member for the district, addressed that gathering at great length. I will not read it all; it is too long—it points out that you found fault with some writer for the Press. You pointed out to the meeting that you had given some Press writer all the facts and the district's requirements and the area of land that would be served by the railway, but he had misrepresented the facts. Later on at the same meeting you, Mr. Speaker, made another statement. The report says:—

"Mr. Quinlan said he felt he should reply at once to Dr. Crawford."

I had better read what Dr. Crawford said:—

"One needed to be careful when dealing with such Governments, particularly after the way they had been treated for the past five years. It would not do to remain quiet and wait. Others were advancing while they marked time, and they would find themselves left if some definite action was not taken. Parliament was now the scene of action. They had done all they could and it was now the duty of their representatives to take the matter up."

Mr. Bull spoke, and then the report says:—

"Mr. Quinlan said he felt he should reply at once to Dr. Crawford and Mr. Bull, whose remarks had received the evident commendation of the meeting. There was no one who felt so disappointed, and, indeed, indignant, as he did at the delay in not granting the railway. They had been promised the railway, and they had every possible reason and argument to warrant the

Government in fulfilling that promise." We had a statement to-day from the Premier that he could not find any record of any promise made. Mr. Quinlan said:—

"Now while he still believed they would get the railway, yet as some of the speakers seemed to be doubtful he would make a serious statement.

Now comes the crucial test:—

"They would not think him guilty of over-estimating his own influence as their member, nor did he wish in any way to use a threat, but he had long since made up his mind that, if the railway was not granted, he would join the Opposition, and be no longer a supporter of a Government in whom he had such faith up to the very last moment. He felt he should be wanting in self-respect after the promises that had been made to him if he did not part company with those who had broken faith with him. He felt certain that the whole constituency would back him up, and give him that solid support which he had always obtained from them. He felt he would be acting in this matter not only to maintain his own self-respect, but also to maintain the honour and self-respect of his constituency. (Loud applause.)"

In that speech are definite promises, and we find that the gentleman who represents that district was so incensed at the failure of the fulfilment of the promise and at the failure of this line to be constructed that he would at once remove his seat from the Government side and sit on the Opposition—I presume on the vacant chair on my right. Just imagine the member for Toodyay, holding the democratic views he does, sitting cheek by jowl with the member for Mount Margaret, thundering broadsides at the Government about their being unfaithful and untrustworthy. Just about that time when those speeches would be delivered from this side of the House by the member for Toodyay, backed up by the member for Mount Margaret in a much lesser degree, we would read cables from England about these letters written by the Rev. Father Hallinan, telling the people of England of the treachery of the Moore Ministry, telling it to the people of Ireland, a place

where we expect to get our immigrants to settle our lands that are now unpeopled. We would read letters from a man holding a position like that gentleman telling the people of Ireland through the columns of the leading Press that the Moore Government had betrayed the settlers and had failed to fulfil promises to the people in this country; and just at that time the member for Toodyay and the Opposition, in one alliance as the democrats of Western Australia, would charge the Government over this 24 miles of railway. In view of these facts I say unhesitatingly there has not been a railway line in Western Australia on which such threats have been made and such powers used to back it up, and having due regard to that I say that the speech of the Premier sinks into insignificance. The battle ground is not in this House, it was in the district. They decoyed the Premier to that gathering. They recognised in the Premier, as I have all along recognised, a genial good fellow who was young in politics and unsophisticated, and they thought that if they could only get him up there they could convince him but they found that he was equal to the occasion and that he was not likely to make any promises except those he saw his way to fulfil. He told the people that straightforwardly. I commend him for it, and I commend him for his pluck to go up and make the speech he did, before members for the district, members for the Legislative Council, for the Lower House, and members of the church, and members of the local council, and of the farmers' association and progress committees, and the National League, and for confronting all of those congregated, attacking him, accusing him of not carrying out promises which he had failed to find on the files. There is no railway line, be it short or long, which has taken up so much time and which requires so much bolstering up, as this. Therefore the House would be wise in rejecting the proposition.

Mr. SCADDAN moved—

That the debate be adjourned.

Question put and negatived.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Mr. J. Mitchell): I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, because we should endeavour to give facilities of transit to people in the agricultural districts. I know this district to be one of the best in the State for agricultural purposes. It has been settled for the past 50 years; but during that time its progress has been retarded owing to the lack of transport facilities, and there are immense possibilities in the thirty miles of country beyond Newcastle, the present terminus of the Clackline branch. If there be one agricultural district in this State to which the building of a spur line is justified, it is Bolgart. Remembering the quality and vast area of the agricultural land lying between Newcastle and Bolgart, one is inclined to wonder that a railway has not been built to there long ago. In the early days of this Parliament I have advocated the construction of a railway from Newcastle to Bolgart, and I have now much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill for its construction. This line will be some 23 miles in length, and the estimated cost about £25,000. It will bring into use some 200,000 acres of rich land; and when it is remembered that this is amongst the best of the agricultural land in the State and situated so near to our principal port, members must realise that it is the duty of the Government to construct this line. Railways are an important factor in attracting population, for without railways it is impossible in these days of competition to settle people on our lands. In order that the country may be developed, settlers must have cheap and easy means of transit, which can be provided only by railway communication. If we look at figures, we find that we are now running 1,764 miles of railways at an annual cost to the State of some £30,000 towards the sinking fund. This result has been achieved from the railway policy of the past, and there is no reason for supposing that the construction of additional railways will not further increase the prosperity of the State and the numbers of our people. There is one point in connection with the

building of railways I am anxious to touch on, and that is the unimproved land adjacent to railway frontages. We have already provided railway facilities over some 1,200 miles of agricultural lands, representing about 12 million acres of country; and of these twelve million acres, much of which is capable of producing wheat, something less than half a million acres are under crop. That state of things is entirely wrong, and it seems to me we should take some steps to compel people owning land along railway frontages to use that land. I do not altogether see what can be done in that direction; but in this and other railway propositions now before Parliament, there is contained a proviso giving power for the Government to compulsorily repurchase land adjacent to the line in each case. I hope that in this and every other instance where that proviso is made, the compulsory repurchase clause will be put into operation. [Interjection.] The proviso will apply not only to the Midland Company's land but to all lands adjacent to a railway. I think it right that people should not be permitted to hold for years large areas of land unimproved. Under the compulsory purchase proviso in this Bill, any estate of 1,000 acres or over, if held and unimproved for a number of years, may be acquired compulsorily by the Government. Between Newcastle and Bolgart there is magnificent country, second to none in the State, much of which is improved. [Mr. Taylor: Most of it is settled.] So much the better. There is little use building railways into country that is not taken up and settled. That district is to some extent improved; but it is capable of much farther improvement; and that it will be farther improved we may expect from the Premier's statement that he intends to exercise the right of compulsory purchase contained in the Bill. This will mean, in connection with this railway proposal, that we shall be able to provide for closer settlement, which is desirable. I venture to say that if this clause be put into operation, we shall have in this district one of the most flourishing communities in the State, such as will provide an ob-

ject lesson to those now holding land unimproved along our railways, and show them the wisdom of looking to it that they improve their lands. We are doing this in order that the work of developing the country may proceed; for while we have some twelve million acres of land adjacent to railways already built, only half a million acres are under crop. While I believe we shall yet have to build many thousand miles of railway in order to open up this great State, it would of course be wrong to go on building lines through unimproved country unless we can compel the owners to improve their lands; and it remains to be seen whether that object can be attained by putting this clause into operation. As I pointed out a few moments ago, it is absolutely essential that means of transport be provided for people settled on our lands. One of the first spur lines built in this State was that from Northam to Goomalling, constructed about seven years ago, and it is to-day probably one of the best paying lines in the State.

Mr. Collier: Nonsense!

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is not nonsense.

Mr. Collier: That line is not paying at all.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I say it is one of the best-paying lines in the State; not only is it paying directly, but it provides an enormous amount of traffic for the main lines; the thousands of tons of produce grown between Northam and Goomalling being trucked thence to Fremantle or the goldfields, thus providing traffic for the main lines.

Mr. Taylor: Had we a system of sectional returns, we would know how each railway stands.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am now telling you how this line stands. These spur lines act as feeders to the main lines, thus making it possible for the latter to pay. Where main lines are run through to goldfields centres, it is necessary to provide traffic for the back journey; and we know the goldfields send their valuable product down in small bulk and representing millions of pounds sterling, while the amount paid in freight is correspondingly small. As it is neces-

sary the goldfields should be provided with back freight, I say it is possible for this proposed railway to provide some of the necessary traffic to turn the main lines to the best possible use. This railway to Bolgart will render possible the cultivation of hundreds of thousands of acres of magnificent country.

Mr. Taylor : According to the returns supplied to members, it will not do that.

The HONORARY MINISTER : Yes; returns show there are available some 76,000 acres not already alienated, which with the 132,000 acres owned by the Midland Company, and the farther 250,000 acres held by other private owners, make the enormous total of 426,000 acres in that district, nearly equal to the total area now under crop in this State. I do not say every acre of that extensive area is first-class land; but having visited the district I know that a great percentage of the land is capable of producing cereals. [*Mr. Taylor* : You have to go out 15 miles beyond Bolgart to take in that area.] That is so; but one does not draw a line at the terminus of a railway and say you are not to go beyond that point to secure traffic for the line. Fifteen miles from a railway or beyond the terminus is regarded as the limit at which carting to a railway is profitable; and one is entitled to take a radius of fifteen miles from the terminus, as in this case. I know the country is capable of producing enormous quantities of produce, and that it will accommodate a large number of settlers under a scheme of closer settlement such as the Premier intends to put into operation. Apart, however, from the fact that the land is of first-class quality, there is this farther fact to be considered, that this extension to Bolgart will mean that the present short line to Newcastle, now unprofitable, will be converted into profitable working. Whilst I am in favour of the building of agricultural railways, I do not favour a large number of short spur lines. We should endeavour to make every spur line pay, and to do this it will be necessary to extend several of those already built.

Mr. Angwin : Is there any Crown land in that neighbourhood that needs opening up?

The HONORARY MINISTER : The line already built to Newcastle must be extended to become payable. With regard to agricultural railways generally, it is unfair to credit them with the moneys received from goods and passenger traffic only. They provide more work for the main lines than these would otherwise get. If we make roads in order that railways may pay, in order that produce may be carried to the railways, there is no reason why we should not construct spur lines, so that the tonnage carried by the main line may be increased to a far greater extent than would be possible if roads were its only feeders.

Mr. A. C. GULL (Swan) : I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading, as I am one of those who know the country to be traversed by this railway. That country is quite as good as any new agricultural area now being opened up. Of course it contains some inferior land, but it contains a very large area of first-class land. The fact that some of the estates to be served are within twelve miles of the present terminus at Newcastle is no reason why they should be excluded from the benefits of a railway. Once the line is extended to them, they, instead of sending in a hundred or a thousand tons of stuff by twelve miles of road, will probably send by rail two thousand or three thousand tons.

Mr. Angwin : Sheep can be driven in.

Mr. GULL : We are not building agricultural railways to carry sheep, though incidentally they may carry sheep and make what profit they can on the transaction. If any member thinks that carting produce twelve or fifteen miles is nothing, let him try it, and he will understand the difficulty. Though such settlers are within a reasonable distance of the present terminus, there is no doubt that when the railway passes their front doors they will extend their operations. [*Mr. Taylor* : Nonsense.] It is an absolute fact. I join issue with those members who think we ought not to extend the railway to serve the Midland Company's

land. At one time no one was more strongly opposed than I to the purchase of the Midland concession ; but we had an opportunity of making that purchase, and Parliament refused to buy the lands and the railway, and with that refusal I fully concurred. But seeing we had that opportunity, I do not think it right for us to decide that we shall not extend a railway because it will do some good to the Midland concession.

Mr. Underwood : There are plenty of lands of our own to open up.

Mr. GULL : And we are opening up plenty in other directions. Where there is a good area of land to be served, whether it belongs to the Midland Company or not, we are perfectly justified in giving it railway facilities. I for one hope that this line will be extended beyond the twenty-three miles proposed, so that it may serve the more distant agricultural areas which undoubtedly exist in that direction. For years we laboured under the false impression that a generous rainfall was needed for wheat-growing. But recent experience has proved that fifteen or eighteen inches of rainfall is much better for the purpose than thirty or thirty-five. In my opinion the best wheat belt in Western Australia consists of the land lying eastward of Northam and running north and south practically as far as you like to go. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE (Katanning) : I am supporting the Bill, and I regret that I was not present to hear the speech of the Premier. But there is no need for me to acquire information regarding the district. I have travelled over a considerable portion of that country, although not recently ; and from my knowledge of it I am satisfied that a railway in the direction proposed will be of immense benefit to the State. If we needed any argument in favour of the railway, though I think argument is hardly necessary with the facts before us, we could not have a better than that furnished by the member for Mount Margaret (*Mr. Taylor*), who, not being able to bring forward any sound objection to the pro-

ject, humorously quoted certain Press reports of meetings which took place in the locality. I take it that the hon. member did this with the object of throwing ridicule on the proposal.

Mr. Taylor : No. I did it to show how strong was the influence that had to be brought to bear to make the Government bring in this Bill.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE : I fully recognise that the hon. member regrets having used such arguments, for he has been full of remorse since he delivered his speech.

Mr. Taylor : What ?

Hon. F. H. PIESSE : He has looked very unhappy ever since he spoke.

Mr. Taylor : Unhappy ! Are you, too, becoming humorous in your old age ?

Hon. F. H. PIESSE : However, this is a question of serious moment ; and I am satisfied that the railway will benefit the country. I am glad to be able to say that the opinions I have so often expressed in this House, regarding the utility of spur lines, have been endorsed by a Victorian gentleman now visiting this State. We have heard much of the construction of spur lines in Victoria, which has been held up to us as an awful example. But this gentleman bears out the statements I have so often made.

Mr. Underwood : He is only making himself pleasant.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE : And it must be remembered that the Victorian spur lines cost much more money than ours, and were very much shorter. Victoria is a much smaller country than Western Australia ; and when we bear in mind the possible extension of the railways we now call spur lines, our proposals assume a very different aspect from the Victorian. The railway now proposed to be built from the junction at Clackline may be extended some hundreds of miles, until it connects again with our railway system or with some other system in the State, thus inaugurating the loop system so often suggested in this House. With the great area of land available in different parts of our country, these spur lines now laid down for 25 miles will in many instances be extended over a hundred to

150 miles, and the lines going west from the Great Southern Railway will ultimately connect with our South-Western system, thus ceasing to be the spur lines so often denounced in the House. A railway such as this will not stop at Bolgart, but will go farther to the north or north-east, opening up for agriculture a very fine tract of country. Members who have opposed this or similar measures have often mentioned that sheep can be driven, and therefore would not use the railway. But such railways are not for the purpose of opening up sheep country. They are intended to open up lands highly adapted to wheat-growing. It is not my intention to deal at length with this Bill. I am satisfied that any project for a railway to serve land capable of producing grain is a good project, and fully justified even in the present financial position of the country. It will open up large tracts of land, will induce fresh settlement, and will otherwise do immense good. Some say it would be better to construct such lines through country which is wholly Crown land—that this line will go in the direction of the Midland concession. Viewed from that standpoint alone, I admit we might have good reason for not building the railway at the present juncture; but we must not forget that though some of the country to be served is owned by the Midland Company, there are large areas owned by the Crown, and that any land in this State, even though it be owned by outside persons, is part of our national wealth. It belongs to the country, and cannot be taken away. It is not a moveable asset, but is part of the country's assets, and adds to its capabilities. Though it is admittedly preferable to build railways through our own lands to open them up, yet I do not think the argument can be used effectively against this railway because some of the lands belong to the Midland Company. Already we have in the Bill a provision enabling us to acquire those lands at a price which is not exorbitant. I think that the future of this railway will justify its construction, which will be of advantage not only to the district served, but to the State generally.

