

a statutory matter entirely. The conditions appear to be so outrageous that it is hardly possible to go into detail. I am sorry to say I shall be obliged to vote against the second reading.

On motion by Hon. C. Sommers debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th January, 1911.

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines to 30th June, 1910.

QUESTION—STATE BATTERY FOR MT. EGERTON.

Mr. HOLMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: Is it the Minister's intention to erect a battery at Mt. Egerton at an early date; if so, will he give some idea as to when it is likely to be there?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: I am making inquiries as to what is known as the "Holman" pneumatic mills; and if I am satisfied with them, I will have no objection to putting one of these small mills in that locality. It will

not be long before I know the result of my inquiries.

QUESTION—POLICE ATTENDANCE AT PICTURE SHOW.

Mr. SWAN asked the Attorney General: 1, Is he aware that eight police constables and an inspector were in attendance at West's picture show at Queen's Hall on Monday evening, 9th inst? 2, What was the reason for such an extraordinary force of police at a harmless picture show? 3, Did West's company make application for the attendance of the police? 4, If so, did they pay for the services of the constables, or were they paid from the taxpayers' money? 5, Have the Attorney General and the police magistrate of Perth been presented with a free pass each from West's picture company?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, There were only two constables in attendance; no inspector. A sub-inspector visited the hall after 9 p.m. in the course of his duty. He reports that he saw two uniformed constables only and no plainclothes police at the hall. 2, No large force of police as stated were present at the picture show. 3, West's company applied for extra constables and were granted the services of two men only. One constable is usually in attendance. The non-commissioned officers in charge of duties were instructed to visit the hall at intervals during the evening in order to make necessary arrangements should additional assistance be needed in consequence of any trouble arising out of the existing dispute between the management and the members of the orchestra. Not more than three members of the force were present at any one time, including the visiting corporal, who would remain for a short interval only. 4, The services of the two constables detailed for duty at the hall were paid for at the usual rates. 5, No.

QUESTION—GOVERNMENT LOAN TO FREMANTLE MUNICIPALITY.

Mr. SCADDAN asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that the Government have

agreed to loan to the Fremantle Municipal Council the sum of £3,000 without interest? 2, For what purpose has the money been advanced, and what is the currency of the loan? 3, If the above is a fact does the Premier not think that such action will tend to cause municipalities included within electorates represented by Government supporters to be reckless and extravagant in the management of the ratepayers' funds? 4, Are the Government prepared to advance loans on similar terms to any other local authority requiring the same?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Government have agreed to lend £5,000, with interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, on an agreement being entered into for the payment to the Government of moneys which will be paid by the Commonwealth Government for municipal lands resumed, and on account of subsidy amounting to £1,200 per annum. 2, To meet interest and other liabilities of the municipality. 3, No, because similar advances have been made in the past, irrespective of whether the municipalities are situated in electorates represented by Government supporters or otherwise. 4, Advances have been made from time to time to the following local authorities:—Southern Cross, £750; Wagin, £200; Collic, £100; Queen's Park, £400; Northam, £400; Cottesloe, £500; Boulder, £2,867; Kalgoorlie roads board, £1,000; all of which have been repaid. 5, The Government are prepared to help local authorities when in financial difficulties under similar circumstances.

Mr. ANGWIN: What is the protection for the owners under the Municipal Corporations Act if the Government persist in making loans to municipal authorities without the owners being consulted as required by the Municipal Corporations Act?

The PREMIER: These advances are usually made under security, either by way of advance against subsidies or against moneys to be received.

Mr. Angwin: This advance has nothing to do with the amalgamation of the East and North Fremantle electorates under the Redistribution of Seats Bill, has it?

Mr. Murphy: You would not say that outside.

Mr. Angwin: It is a fact, anyhow.

Mr. Murphy: Come outside and say it.

Mr. Scaddan: What, another challenge?

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1. Pharmacy and Poisons Act Compilation.
2. Southern Cross-Bullfinch Railway.
3. Southern Cross-Bullfinch Railway Appropriation.
4. Mt. Lawley Reserves.
5. Land and Income Tax.
6. Supply, £274,443.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson) moved—

That for the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be passed through all their stages in one day, and Messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the day on which they are received; also, so far as to admit of the reporting and adopting of the Resolutions of the Committee of Supply and of Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees.

Mr. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): In moving this motion the Premier might have taken the House into his confidence in the direction of showing what measures on the Notice Paper the Assembly were to be asked to pass. The Notice Paper was very extensive; it was doubtful whether at any stage during the session in the last six years there was so formidable a list when a motion of this kind was tabled. This was another method of preventing proper discussion by members, and a motion of this kind was of such importance that it was due to members that the Government should intimate how far they proposed to go with the Orders already on the Notice Paper.

The PREMIER: It would be found that although there was a large number of Bills on the Notice Paper most of them would not require any very lengthy discussion. We were all at one in our desire to pass the railway Bills in order that the works policy of the country might be proceeded with by the department as fast as ever the labour market would permit. Of the other Bills the Roads Bill was certainly important, but, after the consultation which had already taken place between members on both sides of the Chamber who were interested in the subject of the Bill, surely the discussion on that measure could be so limited that the Bill could be adopted pro forma on the understanding that, next session, it would, if necessary, be revised or amended. Nearly all other Bills on the Notice Paper could be put through within the next three weeks. He hoped we would be able to close the session within the next three weeks. There were of course to come down the Loan Estimates, the Loan Bill, and the Appropriation Act, but, apart from these measures, he knew of nothing of any importance still remaining to be introduced.

Mr. Scaddan: There is the Licensing Bill to be considered.

The PREMIER: Of course the Council's amendments to the Licensing Bill would take some consideration. He proposed to go on with those almost immediately.

Mr. Scaddan: And there is the Health Bill to come back.

The PREMIER: In any case he did not think there were any amendments of much importance in the Licensing Bill. Now that the Council was sitting again he desired to be in a position to transact business promptly with that House. There would be a large number of messages passing backwards and forwards between the two Chambers during the course of the passage of these measures, and their final adoption. It was not as though we had not had these measures before us for a long time.

Mr. Scaddan: A number of them have not been discussed.

The PREMIER: There would be plenty of opportunity for discussion. The

suspending of the Standing Orders did not prevent discussion. He took it the leader of the Opposition was, like himself, anxious to end this trying session as early as possible. In moving this motion he had not adopted anything contrary to practice. On one occasion the Standing Orders had been suspended before Christmas although Parliament did not ultimately prorogue until February. On many occasions the Standing Orders had been suspended much earlier than this, and it was in the interests of all concerned that the motion should be adopted. As the business went on he would be glad to further consult with the leader of the Opposition as to how best it could be expedited.

Mr. SCADDAN: In the circumstances he would suggest that some of these measures be dealt with according to the ordinary procedure. The Standing Orders might be allowed to apply until the difficulty suggested by the Premier should arise, namely, that of keeping another place supplied with work. To that extent the Standing Orders might be suspended, while with regard to other Bills for which there was no such urgent necessity, the Standing Orders might still be applied.

Mr. WALKER: The wiser course would be to get through only the absolutely necessary business. If he might, without being disrespectful, say so, the House was utterly unfit to do the work on the Notice Paper. For his own part he no longer felt the same enthusiasm with regard to his legislative duties as he had done a week ago. Like himself other members must have received a severe shock. Confidence was entirely gone, and the sooner the building was closed up and the constituencies appealed to the better it would be, certainly for those constituencies, who had the next right to speak. Personally, he objected to continuing any longer than was absolutely necessary. Some of the Bills were essential, the Railway Bills for instance. He did not think the members of the Labour party, or any other section of the House, would like to delay the necessary work represented in those Bills. But with regard to other matters none in

the House could approach them in a deliberative spirit. That was all gone, and with all due respect he would say the House was utterly demoralised, and the sooner it was purified at the hands of its masters the better.

Question put and passed.

BILL — BUNBURY MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC LIGHTING.

Second Reading.

Hon. Sir N. J. MOORE (Bunbury) in moving the second reading said: The Title of the Bill sets out the object of the measure, and the powers sought by the municipality of Bunbury, namely to acquire, construct, improve, and maintain works for the generation and supply of electricity for motive, heating, and lighting purposes, and also to facilitate the exercising of such power and for these purposes to confer additional borrowing powers. Some years ago an agreement was entered into with Messrs. Splatt, Wall, & Company for the lighting of the municipality of Bunbury. Under this agreement at a certain date the municipality was to have the option of acquiring the plant. When the option date arrived negotiations were entered into for the purchase, and the amount of £7,750 was named as the value of the private plant. After conference with the company the council made an offer of £7,000 and this offer was accepted and the purchase completed. Following on a report by an electrical expert it was decided to augment the plant to the extent of £2,000. This necessitated a loan of in all £10,000, which was subsequently raised. Afterwards a communication was received from the harbour board intimating there was a possibility they would require electric light, together with current for the new cranes on the jetty; and also an application from the Railway Department for a supply of lighting. After consideration it has been decided to fix up a contract and to instal the increased plant necessary for the same. The council, therefore, is faced with an additional expenditure of £4,500. They have proceeded to order the plant, which must be installed within

10 months of the signing of the agreement. Consequently they are now face to face with a deficit, and it is necessary to acquire the additional powers set out in the Bill. With regard to the present Bill it is essential that the borrowing powers of the council should be extended to cover at least £15,000 for electric lighting purposes. Under the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act a municipal council is empowered to borrow up to ten times the amount of its average revenue. But it was not anticipated that included in any works to be covered by the loan would be the purchase of electric lighting plants or works for water supply. The ordinary revenue of the Bunbury municipality is £3,500. Therefore under the Municipal Corporations Act this municipality has power to borrow up to £35,000. They have borrowed already, for municipal purposes, £21,100; on account of the water board they have borrowed £3,000, which is included in the £21,100, while in addition to that they have obtained from the Treasury £3,500 under the Water Boards Act. Thus the loan indebtedness of the municipality is:—Municipal purposes, £21,000; water, £6,500; electric light, £10,000; plant on order, £1,190; or a total of £38,790. Of this, £3,500 was borrowed under the Water Boards Act, which leaves a total amount of £35,290, which is practically the limit to which they can borrow. But of this virtually £10,000 is expended in electric lighting plant, and when the Municipalities Act was framed it was not anticipated that the limit would be extended for the acquiring of a trading plant for other than municipal purposes. The Bill sets out in its various clauses the purposes for which it was framed. In the first place the Council will have power to purchase or acquire in addition to the present plant and machinery all such plant and machinery as may be necessary for the supply of electricity within the municipality. Secondly, it gives general power for the supply of electricity, not only within the municipal boundaries, but power to enter into a contract with the harbour board or any similar board to supply them with electric current. The third provision gives power to borrow for

the construction of new works with a limitation of £15,000. Finally the Bill provides that the amount borrowed shall not be taken into account in estimating what can be borrowed for other purposes. That is to say, the amount borrowed shall not be subtracted from the £35,000, and so the municipality will be allowed to expend another £10,000 for municipal purposes. The Bill of course must be read in conjunction with the Electric Lighting Act of 1902, and portion of the Municipalities Corporations Act of 1906. If any further information is required I shall be glad to supply it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Taylor in the Chair; Hon. Sir N. J. Moore in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Power to borrow for works:

Mr. ANGWIN: Beyond doubt this clause was necessary for the protection of the ratepayers, but when it was realised that the Government overrode an Act of Parliament what was the good of framing a clause for the express purpose of protecting the ratepayers in regard to loans? The Bill embodied the provisions of the Municipal Act in regard to borrowing money, wherein it was enacted that certain prescribed forms had to be gone through before any money could be raised for any works to be undertaken by the municipality, and the ratepayers were given power to refuse the request of the council for permission to raise a loan for the carrying out of any work whatever. But that clause was treated as a dead letter. Money had been borrowed contrary to the provisions of that section, and what could be the use of putting in the Bill a clause of this description when members knew it would be treated as a dead letter if it was found expedient to do so? Then, again, why was so small a limit placed on the amount to be raised? Generally, in connection with works of this kind, the municipalities were handicapped by not having sufficient capital with which to carry on the business after the capital expenditure had been incurred.