Mr. J. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): I desire at the outset to make it clear that I am opposed to this line. Some of the reasons given by the member for Katanning, which he thought to be in favour of the line, have caused me to come to the conclusion that the railway should not be constructed at this juncture. The gentleman the hon. member referred to naturally would give him information in connection with the construction of this line which would make it appear in a favourable light, for that Victorian gentleman had something to do with the land laws and the construction of railways in the sister State a few years back. I would point out, however, that the great majority of those railways were politically constructed, and that was why they never paid. It is because I believe that in this instance the line is more a political than an agricultural one that I am opposed to it. I was somewhat surprised at the remarks the member for Katanning made, especially one wherein he argued in favour of the line in Western Australia as compared with those in Victoria, and in which he endeavoured to make the House believe that, as we have a larger country here than they have in Victoria, the line should pay better here than there. Does he not recognise that a mile of railway here will serve the same acreage as a mile of railway in Victoria? In view of that fact I cannot see that the spur lines here will be more successful than those in Victoria. [*Hon. F. H. Piesse*: They are not spur lines here.] Another statement made by the hon. member was that we should pass the line in view of the fact that we have full information before us concerning it. We have had information but I regret the member for Katanning has not looked it up, for otherwise he would not have made the statement he did just now to the effect that a considerable quantity of the land was in the hands of the Crown. Had he perused the map which is put up in the corridor, he would have seen that outside of the Bolgart Estate, recently purchased, there is very little land held by the Crown which would be served by the railway. He will find there are extensive estates

through which the line will run and which are held by members of this House and of another Chamber. That is shown by the map. Within a 12-miles radius of the line there is no land to speak of held by the State. The hon. member apparently has not seen the map and knows nothing about the country. [*Hon. F. H. Piessé* : I know more about the land than you do.] Anyhow, whether that is so or not, there is no land held by the Crown at the head of this line. There is a little Crown land to the westward or north-westward, within a 12-miles radius, but the exact extent I am not in a position to state. The information we have received is in no way sufficient to cause us to come to the conclusion what land the line will serve. In the first place we are told that it will serve 426,175 acres, but we have to deduct from that the land within a radius of 12 miles from the present terminus of the line at Newcastle. In arriving at these figures the Government have taken every acre past the Newcastle terminus. Surely that is not the position to be taken up by this House. At the present time all the land 12 miles past the head of the line is served by the railway. In giving us these figures the Government have included all this land as if it had to be served solely by the extension. I am not in a position to be able to say now whether these 76,000 acres held by the Crown are already served by the Newcastle line or not. If it were set out how much of this land is already served by the Newcastle line, as being within a radius of 12 miles of it, we would be able to see how much of the remainder will be served by the proposed extension. It appears to me now that this line is to be run from a political standpoint only. There are several large estates there, and the member for Toodyay admitted that last year. I do not object even to large owners receiving proper railway facilities, but it has to be shown to me that they are not already served by a railway. These private owners are within a 12-miles radius of the present line, and they cannot complain if they do not receive closer railway facilities. We have had it admitted that persons at the head of the line to be

served by the new railway have occupied the land under conditions which I have objected to on previous occasions, namely, by taking up small areas of about 40-acre blocks. By doing this they have picked out the eyes of the country so that no one else will ever take up the intermediate blocks. The result of this policy is that the rest of the land, without being actually in their hands, is at their mercy. [*The Premier* : That is only an out-station.] There are many instances of this. According to a newspaper correspondent the extent of these blocks which have been taken up is not more than 40 acres, and the result is that the land immediately adjoining these blocks is not high class enough for settlers looking for land to take any notice of. Those people have nothing to complain of if they do not get farther railway communication. I do not know that the holders are going in for intense culture, and unless it is shown that they are doing so, other reasons should be provided to us for extending this line. The Premier went to that spot and argued the point with the people there, and he could not find a single argument to warrant the line being introduced to Parliament. To show the House exactly what transpired I will read the remarks as published in the *West Australian* of 29th October :—

“When we reached the Bolgart Well, which is, approximately, the objective of the Bolgart railway, we were about 7 miles due north of Newcastle. At this spot a halt was unanimously called. The Premier produced his map, and at once a discussion took place as to the merits of the project. Cheerfully admitting the high agricultural value of the land passed through, the Premier directed serious attention to the fact that the railway would benefit the Midland Railway Company more than anyone else. He pointed out fully and frankly the difficulties that would be experienced in presenting the claims of a railway which had no Crown lands to develop, but which only enhanced the value of private property and syndicate concessions, and in accepting the force of his contentions those interested in

the project expressed their deep regret at the refusal of Parliament to buy the Midland Railway and lands when they were placed under offer last year."

If that statement of the Premier's was true, it is true to-day. I have not seen any contradiction of it. Then there was a statement made by the Premier at a banquet held at Wyening when he made rather a cautious speech. He would not commit himself to the railway, and he would lead one to believe he did not think the line was justified. No other inference could be drawn from the remarks he made. He said :—

"It was impossible that he should personally judge of the merits of the proposed railway. He would to a large extent have to be guided in his decisions by the reports of departmental officers. It was the intention of the Government to introduce a Loan Bill in about a week's time asking Parliamentary authority to borrow considerable sums of money, sufficient to carry out their policy of development during the next two years. He hoped that as a result of his closer study of the question that in the schedule attached to that Loan Bill the Newcastle-Bolgart railway would find a place. (Applause.)"

This is the sort of statement we receive from the Premier and other Ministers in order to buoy people up with the hope that lines will be constructed. That was before the threats were made. The Premier stated then that he had never made a promise of any kind. The date of that speech was 29th October, 1906. Now we find the member for Toodyay, when addressing a public indignation meeting at Newcastle, said that a definite promise had been made to him for the construction of the line. That promise could only have been made by the present Government. It could not have been made by the previous Government, seeing that the member for Toodyay had threatened to cross the floor of the Chamber and sit in Opposition to the present Government if the promise were not fulfilled. This Government must have given the promise between 29th October and 5th November,

which was the date of the member for Toodyay's speech.

The Premier: That does not follow at all. I should say it was the opposite.

Mr. SCADDAN: It appears so to me. The Premier said at the banquet he had made no promise in connection with the construction of the line and he refused to give a promise there. The member for Toodyay at the public meeting said that unless the promise given to him was faithfully kept he would cross the floor of the House and sit in Opposition.

The Premier: The promise was not given by the Government.

Mr. SCADDAN: Well if that were so why was the member going to sit in Opposition to the present Government? He could only have referred to a promise made to him by the Moore Government. If that were not so, then the member for Toodyay was misleading his audience, for he was making them believe that the Moore Government had given him a promise, and added that if they did not keep their promise he would sit in Opposition. These facts have not been contradicted.

The Premier: The point has never been raised before.

Mr. SCADDAN: It has been raised before. After reading the files of the papers and hearing the statements in connection with this trouble, I contend that the time is not ripe for the construction of this line. I know there is a good deal to be said in connection with the extension of the spur railway lines. At the present time, however, when we are practically scrambling on the loan market in order to get sufficient money to deal with the railway lines already passed, there could be no objection to this railway line remaining in the background for a short time. There can be no immediate need for the line, as by it we shall obtain no new settlers. There is no room there for them at the present time.

At 6.15, *the Speaker* left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Mr. SCADDAN: I regret the Honorary Minister is not in his place, as I

desire to show him that the statement he made to the House this afternoon in connection with the Northam-Goomalling line is not correct, so far as I am able to gather from the figures recently supplied by the Railway Department. I do not lose sight of the fact that these spur lines add to the traffic carried over the main lines. If inquiries are made into the matter members will see the Railway Department, in making out the returns as to the spur railways, give credit of a certain percentage to the spur lines for goods carried over the main lines. In this connection I may say the Goomalling line is anything but one of the best paying propositions in the State. The hon. member should know such is not the case. The Goomalling line, if paying at all, is only paying when it is credited with a certain percentage of the goods carried over the main line. By the returns supplied by the Chief Railway Auditor in 1905, the line was almost paying, although even then it was only paying after allowing a fair percentage of the gross value of the traffic carried down over the main line to any station on the Goomalling line or from any station on the Goomalling line to any other station in the State. If the Goomalling line is a paying line then I am sorry for the other lines in this State. I am prepared to support the construction of agricultural lines on the spur or loop system in districts having *bona fide* settlers, or where there is a likelihood of adding to the settlement of the district. In regard to this addition to the Newcastle line if it is anticipated in the near future to add to the settlement in the district it can only be done by repurchasing estates through which this line will pass. I absolutely decline to be a party to anything in the nature of a political line, and I am not too satisfied that this is not one of those lines in view of the statements I have already made to the House that the Premier declined to make a promise in October 1905, yet in November the member for the district announced that he would cross the floor of the House and sit in Opposition unless the promise made by the Premier to him was carried out. In any case it seems to me that a great deal

of pressure has been brought to bear on the Government in this connection. We are told by Father Hallinan, who has been in the district for many years, that the construction of the Newcastle to Wongan Hills line would do away with the necessity for the construction of a railway from Newcastle to Bolgart; yet to-day the Government have a survey party out making a preliminary survey of a line from Newcastle to Wongan Hills. I object to the survey of these lines without first obtaining the concurrence of Parliament, because when a survey party goes out it is taken by the settlers as a promise by the Government to construct the line at some future date. Where a survey is being made the public jump to the conclusion that the Government are pledged to the construction of the line; settlers take up land at once, and begin to clamour to the Government for railway communication. That is an unwise policy to pursue. In my opinion the construction of this line will add considerably to the value of the Midland Company's land, and that is recognised by the Midland Company themselves because since the Bill has been brought forward Mr. Gardiner, the auctioneer and agent for the Midland Company has, per medium of advertisement, made it clear to those desirous of purchasing the land, which it is intended to offer by auction at an early date, that this line is practically a foregone conclusion. Naturally it follows it must lend an added value to the Midland Company's land. In view of the fact that we have already had difficulty in connection with the Midland Company to get them to settle their land where they have railway communication already, we should see that the land along already existing lines be settled before we construct other lines that will only benefit a very few settlers on Government land. The figures supplied to us we cannot take as being very satisfactory because we do not know to what extent the land will be served by the construction of this line. Government lands are already within 12 miles of the terminus of this line or some portion of it. It is practically from the standpoint that this is a political line that I protest against

this Bill being rushed through at the last moment. Lines of this nature should not be authorised before we have the full facts placed before us.

Mr. J. B. HOLMAN (Murehison): I do not intend to delay the House long in speaking on the second reading of this measure. In connection with the land that this line will serve, so far as my limited knowledge allows me to judge, in my opinion the line will serve some of the best land in the State, speaking from an agricultural point of view. I have been through that portion of the country, and I took a great deal of interest in it. I made a great number of inquiries, and I believe the line is warranted. The main factor against the construction of the line is that it will enhance the Midland Company's property to a great extent. I do not think it is a reasonable view to take, because this line will enhance the Midland Company's property that we should prevent settlers having railway facilities. Another feature is that there are a great many large estates in this country, but if we make it a condition whereby the Government take over these properties and cut them up and allow legitimate settlers to settle on the land that difficulty will be overcome. It is a great pity a proper land tax was not brought down to deal with the people who grab the land and do not use it. There have been some methods adopted in regard to this line that are altogether unnecessary. I daresay if I go and threaten the Government that unless I get a railway line built I will join the Opposition, it would not carry much weight. If this line is warranted, I maintain it should be constructed without any threats about joining the Opposition. If any line is warranted it should be immaterial on what side of the House a member sits. It should not be necessary for a member to threaten to leave the Government and support the Opposition to get a line constructed. If I were the Premier of the State and a member made that threat to me, he could go and join the Opposition, or do anything else, but he would not get his railway by holding out threats. If this can be done when a line is warranted it

may be done when a line is not warranted. I maintain it is setting a bad precedent when members who give the Government support are saying that unless they get certain concessions they will leave the Government and support the Opposition. That is not the proper way to get legislation passed. I brought this matter forward when dealing with the Land Bill last year, when I said:—

“Let us take the railway from Newcastle to Bolgart. I have been through that part of the country, and I think that line is warranted, but I do not indorse the action of the member for Toodyay in drawing attention to the fact that the railway was required in the manner in which he did. I take strong exception to any member in this Chamber taking the action which was taken on this occasion, and in saying that if he did not get a railway line he would join the Opposition.”

I went on to state that in all probability if I joined the Opposition it would not carry much weight. I am not going to oppose the railway for in my opinion I think it is warranted. I generally speak what I think whether it pleases or not, and as far as I am personally concerned I think the railway could have been built without making any threat. I take strong exception to a member making threats as to what he will do unless he gets what he wants. That is doing more harm than enough in this country, and the time has come when all these matters should be dropped. It should not be that because a man is a strong opponent of the Government he cannot get anything for his district, and that because a man is a servile supporter of the Government he can get anything. It should not be spoils to the victor. If we are going to make this State what it should be, every part of the State should have equal opportunities, no matter whether the member representing any part of the State sits on the Government side or on the Opposition. I hope the time has gone past when any concession will be given for support given. I do not think the Premier would hold to that. He said he was not going to be forced at the point

of the bayonet. I commend him for the attitude he took up on that occasion. I have spoken three times on this matter and have said practically the same thing on each occasion, that I believe the railway is justified. Though I believe it will enhance the value of the Midland Company's lands, I feel this should not deter the country from constructing the railway. Of course it is a great pity we do not own the Midland Company's lands, for then this railway could be continued to junction with the Midland line and thus open up a great deal of valuable country. But I hope the time is not far distant when the State will own the Midland Railway, and then we will be able to develop the country without the fear that by so doing we will increase the value of any private company's property. [*Mr. Angwin*: It will increase the value of their property.] Certainly; but the more we can increase the value of property in the State the more we will increase the value of the State's asset. It does not matter so long as we have a good rousing land tax how much we enhance the value of the Midland Company's land. It is immaterial to whom the land belongs. If people do not make use of it they will have to contribute towards the revenue of the country. That is the way we should look at it. If we increase the value of the company's property we increase the State's source of income, because we increase the taxation of the company's land. I do not intend to delay the House on this measure except to enter my protest at the methods adopted in forcing the attitude of the Government, especially when it was not necessary. It only gives us an idea of how force has been used in the past to get works constructed or railways built; not because the work was wanted, but because it was threatened that if the work was not accomplished people would leave the Government side and support the Opposition.

Mr. H. E. BOLTON (North Fremantle): I do not advocate opposing the construction of railways for the development of the country; I am hardly opposed to the construction of this railway; but there are one or two points that it is

necessary should be mentioned in considering this proposition. While we admit that agricultural lines will not pay for the first few years, I am convinced that this railway will never pay. There is an important factor which makes it next to impossible for this railway to be ever revenue-producing. The only connection possible with the main trunk line is a Clackline, and the already existing railway from Clackline to Newcastle, a distance of fourteen miles, is over country the nature of which makes it impossible for engines to haul a proper load. The line for seven miles is upgrade, and for the other seven miles is down grade, and the only engines it is possible for the Railway Department to use on that railway are the smallest type in use in the State, obsolete for any purpose but for running on that line. The maximum loading capacity hauled by those engines is four or five wagon loads.

The Premier: The stiffest grade of the railway is not more than one in 60.

Mr. BOLTON: No engines but those now in use on that railway can run on the seven-chain curves on the section. Unless the railway is relaid it will not be possible to haul more than half a dozen wagon loads over it. If this extension to Bolgart is constructed the portion from Clackline to Newcastle will have to be relaid and the curves considerably altered.

The Premier: All we want to do is to flatten out the curves.

Mr. BOLTON: The rails have been down for so long that they will not stand much flattening out. The section hardly pays wages. It has been a losing proposition all the time, and any extension will not help to make the existing line pay. If we want to haul decent loads we must have bigger locomotives, but before we can put bigger locomotives on the line we must have it relaid and the whole system altered. The Northampton line is the only other line in the State where there are such sharp curves; and if the Premier inquires at the department he will learn that the maximum tonnage that can be hauled is very small indeed, and that the engines that haul

goods trains are not allowed to go on the Newcastle-Clackline section. In fact they are not allowed to run on even a short distance of it just over the bridge from Clackline. How are we to get to the main truck system unless the trains go to Clackline? Everything that goes from Bolgart must go over the Clackline-Newcastle section; and if we are to make up three trains where otherwise one will do, how is it possible for the line to pay? So long as there is no other outlet for the produce from beyond Newcastle the line cannot be otherwise than a heavily losing proposition, unless the Government intend to spend money on the existing section so that the engines will be able to haul bigger loads. As it is at present wages will have to be paid for hauling half a dozen wagons when considerably larger loads could be hauled for the same money. If the trade is to come from Bolgart it will be necessary to make up half a dozen trains to reach Clackline instead of one. That is the greatest argument that can be put up against this railway. The existing line is a white elephant—the greatest we have in this State. No matter how necessary the line may have been when built, it probably was never expected to pay, but if we increase the production at one end and there is no other means of getting it to the port or other centres of consumption, the line is going to be a still greater loss. I do not want to oppose the Bill altogether, but members should take these facts into consideration. They must be prepared for the Government to come down with a large vote in order to put the Clackline-Newcastle line in a condition that will enable it to cope with the traffic coming from the extension to Bolgart.

Mr. ANGWIN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	25
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	15

AYES.
Mr. Angwin
Mr. Bath
Mr. Bolton
Mr. T. L. Brown
Mr. Collier
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Barnett
Mr. Brebber
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Davies
Mr. Draper
Mr. Eddy
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Gull
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Heitmann
Mr. Layman
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Plesse
Mr. Price
Mr. Varyard
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): There is just one point I wish to emphasise in regard to this railway, and it is the chief point which actuates me in opposing the Bill; that is, in order to construct the railway we are spending Government money for which we will have to pay interest and sinking fund and which we will have eventually to redeem, not to improve land taken up from the State, or from private companies, or land being utilised by the owners in agricultural or grazing pursuits, but to improve the area of a company who are there to dispose of land to other people. I would point out to the Premier that in the latest area the company have disposed of, and it has been advertised in the auction columns of the daily Press, holding forth as an inducement for purchasing land at an enhanced price the fact that the Government propose to provide railway facilities for those lands. I do not think it is any part of the duty of Parliament to deliberately vote loan moneys in order that a company holding a large area of unimproved land may use that expenditure as a means of putting money into their pockets, not by the legitimate cultivation or use of the land, but by land speculation, by selling their land at auction. That is a feature which I think should commend itself to members of this House; and we should hesitate before we pass a Bill authorising the construction of this line so that this end may be served. There are other areas taken up

from the Crown and being used by settlers to whom railway communication would probably be a boon; and those settlers are more deserving of railway communication than is this private company. I could name for the Premier a number of districts in Western Australia which have good claim to the consideration of the Government. In some instances the promise of a railway made as far back as the time of Sir John Forrest's Government has not been redeemed. I think if we have loan moneys to spend, we should give facilities to those people who are using their land rather than expend money to enable this company to reap a harvest by holding out this railway proposal as an inducement to people to purchase their land.

Mr. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Pilbarra): I feel inclined to oppose the construction of this line, on suspicion. The reports read this evening would make one suspicious. Though I am not naturally suspicious, when we find members threatening to leave the Government if their line is not built, when we find the Church actively engaged in advocating this railway, we must come to the conclusion that the line has little merit of its own to commend it. Another reason why I feel disinclined to support this proposition is the attitude adopted to-night by the members for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) and Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell). I was surprised at the astute manner in which the Treasurer to-night got round that awkward bend—[*The Treasurer: Which bend?*—the Land Tax Assessment Bill. But when we find the member for Katanning and the member for Northam deprecating the holding of large estates, it is time one became suspicious. We have heard of Satan reproving sin; but after what we have seen to-night, I think Western Australia holds the record. I believe, after what we have heard to-night, those members could make a speech to prove that any proposition was thoroughly warranted. In regard to the building of railways, I hold with the Leader of the Opposition that it is inadvisable to build lines to increase the value of someone else's land; and the

land to be served by this proposed railway is not Government land. The Honorary Minister held forth for some time on the provision contained in this Bill whereby the State is empowered to buy back private land. That is all very well but why not buy back the land adjacent to lines already built, instead of building new lines into privately-owned land? I have no doubt as to the excellent quality of the agricultural country through which this line will pass; but that land is already privately held and unused. It is on sale, and when the line is built it will still be for sale, though at increased prices.

Mr. Bath: They are asking increased prices on the strength of the promise of a railway.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In fact I believe the owners have already raised the price a little, on the threat that this line would be built; and by the time the first sod on the railway is turned, the price will have advanced considerably. I protest strongly against this continuous expenditure of money to increase the value of private lands. If we desire to build railways for the benefit of immigrants whom our splendid department in Melbourne is snaring from Gippsland—they secured two last week, I believe—we should build them to a point at which there is some Government land. We have this philanthropic Midland Company advertising the fact that the Bolgart railway will increase the value of their land—adjacent to it, and that is the sort of thing by which we hope to attract hundreds of immigrants to this country. Again, we are told that a distinguished visitor from the East, a Federal Senator, entirely approves of this policy of railway construction. If so, his memorandum must be very short, for the country in which I believe Mr. Best has been all his life has suffered severely from that very policy. Victoria went railway-mad about 20 years ago, getting pulled up in the career about 15 years ago; and one result of that policy to-day is that there are in this State many first-class Victorian settlers. Farther in regard to Mr. Best's opinion on this question, I desire to say that admittedly it takes an agri-

culturist some time to become thoroughly acquainted with the land in this State ; yet Mr. Best, who is a lawyer, and probably would not know a turnip from a potato if he saw them growing, comes here and eulogises our agricultural lands. I do not mind Mr. Best doing that ; but I object to Ministers putting those opinions before us, who do know something of local conditions, as a reason why this railway should be built. The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) says things will be all right when we get a land tax ; but before we get a land tax we will have to shift the Legislative Council, and as we shall require all our resources for that feat, we would be wise not to expend all our energies in the interest of syndicates for the construction of non-paying railways. I agree that had we a proper land tax, we could prevent the accumulation of large estates and also make the holding of land for speculative purposes unprofitable, thus giving genuine settlers an opportunity of settling in the country ; but under the present constitution of Western Australia, I feel sure there is no chance of getting a decent land tax—at least not a State land tax ; we shall have to make it a Federal tax. Until then it is as well to look with caution on these railway proposals, particularly on this one which appears to me to all intents and purposes a political railway.

The PREMIER (in reply as mover) : Perhaps the most interesting feature of this debate was the dissertation by the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor), and his comments on the reports appearing recently in two newspapers in regard to a visit made by myself and other members of Parliament to the district known as Wyening. The hon. member—and he has since been supported by other members—stated that undue pressure had been brought to bear on the Government to induce them to construct this line. As I said before, this railway was the subject of consideration and debate for some time, and the Government of which that member was a distinguished representative, provided a certain amount out of excess votes for a survey of a line from

Beejoording to Newcastle. I am at one with the hon. member when he says that in a matter of this kind it should be unnecessary to use any extraneous assistance to bring before Ministers the wants of a district in regard to railway communication ; and at the time the gentleman delivered the sensational address referred to, I did resent the interference of parsons in politics. Yet this is a free country, and therefore that gentleman had probably as much right to express himself as he did on that occasion as has any member here. I would like to point out that so far as Newcastle is concerned, certain people do appear to run politics to some extent, for on one deputation which waited upon me in connection with this railway there were no fewer than three representatives of three religious bodies ; so that the reverend gentleman referred to by the member for Mt. Margaret is not singular in his advocacy of this railway.

Mr. Collier : There were about 75 persons on that deputation.

The PREMIER : Yes ; as I remarked at the time, the whole of Newcastle except the policeman was apparently present. The last speaker (Mr. Underwood) asked why we did not first buy back the private land instead of waiting for the authorisation of the railway. Under the clause empowering the Government to acquire private land compulsorily, its value is to be assessed at the market value prior to the authorisation of the railway. We have had some experience of repurchased estates, and they have proved remunerative investments for the State. I need refer only to the Bolgart Estate, secured by the Government about twelve years ago and now in the occupation of some 18 or 20 settlers, to whom it was sold by the State at a profit of between £7,000 and £9,000.

Mr. Heitmann : It is a shame you are making money out of it.

The PREMIER : One member of the Opposition says it is a shame we are making money out of this repurchased estate, while another complains that we are enhancing the value of other people's land by proposing the construction of this railway. The member for Pilbarra

referred also to the question of immigration; but I would remind the hon. member that this is not the only State doing something to attract immigrants. Queensland is spending £50,000 on an immigration policy; and that State not only provides, as we do, for assisted passages but for absolutely free passages. I am satisfied, however, that immigrants to Queensland have not the same opportunities for land selection as those coming to Western Australia. I received a wire to-day from Mr. Ranford, at present at Mildura, stating that a representative farmer is coming over here immediately. This man last year exported something like 60 tons of dried fruit; but being dissatisfied with the methods of irrigation at Mildura he has decided to try elsewhere; and being told by Mr. Ranford of the regularity of our rainfall, he is coming to this State to investigate. If he is satisfied, there will be from seven to ten other settlers for Western Australia from Mildura. The member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) referred to the grades on the existing line. The hon. member, when he does speak, generally speaks with some knowledge of his subject; and he pointed out that with a 1 in 60 grade and 7-chain curves it is not likely that this extension will ever prove payable. But I should like to point out that it will cost little more to run the additional 24 miles than it costs to run the 14 miles from Clackline to Newcastle, except that additional expenditure will be needed for the upkeep of the permanent way. I have not had an opportunity of examining the sections; but provided the traffic warrants it, there is no reason why the line could not be made in the manner indicated, why some of the 7-chain curves should not be knocked out, and some flatter curves substituted. On the Great Southern railway we have four miles with a 1 in 60 grade.

Mr. Bolton: But you have a 45lb. rail on the Newcastle branch.

The PREMIER: And what between Clackline and Newcastle?

Mr. Bolton: A 45-lb. rail.

The PREMIER: And what on the Great Southern?

Mr. Bolton: A 60-lb. rail.

The PREMIER: No. We are now considering whether we shall lay from Beverley to Narrogin with 60-lb. rails.

The Treasurer: On the Great Southern we have a 46¼-lb. rail, the same as on the Newcastle line.

Mr. Taylor: But you cannot alter the curves without a deviation.

The PREMIER: It is only a question of a slight outlay. You must have the sections before you to ascertain what a deviation will cost. I do not know how many seven-chain curves there are, or what is the length of the grade; but on the Great Southern Railway, with the same grade, we have four miles of 1 in 60; between Mount Barker and Albany we have a mile with 1 in 50; and we know what loads are now being hauled over that railway. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath) says that by constructing this line we shall improve other people's property. I recognise that; and I have already pointed out in my introductory speech what proportion of the land alienated will be improved, and what proportion is Crown land. No doubt we are to some extent improving the alienated land; but my colleague and I have already pointed out that we have an opportunity of acquiring that land at its present-day value within twelve months of the opening of the railway.

Mr. Bath: The Midland Company intend to sell some of it.

The PREMIER: The Government can acquire it. If the Midland Company sell blocks of less than a thousand acres, good luck to them, so long as people settle on it and work it. If the block exceeds a thousand acres, we can acquire it within twelve months of the opening of the line. If the land were all cut up and worked, surely you would have no objection?

Mr. Taylor: The Midland Company's land will be given an enhanced value by the railway.

The PREMIER: We have a right to acquire that land at the present-day value.

Mr. Johnson: At an enhanced value.

The PREMIER: Why?

Mr. Johnson: Because some private person will buy it in the meantime.

The PREMIER: We have an opportunity of acquiring any portion exceeding a thousand acres. Last year, when visiting the district, I got an option for several of these blocks; but the price quoted was too high. The blocks were not held by the Midland Company, but principally by debenture-holders of that company. Mr. Mendel was one, and Mr. Bond another. I thought it would be better business to acquire the land by repurchase. As to the suggestion of a promise made between October and November, when a certain member is said to have stated that he proposed to change his seat as the result of the non-construction of this railway, as a matter of fact I had made no promise at all, and never made any promise until last month, when I made a promise to a deputation introduced by the member for the district. The newspaper report reads as follows:—

"The Premier, in reply, said that he had mentioned that Sir Walter James and Mr. Rason had promised the railway. He had not made any promise in regard to the railway, but he had made provision for the railway in the Loan Bill. That was an evidence that the Government recognised there was a justification for the railway in the district. There was no necessity for settlers to feel alarmed that the Government were going in for any repudiation. The desire was to have all the railways included in the schedule he had brought forward authorised. It was his intention to bring down a Bill for the construction of the Newcastle-Bolgart railway. He had made up his mind about that, and there had been really no necessity for the deputation to wait on him."

And I feel sure that if the member for the district had an opportunity of speaking, he would be able to convince the House that no promise was made by me until this deputation waited on me in my own office; and then I did not make that promise at the point of the bayonet.

Mr. Taylor: You made it for fear of losing a supporter, anyhow.

The PREMIER: The hon. member said to-day that in case of the railway

being refused, he might have had someone as a right-hand supporter; but I do not think the refusal would have led to any such accession to his party.

Mr. Taylor: The Speaker said so.

The PREMIER: I do not know that I need to say anything farther, except in reply to the statement of the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Underwood). We have repurchased three estates in that district, the Bolgart, the Norman and the Coondle; and they have proved remunerative investments. There is much really good settlement in that district, and I have referred to one settler, Mr. Camerer, a very enterprising man, who is revolutionising dairying in the neighbourhood. I am satisfied that this railway project, if approved by the House, will justify the votes of hon. members, and that the new line will do much to assist in making the main line a source of profit.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	26
Noes	..	..	..	12

Majority for .. 14

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Barnett	Mr. Angwin
Mr. Brebber	Mr. Bath
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. T. L. Brown
Mr. Draper	Mr. Collier
Mr. Eddy	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gull	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Stuart (Teller).
Mr. Heitmann	
Mr. Horn	
Mr. Hudson	
Mr. McLarty	
Mr. Mitchell	
Mr. Monger	
Mr. N. J. Moore	
Mr. S. F. Moore	
Mr. Piesse	
Mr. Price	
Mr. Verrard	
Mr. A. J. Wilson	
Mr. F. Wilson	
Mr. Layman (Teller).	

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Authority to construct:

Mr. TAYLOR: In view of what we had heard, we should enact that no

charge should be made for any private land through which the line passed. We might provide that the Government should fence both sides of the line. The hon. the Speaker said at a public meeting that private owners would be willing to give the Government, free of charge, all the land required for the railway. This promise should be insisted on, and it was only right that those persons who had held the land for speculative purposes for so many years should now grant the Government the necessary land free of charge, especially seeing that the railway would so greatly improve their property. Later on he would move to amend the clause by making a proviso that this land should be granted free of charge.

Mr. SCADDAN : It was essential for a proviso to be inserted, setting out that the land should be given to the Government. It had been published that in the event of the Government constructing the line the owners would not ask for compensation for the land through which it would pass. Had any negotiations taken place for the purchase of the lands, and if so, how far had they gone ?

The Premier: Where was the authority for the statement that a promise had been made ?

Mr. SCADDAN : The promise was made by the member for Toodyay (Hon. T. F. Quinlan) at a public meeting held on the 2nd November. Those utterances could only be made with the object of inducing the Government to bring the Bill down. It was a genuine offer, and in view of that fact it was a fair proposition to insert the proviso suggested. The land-owners should be kept up to their promise. Unless the clause were inserted the owners of the land would come on the Government for full compensation.

Mr. GORDON : The suggestion was a good one, but it should not apply to the owners of town lots, or to small farmers who had 100 or 200 acres, and whose property would be altogether ruined if a railway line were run through it. Where, however, there were large estates, the owners should certainly give the land for nothing. The Government had power to resume land, and they could surely be trusted to make the best deal

possible in the circumstances. The settlement of the question should be left to the Government. If the amendment were inserted it might be unfair to small holders of land. He was quite agreeable to make a provision which would apply to the holders of 1,000 acres of land or more. It must be remembered, however, that even estates of 1,000 acres might be very greatly deteriorated in value if the railway line were to cut through certain portions of the property.