In this case also, if the amount was limited to the cost of the works, the municipality was going to be at a great disadvantage in the conducting of the works.

Hon. Sir N. J. MOORE: The amount of the original purchase was £7,000 odd and there was an additional two thousand pounds worth of plant. Provision was made for borrowing fifteen thousand pounds, which was a 66 per cent. margin over and above the present capital cost.

Mr. OSBORN: Parliament should either repeal the section in the Municipal Act which provided that the property-owners should have a voice in regard to the raising of loans, or the Act should be adhered to in its entirety. Only a few weeks ago a Bill had passed through Parliament to take out of the hands of the ratepayers of Perth any opportunity to object to a loan for the purchase of the Perth Gas Company's business. The measure before the Committee proposed to do exactly the same thing. Evidently it was not intended to refer the matter to the ratepayers of Bunbury, but the Council were putting the Bill through Parliament so that they could at once proceed to borrow money without consulting the ratepayers.

Hon. Sir N. J. Moore: The ratepayers have already declared in favour of it by referendum.

Mr. OSBORN: Then what was the necessity for this clause?

The PREMIER: The member for Roebourne did not quite grasp the purport of the measure. When a municipal council, after having consulted the ratepayers, wished to undertake a trading concern such as these works were, it had to have extra borrowing powers for that purpose, and the reason why that extra power was readily granted on nearly every occasion was that the concern itself was a profitable undertaking, paying not only working expenses, interest, and sinking fund on the money borrowed, but, in many cases, a small profit to go to the general revenue of the local body. It was desirable that Parliament should, wherever possible, assist the municipalities to become possessed of their own lighting system, tramways, and undertakings of that

sort, which tended to the betterment of the general community. To say that we should stand by the Municipal Act *holus bolus* seemed absurd. The Act provided certain borrowing powers for necessary works such as road construction, but this was a specific undertaking to purchase a certain business concern which would be a profitable thing for the municipality. It would be idle to repeal the sections of the Municipal Act in regard to borrowing for roads and other necessary expenditure, and allow the municipalities to run riot, simply because it was proposed to give additional power for a specific purpose in an Act of this nature. Proposals of this sort should be considered on their merits.

Mr. George: We cannot consider the merits if we have only the bald Bill before us. We can deal only with the principles.

The PREMIER: The member for Bunbury had explained the merits of the Bill.

Mr. GEORGE: This was a special case, and a poll had been taken of the ratepayers of Bunbury, but the principle laid down by the Premier was a dangerous one. The Municipal Act enacted that wherever there was a departure from the ordinary governing of the municipality the ratepayers should be consulted. The Premier, whilst admitting that that was correct, said in fact that he would not consult the ratepayers in regard to any of these cases.

The Premier: No. I said the ratepayers had already been consulted and there was no necessity to consult them again.

Mr. GEORGE: It was the right of the ratepayer that he should have a voice in any departure from the ordinary course of expenditure, and that right should not be infringed upon. In connection with these municipal matters there should be a mandate from the people, either to the Council when elected or by way of referendum, before such works were undertaken.

Mr. OSBORN: It had not been his intention to raise any objection to municipalities entering into business ventures of this nature. His objection was to the money being raised without a referendum

having been taken. His idea was that in regard to all loans the people should be consulted, and no Act of Parliament should take away their right to say whether or not a loan should be raised. As he had been assured that a referendum had been taken, he would offer no further objection to the measure.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Report Stage.

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading.

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

BILL — FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL GAS AND COKE SUPPLY.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Daglish) in moving the second reading said: I desire to move the second reading of this Bill *pro formâ*. I am asking the House to assent to it in order that the matter may go before a select committee. At the outset I was requested by the member for Fremantle, on behalf of the Municipal Council of Fremantle, to introduce this Bill which I was informed was practically the same, with, perhaps, some verbal alterations, as the Bill which I had introduced and which has been assented to with regard to the acquisition by the Perth council of the Perth Gas Company. Having ascertained from the Attorney General that there was no legal objection to giving the same consideration to the request of the Fremantle council I undertook to introduce this Bill. As hon. members are no doubt aware, after the general mayoral election last November, there was a good deal of comment in regard to the circumstances which gave rise to the request of the municipal council for this Bill. Very strong representations were made through the Press with

regard to the conditions prevailing in the council at the time the motion for the purchase of these works was carried. In reply to the insinuations which were made there was another side of the argument put forward. It might then have been thought advisable that the Bill from a Government point of view might have been allowed to lapse until some more satisfactory statement of the position than had been made was brought forward. Strong representations were made, however, by persons holding opinions for and against this proposed purchase at Fremantle, persons with commercial interests, persons in various municipalities having varying municipal interests, and it was thought it would be far more satisfactory from all points of view that the matter should be thrashed out thoroughly by some impartial body. There would be a difficulty in getting impartiality from a body like, say, the Fremantle council or like the Fremantle Tramway Board.

Mr. Angwin: They have nothing to do with it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are undoubtedly interested in it.

Mr. Bolton: They soon will be.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The North Fremantle municipality, too, will be affected by this purchase if carried out, that is, under the terms of the existing Fremantle Gas Company's Bill and which would, under the proposed Bill now before the House, govern the purchase if made by the Fremantle council. Under the circumstances I intend to ask the House to agree to the second reading *pro forma* and, subsequently, to refer the Bill to a select committee, when it will be possible to call evidence to deal with the measure. I hope that the House will agree to adopt this procedure. I have had practically no information furnished to me by the Fremantle council with regard to the Bill, and neither, after the conflict of opinion which I saw exhibited in the public Press by the different public men of the district, did I seek that information. I preferred to adopt the action I am now taking, namely, to leave

it to the House to make its own inquiries. I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

[Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. WALKER (Kanoona): I am not going to address the House on the second reading, and although I feel inclined to let it go I cannot help mentioning that, in my opinion, the Bill is not in order.

The Minister for Works: It is a public Bill.

Mr. WALKER: It is not a public Bill; it has its distinction. That matter, too, might be thrashed out by the select committee.

Mr. MURPHY (Fremantle): I hope the House will agree to the suggestion of the Minister that the Bill be read a second time *pro forma* and then be referred to a select committee. For many reasons it is desirable that this course should be adopted, and I hope these reasons will be brought out during the progress of the inquiry. There is one feature with regard to the purchase of the Fremantle Gas Company, and that is that it has no bearing on other purchases by municipalities of gas companies which have taken place during the present session. In Fremantle we have been municipally lighting our town with electric light and we have been a competitor with this gas company, with the result that the value of the concern has been a decreasing quantity. The very notice that was given to the gas company was issued at an informal meeting and as far as the council was concerned the notice was invalid, although, according to legal advice, as far as the company was concerned the notice was valid. It is a peculiar affair of law, but there it is. The circumstances surrounding the whole case are known to me now that I have the honour to be mayor, and they are sufficient to warrant me in asking the House to pass the second reading and have the inquiry made.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): I might say that personally I am of the opinion that this matter should be left entirely to the ratepayers of the town.

If there is nothing wrong in the action of the council in either giving notice wrongly, or nothing wrong with regard to the property itself, if this Bill is approved then the ratepayers, who are personally interested and would have to meet the cost, should be the persons to determine whether the Fremantle council should purchase the gas company's rights or not.

Mr. Murphy: I wish I could disclose to you privately what I know.

Mr. ANGWIN: Would it be the duty of the select committee to go into the value of the gas works and go into the aspect of the works, as to whether they are obsolete or not? If that is so how would it be possible for a select committee to bring any information before hon. members as a guarantee of the safety of of that plant to the ratepayers of the town. The select committee would have to consider whether it would be wise or not to give the power looked for under the Bill to the ratepayers of Fremantle. If the select committee made the investigation which would have to be made under the Fremantle Gas Company's Act, by arbitration, before any settlement could be arrived at regarding the purchase of this property, and for which provision exists in an Act of Parliament with regard to these works, I do not see how the select committee will get the information required to satisfy the ratepayers of Fremantle in that direction. Seeing that some hon. members have a certain amount of doubt with regard to this matter I am not going to oppose a select committee, but I certainly think that the Minister should have every information placed before him before being asked to introduce such a Bill.

Mr. FOULKES (Claremont): I have my doubts as to whether this is a private or a public Bill; to my mind it is exceedingly difficult to decide whether it is a private or a public Bill. My own idea is that it is a private measure. Power is given in the Bill to certain authorities at Fremantle to carry on trade in other districts. No official notice has been given to any of the local authorities of those districts of that intention.

The Minister for Works: The Perth Bill was exactly the same.

Mr. FOULKES: That might be the case.

Mr. Bolton: That will be cleared up by the select committee.

Mr. FOULKES: I am glad that the Minister has decided to refer the Bill to a select committee, because there are many clauses in the Bill, particularly those clauses which give power to the Fremantle authorities to carry on their trade in districts outside their own, which will cause a grave injustice to large communities. The member for Fremantle must be aware that five miles would embrace Claremont, where there is a local authority carrying on lighting works of their own, and the same position applies, to a certain extent, to the district of Cottesloe, and the Bill gives power even without the consent of the local authority to include any district. These local authorities do not want competition on the part of other local authorities. The district of Claremont has entered into obligations. There is a great difference between a gas company whose finances are limited and a large corporation whose finances are practically unlimited. There is hardly any limit to the financial strength of the municipality of Fremantle. I strongly support referring this Bill to a select committee, otherwise I should feel compelled to oppose the Bill.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray): I should have very much preferred the Minister for Works to have moved that the Bill be read a second time this day six months. I conclude from what has fallen from the member for Fremantle that the probability is that if this Bill is referred to a select committee it may assist this corporation to get out of a mess into which it has got, and if that is so I think the House should assist them. What I know about this plant is that it is absolutely out of date, it belongs to the age of the Noah's ark type so far as gas lighting plant is concerned, and why in the last tottering days of a company whose plant is practically obsolete an attempt should be made to pass this Bill through the House I cannot understand. It is quite within my knowledge that within the last five or six

years this company was trying to obtain from the Railway Department a large portion of the land near the smelters at Fremantle for the purpose of putting down their new plant. They have managed to exist on the present site somehow or other until now and they have not put down the new plant. Their mains have been down now for many years, and those who know anything about gas mains know that the life is limited for any useful purpose to a few years, especially with the type of coal which has been used in Western Australia for gas making for some time. The matter is altogether different from the Perth scheme. As was pointed out by the member for Fremantle the Fremantle municipality supply their own electric light, and here we are asked in almost an impudent fashion to pass a Bill to enable Fremantle to buy out its competitor and become a competitor with itself. The bringing forward of this Bill is shameful, and if the referring of it to a select committee can give it a decent burial in the interests of the Fremantle people, well and good. The very fact that this matter, having been brought before the council—an important matter of this sort—at midnight and passed in a few minutes without anything being heralded in the Press, is to my mind too much of a hole and corner business for any decent man to have anything to do with. I speak thus strongly because I have known these works for a number of years and I am satisfied it is not an undertaking I could conscientiously vote for, or as a ratepayer do anything else than try to defeat it.

Mr. HEITMANN (Cue): I intend to oppose the second reading for this reason: it seems most extraordinary that we should have a Minister of the Crown introducing a Bill, of importance, it must be admitted, and informing us that he knows nothing whatever about it. It is most extraordinary. From what we have learnt in the Press it appears to me that there had been squabbling in Fremantle affecting the municipality generally, and one must admit, according to the information in the Press, that Fremantle, at all events, has not been managed as a municipality

of its importance should be. Then we find, as stated by the member for Fremantle and by the member for Murray, that at a midnight meeting it was decided to serve the proprietors of these gas works with a notice that the municipality intended to purchase. It appears to me that squabbling is going on in Fremantle as to whether this meeting was formal and the notice valid or whether the municipality would purchase the works or not. Then we have the Bill introduced here and the Minister stating at once that he knows nothing about it, implying that it would be a good method of clearing up the atmosphere as far as this particular transaction is concerned. I oppose the Bill because I object to the House being called upon to clear up a municipal fight and squabble. Before members are asked to vote on a question of this kind a Bill is brought in in a very slipshod way and we should ask the people of Fremantle, both councillors and ratepayers, to fix up their business and come unanimously before us before we are prepared to deal with a matter of this kind.

Mr. Angwin: The ratepayers have nothing to do with this.

Mr. HEITMANN: We are asked to take upon ourselves the functions of a court of law and I object most strongly to such a procedure. The Minister in fairness to the House itself and the ratepayers of Fremantle, rather than lay down a precedent by creating this House a court of law should have returned the Bill to the member who asked him to introduce it and say, "I am not prepared to do so unless you yourselves are satisfied as to its validity." If I am in order after making these few remarks, I beg to move an amendment—

That "now" be struck out of the motion and the words "this day six months" be added.

That will give the mayor and ratepayers of Fremantle an opportunity of deciding what is right, or what is wrong and what is best in the interests of themselves.

Mr. George: I second the amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has spoken and therefore cannot second the amendment.

There being no seconder the amendment lapsed.

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

Ayes	28
Noes	7

Majority for	21
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AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Male
Mr. Brown	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Monger
Mr. Carson	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Murphy
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Troy
Mr. Harper	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hayward	Mr. F. Willson
Mr. Horan	Mr. Layman
Mr. Jacoby	(Teller).
Mr. McDowall	

NOES.

Mr. Bolton	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Walker
Mr. George	Mr. Heilmann
Mr. Gill	(Teller).

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR WORKS. Bill referred to a select committee consisting of Messrs. Layman, Foulkes, Walker, Gill, and the mover, with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to move from place to place; to report on the 31st January.

BILL.—KATANNING-NAMPUP

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th January.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet): It is not my intention to oppose this measure for the simple reason that I do not know too much about it. In the circumstances I prefer to give it my support rather than my opposition. Opposition would have to be based on some very accurate information, and that is not at my command. But I want to offer a few remarks, and these remarks will apply to the whole of these agricultural railways, just as the remarks of the Minister for Works, who introduced

the Bills, also referred to the whole of them. I have always supported the system of agricultural railways, and I believe it will be found on reference to *Hausard* that my vote has always been given to any agricultural railway proposition, with the exception of one, and I still believe I was justified in opposing that one. It has been said frequently that members of the Opposition, and the Labour party generally are opposed to the construction of agricultural railways. If there was any truth in that statement it has long since been exploded by the remarks of the Minister for Works himself some few months ago, who, in attacking the Attorney General, referred to the fact that it was the Labour party, under his leadership, which initiated the construction of agricultural railways; and ever since the initiation of that policy the party have supported it. Had it not been for the support given by this party to the agricultural railway propositions they would never have got through the Chamber.

Mr. Monger: The same remark will apply to the goldfields railways.

Mr. TROY: Everyone knows perfectly well that if this party had determined to oppose a railway proposition for agricultural extension it could never have passed the House; but we have always given this policy a generous support; and I hope we always will; because only by extending agricultural railways throughout the State can we hope to properly develop it. We have, of course, reserved the right to criticise these railways, not only agricultural railways but mining railways. Whenever a proposition has come before the House for the construction of a railway to a mining centre, even represented by a member of our party, we have not failed to criticise the proposition if we thought it deserving of criticism; and, undoubtedly, there have been propositions that have deserved criticism, and have received their full meed of it. While not an authority on spur lines, still, relying on the common sense I possess, I am of opinion that these spur lines are not to the greatest advantage of the State. I do not mean for a moment that it would be far better not to have spur lines, but I believe that in

the development of the agricultural portion of the State it would be preferable to have a great branch railway from Yalgoo to Wongan Hills, and from Kellerberrin south, running parallel to the Great Southern Railway.

The Minister for Works: We will have something of that sort ultimately, no doubt.

Mr. TROY: It would have been preferable to building spur lines. Spur lines necessarily must be expensive to work; they cannot be worked as cheaply and as effectively as a great branch railway. If the Minister brought in a Bill providing for a great branch railway from Kellerberrin to the southern part of Western Australia, eastward of Albany, he would do a great deal towards opening up the agricultural areas of the State.

Mr. Piesse: What distance would your parallel line be from the Great Southern?

Mr. TROY: I do not know the exact distance; but from a glance at the map, I should say it should run from Kellerberrin due south. It must be recognised that the rainfall area extends eastward as we go south. I believe Kellerberrin is far enough east for the junction. It is not too far east, because Merredin is still further east; but it is as far east as we might go in that locality for a railway connection of this character. But as we go further south the cultivable area extends further east, and as a result I believe this branch line I suggest would confer a distinct advantage on that portion of Western Australia. After all, what is the main reason for building these spur lines? Is it that they are more advantageous than a branch line, or is it that the spur lines serve the parochial interests of several localities on the Great Southern Railway, whose endeavour is to bring in the whole of the trade of the back country? We have a spur line from Narrogin to Wickepin. It may be justified on the plea that it will be extended later on to Merredin and will be a line developing not only agriculture but other industries. Wagin has a spur line, because Wagin has trade interests and those trade interests must be served. Katanning has a spur line to the west, and this proposition is to

carry one to the east in order that Katanning may reap all the advantage of the trade of the back country. I do not think we should consider the interest of any body in Katanning, Wagin, Narrogin or any other portion of the country; we should not consider the interests of any centre; our purpose is to spend the people's money to the best advantage so that it will serve the best purpose for all concerned. I notice there is a distinct tendency for this particular line to turn north-east beyond Shannon's Soak, so that the trade may be diverted from Wagin, where it now goes, towards Katanning. The whole tendency, we know, in regard to the Kojonup railway was to divert much of the trade from Broomehill to Katanning. The line runs parallel to the Great Southern line for seven or eight miles.

Mr. Piesse: That is in order to get a better grade.

Mr. TROY: I believe the engineer was compelled to alter the previous arrangement by the demand of the Government, and I conceive it was for no other purpose than to give Katanning that trade which should rightly belong to Broomehill. We find in this railway also there is a tendency to turn north after leaving Shannon's Soak in order to bring in all the trade of that country which rightly belongs to Wagin. Later on I have no doubt the determination of the Government will be to push the line on to Lake Grace. Lake Grace stands right behind Dumbleyung, and if it has any distributing centre more than another it is Wagin; but the tendency will be later on to continue this line to Lake Grace and take the whole of that trade out of its natural course and divert it to Katanning. I do not think our purpose in the House should be to expend the people's money in building up the trade of any town such as that, and I do not think any member is justified in making it his business in the House to push forward the interests of any particular town in his own constituency. I am in agreement with the general policy of building these lines, but, at the same time, I believe a branch line would serve the better purpose instead of

pandering to the parochial interests of a few towns on the Great Southern Railway. Exception has been taken in the House to the information provided in support of these measures. While I criticised the Minister for Works some few months ago on the slipshod manner in which he introduced certain other Bills, I give him credit in that at least on this occasion he gave more information than he gave on that other occasion, and, as a result, there is not the same cause for that criticism. At the same time, on the sheet before members there is little of the information members should receive. We are told in regard to large holdings within 15 miles of the line, that there are eight large holdings of 1,000 acres and over.

The Minister for Works: It should be "over 1,000 acres."

Mr. TROY: It is very indefinite. A holding of 1,000 acres cannot be considered too large in this country. I find in the comparison as to the resident occupiers and the average acreage held by each there are 130 resident occupiers occupying 110,000 acres, and the average works out at nearly 1,000 acres per man, yet we are told in the information supplied that eight people hold large holdings of 1,000 acres and over. I believe it was Professor Lowrie who said that 1,000 was none too large, and that every farmer should have 1,000 acres. I believe the Minister for Lands admits that 1,000 acres is not too much for a farm.