Mr. FOULKES : The Government had the right to take country lands without paying any compensation. Nearly all the title deeds contained a provision giving power to the Government to resume, without compensation, one-twentieth of the land for the purpose of constructing public works. During the last 20 years many such lands had been resumed. There was the railway line from Bunbury to Boyanup, which was alienated about 50 years ago, and which estate was held by the family of the member for Bunbury (Hon. N. J. Moore), and this land was sold in small blocks. When the line was constructed the Government took the blocks for the purpose of the line without granting any compensation. When the railway was constructed from Katanning to Kojonup no compensation was paid for land resumed, except township lots.

The PREMIER : As had been pointed out by the previous speaker, there was a provision in the old grants that one-twentieth of the land could be resumed by the Government for the purposes of railways, roads, quarries, etcetera, and in the Public Works Act, in providing for compensation it was stated :—

“If the land taken up under this Act exceeds the quantity which might have been taken or resumed under grant, lease, or other instrument, or such other Act, compensation shall be payable under this Act only in respect of the excess.”

That was to say, nothing in excess of one-twentieth would have to be paid for. Land had been taken away from him, personally, without any compensation being granted for it. It was not, however, always the quantity, but sometimes

there was a claim for severance, which would be greater even than the claim for the actual land taken. If the proviso were inserted it might be that a hardship would be inflicted on certain owners, more particularly those in the neighbourhood of the town of Newcastle, inasmuch as there were orchards and vineyards there. The Government would not be able to take that land without paying for improvements, such as trees and vines, which would be destroyed if the land were resumed. It would be invidious to take action in connection with this Bill, for other similar measures had been passed without making any condition other than that already contained in the grants. He could assure members that if the Bill went through, and owners of land tried to make the Government pay through the nose in order to be enabled to build a railway which would improve their property, the railway would not be built.

Mr. Scaddan : The Premier should therefore support the amendment.

The **PREMIER** : An amendment affecting a principle like this drafted offhand was rather dangerous to accept. We were protected by the proviso which enabled the Government to take five per cent. of a person's land without compensation. People who had made a promise would be prepared to redeem their promise.

Mr. HAYWARD : In respect to the South-Western railway the whole of the land required as far as he knew was taken without compensation being paid, and in regard to the Bunbury line the Government took some of the best land without compensation.

Mr. TAYLOR moved an amendment that the following be inserted :—

“Provided, notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, no person shall be entitled to receive or shall receive from the Government of Western Australia any purchase money for any land required for the said line of railway or any compensation in respect of any land required to be used in connection with or likely to be prejudicially affected by the construction of the said line of railway, or in consequence of

any part of such line of railway being made, constructed, or used on any road.”

The **CHAIRMAN** : The hon. member had better move that as a new subclause.

Mr. TAYLOR : There would be no possibility of getting it through then. The Premier had said that we should not accept any amendment that was hurriedly moved. The Premier had moved the second reading of this Bill this afternoon and it was being passed through its stages in one sitting. There could be no objection to the amendment because it was similar to Section 9 of the Railways Act of Victoria. If he was in order he would move the amendment.

The **CHAIRMAN** : The hon. member was in order ; the amendment would come in as an addendum to the clause.

Mr. TAYLOR would move it as an addition to the clause.

The **PREMIER** : The provision made in the Crown grant was as follows :—

“—without making to the said heirs and assigns any compensation in respect thereof ; so, nevertheless, that the lands so to be resumed shall not exceed one-twentieth part, in the whole, of the lands aforesaid, and that no such resumption be made of the part of any lands upon which any buildings may have been erected, or which may be in use as gardens, or otherwise, for the more convenient occupation of any such buildings, without compensation ; and provided, also, that it shall be lawful at all times, for us, our heirs and successors, or for any person or persons acting in that behalf by our or their authority, to cut and take away any such indigenous timber, and to search, and dig for, and carry away any stones or other materials which may be required for making or keeping in repair any roads, tramways, railways, railway stations, bridges, canals, towing-paths, harbour works, breakwaters, river improvements, drainage or irrigation works, and generally for any other works or purposes of public use, utility, or convenience, without making to the said heirs and assigns any compensation in respect thereof.

And we do hereby save and reserve to us, our heirs and successors, all mines of gold, silver, copper, tin, or other metals, ore, and mineral or other substances containing metals, and all gems or precious stones, and coal or mineral oil in and under the said land, with full liberty at all times to search and dig for, and carry away the same; and, for that purpose, to enter upon the said lands or any part thereof."

This applied to land selected under Sections 55, 56, 61, and 62 of the Land Act. The land to be resumed must not exceed one-twentieth of the whole area held by one person, but compensation had to be paid where the land resumed contained buildings or was a garden. This provision related to all land acquired prior to the 1898 Act.

Mr. Scaddan : Were these lands acquired prior to that Act ?

The PREMIER : Yes. He appreciated the motives which the member had in moving the amendment, but were we not sufficiently safeguarded ?

Mr. Collier : Had no compensation been paid ?

The PREMIER : At the present time the people of Armadale were up in arms because they had not been paid compensation. The member for the district had brought the matter under his notice, and he (the Premier) had pointed out that under the section he had read land could be resumed without compensation being paid. The people of Armadale used as an argument that this land had been cut up, and that the roads had formed a portion of the one-twentieth; but the roads were not laid out by the Government but by the owners of the land. He thought the Government were safeguarded in this matter.

Mr. Scaddan : It was strange that some of the owners of land in this district did not know the conditions under which the land was held; or if they did they went to public meetings and in order to curry favour made out that they were prepared to hand over one-fifth of their area without compensation.

The PREMIER : Suppose some unfortunate man had an orchard and the Government put a railway through it,

under the amendment of the member for Mount Margaret the man could not get any compensation.

Mr. Scaddan : Would the Premier accept the amendment in these terms :—

"No compensation shall be paid to any owner or occupier of land except town sites, or land within a radius of one mile from the starting point of the line, taken by the Governor for the purpose of constructing a railway, and no compensation shall be paid for severance, but compensation shall be paid for any buildings or orchards that may exist on such lands."

The Premier : Make it two miles.

Mr. Scaddan : If the Premier would accept that amendment, he would ask the member for Mount Margaret to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. Taylor : The desire was to safeguard the State against having to pay compensation for land held for many years by persons making no use of it, and to keep certain gentlemen to their public utterances. If they were aware that the Government had this power to resume their land, then these gentlemen were imposing on the credulity and gullibility of their electors. He would withdraw his amendment if the Premier would accept that of the member for Ivanhoe. But his amendment was based on a section in the Victorian Act passed by the biggest Tory Chamber in Australia. He would amend it in any way to protect the small orchard holders, but we could not frame amendments to meet every case when a Bill was being rushed through the Chamber. [*The Minister for Railways* : This was not the only railway Bill.] That was the trouble. It was about time someone told the country the brutal way in which legislation was rushed through the House. Apparently the Premier would not accept that amendment of the member for Ivanhoe.

The Premier : No one said so.

Mr. Hayward : In very few instances would a railway take one-twentieth of an estate of any size. The amendment appeared to be quite unnecessary.

Mr. Angwin : It appeared that a promise was given that land would be

given for the railway without compensation, and no doubt that promise influenced the Government in bringing forward the Bill. Not so many years ago there was a similar promise given in regard to the construction of the railway from Northam to Yilgarn, but in after years the member for York asked for a return of the compensation paid for the land resumed for that railway line. The then member for Northam (Mr. Throssell) said in the House that he had made no claim against the Government, and he had told his solicitors so, but when it became apparent that the Government were determined to pay compensation, and that everyone was receiving compensation, he could not help but allow his solicitors to accept it.

Mr. TAYLOR : When he heard this of Mr. Throssell who had settled the same people about Northam for all time (using "settled" in i.s. racecourse meaning), we could readily believe the same would take place in regard to this railway, and that the persons offering this land would be just as likely to go back on their word and be brutally forced by their solicitors to accept compensation. When we found that the "wily lion" from Northam got his solicitors to jamb their elbows into the Treasury it was time to take steps to prevent such a thing, and if he (Mr. Taylor) did not prevent it it would not be for want of addressing the House to-night. He wanted to make every post a winning post in stopping the avarice of these landed proprietors, sheltering themselves behind a firm of solicitors in plundering the Treasury.

Mr. Scaddan : Mr. Throssell got £1,500 compensation on that occasion.

Mr. TAYLOR : The Government would probably rush to Newcastle and make Mr. Hamersley and the member for Toodyay take money for allowing the line to be constructed over their land. There might be something in the Bill that would allow the Government to force compensation on these people. It was done in the past ; one gentleman got £1,500. It was a good thing we had not had a fire like they had in Wellington destroying all the Parliamentary records or we might not have heard of this to-night. However, seeing

that the member for Ivanhoe had an amendment which might meet the case he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment withdrawn.

Mr. SCADDAN moved that the following proviso be inserted :—

Provided that no compensation shall be paid to any owner or occupier of land except townsite land within a radius of two miles from the starting point, taken by the Governor for the purpose of constructing the railway, and no compensation shall be paid for severance. Compensation shall be paid for any buildings or orchards that may exist on such lands.

The CHAIRMAN : A new clause would better embody the intention of the hon. member.

Mr. SCADDAN : Knowing that the railway would pass principally through large estates, he desired to protect the Government against any claim for severance.

Amendment passed ; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 7 (end), Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments ; the report adopted.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair, the Minister for Railways in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Ministerial or Commissioner Control.

Clause 2—Amendment of 1904, No. 23, Section 10 :

Mr. SCADDAN asked the Minister to state just what the Government proposed to do in this matter.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : If there was any amendment dealing with the vital principle of the Bill, as to whether we should have Ministerial or Commissioner control, it would be well to consider that straight away ; and if arguments were to be used in regard to that, he could reply.

Mr. WALKER : Could the Minister give an idea about the salary ?

The MINISTER : It depended on the action the Government might take in appointing a new Commissioner. It was the intention to advertise outside the State for this position ; and it might possibly be that an applicant who would be considered worthy of the position might require £2,500 or £3,000 a year salary. The expectation of the Cabinet was that we should be able to get a good man for about £2,500 a year. If we did go outside the State for some person who had made a name for himself in the railway world and was in receipt of a high salary, hon. members would recognise that it would be impracticable to expect that man to come here at a salary of £1,500. At present no particulars could be given in regard to the matter. We should first settle the question of Ministerial or Commissioner control. In no circumstances would the salary be higher than £3,000 per annum.

Mr. WALKER : The Minister was not sufficiently explicit. Would an advertisement be inserted asking for applications stating qualifications and salary expected ?

The MINISTER : No.

Mr. WALKER : It should be clearly understood whether local applications would be considered. Some local men might be willing to take the post for less than £2,000 a year. If the clause passed as it stood, would local applications be invited ?

The MINISTER : If the clause passed as it stood.

The CHAIRMAN : The amendment was out of order. The hon. member could not move to strike out one clause with a view to inserting an entirely different clause. He could vote against this clause, and move a new clause later on.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : The hon. member could move to strike out certain words. If the amendment were passed, it would involve the withdrawal of the Bill and the bringing in of a new Bill next year to carry out the wishes of the Committee. The clause was vital to the Bill ; and if it were

struck out, passing the other clauses would be waste of time.

Mr. BATH : Better alter the amendment to read—

That the words "Section 10," and all the words after "amended," in line 1, be struck out.

Mr. JOHNSON altered the amendment accordingly. This would test the feeling of the Committee as to the system of control. In view of the late hour of the session, he would not discuss the question exhaustively. Ministerial control gave the Minister absolute control and responsibility ; Commissioner control at its best shared the responsibility with someone not directly responsible to Parliament, and consequently not directly responsible to the people. On the second reading the only argument the Minister advanced against Ministerial control was the possible introduction of political influence. Whatever the system of control of a Government undertaking, political influence was possible ; and the worst possible political influence could be brought to bear under Commissioner control. On the second reading he had given instances. But the main reason for reverting to the old system was that the railways might be utilised for the general development of the State. Under Commissioner control they could not be worked in harmony with a general development policy. The Commissioner's sole object was to obtain revenue. His ability was judged by the revenue per train mile, and not by the actual cost of operating the line. It was unfair to compare the working expenses of our railways with those of Queensland, for the conditions were hopelessly different. Our coal and our water, for instance, were supplied under conditions altogether different from those of other States. But the one desire of Mr. George as Commissioner was to get from the railway customers as much money as he could extract. Mr. George was one of the best and most loyal servants a Treasurer ever had ; but his policy was not desirable in this country of huge distances, a country which could not be developed except by throwing out railways in all directions. But under Commissioner control, though the Gov-

ernment might construct light railways, there was no guarantee that they would be cheaply operated; and unless they were, they would be of little benefit to settlers. Even the Treasurer said on one occasion that it might be better to leave such railways under the control of the Works Department, so that Mr. George might not operate them with a view to revenue merely. The small attendance to-night as well as on the second reading was regrettable. The Minister had said this was not a party question; that he would leave it to Parliament to decide. And to-night he made no special appeal, but said that if the Committee decided against the Bill, another Bill, in accordance with their desire, would be introduced next session. The present Minister was at heart in favour of Ministerial control.

The Minister for Railways: Certainly not.

Mr. JOHNSON: His second-reading argument against Ministerial control was most incomplete and unconvincing, and led one to believe that he was not a strong advocate of the present system. It had been urged that a Minister, owing to lack of technical knowledge, was incompetent; but no Minister was selected because of his knowledge of the details of any undertaking. Even the Attorney General's Department had at times been controlled by a layman. Ministers were selected for their general ability, and administrative details were left to specialists. For instance, there was the Goldfields Water Supply which was under the control of the Minister for Works. The Minister was not selected because of his special knowledge of water supply, but because he had the capacity and was suitable to manage that concern. The Minister laid down a policy the details of which were carried out by the secretary and the engineer. The administration of the branch had been a distinct success. Those who did not utilise the scheme did not praise it to such an extent, but the Government looked at the indirect profit to be gained. With a Commissioner controlling the railways, there was not that position. The Minister had the right to control a certain amount of the policy, but he had not an adviser as the Min-

ister for Works had in connection with the Goldfields Water Supply. There was no one between the Minister for Railways and the Commissioner. If there were an officer capable of balancing affairs when the Minister and the Commissioner came into conflict, and had a difference of opinion, there would not be many arguments against the present system of control. If the Bill were passed there would be the Commissioner, who was an expert, and the Minister who was not an expert, and the latter would have no one to assist him when he came into conflict with the Commissioner. The Government must work the railways in accordance with their general policy of development. The Minister at present was hampered and interfered with. When members were using arguments on past experience it should be realised that at that time the railways were placed in the hands of the Minister for Works. At that time the Works Department was growing by leaps and bounds. The Minister had to control a huge amount of loan moneys; he was carrying out the Fremantle Harbour Works, and starting the Goldfields Water Supply. There was railway construction going on throughout the State, and a huge public works expenditure everywhere. There had never been so great a strain on a Minister for Works as existed at that time and when, in addition, the Minister had to control the Railway Department. It was necessary for the Minister to devote much time to the Works Department, and as a result the railway administration suffered. The Minister had to trust to the general manager, and that officer entertained certain opinions which were against what the people considered were in the best interests of the State. The criticism at that time was not so much against the system of control as against the general manager. On the goldfields the management of the railways was generally condemned, but Parliament, after the general election of 1901, was of opinion that the dissatisfaction of the people was owing to the system rather than the manager. Consequently the system was altered. A mistake was then made, and the State would have been in a better position had the

Ministerial control been continued. He trusted the Committee would revert to the old system of Ministerial control.

Mr. BOLTON: It was unnecessary for members to repeat arguments in Committee which had been used by previous speakers, or to make long second-reading speeches on different amendments. If these second-reading speeches were to be made in Committee, then he would prefer to be out of the Chamber while they were being delivered. The present system practically provided dual control. If the Ministerial control were reverted to it would simply mean the control of the railway by a Minister who was responsible to Parliament. At present when members objected to the expenditure on certain works the only reply they received from the Minister was that the alteration had been suggested and he had approved of it. The present difficulty was that Parliament had no say in what the Minister approved. The Minister that evening had said he was opposed to Ministerial control. He (Mr. Bolton) was inclined to think one reason for that was that if Ministerial control was reverted to, too much work would be placed on the present Minister's shoulders. He should remember however that, if Ministerial control were reverted to, it would not be possible to place the department and that of the Minister for Mines in charge of one member of the Ministry. It would be a very great mistake to put those two important departments under one Minister. With regard to the question of judging by results it was possible for any Commissioner or general manager so to work the railways that the result to the country would be startling, for he could very greatly lessen the cost by using new stock instead of repairing old stock. During the following few years, however, leeway would have to be made up. A man could not be judged on a short term of office, and to get proper results an officer would have to be in charge for some five years. It was impossible for instance to judge the Acting Commissioner by the results of a few months' work. The Government were now carrying Collie coal, manures for farmers, and stock at fifty per cent. reduction, and

several lines were being carried on at absolute loss. Was it fair for the Commissioner that he should receive instructions to make the railways pay, and then for the Government to introduce an entirely new system? With the Ministerial control everything of that kind would be settled by the Minister, and then Parliament alone would govern the policy of the railways. The railways were the greatest producing department in the State and it was only right that they should be under the control of Parliament through the Minister.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment was not clear to him, and he had allowed members to discuss the question of Commissioner versus Ministerial control. There was no necessity, seeing that an arrangement was made between the two sides of the House, for the amendment, and members could express their opinion on a vote for or against the clause.

Mr. Bath: Was the amendment out of order?

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment had not been put. The hon. member had proposed to strike out two words "Section ten" with a view to inserting other words which he did not notify. The proposal on the Notice Paper was to strike out the whole clause with a view to inserting another. That was out of order. The member could vote against the clause and insert another when the proper time arrived, moving his proposition as a substantive clause. A member could not strike out the whole of one clause with the object of inserting another clause.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: From the experience he had in connection with the Railway Department, he felt certain we should be making a great mistake if we departed from Commissioner control. He wished to make himself very clear and emphatic on that point. In the best interests of the State it was wiser to keep to the present policy so far as the Commissioner control was concerned without reverting back to Ministerial control. The member for Guildford had said that the Commissioner was judged on the profits made. He joined issue with the member on that and said we should judge our work on the

turnover of the business and the cost to the country in making that turnover. If we looked back to the year 1901-2 we would find the working expense of the railways amounted to £1,250,000; in 1902-3 it was almost the same, £1,247,000; in 1903 it came down to £1,179,000, and in 1904-5 there was a large expenditure of £79,000 on works which could have been spread over a certain number of years. In 1905-6 the expenditure was £1,201,000; in 1906-7, £1,137,000. We had to consider the greater amount of tonnage carried as between 1902 and 1907, the greater number of passengers and the increase of trade. There had been reductions made continuously in freights from 1902 down to 1907, and the revenue of the Railway Department had been reduced from time to time. The member for Guildford made certain alterations in the grain freights. They were decreased the following year by himself (the Minister), and again last year farther reductions in the grain freights were made. Then there were reductions in the timber freights, and in many instances where it was found anomalies existed reductions were made. Reductions had been continuously made in past years. Although a much larger business was done and more passengers were carried, we found that the expenditure on the railways was £120,000 less than in 1902. For this year the Government were only asking for £1,077,000 to pay the working expenses of the railway system, and he thought he was justified in saying that the Government would not spend more than £1,050,000. He did not receive these figures from the department; but the amount the Government were spending now would leave a credit compared with the amount placed on the Estimates. The earnings fell off in the early portion of the year, but he was satisfied we would more than make them up, and our revenue this year would be quite up to the amount on the Estimates. The records showed that from 1902 our working expenses had been decreasing although the work of the department had increased. To judge the work of the railway system, what we should look at was not the earning capa-

city, because the Railway Commissioner and the Government could make all sorts of charges on the public. Charges could be made here and there which would swell the revenue, and these would be irritating to the public. They would increase the revenue but the public did not appreciate that. If members looked at the following clauses they would see where the Government were desirous of taking the responsibility on themselves in connection with the charges and freights. If the Government altered the freights and acted directly contrary to the wishes of the Commissioner, then the responsibility should be thrown on the proper quarter for these reductions and alterations. But it was in regard to the working expenses, not in regard to the profits that we should judge the work of the Commissioner. The question of whether the railways would show a profit or not would rest on the Government, and if it was found the profits were not sufficient to pay the interest and working expenses, the Government could demand an increase in the railway freights to make the railways pay. He had pointed out clearly the other night that he wanted the Government to have control of the policy of the railways; but the administration, as the member for Guildford interjected, did not depend on the appointment and dismissal of railway employees, but in connection with the whole of the detailed work of the system. No one could be a good controlling Minister acting without a Commissioner and having all the responsibility of the control of the railways on his shoulders. It would be unfair to ask someone who had not the slightest knowledge of railway work to accept the whole responsibility in connection with the ordinary administration of the Railway Department.

Mr. Johnson : That applied to all Ministers.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS disagreed with the member. A Minister could not have a knowledge of the detail work of the department. It was, of course, the duty of the Minister to make himself acquainted with the details of the department as far as possible; but he could not have that intimate

knowledge which a Commissioner must necessarily have. It was impossible to get a Minister for Railways from amongst members of Parliament to have the full knowledge necessary. In the Railway Department the Commissioner must be a great organiser, and the Minister had not time to carry out the organisation of the department. Members might say that this organisation could be done as well with a general manager; still, the responsibility was thrown on the Commissioner. There was a large amount of political influence brought to bear in connection with railway work. The Acting Commissioner had informed him (the Minister) that he could do with less trains being run, and in that way the working expenses could be reduced, and he (the Minister) assured the Acting Commissioner that he would have a free hand in connection with these matters. If he thought the traffic did not warrant the running of trains to certain places he was to cut down the train service. Members must have noticed the deputations that had waited on him (the Minister) from various districts to try and induce him to instruct the Commissioner to revert to the old train service; but he did not do so. He wanted to give this new train service a trial, and he looked on that work as belonging to the Commissioner. It was his duty to know the traffic on certain lines and what tonnage had to be carried, and what trains could carry that tonnage. Still, it was necessary to give a fair and equitable service to the various districts. That was one place where political influence could be brought to bear. Under the present system the Commissioner was absolutely supreme as to the train service, and in all matters of detail the Commissioner was supreme. It was important where we had a huge department of 6,000 employees, to leave the responsibility with regard to those employees in the control of a Commissioner, and outside the Minister.

Mr. Scaddan : Leave them to the tender mercies of the sweater.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : It all depended on what the member meant by the sweater. The hon. member made a statement the other night for which there was no justification.

Mr. Scaddan : There was any amount of warrant for it.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : We heard a lot about the sweating business, but there was no doubt the interjection was not a fair one, because it could not be shown that any effort had been made in the department to sweat the officers. Were not the working men on the railways more satisfied than they had been for many a long day? In nearly every instance there were special agreements between the Commissioner and the workmen, and although there might be a little friction occasionally, that would always arise. He hoped we should always be able to control these matters; at the same time he was sure that the men were more satisfied to-day than they had been during the last six or seven years. They were better paid than they were six or seven years ago. As long as we complied with the laws of the Arbitration Court which controlled the railway system, he could not see where there could be any question of sweating in the service. What he wanted to see was the Minister controlling all questions of expenditure, and having power to control freights, so that if the Government desired to make rebates with a view to help any industry they had the power to do it.

Mr. Butcher : What responsibility was to be given the Commissioner?

THE MINISTER : The administration of the service.

Mr. Scaddan : Boss of the employees.

THE MINISTER : If we passed our Estimates and agreed to expend a certain amount in salaries, the matter was handed over to the Commissioner; but for any improvement, even a small betterment, any expenditure from the earnings of the Railway Department to give some improvement in a country township, the money was not to be expended without the Minister giving his approval. The responsibility should be taken by the Minister who should be in a position to be blamed in the House. Under the old Act the Minister was responsible for the expenditure of money. The only extra power wanted for the Minister was the power to control freights. When the Executive Council interfered in the mat-

ter of freights they should take the responsibility of superseding the rates fixed by the Commissioner. Other than on questions of expenditure of money and the alteration of freights, the Commissioner would be supreme, subject, of course, to the Act with regard to his dealing with the employees. If the Commissioner dismissed a man the employee had the right to appeal to the board. Also the Commissioner was controlled with regard to by-laws and regulations; they must be approved by the Governor-in-Council before having the force of law. We were justified in taking the extra power; but we were not justified in going back to Ministerial control, putting all the responsibility of the general administration of the department upon the Minister. If we did so we would be introducing a system which would not be beneficial to the State. We should at least have another five years under Commissioner control. Tasmania was the only State with Ministerial control. We should profit by the experience of the older States where they had larger railway concerns than we had in this State.

Mr. WALKER: The Minister's speech would convince anyone that Ministerial control was the better system. The Minister wished to leave to the Commissioner merely the control of the details of carrying out expenditure, policy, and freights, and wished to retain to himself the control of expenditure, rates, charges, and policy. The Minister would leave to the Commissioner nothing but the absolute supervision of the workmen, and would make him a mere overseer, not even a general manager, simply a boss; and the proper term for the underling would not even be General Manager, though certainly the dignity of the position would be maintained quite sufficiently if the term "General Manager" was used. The Minister must know that the head of any firm left to his manager certain autonomy, the right of free and independent action, and discretion and judgment in the exercise of his duties. No Minister of a department went into minute details; every Minister was obliged to trust to his officers; and so it

would be in the railways. The Minister would be responsible, but would have his officers under him in whom he must trust, and the general manager would have under him officers whom he must trust, and so on right down through the service. What was wanting in the present system was that the House had no say if any employee in the service had a grievance. Members should not be in a position to have someone in the railway service who could spread over the workmen a screen that deadened the sound of their appeal to this tribunal for justice. The Minister should take the responsibility of interfering, or accept the responsibility of the verdict of Parliament on his conduct. Again, how could there be government in regard to policy with the control given to a Commissioner? We had authorised the construction of a railway from Fremantle to Arncliffe. The Commissioner disapproved of the work, but the line was constructed; and then the Commissioner fixed the time table in such a way that everybody cried out that the line was a failure. That was because the Minister could not interfere.

The Minister: If the Commissioner did things like that the Minister would soon interfere. Did the hon. member think Parliament would not interfere?

Mr. WALKER: We could not get behind the four corners of an Act of Parliament. It was desired to get facilities for interfering, and for the Minister to exercise judgment in a case like that if it be necessary. Members desired to be in a position to inform the Minister through the House that a grievance or danger existed, and ask him would he take steps to correct it. If the Minister secured a general manager who would not take upon himself powers that were not allocated to him, who would perform his duties as a manager and leave the Minister to act as the go-between of the people and the general manager, then we would have a public service that was in touch with the public and one that the people could feel was for them. A general manager would suit all purposes, and now it was only a question of the name which that manager should bear. The House wanted to feel that it could

make alterations from time to time through the Minister as being directly responsible to the House. We wanted to make it impossible for the Minister to screen his lack of judgment or his political tendencies by saying this or that matter was for the Commissioner to decide. We wanted to be in touch with every string in the management of the State railways. The system of Commissioner control was fading in the East.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS was not asking for any farther power in the Bill as to the expenditure of money; this was provided under the present Act. It had been stated that money was expended without the responsibility of the Minister for Railways; but he wished to make it clear that the Minister had the responsibility for railway expenditure.

Mr. Walker: What about the duplication of lines?

The MINISTER: Where did the hon. member suppose the Commissioner would get the money from for duplicating a railway? It must be always with the approval of Cabinet that any large work could be undertaken.

Mr. Gull: Did that apply to the purchase of land on the goldfields for a reservoir to supply water for the railways?

The MINISTER: The only power he was asking in the Bill was to give the Government power to alter any rates, and for the Government to take the responsibility.

Mr. ANGWIN: The influence which was used by the Minister and backed up by Act of Parliament tended to make the Minister rather careless in granting requests by the Commissioner for expenditure of money. If the Minister knew he would be responsible for acts done in connection with the railways, the Minister would take more care, knowing that he would have to make explanations to Parliament. Though the Minister said he had control of expenditure, this really meant that the Minister did not exercise the care he would do if he had full control with a general manager. Take the railway station offices in Perth, which the late Commissioner started to build, or take the duplication to Armadale, or take

the purchase of a reservoir on the goldfields; these showed that the Minister did not take sufficient care because Parliament had placed control in the hands of the Commissioner, and the Commissioner was used as a stop-gap. We should revert to the system of Ministerial control, now that things had steadied down.

Mr. H. BROWN supported the amendment. The *regime* of the late Commissioner was anything but satisfactory to the country, and this was exemplified by the Commissioner starting the construction of railway offices in Perth, when the then Minister said he had not given authority. There was also the duplication of the railway. The sooner we had a Minister for Railways solely, the better it would be for the State, and the Minister could appoint the best man he could get as manager, even if he paid up to £2,000 a year, so that the Minister would have control over him and be responsible to Parliament.

Mr. FOULKES opposed the amendment. The State had suffered great loss during some years past; but he did not blame the Commissioner altogether for the shocking neglect shown by the various Ministers for Railways, neglect and idleness while in Ministerial control of that department. He anticipated there would be many mistakes in the future by the Ministers for Railways, neglect and idleness. The present Minister controlling Mines—one of the most important departments in the State—had not sufficient time to give the necessary attention to Railways. The present Minister gave the greatest attention to the Mines Department, but not equal attention to the Railway Department, and members would know that the control of Mines was more congenial to the present Minister than the control of Railways. The Railway Department, even with Commissioner control, needed the whole attention of one Minister. He agreed with the provision that the Minister could supersede any rates imposed by the Commissioner, the Executive Council acting as a court of appeal; and in the following session Ministers would have to state their reasons for altering or refusing to

alter the tariff. Years ago, with the railways under Ministerial control, the Minister had great difficulty in fighting political influence, and one Minister, rather than give way, resigned. In their hearts members had welcomed the removal of political control, which made them liable to all kinds of outside pressure. The Fremantle members must have found it hard to secure the enormous expenditure on that railway station. Unfortunately, the Minister of the day neglected to prevent that expenditure, for the reduction of which the present Minister was entitled to credit.

[*Mr. Ewing took the Chair.*]

Mr. GULL : Party considerations would not influence his vote. He realised the strength and weakness of both sides of the case. It would be hard to find Mr. George's equal for persistency and determination to have his own way. The alterations to the Fremantle yards, the duplication of the railway, the purchasing of dams on the goldfields to compete with the Government water scheme, tended to show that Commissioner control was wrong. On the other hand, political influence was rampant many years ago. However, the Bill clearly laid down the relative positions of the Minister and the Commissioner, and the Commissioner system should therefore be given a farther trial. It was a revelation to hear the present Minister accept the responsibility for the acts of the Commissioner. The previous Minister had disclaimed all such responsibility, and had told him (Mr. Gull) that he had tried to stop the work at the Fremantle yards, but in vain.

The Minister for Railways : The member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) knew that every Minister for Railways had been responsible for such expenditure.

Mr. GULL : It was unfortunate that the previous Minister sought to shelve that responsibility. As additional powers were taken by the Minister under the amendment of Section 22, he (Mr. Gull) would vote for Commissioner control.