The Minister for Lands: That is so.

Mr. TROY: I do not think it is too much for a farm, particularly when most of the areas of 1,000 acres consist of very mixed country, some good, some very indifferent, first, second and third-class land and sandplain. In fact, to-day it is very difficult to get 1,000 acres of all good land in this State. As far as the information regarding the area occupied by these people is concerned, it is very indefinite indeed. Apparently the land under cultivation this year, together with that cleared and ringbarked, shows a very good average. There are 13,000 acres under cultivation, 18,000 acres cleared, and 35,000 acres ringbarked, or roughly

66,000 acres in all. There have been 110,000 acres taken up by resident occupiers, and the fact that more than half of this is under cultivation, or cleared, or ringbarked, compels me to support the Bill. I hope all the measures introduced will show that the people whom these railways are intended to serve are working their properties. I know it is very hard to expect people remotely situated to get their properties into working order and to cultivate their land, particularly when they have to cart their produce over long distances; but at least we in the House may expect they should give evidence of their intention to cultivate their lands, in order that the railway may be made productive as soon as possible. The Minister referred to the fact that most of these agricultural railways, if not paying, were showing but a very slight loss. I submit that, so far as the agricultural railways are concerned, with the exception of the Dowerin line, none of them are showing a profit. And even those lines which are more profitable than others are not agricultural railways in the true sense, because they are timber railways. These timber railways show a profit, but were they dependent entirely upon agriculture they would show a heavy loss.

The Minister for Works: But the timber traffic will diminish yearly, while the agricultural traffic will increase.

Mr. TROY: Of course the timber traffic must decrease as the timber is cut out, and we hope the agricultural development will be encouraged by the building of the railways. But I want to point out that were it not for the timber we could expect very little revenue from these railways for some years to come, because the agricultural development is not there, and is not likely to be there for some time to come. However, I am glad we have the timber, because it is assisting in the development of the agricultural areas. I agree that we must not expect these small agricultural lines to become payable propositions from the beginning; no member on this side of the House expects that. We all know that some time must elapse before the whole of the lands can be made fully productive; and if within a number

of years, if within the term of the loan raised for the building of these lines these railways will pay interest and sinking fund on that loan, we ought to be well satisfied. I am perfectly agreeable that these railways shall be built, even though they do not show a profit so long as the main system will maintain them. I shall be glad to give my support to the measure.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest): I recognise with the last speaker that it is an exceedingly difficult proposition to deal in any way exhaustively with these railway Bills, owing to the fact that very few members of the Chamber have any knowledge of the country through which the lines will pass. I myself have, perhaps, travelled over more of the country than most hon. members, and I do not know very much of the localities to be served by these railways. I notice from the information supplied by the Minister that he makes provision for extra cost of construction owing to the increase of wages and the increase in the cost of materials. I would like the Minister to tell us later on what has been the increase in the cost of materials during, say, the last 12 months. I believe it would assist members to a considerable extent were they given this information in regard to projects we have to deal with from time to time, some of them huge projects involving large expenditure. If the Minister is able to show that the increased expenditure is necessary owing to an increase in the cost of materials, I think the House should be in possession of the information. The Minister makes reference to the increase in the cost of sleepers. That, I believe, will be a permanent increase and, therefore, we cannot take exception to it. But when he specifically lays down the size of the sleepers it suggests that the Government have abandoned the project of using the round-backed sleepers. It will be remembered that the Katanning-Kojonup railway was constructed on these round-backed sleepers, and I believe they have not given that measure of satisfaction which was expected; so I take this reference by the Minister as an indication that the Government are going to abandon the use of those sleepers. I must agree with the member for Mount Magnet when he

deplores—or, if he did not deplore, I do—the existence of so many spur railways in this particular locality. Any hon. member looking at the map would come to no other conclusion than that the country would be better served by a loop line starting from Wickiepin and ending at, say, Tambellup. Here we have four different spur railways, two completed and two projected. The two completed could remain, and the loop could sweep out 10 miles from the present terminus. It would then serve a large number of settlers and do away with the endless friction and jealousies associated with spur railways. I do not think anyone can say the spur railway is the satisfactory method of locomotion we would like it to be. Complaints are coming in from different centres—I myself have had many—of the faulty arrangements, the delays, and the shocking services provided. I would urge, even at this late hour—it is of no use appealing, because the policy of the Government is fixed—but I believe a mistake has been made and I think instead of building these two lines we are discussing, if we constructed the loop it would bring every settler within a reasonable distance, and do injustice to none. The reason at the bottom of these spur railways is the agitation from each town. Each town wants a railway for itself in the hope of its bringing revenue into that town. As pointed out by the member for Mt. Magnet, Katanning has two spur railways, Wagin has one now and is going for an extension, Narrogin is practically a junction with four lines, and, in greater or less degree, the same is applicable to a number of other centres. It appears to me most of the trade from Wagin will eventually go through Bunbury, while the trade on the Katanning-Nampup line will find its natural port at Albany. But wherever this trade finds its port I think the policy of spur railways is due to the agitation put forward by the residents in these larger towns on the Great Southern Railway in the hope of getting as much money as they possibly can.

Mr. Piesse: That is absolutely incorrect as far as Katanning is concerned.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It has been pointed out before that the Kojonup railway was

diverted in the direction of Broomehill in order to capture the trade. I intend to make a few remarks later on, when discussing the Dumbleyung-Moulyinning railway, with the object of trying to show that my statement is correct. I believe if there is one town in Western Australia which has suffered an injustice owing to undue influence wielded by its neighbouring town that town is Broomehill. Later on I hope to be able to show that these smaller towns along the Great Southern have not had a fair deal, owing to the fact that their claims have not been put forward in as energetic a manner as have those of the larger towns. It may be contended that the object of all spur railways is to divert the trade into big towns. I will ask the member for Katanning himself, is he prepared to offer any serious opposition to the proposal to establish a loop line from Wiekepin to Tambellup?

Mr. Price: Why not Mount Barker?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Well, to Mount Barker will do. If the member for Katanning is opposed to it I trust he will give some idea of the reasons why it is not feasible.

The Minister for Lands: You tell him why it is feasible.

The Minister for Works: Why not wait till we bring the project forward?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Government will never bring it forward. The Government have fixed their policy and will stand or fall by it. But in my opinion a mistake has been made in not going for a loop line in this particular locality. The time will come when we will have to construct such loop line. My objection to the spur railway system is based largely on the unsatisfactory working of the various spur railways at present constructed. I can point to numerous lines that are causing great dissatisfaction amongst the settlers called upon to use them. While they constitute a big improvement on the method of locomotion formerly in vogue, we cannot claim that they are giving the maximum of satisfaction at the present time. I do not intend to deal with the figures presented by the Minister. However, if the Minister has an opportunity this evening of making a

few remarks on this and other railway Bills, I trust he will let us know if there is any poison land in the area to be served, and if so, what extent.

Mr. Monger: All the poison is in your electorate.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I only wish it were possible to include all the poison tracts in any one electorate. Poison exists practically all over the Eastern belt. It exists at Dowerin, at Williams—

Mr. Monger: Oh give the country another good advertisement.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If I could not give the country a better advertisement than can the member for York, I would not attempt it at all. The hon. member seems to think that because a member refers to the difficulties confronting settlers he is damning the country.

The Minister for Works: You would not refrain from building a line because of the poison?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No, I only want to know how much poison country is included in the area for the railway. If the Minister can give the information I do not think I am asking too much.

The Minister for Works: It would be extremely difficult.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Still if the Minister made inquiries he could give the approximate area. If the country is carrying poison to any great extent we cannot expect to get from the railway the revenue we are hoping for.

The Minister for Railways: Not at the outset.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No, certainly not at the outset.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Power to Governor to compulsorily purchase lands within 15 miles of a railway:

Mr. ANGWIN: Would the line traverse any large areas? According to the information supplied to the Committee there

were 130 resident occupiers to be served by the railway; perhaps the greater portion of them lived in the town of Katanning?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There were six large holdings, that was, holdings of more than 1,000 acres. The hon. member could rest easy in his mind that there was no risk of any large holdings in the ordinary sense of the term being largely enhanced in value by the building of the railway and then being repurchased by the Government. This clause took a larger power to the Executive to purchase land, without giving the increment provided by the railway, than was taken in any previous Bill, and the same provision would be made in all the railway Bills to be considered this session. That was, the power of the Government to purchase land within 15 miles of the railway for township purposes, thereby protecting the public interest to a greater degree than ever before.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6, 7—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—TAMBELLUP-ONGERUP RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 5th January.

Mr. PRICE (Albany): I do not intend to speak at any great length on the second reading, for the reason that any honest criticism might be contorted by those who desire to misrepresent the actions of members in so criticising into opposition to Bills of this character; at the same time, I should be lacking in my duty as a member of this Chamber if I were not to enter my protest against the extraordinary manner in which the survey of this line has been carried out. Whilst in every other case the line has taken a fairly definite course from the starting point to the terminal point, we find this proposed line starting from Tambellup, running east by north, then turning to the south

and running in a southerly direction for a very considerable distance; then, when it comes within reasonable distance of a very large number of settlers, turning north again until at its most northerly point it is within 20 miles of the line to be constructed from Katanning to Nampup; then there is a sudden shoot almost due south from that point, and the line, after running south for 10 miles or more, again suddenly strikes north-east to Ongerup. I trust that the Minister for Works will give us some reason for the extraordinary curves which we find in connection with this line, because I am assured by those who are thoroughly conversant with this country that there is no real reason why these curves should exist and that the line might have been kept a great deal farther south than is proposed, and would thereby have served a larger number of settlers, and opened up a large area of land about Magedup which the line, as at present surveyed, cannot serve. That brings me to a point which has previously been referred to by other speakers when dealing with different railway lines, namely, the question as to whether spur lines such as these are preferable to a loop line. This is one of these cases which undoubtedly proves that the present policy of running spur lines is not the best policy in the interests of the country. If instead of passing two lines, this one of 55 miles and the one just authorised of 38 miles, making a total of 93 miles, we were to put in that extent of railway in the form of a loop running from Tambellup south-west and eventually joining with the Great Southern line near Mt. Barker—I do not say right at Mt. Barker, because I know there are engineering difficulties in the way of looping up two lines there, but on this side of Mt. Barker, where there are no engineering difficulties and the distance traversed would be a little more than the total distance of these two lines—that loop line would relieve the traffic upon the Great Southern line. As a matter of fact, this policy of building spur lines must inevitably lead to the necessity for the duplication of the Great Southern Railway or the construction of a line running

parallel to it. If we run a line parallel to the Great Southern, after constructing these spur lines, then we are duplicating the work we are now doing, because running a line parallel to the Great Southern would open up no more country than these spur lines do.