Mr. SCADDAN : During the last few months we had a fair experience of re-

versals of form on the part of some members, particularly some on the Government cross-benches, and the member for Swan (Mr. Gull) was no exception. Last year he voted for Ministerial control. During the first session of 1907 he (Mr. Scaddan) said on the Address-in-Reply that it was absolutely unfair for the Government to bring in a Bill endorsed with their approval and expect to get on it a fair expression of opinion. From what he had seen in the Corridor and in the Chamber to-night, there was energetic whipping going on to have this clause passed, and the latest utterance of the member for Swan showed that he had come under the whip. His excuse was most flimsy—that he had not understood that the Minister possessed, under the existing Act, the power which the Minister now admitted he possessed ; and therefore the hon. member would vote for a continuance of Commissioner control. The hon. member was in the House when, during the discussion of the motion referred to, the same statement was made ; and yet he then voted for Ministerial control. The country should understand that on matters of this kind they could not get a true expression of the opinion of Parliament. If members were satisfied with the control of the Commissioner, why were the whips sent round ? He had always held the opinion that we should revert to Ministerial control. The system of the control by the Commissioner had now been given a fair trial, and under a gentleman such as whom we would never get again. Mr. George was a gentleman who would permit none to override him. He was satisfied that the present Acting Commissioner was not to be compared with Mr. George in that regard. What the Government wanted was to allow the Commissioner to remain in order to take the responsibility of sweating the employees of the Railway Department. Such sweating was going on now in spite of the denial of the Minister. The Government had been challenged to hold an inquiry but they would not grant one. The Upper House had passed a resolution in favour of an inquiry, but even they could not get one. Only to-night a case had been brought under his

notice which was a disgrace to the Railway Department. If the Commissioner were responsible it were a disgrace to him, and if the Minister were responsible the same remark applied to him also. This was the case of a man who had been in charge of the electrical motors at the Midland workshops. He was dismissed for some alleged offence and appealed against the decision. The department were unable to uphold the charge; consequently the man was ordered to be reinstated. He was shifted from the position he held previously, where he obtained 9s. 6d. a day, and was put into the yards at a wage of 8s. a day. They did not stop there, however, for they then sacked the man and put another in his place. That sort of thing was going on under the control of the Commissioner. There were many other cases of a similar kind which had been brought under his notice, where the appeal board had ordered men to be reinstated, but almost immediately afterwards they had been discharged. The reply one received on asking why these men were discharged was that it was under the new policy of retrenchment. It was nothing of the sort; it was merely a desire to remove these men at all costs. With regard to the responsibility placed on the Commissioner, the Minister now said he wanted to place the responsibility on the Commissioner of running the railways at the lowest working expenses, but that he would take control of the earnings. There was only one way by which a Commissioner could prove his *bona fides* as a railway expert, and that was by running the railways at the lowest possible cost. This would be done by sweating the employees.

The Minister for Railways : The reduction was insisted upon by him, and he hoped there would still be more.

Mr. SCADDAN : The Commissioner would be judged by the Minister on the manner in which he cut down working cost; and the Minister intended to take under his control the earnings of the department, stating, "I control the earnings, and you must get the most you can out of the men employed." If the Minister were to take this amount of control

from the Commissioner why did he not take all?

Mr. BUTCHER : The principle of control by Commissioner had always been opposed by him, and he was one of those who, when the Bill was first brought in, opposed it. He had not seen or heard anything since then to induce him to alter his decision. The only argument to be brought forward against Ministerial control was the fear that political influence would creep in. What was political influence? It was the opinion of the people, and as it was the people's railway it was only right they should control the system. If there were to be control by the Commissioner then let it be absolute, but there should not be a dual control partly by the Minister and partly by the Commissioner. It would be far better to revert to the old system.

Mr. BREBBER : There was no time when so much favouritism was shown, so many accusations made against the Railway Department and the Minister for Railways as when there was Ministerial control of the system. He watched first the Ministerial control system and then that by the Commissioner, and the opinion he had arrived at was such that he intended on the present occasion to vote for the retention of control by the Commissioner. When the Minister was in charge, accusations were hurled at all and sundry, and discontent existed throughout the whole service. It had been said that one result of Ministerial control was that Ministers were swayed by this or that party. He could well conceive the position where parties would be so even in the House that there would be a likelihood of a weak Minister being swayed by one party or the other, so as to catch a certain vote. In such circumstances the Minister and the Department became no more than puppets in the hands of the House. The railways formed a large business concern which should be kept altogether outside of political influence. The department ought to be administered without any party bias at all, and it would be most unfair and unwise in the interests of the country to have the railways managed by a Minister who might be swayed by persons

outside of Parliament as well as by members. Again, the life of a Minister sometimes lasted for only a few months, and in that period it was impossible for him to get even a glimmering of the technicalities of the work of a huge concern like the railways. Therefore how could such a business as that be expected to prosper? The department required at its head an expert who had given a lifetime to the study of managing railways. No other business could be managed under such a condition of affairs. No person could take charge of a large institution for two or three months and run it. It would be very unwise to put the control of the railways into the hands of an inexperienced individual such as the Minister. The control ought to be placed in the hands of a Commissioner so that there would be no political influence. Only since the reductions had been made had the expenses of the department been brought down to anything like what they were in the other States.

Mr. HORAN: The only possible way to get over the difficulty was to have a buffer stop between the Commissioner and the Minister; some expert to advise the Minister when he differed from the Commissioner, practically free from either of them.

The Minister: A permanent secretary?

Mr. HORAN: A permanent secretary to be an expert; that was the solution to the difficulty. He would vote for the retention of Ministerial control on the basis he had mentioned.

Mr. STUART: If we desired a perpetuation of the Commissioner system after our experience of the last few years we were gluttons. The country was sick of it, and if we persisted in it the people would be sick of members. We had seen the Commissioner of Railways hedged around by an Act setting at defiance the wishes of the House as interpreted by the Minister for Railways. He did not think at any time there had been so much contempt brought on the Minister or Parliament as there had been by the actions of the Commissioner whom we had recently got rid of. He did not know who the Gov-

ernment desired to support as Commissioner, but the experience of the past should teach the Government to be careful. We heard about the stupendous magnitude of the railways, but it was a tin pot affair compared with large propositions which were carried on without so much fuss. If we had a Minister in power who would take an interest in the system and safeguard the public no Commissioner would be necessary. Something between the two systems was necessary. If we got hold of a reasonable Commissioner and had a sensible Minister, Commissioner control might be advisable. But the Commissioner was outside the reach of the House while the Minister was directly responsible, and there was a way of bringing him to account. He was in favour of reverting to Ministerial control, and if we could not find a minister to handle the system we should have to adopt something between the two systems. In his opinion we should revert to Ministerial control.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS :

The member for Yilgarn's suggestion that there should be a permanent secretary appointed to advise the Minister in regard to railway work was worthy of consideration. One objection he had to it was that the work of such an office would be somewhat of a sinecure, because there was not sufficient work for such an officer to perform to fill in his time. He (the Minister) often thought it would be wise to have someone to act as an intermediary between the Commissioner and the Minister, and to advise the Minister; but there was always the consideration of expense. One must always feel that any recommendation placed before the Minister by the Commissioner had received the fullest consideration of the Commissioner, and one must have confidence in such an officer. Still the suggestion was worthy of consideration. As to the argument that the Ministers had been mere puppets in the hands of the Commissioner, he did not think the remark was warranted. From what he knew of the previous Ministers such a statement was not justified, and he did not think it was justified as far as he (the Minister) was concerned.

Mr. Stuart : Did not the Commissioner do as he liked all the time he was there ?

The MINISTER : Nothing of the kind. On one or two occasions the member for Ivanhoe and other members had spoken in regard to the administration of the service, and those members knew perfectly well that the Commissioner did not have his own way.

Mr. Scaddan : It was doubtful how the Commissioner would have acted if it had not been towards the end of his term.

The MINISTER : The matters he had in his mind were wholly under the control of the Commissioner ; yet pressure was brought to bear on the Commissioner by the Government and he had to give way. He was sure the Ministers who had preceded him had seen that the instructions given to the Commissioner were carried out. If we went back to the old system of Ministerial control we would be adopting something which would be prejudicial to the best interests of Western Australia.

[*Mr. Daglish took the Chair.*]

Clause put, and a division taken with the following result :—

Ayes	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	17
			—

Majority for .. 3

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Barnett	Mr. Anquwin
Mr. Brebber	Mr. Bath
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Draper	Mr. H. Brown
Mr. Eddy	Mr. T. L. Brown
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Collier
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Holman
Mr. Layman	Mr. Horan
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Hudson
Mr. Male	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Monger	Mr. Stuart
Mr. N. J. Moore	Mr. Underwood
Mr. S. F. Moore	Mr. Walker
Mr. Price	Mr. Ware
Mr. Smith	Mr. Heitmann (Teller).
Mr. A. J. Wilson	
Mr. E. Wilson	
Mr. Gordon (Teller).	

Clause thus passed.

As to Salary.

Mr. SCADDAN : What about the salary to be paid under this clause ? That question had been waived for the purpose of ascertaining the opinion of the Committee as to Ministerial control.

The CHAIRMAN : The question of salary could not be raised now.

Mr. SCADDAN : It was absolutely unfair to the Committee to put questions in this fashion.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member must at once withdraw that statement.

Mr. SCADDAN withdrew ; but this procedure put the Committee in a false position. At the outset the Minister asked the members not to consider the salary until they had decided the question of Ministerial control.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member might have misunderstood him (the Chairman) ; but he, knowing nothing of such arrangement, distinctly told the Committee that he could not accept the amendment of the member for Guildford (*Mr. Johnson*), and therefore had to put the question that the clause stand as printed. That having been resolved in the affirmative, there was no possibility of harking back.

Mr. SCADDAN : Then the country should know that the question whether or not the Commissioner's salary should be increased had not been discussed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 22 :

Mr. BATH opposed the clause. The Minister laid great emphasis on the provision made in the Bill for Ministerial control of the Commissioner ; but he could hardly have studied the amendment in the light of the section in the principal Act, under which section the Commissioner had a right to fix various charges and regulations. The clause provided that the powers conferred on the Commissioner by that section might from time to time be exercised by the Governor, and that the charges fixed by the Governor should supersede those fixed by the Commissioner. This was a comic-opera provision. Who would determine its meaning ?

The Minister for Railways : The clause was quite clear if read carefully.

Mr. BATH : When would the Governor interfere ? Just before an election, as in the case of the election for Northam ? Would wires be sent to the constituency that the Government would exercise this power to reduce freights ? Under such a

clause political influence could be used in most pernicious fashion. If the country was to be committed to Commissioner control, let that control be complete, so as to obviate political corruption. Those employed by the railway, the people who must suffer in times of depression, were left to the mercy of the Commissioner; yet the Minister was to have power to grant a reduction of freights, against the will of the Commissioner, pending an election. If Commissioner control was good in one matter, it was good in the other.

Mr. BOLTON: As the Committee had decided in favour of Commissioner control, this clause should be struck out. By Section 22 of the Act the Commissioner might, with the approval of the Minister, do certain things after giving notice in the *Gazette*; but by the clause the Minister might overrule such action. The Minister would be empowered to cancel his own approval of the Commissioner's actions.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Why all this fuss? The member for Brown Hill (Mr. Bath) thought that all sorts of wickedness would be perpetrated under the clause, and the last speaker could see nothing in it but dual control. By Section 22 the Commissioner might do certain things with the approval of the Minister; and if the Minister wished at any time to alter the conditions of which he had previously approved, he could not do so without the consent and recommendation of the Commissioner. This related to charges only, and not to ordinary regulations. If the Minister approved of certain charges, and a new Government took office and desired to alter these charges, the alteration was at present impossible unless the Commissioner made the necessary recommendation to the new Minister. The Government should have that power with regard to charges; the Governor-in-Council should have power to supersede the special rates, say the grain rates. The Opposition might be placed on the Treasury benches to-morrow but the Commissioner might decline to make some alteration which they thought justifiable.

The responsibility should be thrown clearly upon the Ministry, that the alterations were made at the dictate of the Government.

Mr. HOLMAN: The motive of an amendment like this was to place certain powers in the hands of Ministers to be used in their own interests at election times. There was sufficient power in the present Act for the Government to bring about an increase in freights, but this amendment would enable the Government to bring in a list of freights which might upset the general working of the railways. The Commissioner should be put in such a position, that he would know at the beginning of the year that when he based his estimate on certain freights he was going to realise that estimate. With this amendment the Government could upset his calculations at any time. The Government knew well that if the Commissioner of Railways refused what they desired they could refuse supplies to the Commissioner, and that not one penny could be spent by the Commissioner without the consent of the Minister, so that the amendment was unnecessary. The only reason why it was brought forward appeared to be that it would give the Government a power to use at election times.

Mr. UNDERWOOD favoured Ministerial control and was not so strongly opposed to Commissioner control. Both systems had been tried and worked fairly well, but the system proposed in this clause was a mongrel control. If we were to have Commissioner control we must give the Commissioner a fair chance; but the clause was merely a hedge for the Minister to get behind. It was to give the Minister control of the railways if he chose, but if anything went wrong it would be blamed on the Commissioner, on the other hand if anything went right the Minister took the credit. With a view to winning the Northam election the Government deliberately promised to reduce freights to the extent of £50,000. The clause was no doubt put in in this Bill to buttress the position of the Government if they happened to be in a similar position in the future.

Clause put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	17
Noes	14

Majority for	3
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AYES.

Mr. Barnett
Mr. Brebber
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Draper
Mr. Eddy
Mr. Gordon
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Keenan
Mr. Male
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Price
Mr. Smith
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Layman (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angus
Mr. Bath
Mr. Bolton
Mr. T. L. Brown
Mr. Collier
Mr. Holman
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Stuart
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Walker
Mr. Ware
Mr. Heitmann (Teller).

Clause thus passed.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 23 :

Mr. BOLTON moved an amendment (on Notice Paper) to add certain words to Section 23.

The Minister : One could not see any sense in the amendment.

Mr. BOLTON : Section 23 provided : "The Commissioner may from time to time make by-laws upon the following subjects." He was anxious to add the words, "with the approval of the Minister" after "from time to time." Since the Minister had obtained the right to veto the matter of freights, perhaps the Minister would agree to this amendment.

The Minister : It was already provided for. Section 24, Subsection 1 of the Act, said that no by-law should have effect until approved by the Governor and published in the *Gazette*.

Mr. BOLTON : It was farther sought to amend Section 23 by adding words to Subsection 26. The section provided that the Commissioner could make by-laws, among other things, for organising, classifying, and paying the staff employed on the railways and prescribing the terms of employment. He was anxious to add these words:—

"or in any other manner affecting the duties of such employees, provided that such by-laws or regulations are in no way inconsistent with the terms of an award of the Arbitration Court or any industrial agreement that may be in force, and—"

The subsection in the Act did not give the Minister control over these detailed subjects, so that in this case the words, "with the approval of the Minister" were really necessary. The proviso to this amendment was that the by-laws and regulations should be in no way inconsistent with the terms of an award of the Arbitration Court, or any industrial agreement that might be in force.

[12 o'clock, midnight.]

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : Evidently a mistake had been made in preparing the amendment, for surely the hon. member did not desire to insert in line 2 of the Bill now before the House the words he suggested.

Mr. BOLTON : That was a mistake, for it was intended that the proposal should be an amendment to the principal Act, not to the Bill.

The MINISTER : Then the amendment would have to be very different. In any case he could not see why it was needed. In regard to the proposed clause, the only reason why we granted Parliamentary sanction was that the Auditor General had questioned the right of the department to do certain work without Parliamentary sanction. It was something outside the scope of the department, and the Auditor considered the Commissioner had no power to pay the officers for this class of work without Parliamentary authority. Every member would approve of the provident fund. The last few words of the clause made membership compulsory.

The CHAIRMAN : Did the hon. member for North Fremantle desire to move the amendment ?

Mr. BOLTON : If there had been a mistake in the wording of the amendment it was due to the printing, but he certainly desired to take a vote on it. High authority had been obtained by him with regard to the drafting of the amendment. Probably it looked a little vague, and the trouble was evidently due to some words having been omitted from the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member could only move the first portion of his amendment.

Mr. BOLTON : It would be better perhaps to withdraw the amendment he had moved.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. BOLTON moved an amendment—

That the words "and make the membership thereof a condition of the employment of employees," be struck out.

Mr. ANGWIN : During the course of the debate on the second reading he had drawn attention to this clause in order to ask what effect it would have upon men who might make a claim under the Workers' Compensation Act. Had the Minister obtained a legal opinion on this point ?

The Minister for Railways had been unable to obtain a legal opinion on the point.

The CHAIRMAN : The amendment of the member for North Fremantle on the Notice Paper should precede the amendment now before the Committee, for it was to add certain words to Subclause 26, while the present amendment was to amend the subclause which would be numbered 26a.

Mr. BOLTON moved an amendment—

That the words "or in any other manner affecting the duties of such employees, provided that such by-laws or regulations are in no way inconsistent with the terms of an award of the Arbitration Court, or any industrial agreement that may be in force, and" be added to Subsection 26.

There was nothing of very great importance in the amendment except that it gave certain power to the Commissioner. The question had been raised in the courts as to the power of the Commissioner to enter into an agreement. The amendment should be inserted in the measure.

The Minister : The object of the amendment apparently was to meet the case of reorganising and classifying the staff. There could be no objection to the amendment, as the Government desired that an award of the Arbitration Court should be binding. It was desired that the Commissioner should comply as far as possible with the awards of the court or with any agreements that had been made. He had not received legal advice as to

how the amendment would affect the work of the department, but he would agree to it.

Amendment passed.

Mr. Ware called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. JOHNSON : The member for North Fremantle had an amendment to strike out all the words after "employees" in Subclause 3, the object being to prevent the provision being made compulsory. But the amendment would not have that effect. There was no objection to the establishment of the fund, but he objected to the deduction being made compulsory. There were employees who were opposed to this provision.

The Minister : They would not join the funds then.

Mr. JOHNSON : How would the Commissioner discriminate ?

The Minister : A list would be handed in and only those who joined would contribute.

Mr. JOHNSON : If the foreman in a department went to a man and told him it would be better for him to join the fund, that man would join and the deduction would at once be made. He moved an amendment—

That all the words after "fund" be struck out.

Mr. Bolton : Would the insertion of the word "voluntary" meet with the approval of the member for Guildford ?

Mr. Johnson : Yes.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. BATH : The best way of meeting the difficulty, if officers were willing to have the deduction made, was to insert the word "voluntary" after "establishing," and insert the words "subject to the consent of such employees being given" after "employees." He moved an amendment—

That the word "voluntary" be inserted after "establishing."

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS accepted the amendment. There was no desire other than to make this a voluntary fund. Those members of the ser-

vice who did not desire to join need not do so.

Mr. ANGWIN opposed the clause. Since the establishment of the fund he had watched the matter, and the position was that if a man who met with an accident received an amount from the fund equal to the amount he would be entitled to under the Workers' Compensation Act, that was all he could obtain.

The Minister: If the word "voluntary" were inserted that would meet the case.

Mr. ANGWIN: That was the worst feature of it, because if the man agreed to this fund and the Commissioner agreed, it would be certified to by the registrar, and it had been held by the Court of Appeal in England that the receipt of compensation under a certified scheme was a bar to any action for damages. The clause, though a good thing for the State, gave the workmen an opportunity of contracting themselves out of the Workers' Compensation Act. Private employers would be glad to avail themselves of such a provision. He had received from the Commissioner a letter to the effect that it was not intended to avoid the liability imposed by that Act.

Mr. BATH: The Attorney General should state whether the opinion of the last speaker was correct.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. BATH: A farther amendment was needed. He moved—

That all the words after "of" in line 3 be struck out, and "such employees as give their consent thereto" be inserted in lieu.

Mr. JOHNSON would divide the House on this dangerous clause. The highest authority in the land had held that if a scheme existed by which employees could obtain compensation equal to that obtained under the Workers' Compensation Act, that Act should not apply. As to this clause the workers were never directly consulted. When the fund in question increased so as to permit of compensation greater than that procurable under the Act, the Act would no longer apply to railway servants. The

Attorney General should give us some information.

Mr. ANGWIN: If the Railway Department would give an undertaking that there was no intention to have a certified scheme, the danger would be removed. In the case to which he referred the decision of the court was that the receipt of compensation under a certified scheme was a bar to an action for damages.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Workers' Compensation Act provided in Section 13 that certain schemes approved by the registrar might be registered by him, and that a scheme so registered should be taken as an agreement between employer and worker that the scheme should be relied upon, instead of the Act, for giving compensation in case of accident. The registrar, to utilise the section, must first obtain the opinion of the employer and the employees; and the registrar's certificate, if given, must set out that the scheme under which employer and workers both agreed to come in order to exempt themselves from the Act was equally favourable to both. Consequently, if the clause were passed as printed, authorising the establishment of certain funds, the employees might refuse to become parties to surrendering any rights they had under the Workers' Compensation Act. The Registrar of Friendly Societies could not substitute such a scheme for the provisions of the Act except after ascertaining the views of employer and workers. If either party were hostile, the scheme could not be adopted.

Mr. ANGWIN: From the fund the men received in case of death more money than they could obtain under the Workers' Compensation Act; but the money was contributed by themselves. The ex-Commissioner had said he had no intention of initiating a certified scheme. The Minister ought to confirm this statement, and the men would then have a remedy if there was any attempt on the part of departmental officers to make this a certified scheme.

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

Clauses 5, 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 59:

The MINISTER moved that the following new subclause be added—

Every restaurant car and refreshment room leased under this section shall be deemed licensed premises and the lessee shall be deemed a licensed person within the meaning of Part I. of "The Sale of Liquors Act Amendment Act, 1897."

This would empower the inspectors to take samples and to prevent the sale of inferior liquors.

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 8—Amendment of Section 70; constitution of appeal board:

Mr. BOLTON moved an amendment—

That after "staff" in line 5 of paragraph (c) the words "and one person and his deputy from the locomotive branch" be inserted.

Under the Act an appeal board consisted of the chairman, the nominee of the Commissioner, and one person to be elected by the employees of each of the following branches of the department: Ways and Works, Traffic, Locomotive, and Workshops; but only the person elected by the branch in which the appellant was employed was to sit on an appeal. The Bill sought to amend this by providing that the board should consist of the chairman, a nominee of the Commissioner, and one person elected from the employees on the salaried staff and one elected from the employees on the wages staff, but only the person elected by the employees upon the staff on which the appellant was employed was to sit at the hearing of an appeal. The object of his amendment was to provide that a person representing the locomotive branch employees should sit on the appeal board to hear appeals from employees in the locomotive branch. The locomotive branch being a special branch of the service, it was difficult for a person chosen from the general wages staff to understand appeals dealing with the locomotive branch.

The MINISTER: There was no objection to the amendment.

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 9—Amendment of Section 71:

Mr. BOLTON moved as an amendment that the following be added as a subclause:—

"Every facility shall be given to the representative of the workers to attend the sittings of the Board, and he shall be paid his ordinary rate of pay for each day occupied in sitting, in addition to a sum of one guinea per day or part thereof, as expenses."

This was dealing with the appeal board. After having provided for employees' representatives to attend the appeal board to hear appeals, it was necessary that facilities should be given. There was no complaint that every facility was not given, but the principle in the amendment was that the representative of the wages staff should be paid a fee in addition to the time occupied in sitting on the board. It often happened this representative of the wages staff only sat on the board for two hours and was then brought on to work to make up his time. It would be more satisfactory for the staff to have a representative in receipt of some honorarium other than his wages.

The MINISTER hoped the amendment would not be pressed. Every facility was now given; if not there would be an outcry. The department paid the representative of the workers full wages all the time and had no objection to paying him out of pocket expenses. If the appeal was being heard at Kalgoorlie, the workers' representative would be paid all his out-of-pocket expenses and full wages all the time. We always took care the out-of-pocket expenses were paid while the man received his salary; with that assurance the hon. member should not press the matter.

Amendment negatived; the clause passed as printed.

[Mr. Ewing took the Chair.]

Clause 10—Amendment of Section 73:

Mr. BOLTON moved as an amendment that the following be added to the clause:—

"But in the event of the workers' representative refusing to sit, or being

unable to sit through sickness or for any lawful reason, the executive committee of the union to which the employee belongs shall be requested by the chairman, and shall have power to and shall, appoint another employee to act as a substitute for such member who is unwilling or unable to sit."

It was rather hard to grasp these amendments. The Act provided that the chairman and one other member of the appeal board constituted a quorum. The Bill provided for the deletion of those words and the section of the Act, as amended by the clause, would then read:—"The decision of any two members of the board shall be the decision of the board." His object in moving this amendment was to provide that in the event of the workers' representative refusing to sit or being unable to sit through sickness or for any lawful reason, the executive committee of the union to which the employee belonged should be requested by the chairman of the appeal board to appoint another employee to act as substitute for the member unwilling or unable to sit on the appeal board. Cases had fallen through because members of the board had not attended the appeal board. In the clause just passed we had provided for a deputy to be appointed, but the deputy might be exactly in the same position as the representative, and there was no provision for filling the vacancy. In many instances cases that might otherwise go to the appeal board were first submitted to the union, and were not proceeded with because the union decided they were frivolous. That saved the appeal board a lot of time and expense.

The MINISTER: We made provision for the appointment of a deputy so that the amendment was unnecessary.

Amendment put and negatived; the clause passed as printed.

[1 o'clock a.m. Wednesday.]

Clause 11 agreed to.

Clause 12—Amendment of Section 74:

Mr. BOLTON moved an amendment—

That the words "striking out Subsection 1 and" after the word "by" in line 1, be struck out.

The greatest hardships had been caused owing to the method of holding certain departmental inquiries. It was unfair for an employee who appealed to have his evidence used against him, instead of having the case heard on its merits and evidence taken at the hearing.

The MINISTER: If the amendment were carried it would mean an absolute disorganisation of the whole Railway Department. Subsequently to the amendment now before the Committee the member desired to provide that the board should compel witnesses to attend and give evidence on the request of either the appellant or the department. If an accident occurred say at Nannine and there was an appeal to be held in Perth, it might be a large number of witnesses would be called for, and the service up there would be disorganised. In the existing circumstances the department did not allow more than two or three witnesses on either side to be brought that distance. The board should be permitted to regulate their own work.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. BOLTON moved an amendment that the following words be added to Subclause 5:—

"And shall have power to compel any witness to attend and give evidence on the request of either the appellant or the department."

The MINISTER would agree to the amendment if the words "on the request of either the appellant or the department" were omitted.

Mr. Bolton would, by leave of the House, alter his amendment accordingly.

Amendment as altered put and passed.

Clause 13—Amendment of Section 77, No railway servant to engage in outside employment:

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS moved an amendment—

That the words "except with the approval of the Commissioner," be struck out of lines 3 and 4, and inserted in Subclause 1 after the word "office."

Under the Act there was no provision by which the Commissioner could allow employees to take up land. In cases of

this sort it was desired that the approval of the Commissioner should be obtained.

Mr. SCADDAN : There appeared to be no need for the amendment, which evidently referred to railway servants taking up land. While he had the strongest possible objection to railway servants taking up land for dummying, it was useless to provide that before a railway servant could make application for land he should obtain the approval of the Commissioner. It might be necessary for the Commissioner to approve of a servant holding land after application had been granted, because land could be held for speculative purposes and we should prevent that being done.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : If the amendment was not carried a railway official would not be able to hold any land because the Crown Law officers had held that the holding of land was included in the provision "engaging in outside service."

The PREMIER : If a railway servant applied to take up land leave could be given for him to do so by the Executive Council. The words, "or acquire land without the permission of the Executive Council," should be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the following be inserted as Subclause 3 :—

"Or acquire any Crown lands without the approval of the Minister."

Mr. SCADDAN : This would improve the clause. If a railway employee wished to take up land he would be placed in the same position as an ordinary public servant.

Amendment passed ; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 14—No damages to be recoverable unless owner of land provide fire-break :

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : Since a recent decision had been given it was unwise to insist on a fire-break being made by the Railway Department, we were safeguarded now.

Clause put and negatived.

Clauses 15, 16—agreed to.

Clause 17—Exemption from liability :

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS moved an amendment in Subclause 1—

That paragraph (a) be struck out.

Were there was a siding attended, the Commissioner took the responsibility, but if goods were left at a siding unattended the consignee or consignor had to take the responsibility.

Amendment passed.

Mr. SCADDAN : What did the Minister intend to do as to Subclause 2 ?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : In one case where a locomotive was run tender first, and an accident occurred it was held that that was evidence of neglect ; we must provide against that.

Mr. SCADDAN : This clause would apply to all our railways.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : Only in regard to district railways.

[Mr. Daglish took the Chair.]

The PREMIER moved an amendment

That in line 2 of Subclause 2 the words "on a district railway" be inserted after "not."

Mr. STUART : There was a too prevalent tendency to run tender first. The damages for a big accident would pay for many turn-tables.

The Minister : A turn-table could not be provided at the end of every spur line.

Mr. STUART : But by absolving the department from responsibility on spur lines we implied that they accepted responsibility for running tender first on the main lines.

The Minister : The Court had held that running tender first was proof of negligence.

Mr. SCADDAN : It would be well to run engine first on all occasions ; but we could not put down a turn-table at the end of a line carrying two trains a week. We ought not to run tender first on the main lines.

Mr. HORAN : The intention was to exclude the district railways from the obligation to run engine first.

Mr. ANGWIN : If the line would not bear the charge of a turn-table, better not run any trains. Let us walk. A turn-table was less valuable than human life.

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

Clause 18—By-laws as to staff :

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : The clause specially provided that if any employee on the standard railways was transferred to a district line he should not lose any right of appeal. On these spur lines the intention was to add the duties of an agent to those of guard, and the guard must therefore do work probably altogether different from a guard's work on the general railways. But he would not lose any of the rights which he possessed under his ordinary classification.

Mr. BOLTON : But though he might not lose his status, he would be debarred from coming under the appeal sections, 69 to 76 of the principal Act.

The Minister : His appointment to the district railway would be only temporary.

Mr. BOLTON : It would be possible for a guard to be punished unjustly whilst on the district railway, and to have no right of appeal.

The Premier : No. His rights were fully preserved.

The Minister for Railways : Quite so. The employees' association had not protested against this clause.

Mr. STUART : Why the words "unless such person is transferred from or ordinarily employed on a Government railway"? The Minister's announcement was not definite.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : The employees' association had carefully considered the Bill, and raised no objection to the clause. The words quoted meant that if a man had been transferred from the standard railways to a district railway, none of his rights under the appeal sections were taken from him. The Government were fully desirous of preserving all such rights.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 19—agreed to.

New Clause—Payment of salaries or wages may be proved by certified sheet :

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS moved that the following be added as Clause 20 :—

A statement in writing at the foot of or endorsed upon a wages or salary pay sheet to the effect that the officers or employees therein named have been paid the amount of salary or wages set against their names shall, if purporting to be signed by a paying officer and countersigned by some other officer or employee of the department, be prima facie evidence of the payment set forth in such salary or wages pay sheet.

This, he was advised, would be a great convenience to the department, and would save much clerical work. The practice obtained in South Australia and on several English railways. If some paymaster embezzled the money instead of paying the workmen, they would not be prevented from securing payment.

Mr. STUART : Had the Audit Department been consulted ?

The Minister : Yes.

Mr. BATH : This provision that the workers should nevertheless receive their wages might be awkward if they sued for their wages in court. How would the clause save clerical work ?

Mr. HORAN : For years the custom was for an inspector and a paying officer to traverse the line, the former certifying to identity of each employee. The certificate of the two officers was *prima facie* evidence of payment.

Mr. BOLTON : The new clause was practicable in the case of permanent way men and others stationed along the route; but in the running branch ten or twenty men in each shed might be away on duty, or off duty; and the money due to them was taken back to Perth and subsequently paid by cheque, on application, which cheque must naturally be cashed in a hotel. Payment by cheque was unfair to wages men.

Mr. Scaddan : In some large concerns such as gold mines, men did not sign for their wages.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS had been slightly in error in stating that this clause had the concurrence of the Audit Department. The Treasury and the Crown Law Department had agreed

to it, and it was much desired by the Railway Department. For the protection of the workmen he had the assurance of the Crown Law Department that it would not affect the claim of any workman wrongly debited with unpaid wages.