Mr. Piesse: What class of line would you have for that parallel line?

Mr. PRICE: A trunk line, a heavy line to carry the heavy traffic which must be carried over it through the opening up of the country. But these spur lines congest the traffic on the Great Southern line. The member for Katanning and others are well aware that during last harvest it was almost impossible to cope with the traffic on the Great Southern line. Possibly, through the relaying of the heavy rails carried out during the intervening period, the Railway Department will be able to run heavier engines along the line during the coming season; but at the same time I see the danger of the traffic upon that line eventually becoming so congested that duplication or the building of another line running parallel to the Great Southern, looping up with the Great Southern about Mount Barker, or going round the Stirling Range and coming into Albany from the east, will be an absolute necessity. A loop line, instead of these spur lines, would have relieved the Great Southern rather than have congested the traffic upon it. However, the policy of the Government is in the direction of building spur lines. It is a good policy for the present, but I certainly think they would have shown more foresight if they had in the first place decided on loop lines rather than the spur lines they have adopted. I have already indicated to the Minister that I think it necessary, and certainly desirable, that the House should receive some information as to the manner in which the survey of the Ongerup line has been carried out. I do not suggest there is anything unjust in the survey; at the same time one should certainly have some reason given for the manner in which the survey has been carried out. When we find it running to almost the four points of the compass in a line of 55 miles there must be some reason for

it, and the reason I think should be forthcoming to members in this Chamber. I take exception to the information laid before members, upon which members are supposed to pass their opinions and record their votes in regard to this measure.

Mr. Monger: Do you mean the advisory board's report?

Mr. PRICE: No. I refer to the information placed on the Table by the Minister. We find there are 114 resident occupiers, and their aggregate holdings amount to 269,294 acres, being an average of 2,362 acres per occupier. We are also told that there are 666,965 acres of land open for selection within 15 miles of the line. I challenge that statement. Might I draw the attention of the Minister for Lands to this statement, because as a matter of fact a search made by myself in the Lands Office only a few days ago disclosed the fact that there is very little land at present available for selection along the route of the Ongerup railway. There will be land open for selection; I am not disputing that. What I dispute is that there is that amount of land available along the line.

The Minister for Works: Available to be selected.

Mr. PRICE: Very well then, we have before us misleading information. The statement before the members is that there is 666,965 acres of land open for selection.

The Minister for Works: Not open.

Mr. PRICE: Does the Minister suggest that I am so blind that I cannot read a plain statement?

The Minister for Works: No, I had not seen it; the hon. member is quite correct in his statement.

Mr. Piesse: It should read "available for disposal by the Crown."

Mr. PRICE: That is another matter; because only a few days ago I had occasion to make an investigation, not in connection with this railway but for another purpose altogether, as to what land was available along the route of this railway, and the Minister for Lands knows that at present there is very little land available along it. There will be land available in the course of time, I admit; but

members find themselves in this difficulty: they are told there are 666,965 acres there for selection, and they have to ask themselves how much of it is first-class land and how much second-class and how much sandplain, which is absolutely useless, within the area of 55 miles along the line. That information should be placed before us; because we shall be told, I have no doubt, that the reason why there has been such a big deviation in the route is because of certain large sandplains which had to be escaped and across which it would have been wasteful to run the railway. It would be well also if we had some information in regard to the number of large holdings within the 15-mile radius of the line. The information laid before us as to the number of large holdings is that it is "about six." In view of the fact that out of the 114 occupiers in this district there are a very large number who hold only 1,000 acres each and that the average of land per resident occupier is 2,362 acres, it would be well to know what is the acreage of these six, or about six, large holdings in this district. I think we should have some definite information on that point.

The Minister for Works: I gave it on the second reading.

Mr. PRICE: I have not looked the matter up, but if my memory serves me aright the Minister on the second reading stated that there were certain large holdings but that they were not to any great extent along the route of this line.

The Minister for Works: They amount to 17,619 acres of land.

Mr. PRICE: I can hardly follow the Minister. If there are only 17,619 acres among these six large holdings, that only works out at practically a little above the average I have given for the 114 resident occupiers.

The Minister for Works: That 269,294 acres includes occupiers and holders who are non-resident.

Mr. PRICE: Now we are faced with another problem, another item of information which should be forthcoming, that is, the number of non-resident holders in this district.

Mr. Piesse: There are very few.

Mr. PRICE: If there are very few it is all the more desirable that we should have the information. First the Minister tells me these large holdings aggregate 17,619 acres, or very little more than the average for the 114; then I am told also by the member for Katanning, who certainly has a thorough knowledge of the district, that there are very few non-resident holders.

Mr. Piesse: There are many who have taken up land recently who are not yet on the spot.

Mr. PRICE: This statement was prepared a little time ago, and the many holders to which the hon. member refers as having taken up land recently would not be included in the statement.

The Minister for Works: It is up to date.

Mr. PRICE: It has been on the Table for the last fortnight.

The Minister for Works: It is made up to within the last couple of weeks.

Mr. PRICE: However, I certainly think it would be well if we were given the information with regard to the number of non-residents, and also with regard to the acreage of the large holdings in the district served by this line. The Minister laughs and points to *Hansard* containing his speech on the second reading. As I have pointed out, the information therein contained must be lacking, because if it is correct, practically all the holdings in that district must be large holdings, seeing that the acreage is infinitely above that along the other railway dealt with by the House to-day. I have no intention of opposing this line, though I again express my regret that the policy of the Government is in the direction of building spur lines rather than loop lines, and that in connection with the survey of this line it has been considered desirable to run it in such a peculiar manner, a manner that to my mind will not serve the best interests of the district which should come within the radius of its operations. I trust, however, that the Bill will meet with the approval of members and that whatever errors we may be making to-day in this policy of spur lines we shall rectify in the near future when the Government de-

cide that they will carry out loop lines and cease to listen to the outcries of the little towns, the people of each of which seem to think that if they advocate a branch or spur line from their centre it will do them some good at the expense of the rest of the State. In this particular instance I must emphatically say that the spur lines are beneficial largely to the towns from which they start at the expense of the other portions of the State. I take exception to the second item of information. What members are most concerned in is as to the nearest port to these railway lines, because these lines are built primarily for the purpose of getting produce from the producer to the seaport. In every case we are told how far it is from Perth and not how far it is from the nearest port. We do not want to know how far it is from Perth, but we do desire to know how far it is from the nearest port. May I suggest in that direction in future cases the Minister in charge of the Bill should give us the information as suggested?

Mr. HARDWICK (East Perth) : I cannot help remarking that I am of opinion that the railway policy of the Government is deserving of the very closest scrutiny. I may say as a member of the metropolitan area that spur lines have not altogether been my trouble, but I have on a number of occasions noticed that many of these Bills have been passed by the House, and although we are given to understand that the Opposition side are always on the alert, and that among them we have not a large number of agricultural members, I think that sometimes even members representing the metropolitan area from that side do not pay that close attention to railway Bills which they should do. An hon. member remarked earlier in the evening that almost every little town wants its own particular railway. I think that is true to a degree, and I am rather against the policy of the Government in that respect, that is, taking a railway out in a direction where perhaps there is only a handful of people. I think the Government should have come down with a system of a network of rail-

ways to cover the whole of our agricultural areas.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is not worth their while now.

Mr. HARDWICK: They may still have to consider those things in the next eight or ten months, therefore it would be necessary for them to inaugurate a scheme something similar to that which I have suggested, and which would do away with a lot of those things which we are told by the Opposition occur in the country districts, and in connection with which efforts have been made to divert the railways in a direction which it was not intended they should take it in the first place.

Mr. Gill: We will look after that when we get over there.

Mr. HARDWICK: I think the hon. member will continue to adorn the position he occupies, at any rate until after the next election, when I fear he will leave it altogether. I would like the Minister to tell us to which particular ports these railways are likely to take goods. I have realised for a long time now that Bunbury has had a rather unfair advantage as far as railway facilities are concerned, an advantage which has been to the commercial detriment of Perth and Fremantle.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What railway are you referring to?

Mr. HARDWICK: I will tell you later on.

Mr. Scaddan: He means the Bullfinch railway.

Mr. HARDWICK: I am also of opinion that where railways improve large holdings, some of the unearned increment brought about by the construction of these lines through the large areas held by a few persons should go into the coffers of the State. If there is to be a continuation of the policy of building agricultural railways, I would like to see the adoption of a betterment system, or some other similar system so as to prevent all the profits going into the pockets of a few individuals, and rather that some of this money should find its way into the State Treasury.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison): It is quite a change to hear a few remarks from members on that side of the House, especially when they make statements with regard to the policy of the Government being deserving of the greatest scrutiny.

Mr. Hardwick: It does at all times.

Mr. HOLMAN: In all probability if members on this side of the House took some notice when members on the other side made a protest against the hasty construction of railway lines by the present Government a great deal might be done. We are dealing with agricultural railways generally at the present time, but I intend to refer to one or two other railways which have been constructed by the present Government. Hon. members opposite should take a little more notice of the statements from this side either in condemnation or in the criticising of certain works that the Government are undertaking. As far as the general policy of opening up and developing the agricultural districts is concerned, I think the Government have the support of all members. But no haphazard system of constructing spur railway lines should be adopted merely because of a special outcry from a particular district. It would be as well to have a definite policy laid down. There is no doubt about the question as to which is the best, the present system of spur lines or a general system of loop lines. Only a few weeks ago when the Bullfinch Railway Bill was presented to Parliament and its hasty construction was being criticised, it was shown that it would not be a wise policy to carry out the work at that particular time. Yet the policy of the Government received the undoubted support of hon. members on the Ministerial side. I have here a copy of the *Monthly Journal* of the Chamber of Mines, and although I do not agree with what appears in its columns, I might mention that in this particular issue there is an article in which the very arguments used here by the Opposition against the construction of the Bullfinch railway are put forward. They are the exact statements which were made by members on this side of the House.

The Minister for Works: You are not swearing by that?

Mr. HOLMAN: Not a bit; but when statements are made by this side against the speedy construction of a railway, or the unwise policy of the Government, and the matter is taken up by the Chamber of Mines, it goes to show that when we make statements there may be a great deal more in them than we may ever get credit for. In connection with the Bullfinch railway the article in the Chamber of Mines *Journal* says—

In the particular case of the Bullfinch the Government has acted promptly enough. It is open to question, however, whether more has not been promised than is warranted by present conditions, and whether the more pressing needs of other localities have not thereby been ignored. The one really urgent requirement at the Bullfinch is water, and that the Government has at once met, as it was bound to do. It has, moreover, acted with proper caution in providing only a 3-inch main from the water supply scheme. That will be ample for some little time to come; the cost of it is not very great; and a larger main can easily be put down later, if it be found necessary. It is, perhaps, a pity that similar caution was not exercised in the matter of a railway line to the new field. The two Ministers who visited the Bullfinch, and who met the demand for a railway from Southern Cross with a refusal for the time being, were certainly wiser than their colleagues in Perth who, perhaps in a moment of expansive optimism, pledged the Government to the immediate construction of the line. The amount of work done so far on the Bullfinch field is not of itself sufficient justification for the estimated expenditure of £50,000 on a railway line. The distance to the main goldfields' line at Southern Cross is adequately bridged by existing means of conveyance, although, of course, a railway would be cheaper and more convenient. But none of the mines are yet far enough advanced to require the services of a railway, nor will they be until they reach a stage when the

transport of machinery to them becomes necessary. Nor can it yet be said that the permanence of the new field is sufficiently assured to warrant so considerable an outlay of public money. Everybody hopes, and many mining men believe, that the field will prove of permanent value. But outside of the one mine nothing is really known yet, and one mine alone is not enough to justify the railway. The question of railway construction might well have been postponed until the development of the field had advanced much further than at present and until its future prospects had become more assured than they now are. The £50,000 which the Government has promised to expend on a railway line to the Bullfinch could be expended in other directions with considerably more benefit to the gold-mining industry and perhaps with more justice to other localities. For instance, the one great disability under which prospecting work and mining operations are performed on these arid goldfields areas is the scarcity, often the total lack of water.

These statements are exactly similar to the arguments advanced by this side of the House. When it is known that despite the oft-repeated boast that the policy of the present Government is to construct railway lines in agricultural districts, it is a very strange thing to find the Government taking the rails and sleepers from an agricultural line which was actually being constructed, and removing them to the scene of the Bullfinch railway. When this kind of thing is done one can only imagine for what purpose the line is being constructed. If it is the policy of the Government to assist agriculturists, why did they take the rails and sleepers from an agricultural district in order to build a line which even the strongest advocates of mining in this State are opposed to? As far as the Bill before the House is concerned, after hearing the remarks of the member for Albany one can only wonder why those curves and twists were made, and whether the line was to serve certain individuals or whether the country was of such

a nature as to necessitate the undertaking of these twists and bends. I maintain it is a bad policy to curve lines about as shown on the map, and especially when it is shown as has been done in this case that by making these turns railway communication will be taken away from a large number of settlers. The Government are not treating them fairly at all. In connection with the remark of the member for East Perth with reference to the betterment system, I maintain that the Government should at once adopt a betterment system or something that will operate in a similar manner. We know well of cases where settlers have taken up areas in country through which it is proposed to construct a railway. In this way an increased value is placed on the land. In the country which this proposed line is to serve we know that land was acquired with a full knowledge that it was intended to construct a railway through it. Where did these people get that inside knowledge from? We know also that persons have gone on proposed routes of railways and taken up large areas knowing full well that a railway would soon go through the property, and that they would benefit by the enhanced value. I maintain that the betterment system should be adopted and also that those whose property is increased in value by the construction of a railway should pay an increased price. It is only reasonable that that should be done. While not opposing the construction of these lines I think it would be much better if we had opportunities of visiting the several districts and seeing for ourselves the necessity for the railways. As for the advisory board's report, I do not consider the reports we have had in the past altogether convincing. Members would be better able to speak of these lines if they had opportunities of visiting the districts. Probably the Minister will afford an explanation as to the reason for the twists shown in the route of this line. The matter of large holdings has also been mentioned, and the remarks of the Minister by interjection have not been too satisfactory. We should have further explanation on that point. When opposition is offered to any work from this side of the House there are generally good

grounds for it; thus the £50,000 expended in connection with the construction of the Bullfinch railway, and the taking of sleepers and rails from other lines in order to push on with that work was by no means warranted. However, it is my intention to deal more thoroughly with this matter when on the Loan Estimates. I hope that in future the policy of the Government will be to consider the interests of the majority of the people, and not to twist the lines for the sake of bringing into closer railway communication large holdings which, while benefiting materially by their proximity to the lines, will not give any return to the Government. I hope a policy of loop lines and of introducing the betterment system will be adopted in the future.

Mr. PIÉSSE (Katanning): It is not my intention to take up much of the time of the House in speaking on the Bill, because in view of the statistics produced by the Minister, and of the readiness of members generally to accept those statistics, it requires no further recommendation from me. It seems to me the debates on this and the preceding Bill have centred round the question of route, and as to whether loop lines or spur lines are preferable. From that I take it there is no doubt in the minds of hon. members that this railway is justified. The magnificent areas to be served are sufficient evidence of the necessity for the line, and therefore I hope there will be no delay in passing the measure so that railway facilities may be immediately given to the localities concerned. The question raised by the member for Albany as to whether a loop line would not be preferable to a spur line is one which has already engaged the attention of the people to be served by this line. The residents of the locality of Ngowangerup and the country beyond have taken this into consideration and at their request I, with my predecessor, took an opportunity of placing their views before the Government of the day, asking that a spur line should be constructed to junction with the Great Southern railway. At that time it was suggested the railway should start from Tambellup and extend to Chirrilillup, via Ngowangerup. Subsequently a new selection took place in the

direction of Ongerup, 30 miles a little south of east of Ngowangerup. A large subdivision was there made, and 80,000 acres were surveyed, the bulk of which has been selected by comparatively small holders. I do not think there is one holder in the area with more than 1,000 acres. In reporting on the extension of the proposed Tambellup-Chirrilillup railway the advisory board no doubt took into consideration the fact that the people at Ongerup should immediately secure connection with the trunk railway; it was quite impossible for those settlers to go out 55 miles from the present railway and make a success of their holdings, as the carting would involve several days.

Mr. Angwin: Who holds all the land between?

Mr. PIÉSSE: Some of the 114 selectors given here on the sheet. I believe myself there is a slight discrepancy in the number of resident occupiers, because the statistics given to me show that there are 112—that is before the selection of the Ongerup area—and I am of opinion that there are some 35 or 40, probably 50 of the settlers now resident on that area, while in addition to those there will be a portion of the 80 occupiers of 1,000 acres each who are still to take up their residence. Therefore, before long we shall have a much larger population in the district. And from my knowledge of that country I can say we have a very desirable class of selector along the proposed route of this railway. It is true there are a few large holdings in the district, one large holding in particular. I am sorry the Government did not seize their opportunity when recently this land was placed under offer to them for purchase. The member for Albany questioned the route of the railway after passing Ngowangerup. All I can say is we might be well satisfied with the report of the advisory board, which has been lying on the Table for some weeks past. This, of course, is a thoroughly independent board, who have made an inspection of the country, and the route proposed is that recommended by this body. I am quite satisfied the proposed route will give satisfaction, not only to the present holders of

land in the locality, but also those who are likely to select in the near future; because the railway follows the best wheat producing land in the district. Although I have no authority for saying so, I think one of the chief reasons that influenced the advisory board in going so far south was to serve that country both to the west and the east of the Salt River down as far as Sandalwood. Very excellent wheat land is held there, and there is not the least doubt that in the near future that portion of the district could reasonably ask for railway connection with some point on the Great Southern. However, as a large area of sandplain intervenes between the Salt River and the Great Southern at that point it would be a considerable time before direct railway communication could reasonably be given; therefore I think the advisory board was very wise in making this deviation, especially in view of the fact that there has not been a single complaint from the people to the north-east. As a matter of fact the country to the north-east is not quite so good and, no doubt, the advisory board took that into consideration also when they suggested that the line should be so far south. It seems to me the member for Albany was scarcely consistent, because after pointing to this southern deviation he said the line should go still further south. If the line were to go further south it would, of course, make an even greater deviation. However, I am quite satisfied the route now proposed will serve the best interests of that portion of the district. My only anxiety is that the Government will push on with this work, and have the line completed as far as Ngowangerup by next harvest. A very large crop has been grown in that district during this year, and in view of the great disabilities under which the people there labour I hope the Government will use every endeavour to push the railway on in time for next season's harvesting. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest): If there is one member in the House who should be enthusiastic in supporting propositions of this character, it is the member for Katanning, as both the railways we have

discussed to-night start and end in his district.

Mr. Piesse: It shows it is a good district.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is not my intention to disparage the district, but the few remarks I have to offer will, at least, show I hold an opinion different from that held by some other members in regard to the starting point of this line. The member for Katanning referred to the fact that there was a very desirable class of settlers in his district and that they were in need of railway facilities. I am not going to admit that there is in that district a class of settler any more desirable than is to be found in other portions of the State.

Mr. Piesse: They have faced some very great difficulties down there.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Possibly their difficulties have been many and great during the past few years they have been settled in that locality; but there are desirable settlers in other portions of the State who have languished for railway facilities for the past 50 years, facilities promised year after year and generation after generation, and up to the present they have not received them. I sometimes think that we are rather premature in going to the assistance of some settlers when these older settlers and pioneers have not been considered up to the present time. I have all along contended that Tambellup is the wrong starting place for this line, and that it should start from Broomehill.

The Minister for Works: I thought you were going to say Katanning.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I will say something about Katanning before I conclude. My opinion is that Katanning wields altogether too much influence in that part of the State.

Mr. Piesse: You know nothing at all about it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I may know nothing at all about it, but it is an extraordinary thing that the towns in the same district as Katanning find it impossible to make any progress.

Mr. Piesse: Why?

Mr. Heitmann: The seat of Government is at Katanning.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, the seat of Government is at Katanning. Supplies are sent from there, trade is centred there, and the hon. member has admitted another reason for the backwardness of these other places, namely the big estates. Katanning is a sort of octopus on the Great Southern, bleeding both Broomehill and Woodanilling of the trade to which they are entitled. I believe that if figures were looked into an extraordinary tale would be told in regard to the differential rates on that line. Broomehill has been crippled, owing, in the first instance, to the large estates, and secondly to the hostile influence of Katanning in the district.

Mr. Piesse: How does that influence operate?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is evident here to-night when we find this railway starting from Katanning. Has the member for Katanning made any effort whatever to give Broomehill the consideration to which it is entitled?

Mr. Piesse: Do you say I have not?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I say that when the proposed purchase of that estate he referred to only a few minutes ago was mooted, the member for Katanning never made any public announcement on the subject, and never urged the Government in an energetic fashion to purchase it.