Question put and passed.

New Clause—Amendment of Section 2.

Mr. BOLTON moved that the following be added as a clause :—

Section 2 of the principal Act is amended by inserting the word "printed" before "statement," in the definition of "notice," and by adding to the definition the words "signed by the head of the branch or issued in the Weekly Notice."

The MINISTER: No good would result in connection with these notifications. All the necessary instructions sent out were generally in manuscript, and to print them would mean delay and extra expense.

Mr. BOLTON: The clause was necessary. The difficulty was that the men were held responsible for each notice issued. It was not fair to make a man responsible for a notice that a sub-foreman might happen to pin to the wall. The men considered it a fair request that the notice should be in the Weekly Notice, or should be signed by the head of the department before being posted. According to the definition of the Act a notice was a statement conveying the general effect of a matter or thing done or intended to be done. That was altogether too vague.

Mr. SCADDAN: We could make provision that these notices should be issued in the Weekly Notice or be signed by the head of the branch and properly posted.

The MINISTER promised to confer with hon. members, to see if some by-law could not be arranged. He would not commit the department to have a notice printed each time and to have these matters put in the Weekly Notice. Owing to the ramifications of the Railway Department it might be necessary to have a notice issued speedily on occasions. However, we might have some by-law framed

or some special rule with regard to the conditions of work. He could not allow it to go in the Act.

Mr. BOLTON: The Commissioner declared that a certain amount of Newcastle coal should be used on a certain class of engines and in a certain class of work. A sub-foreman then issued a notice that in future no Newcastle coal would be supplied to such and such engines. These latter instructions might as well come from the Commissioner or the Chief Mechanical Engineer, because the drivers must obey them, though the sub-foreman's instructions might not have the sanction of the head of the branch. All these notices went out to the different shops; they were circular letters; but if they appeared in the name of the head of the branch or appeared in the Weekly Notice there would be no dissatisfaction. He would be willing to confer with the Minister to see if we could not come to some arrangement whereby there would be satisfaction on both sides.

Mr. HORAN was pleased the hon. member had accepted the suggestion of the Minister. The word "notice" in the Act practically meant "public notice," and it would be impossible to put all these notices in the Weekly Notice.

Question put and negatived.

New Clause:

Mr. BOLTON moved that the following be added as a clause :—

Section 21 of the principal Act is amended by striking out the words "the Minister" and inserting "Parliament."

Section 21 gave power to the Commissioner with the consent of the Minister to alter the tractive force in the railways. His desire was to provide that it could not be done without the consent of Parliament. Though the Minister would say that it was necessary to get the consent of Parliament to vote the money to bring about any alteration, that was not sufficient, because the Minister might approve of the alteration and chance coming to Parliament afterwards and getting the money.

The MINISTER: The Government would never think of altering the railway system from steam to electricity

without consulting Parliament. In the case of the Cossack-Roebourne tramway, the Government might put an oil motor on that line to draw the goods. The hon. member would not desire that Parliament should be asked for consent to do that?

Mr. Bolton: What was the power in use there now?

The MINISTER: Horses. No drastic change would take place without Parliament being fully advised.

Question put and negatived.

[2 o'clock a.m. Wednesday.]

New Clause :

Mr. BOLTON moved that the following be added as a clause:—

Section twenty-four of the principal Act is amended by striking out all words after "thereof," in line 3 of subsection (7) to the end of paragraph 1, and by striking out, in paragraph 2, the words "may be applied in making good the damage caused by the wrong doing or neglect of the person charged and subject thereto," and by adding to the subsection the words "or the legal representatives of deceased persons who at the time of their death were employed on the Government railways."

The object was that when a person was fined for neglect, the amount of the fine should go the railway servants' benefit fund and not to make good damage caused by the neglect.

The MINISTER: The clause was very fair as it stood, and he could not agree with the suggested new clause.

Question put and negatived.

New Clause :

Mr. BOLTON moved that the following be added as a clause:—

Section 38 is amended by inserting between the words "person" and "unless," in line 2, the words "other than a railway employee."

The MINISTER opposed the motion.

Question put and negatived.

New Clause :

Mr. BOLTON moved that the following be added as a clause:—

Section 12 is amended by adding new subsections as follow: (10.) Not being appointed and classified as a driver on the Western Australian Government Railways, or a fireman holding a certificate of competency as a driver, moves a locomotive engine under steam, unless in the case of a fireman appointed and classified as such, when he may remove a locomotive under steam, providing he is under the direct supervision of a certificated driver or acting driver who shall be responsible therefor. (11.) Works in conjunction with the moving of an engine or train where shunting is carried on either continuously or intermittently, unless such person has a thorough knowledge of the signals in use for such operations and the safe working thereof.

This provided that only a qualified person should move a locomotive. The new clause has been asked for both by the unions and the officers of the department. Although a new man might not be qualified to touch the engine in order to start it, if he refused to do so when ordered he was a marked man. On the contrary if he obeyed orders and moved the locomotive and damage resulted, he would have to bear the brunt of it.

The MINISTER: The officers of the department thought it would not do to agree to the amendment, for in case of emergency it was necessary for someone to take charge of the engine. This was especially so in the case of an accident to the driver of an engine. If the clause were passed the fireman would in such a case be debarred from taking the train on. If he did the work he would be liable to a heavy fine. In so far as the ordinary work in the yards were concerned, something could be done to prevent persons not qualified from moving a locomotive.

Mr. SCADDAN: If anything happened to the engine-driver there was nothing in the proposed clause to prevent the fireman from taking on the engine. In some cases considerable damage had been done owing to the engines being moved by men who were not qualified.

Mr. STUART: This question cropped up when the retrenchment proposals came in. It was said that cleaners, shovellers, etcetera, were compelled, owing to the unnecessarily severe retrenchment, to do certain shunting as there were not sufficient certificated drivers to undertake the work. It was placing them in a very unfortunate position. Those who came in contact with railway employees about the time of the lock-out knew that an injustice was done. Unqualified men who were told to do certain work, if they refused it was at the risk of their billets, but if they did the work they were liable to a penalty under the Act.

Mr. BOLTON knew the officer who had supplied the information to the Minister, and the information was absolutely false. The loco. inspector supplied the information with a grin, saying, "That will beat Bolton." But he would allow no loco. inspector to beat him while he was a member of the House. He would divide the Committee on this amendment. For a loco. inspector to dare to give such information that firemen would not be allowed to continue with a train was misleading the House. Why should a cleaner be asked to martial the running shed and put engines in their order to go out? If a cleaner did not do that work it would be found that he was slovenly in his work, or something would be found against him so that he might be dismissed. If a non-certificated man was asked to move an engine, he should do it in the presence of the qualified man who was in charge of the shed. If he (Mr. Bolton) was long enough in the House he would make this loco. inspector grin on the other side of his face.

The TREASURER: The Minister had received no information from a loco. inspector; the information was obtained from the Commissioner. It was improper for a member to refer to some unknown person. It was unreasonable to expect that a certified man should stand by while a cleaner was moving an engine. It appeared that the clause would interfere with the working of the department, for circumstances might arise that would render it necessary to instruct an uncer-

tificated man to move a locomotive in the shed or the yard. It was only right for the department to have the power to permit such work to be done in case of emergency. But the hon. member would prevent an unqualified man from moving an engine under any circumstances.

Mr. SCADDAN: The engine-cleaner might have no knowledge of the working of an engine. Although the Commissioner might have a fair knowledge of railway working he did not understand the working of an engine.

Mr. BOLTON: The regulations provided that no cleaner should remove an engine, and it was sought to embody this regulation in the Bill. He (Mr. Bolton) did not attack the loco. inspector but his report. This inspector wilfully misled the Minister with the idea of wilfully misleading the House. The new clause did not provide that only a qualified driver could move an engine. Every cleaner on the railways held a fireman's certificate, and nearly all the firemen held drivers' certificates. The reductions in classification were responsible for this; but cleaners and firemen might not be so competent in future. All the clause asked was that the cleaner should not move an engine unless under the supervision of a qualified man.

Mr. BATH: The petty tyranny possible under the existing regulations made the clause necessary. By the regulations a cleaner was prohibited from moving an engine, but might be ordered to do so and discharged for refusing. The Treasurer's attack on the last speaker was no argument; nor was the extraordinary statement of the Minister, on the strength of an officer's report, any answer to the argument that the heads of the department should be compelled to observe the regulations which they were so prompt to enforce on the rank and file.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	16
				—
Majority against	..			2

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Bath	Mr. Brebber
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. T. L. Brown	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Collier	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Horan	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Layman
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Male
Mr. Stuart	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Underwood	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Walker	Mr. Price
Mr. Ware	Mr. Smith
Mr. Heitmann (Teller).	Mr. A. J. Wilson
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Question thus negatived.

Mr. Bolton had given notice of a new clause repealing Section 52 of the principal Act. He would not now move it.

New Clause:

Mr. BOLTON moved that the following be added as a clause:—

Section 69 of the principal Act is amended by inserting a new subsection as follows: "(4) or is aggrieved with any decision of his superior officer."

The section provided that any person fined, reduced or dismissed might appeal to the board. A man might be censured or removed to another district, and might consider such punishment far worse than a fine or reduction in grade; yet he would be denied the right of appeal.

The MINISTER: It was impossible to agree to this clause. Already if a man was fined 1s. or 2s. 6d., he had the right to appeal.

Question put and negatived.

New Clause:

Mr. BOLTON moved that the following be added as a clause:—

Section 72 of the principal Act is amended by striking out the word "fourteen" in line 2, and inserting "thirty-one," and by adding to the section the words "failing which from any cause whatsoever (excepting as provided in Section seventy-three) the appeal shall be considered to have been upheld and judgment awarded to the appellant accordingly with costs."

The Act provided that the notice of every appeal to the board must be lodged with the Commissioner within 14 days of the date of the decision appealed against. His desire was to increase that to 31 days. Since the Act was passed the rail-

ways had extended and it was not quite so easy to get to the metropolitan district in sufficient time. Also many employees, before appealing, submitted their cases to the executive committee of their union for advice, and it was not easy to get a reply in sufficient time. By doing this, however, a number of appeals that would otherwise go to the appeal board did not go forward. He also desired in this clause to add to the section words providing that if the appeal was not heard the judgment should be considered to have gone for the appellant with costs. This was due to the case where the appellant had to go to the Supreme Court and the Commissioner was directed to take the case to the appeal board.

The MINISTER: The section had worked well in the past and that matter suggested by the hon. member was not likely to again occur. It was a preposterous proposition to ask that if an appeal was not heard the appellant should have the case given in his favour with costs. With regard to time, the present provision was quite sufficient. The appeal could be lodged within 14 days and the appellant then had 30 days afterwards to go before the board or withdraw his appeal. We should let well alone.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Minister might accept an extension of the time. Many complaints never reached the appeal board owing to the advice tendered to the employees by the executive of the association. It was in order to seek this advice that the union sought to have the time extended.

Mr. BATH: Even if only one case arose in which an appeal was not allowed to go before the board it was serious. To have to move the Supreme Court cost more than the appellant got in the way of costs, if his case was given in his favour. Nothing would be lost if the time was extended in order that the men could submit their appeals to the executive of their association before passing them on to the appeal board.

Mr. GORDON opposed the amendment. Apparently members supporting the proposal were unacquainted with the subject.

Mr. SCADDAN : One could expect nothing else from the hon. member who would not be occupying his position if he possessed any brain power.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	16
				—
Majority against	..			3

in moving these amendments without unduly taking up the time of the House. If they could not be accepted by the Minister or the Committee he could do no more. This was a most important amendment the unions desired. The latter part of the proposal was to insert the word "unanimously" in the second paragraph of the section. It was provided in Section 75 that the board could award costs against an appellant whose appeal was considered frivolous. He wished it to read, "whose appeal is unanimously considered frivolous." If the clause were passed, frivolous appeals would be prevented.

The Minister : The court should be given the power sought to be removed by the clause.

[3 o'clock a.m. Wednesday.]

Mr. JOHNSON : At present the board could only adjudicate on action by the Commissioner. If the amendment were included it would give the appeal board power to overcome the difficulties now being experienced.

Mr. SCADDAN : It was no use trying to hedge the board round with restrictions. If an officer of the department took a dislike to a certain man all the appeal boards in the world would not save him. The system adopted was that after an appeal had been heard and upheld, the man was moved to some other work, and then gradually squeezed out of the service altogether on the plea of retrenchment. The board should not have power to do anything but modify, reverse, or confirm an order.

Mr. HORAN : A conductor on the Kalgoorlie line was recently dismissed. The board could not confirm, reverse, or modify the order, but they adopted a different course altogether by fining him £5. It was well for the officer that they had this power as otherwise he would have had to go.

Mr. Scaddan : In the case just cited surely the board had merely modified the order of dismissal.

Mr. JOHNSON : The illustration of the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Horan) was a good one. It was impossible to modify a dismissal, and the board in the

AYES.

Mr. Angwin
Mr. Bath
Mr. Bolton
Mr. Collier
Mr. Horan
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Stuart
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Walker
Mr. Ware
Mr. T. L. Brown (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Barnett
Mr. Brebber
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Eddy
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Gordon
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Keenan
Mr. Male
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Price
Mr. Smith
Mr. A. J. Wilson
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Layman (Teller).

Question thus negatived.

New Clause :

Mr. BOLTON moved that the following be added as a clause :—

Section 75 of the principal Act is amended by striking out, in line 2, the words "or make such other order thereon as they think fit," and by inserting the word "unanimously" after the word "is" in the third line.

This was a rather important proposal. The Act provided that "The board may confirm, modify, or reverse any decision appealed against, or make such other order thereon as they think fit, and the appeal of the board shall be final." His desire was to strike out the words "or make such other order thereon as they think fit." It was absolutely wrong to give that power. It often happened that an appeal was upheld, the man was proved innocent, but he was removed from the city to the bush. This was because the departmental representative on the board felt that it would be awkward for the employee to still be under the officer who had ordered the punishment. The removal was ten times worse than the punishment. If the Minister had been able to go into this matter he (Mr. Bolton) would have been on a better footing. However, he had done his part

case cited had taken up a different position altogether.

Mr. HORAN : The reason for the section of the Act was to overcome the difficulty in getting evidence in appeal cases.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	16

Majority against .. 5

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Bath	Mr. Brebber
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. T. L. Brown	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Collier	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Horan
Mr. Stuart	Mr. Male
Mr. Ware	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Underwood (Teller)	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. A. J. Wilson
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Layman (Teller).

Question thus negatived.

New Clause :

Mr. JOHNSON: moved that the following be added as a new clause:—

All additions and improvements to any railway, the costs of which are charged to the Consolidated Loan Fund, shall be undertaken by the Minister for Works.

When the departure was made of removing the expenditure of loan funds from the Minister for Works to the Railway Department, a grave error was made. The Auditor General drew attention year after year to the fact that loan funds should not be in the hands of a revenue earning department, and this officer stated that we could never get a true statement of the operations of our railways for this year. Mr. C. Y. O'Connor in the last report he made, and in many previous reports, drew attention to this objectionable state of affairs. We should revert to the old system.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There was no doubt a great deal might be said for and against the proposal, but it was a big question to be dealt with on an occasion like this. It was not essential that this proposition should form part of the Railway Bill. To a great

extent this was a matter of administration, and if it were decided at any time by Executive Council to place the construction of large works under the Works Department, there was no reason why we should not take this responsibility. But it was to be hoped the member would not press the proposal to-night, for it was a big question and should be treated seriously. There were many reasons why the Railway Department should do certain works rather than that they should be done by outside departments. Take for instance, the building of the Beaufort Street bridge. Trouble might arise in connection with the traffic; therefore it was necessary to keep this work in the hands of the department. The whole question might be discussed at some future time.

Question put and negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments; the report adopted.

BILL—GAME ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Council, and read a first time.

EXCESS BILL, 1906-7.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read, recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Excess Bill.

Excess Bill introduced by *the Premier*, and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 3.20 o'clock a.m. Wednesday, until the same afternoon at 2.30.