Mr. Piesse: I did so privately.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Private requests do not have much weight. In the vicinity of Broomehill we have three large estates; the Fairfield estate of 6,000 acres, the Woodiarrup estate of 13,000 acres, and the Pallinup estate of 22,000 acres. Pallinup was offered to the Government at one time for 12s. per acre; that offer was allowed to go unaccepted at the time, and only twelve months ago the same property was offered to the Government at £2 per acre. The occupants of the Treasury benches did not display the business acumen which we had a right to expect when they neglected that opportunity of acquiring this property.

Mr. Piesse: It was not my fault that the Government did not buy it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am blaming the Government in this case. This estate was offered to them at £2 per acre, and I ven-

ture to say that had they purchased it, inside of three months every available acre would have been taken up by settlers in the district or by settlers from outside, but the Government did nothing in the matter. They preferred to go to another district and pay £56,000 for the Avondale estate, which, when thrown open, was loaded to such an extent that the settlers would not apply. I believe that a couple of titled gentlemen are the only two applicants for this particular area, and if that is a fact, the Government, in purchasing the Avondale estate, made a bad deal for the people, whilst they were at the same time guilty of criminal neglect in not acquiring Pallinup when they had the opportunity. Had it been repurchased, and this line were to be constructed from Broomehill instead of Katanning, it would, I am satisfied, show much better results than it can as at present surveyed. I understand that it will go through 14 miles of sand plain before it reaches Gnowangerup.

Mr. Piesse: No, not 14 miles; wheat is being grown on that land to-day.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We will not quibble as to whether it is 13 miles or 14 miles, but had the line gone from Broomehill it would have tapped much better country and would have given that town, which has languished in the past, and will continue to languish I am afraid, something like a fair deal. I do not wish to say much in regard to this line because I recognise that it would be of no use to move an amendment, but it is useless for the member for Katanning to urge the Government to acquire the estate after the line has been authorised.

Mr. Piesse: That is the only alternative.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: What is the use of locking the stable after the horse has escaped? Are the Government going to pay £5 per acre for an estate after the line has been built, when that same property was refused a few years ago at 12s., and more recently at £2 per acre? I believe that if that land were put on the market to-day it would bring an average of £3 10s. per acre, and I have heard that one man who offered to sell his land for £2 is now asking £4 for it. I have all along

contended that Broomehill has not received a fair deal in the matter of railway facilities, and as has been pointed out before, the policy has been, wherever possible, to so divert the trade from Broomehill as to build up other large towns. I am not going to urge the Government to acquire these estates now that railway facilities have been granted, for it would be criminal on the part of the Government to spend this £86,000 on the building of a railway and then give owners of those particular estates an additional £2 per acre on their bargain, owing to the fact that railway facilities have enhanced the value of the land. While I do not propose to oppose the construction of this line, I believe that with this, as with other railway proposals, a mistake has been made, and while we continue to allow so much influence to be exercised on behalf of the big towns, we are going to cripple some of the little towns and deny them the trade which naturally belongs to them. It is a pity that the Minister for Lands has not been so sympathetic in regard to the Great Southern as he might have been. He has not listened to the representations of the member for Katanning that he should repurchase these estates, although it would have been a good proposition for the State. I trust that any gloomy predictions I may have made in regard to the quality of the land to be traversed by this line will not be fulfilled, and that the district of Broomehill, with so many natural advantages, will receive more consideration from the Government. Later on I may have an opportunity of pointing out where it may be possible to serve more settlers. I do sincerely hope that the Broomehill district will receive a little more encouragement in the matter of railway facilities in the future, and that we are not going to see a town absolutely crippled by the existence of these large estates, which have checked the growth of that place for the last 30 years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): I do not think it is necessary for me to make many remarks in regard to the criticisms that have been offered. The time has passed for the discussion of the

relative merits of parallel lines and spur lines. If it were intended to serve this large agricultural area by the construction of parallel or loop lines that policy would be utterly inadequate unless we were prepared to multiply it indefinitely. Hon. members will realise that it would be impossible for one line parallel with the Great Southern line to serve, with the main line, the whole of that vast area. It would be necessary then, in addition to the parallel line, to construct a series of spurs or loop lines. Following up the principle of spur lines which was adopted some years ago by this Parliament, after due consideration and deliberation, it will ultimately be necessary to connect the ends of these lines by a line that will run approximately parallel with the Great Southern. That will be a necessary part of the future railway development of the agricultural areas of the State. I do not think it can be urged that any of these lines which have been brought forward, or are being brought forward at the present time, are not absolutely justified on the circumstances that have been submitted, and in this connection I want to point out that although complaint has been made, as complaint always is made, of the amount of information brought forward in regard to the railway Bills, during this session there has been more information submitted than it has been customary to supply in the past. In regard to the information which has been circulated, I am quite willing to admit that there appears to be a discrepancy on the face of the figures supplied; that was drawn attention to by the member for Albany who quoted the resident occupiers at 114, and the acreage held by them at 269,294 acres, showing that these persons were the holders on an average of something over 2,000 acres per individual. But the discrepancy is solely owing to the fact that this 269,294 acres cover the area alienated and held under both Sections 55 and 56 of the Land Act. It therefore does not only apply to the holdings of the 114 resident occupiers but also applies to the holdings granted to those persons who have taken up land under non-residence conditions. It is not necessary for

me to go at any length into the question of the precise route taken by this railway. As originally proposed by me and originally introduced to the House it was to connect Tambellup with Chirellilup. When the report of the advisory board came forward, the board, after exhaustive examination and close investigation of the district, made this recommendation—

We recommend the construction of a line from Tambellup in a general north-easterly direction to Ngowangerup, thence south-easterly to the valley of the Pallinup river, and thence north-easterly to the vicinity of Tarbunkunup near Ongerup, following approximately the route shown on the litho. This proposed railway will have a length of about 55 miles, will serve 780,000 acres of country, 224,000 acres of which are alienated and 556,000 are vacant. We estimate that within this area there are at least 420,000 acres of country well adapted for the growth of cereals. We consider that this line may at a future date (if circumstances warrant it) be extended to Ravensthorpe, and also may form part of a large loop to serve the country east of the existing and the proposed spur lines. The Inspector of Engineering Surveys estimates that this line will cost about £95,000, including provision for water supply.

That is the report of the advisory board, and that report really fixes the route which has been adopted for the line. I do not think it would be possible, even if anyone wished, that influence could be brought to bear on that body to bring in their report. It was not a report following the Government proposal but a report which really recommended that a provision larger than the provision the Government proposed should be recommended to the House. The member for Murchison has suggested that members should be afforded a chance of seeing these districts. Personally, I should be very glad indeed to—

Mr. O'Loughlen: Send him away for a month.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To assist in facilitating such inspections during recess; but at the same time, even if

hon. members had an opportunity of travelling away from the railway to inspect these different districts, it would be difficult for them to spend that amount of time in one district to enable them to form a reasonable opinion with regard to the question of route.

Mr. Horan: We raised the same point during the Moore Ministry, and it was promised for us in the next recess.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The examination of the whole district has to be very close indeed to enable one to arrive at what is exactly the best line a railway should follow.

Mr. Holman: You could not expect members to decide that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: However, I certainly think it would be advantageous generally to members to have larger opportunities of seeing the country than has been possible for them in the past, and I hope it will be possible to arrange so that during the recess some efforts will be made in this direction. The member for Forrest has proposed that this railway should start from Broomehill. It would be impossible to have a railway starting from Broomehill and running parallel with the railway from Katanning to Nampup. The distance, I think, is somewhere nearly a dozen miles—

The Minister for Lands: Eleven miles.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is 11 miles between Broomehill and Katanning. The hon. member will therefore see that if we have the Katanning-Nampup line, it is absolutely impossible to recommend the House to agree to a line from Broomehill to Ongerup.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why impossible? You do not contend it would be only 11 miles away.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I contend that at the starting point it would be only 11 miles away; and I think if I had submitted such a proposition to the House the hon. member would not have been prepared to support it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Power to Governor to compulsorily purchase land within 15 miles of railway:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved an amendment—

That all the words after "may" in line 4 be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—(a) with the object of encouraging the cultivation and settlement of the land, compulsorily purchase any land in parcels of not less than one thousand acres, each parcel being the property of one person or two or more persons, jointly or in common, and situated within fifteen miles of any part of the line of railway, and which land is certified by the Minister for Lands as suitable for closer agricultural settlement; (b) compulsorily purchase any land situated as aforesaid for town-sites; Provided that no land shall be compulsorily purchased under paragraph (a) of this section until the Lands Purchase Board has favourably reported thereon.

Mr. ANGWIN: It was proposed to strike out a number of words and replace them; was it possible to do so?

The CHAIRMAN: It was the simplest form in which to deal with the amendment. It was quite in order.

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

Clause 5—Purchase money to be determined under Public Works Act, 1902:

On motion by the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the clause was amended by striking out the word "but" at the beginning of the second paragraph and inserting in lieu, "Provided that, on the exercise of any such power, or on the acquisition by the Governor within the said period of land situated as aforesaid for any work within the meaning of the Public Works Act, 1902"; and the clause as amended was agreed to.

Clause 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Application of 60 Victoria No. 26:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved an amendment—

That after the word "lands" in the first line the words "acquired under paragraph (a) of Section 4" be inserted.

Amendment passed; clause as amended agreed to.

Schedule, title, agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

BILL — WAGIN-DUMBLEYUNG RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th January.

Mr. COWCHER (Williams): I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of this Bill. I can assure hon. members that the sooner the work is carried out the better it will be. The line is fully justified and I hope hon. members will support the Bill. I have much pleasure in supporting it and I hope that the Government will construct the line as quickly as possible. There is only one thing I would like to say and that is that when the present survey is completed—it has now been carried out a distance of 12 miles—it will be carried out a further ten miles, and I hope that the Government will see that in this connection the line will be taken in a direction where it will do the greatest good to the greatest number. We had a deputation to the Minister for Works recently and he promised that that would be done, and I feel sure that he will carry out his promise. The great desire is to see that the railway will be built through country where it will do the greatest good.

Mr. Horan: There are 80 settlers to be served.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): There appears to be considerable dissatisfaction existing in this district regarding the route that this railway is to take. I think a matter of this description should be referred to a select committee. We find that there has been a petition presented signed by over 80 settlers asking

that an alteration should be made in the route of this railway, and realising the small number of settlers on the route proposed, as mentioned by the member for Yilgarn, it is shown clearly that further investigation should be made regarding the route it is proposed to take. Railways of this description should be built in the manner suggested by the member for the district, and that is, to serve the largest number of residents. It has been suggested that this railway will be only 25 miles from the terminus of the Nampup railway. As a matter of fact, as far as I can gather, it will be nearer 35 miles than 25 miles, and if this railway is constructed on the route referred to by the Minister, there will be caused a great hardship to those settlers who have developed their holdings in anticipation of having the railway within reasonable distance of their properties. When we realise that such a large number as 80 settlers are opposed to the route of the railway I think it is necessary that some other body should step in with a view of ascertaining whether justice is being done. I am hoping this Bill will be referred to a select committee to enable that committee to make an investigation regarding the route proposed.

Mr. TROY (Mount Magnet): The attitude I intend to take up with regard to this railway is that suggested by the member for East Fremantle. I do not think the line is going to be constructed through that area of country which, to use the words of the member for the district, will do the greatest good to the greatest number. We, who are acquainted only to some extent with the country, must largely rely upon the information submitted by the Minister in introducing the Bill, and we must also depend upon the information given by the member for the district. Strange to say, while resident occupiers, according to the Ministerial statement, number 110, at least 80 resident occupiers are opposed to the line being constructed on the proposed route. If that be so, I fail to understand how we are going to do the greatest good to the greatest number because the greatest number appear to be opposed to the route. It is a most ex-

traordinary thing that these two railways, the Katanning-Nampup and the Dumbleyung extension, both turn to the north after running eastward to some extent. Probably had this extension continued due east towards Lake Grace the terminus of the extension would have been very close to the terminus of the Katanning-Nampup, and that would have been inadvisable, but as I pointed out when discussing the previous line, there was no necessity for the Katanning-Nampup turning to the north other than for the purpose of drawing the trade of that country to Katanning. I am not going to vote in this House to build up the interests of any gentleman or any family no matter how wealthy or how influential they may be; that is not our purpose, therefore I decline to accept that policy or endorse it. We are given to understand by the Minister that this railway even now, though it turns to the north, will when it reaches the terminus be only 25 miles from Nampup, but that is extremely doubtful. I am given to understand it will be a greater distance, something about 35 miles. That information is given to me, not by people unacquainted with the district, but by residents of the district directly concerned, who are in a position to give reliable information. I hold the opinion that this line would better serve the interests of the people in this part of the State after proceeding due east if it were diverted somewhat to the south, to serve what is known as the Merrillup district. If this were done it would serve 62 settlers holding an acreage of 62,000 acres, much of which is largely improved, while the area expected to be under cultivation next year amounts to 10,000 acres. According to the figures of the Minister the line if built along the route he suggests will serve only 7,000 acres which are under cultivation, and an additional 9,000 acres cleared, 16,000 acres in all. The average yield for the whole district is similar to that given by the Minister. The land is much of the same quality, and the conditions, climatic and otherwise, are similar. In the Merrillup area there have been completed 250 miles of fencing. If this railway is continued on its present course farmers will

have to cart their produce 17 miles before they can get to the railway. The Minister when introducing these Bills pointed out that 12 miles is a sufficient distance to cart produce, and we are building railways on the principle of serving people 12½ miles on each side of the line. In the present case very many farmers will have to cart their produce 17 miles, and in such circumstances there will be little possibility of carrying on farming successfully. Once this railway is completed there is very little probability of these people ever getting a line. Were we not acquainted with the devious methods of building agricultural railways along the Great Southern we would be at a loss to understand why the Government are always dragging in country which geographically does not belong to that district. From east to west the whole of the country is utilised for the purpose of building up Katanning, while the other localities along the Great Southern, which, owing to their geographical position, ought to be connected at other points on the line, are being neglected. I want to protest against that policy, and to go further, for I believe some investigation should be made. I do not desire that the construction of this line should be in any way retarded. I do not desire to offer any opposition to the construction of any agricultural line, but I do think the best interests of the country are not being served by the construction of the line along its proposed route. Therefore after the passing of the second reading I propose to move that the Bill be referred to a select committee.

Mr. Cowcher: Do you want to hang it up for 12 months?

Mr. TROY: No.

Mr. Cowcher: You will do so.

Mr. TROY: Despite the indignation of the hon. member we have a duty to perform. The majority of the residents in the locality will not be served by this railway, and once a railway is constructed along the proposed route there will be no possibility for many years to come of these people securing railway communication. So, rather than see an injustice done we should pursue in regard to this Bill the policy that was adopted in regard

to another Bill this evening. A select committee could easily secure the necessary information in a week, and then if the route is found to be justified we could pass the Bill as it stands. At the same time there is every reason for delaying it for a little while until we find out exactly how it will affect the people of the locality. There is no desire to retard the Bill, but merely to do justice by the majority in the district. We are getting sick and tired of building railways for political purposes, and it is a fair thing that the interests of the people should be considered and not the interests of an influential family, or of a few members in the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): I have listened with some interest to the remarks of the last speaker, but I do not intend to reply to him; because if a member bases all his remarks on the inference that a railway line is proposed merely to suit one gentleman, or one family, it is of no use arguing with such a member. If he can form that conclusion in a case like this, I am sure the strongest argument would not convince him that opinion was wrong.

Mr. Heitmann: He said a big percentage of the residents were opposed to the route.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes: I am coming to the statement made by the member for East Fremantle in regard to the dissatisfaction in respect to the route. No matter what route is selected for an agricultural or any other railway there will always be a large amount of dissatisfaction. Naturally every settler wants the railway as near his own property as he can possibly get it; and we do not blame him; everyone is tarred with the same brush in that respect. But it is not a question of influence in this matter at all. The Government have put aside influence entirely, and instead of laying down routes themselves they have left the matter wholly to an advisory board of independent and responsible officers.

Mr. Scaddan: I do not know how you can say that.

Mr. Heitmann: Responsible to whom?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To Parliament; they are dependent on Parliament for their bread and butter.

Mr. Bolton: So is every public servant.

Mr. Angwin: It is not long since you objected to a committee appointed in that way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; the hon. member has a good memory, but unfortunately it does not go far enough. I said a statutorially appointed board would be far better. But if the hon. member infers that I said the advisory board was not better than the system of bringing down railways without reference to a board, he is wrong. Because, when in office on a former occasion, I took part in the appointment of such a board, as the hon. member ought to know. How, then, could I now, or a year ago, condemn the very action to which I was then a party?

Mr. Scaddan: It was under totally different conditions. You had not promised the railway in those days.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nor was this one promised.

Mr. Scaddan: All these railways have been promised.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No route has been promised, and in regard to a number of these railways the lines themselves have not been promised. In some instances, I admit, the board was instructed to report on certain routes, as when a railway is part of the Government's political programme, in which case the Government stand or fall by it.

Mr. Scaddan: Then it is a political railway.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; the hon. member surely can distinguish between a political railway and a railway for which the Government take the responsibility, and on which they stake their political existence. What I mean by a political railway is a railway constructed for political purposes. But the hon. member, for instance—and I am giving him an example at which he will not take offence—the hon. member was returned as an advocate of the Esperance railway. I was returned as an opponent—I am

speaking of 10 years ago. If the hon. member had been in power and advocated the Esperance railway, I would not, because he was pledged to that railway, because he pinned his political existence to it, I would not be justified in charging him with advocating it as a political railway. He would advocate it because he believed its construction would be of the highest advantage to the State.

Mr. Scaddan: It would be absurd to promise a railway, and then come here and say it was built because the advisory board recommended it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member is distorting my argument, although perhaps not wilfully. I am taking the question of route. There has been no dissentient voice against the railway, but merely against the route. The railway is all right then. The member for East Fremantle, even the member for Mount Magnet, admitted the railway was all right if it took a different route. Both those gentlemen admitted that the Government were right in taking the responsibility when the advisory board had recommended this railway to the House and the country. But they complained of the route which the Government had adopted on the recommendation of the advisory board.

Mr. Scaddan: The route is the railway.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh no; the railway is a provision for the opening up of certain agricultural country, beginning of course at Dumbleyung and going eastward. It might go in almost any direction so long as it went generally easterly. That is the railway. But this talk of influence can always be raised. In regard to the petition referred to by the member for East Fremantle I desire to say it has been signed by a large number within the influence of an already existing railway. In constructing an extension and dealing with the persons concerned in that extension, there must be an excision of those adequately served by existing railways. We do not take those within twelve and a half miles of an existing railway; they are not considered as persons to be served by the new railway.

Mr. Angwin: Although it does not benefit them they realise the injustice to others.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As it does not injure them they are willing to sign the petition. Probably the hon. member has had petitions signed by persons who neither knew nor cared anything about them. But, supposing the possibility of a mistake having been made, how is the hon. member to overcome it? The member for Mount Magnet said "You cannot trust the advisory board; you cannot trust the Government."

Mr. Troy: I did not say any such thing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member said the route recommended and approved is a wrong route, and he is going to prevent the adoption of the route by moving for a select committee of which he will be chairman, and of which two other Opposition members will form a part, as against two from the Government side. Then we will have an absolutely impartial report on a question of Government policy from a committee presided over by an Opposition member and having a majority of three to two.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Would it be impartial if it were the other way about?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. Because on the one hand we have an impartial body of three responsible officers sitting conjointly and bringing up a joint recommendation after having heard evidence and seen the country. We have beyond them a Government responsible to Parliament for all their actions. And against these two bodies it is proposed to put up a three-to-two majority committee. Even if we had a Minister presiding over the select committee with two other Ministerialists on the committee I still could not but refer to it as an irresponsible body. Every member must recognise that such a committee could have no opportunity of forming an opinion of anything like the value of that formed by the three experts who have been over the route. I would not have a select committee anyway.

Mr. Scaddan: That is why you rig up your select committees when you want a partial report.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When?

Mr. Scaddan: On many occasions.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member is referring to the dark ages for his records. However, I say no select committee, no matter how constituted, can be a satisfactory tribunal to deal with a measure of this description. I say it is impossible to get the evidence. The member for Mount Magnet says the committee can get it in a week. I say it is absolutely impossible, and I further say you cannot rely on getting the best evidence even if you went and spent a month there. I want to point out that these railways have to serve, not only the settler of to-day but also the settler of to-morrow, that they have to provide, not only for those already on the land but for the land that is yet unsettled. It is absolutely essential that the unsettled land should be fully considered when deciding upon these routes. As the member for Williams mentioned, I had a deputation come to me last week on this very question and they wished a deviation to be made. The whole question of the route, as I pointed out to them, is at present only approximate until the permanent survey has been made, and the representations that have been made by the petitioners referred to, and by this deputation, will be fully considered, and can be acted on to the extent of the deviation allowed by the Bill. I think that this House is fully warranted, on the information already submitted, in accepting this Bill, and I hope the member for Mount Magnet will not persist in his proposition to refer the Bill to a select committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

To refer to select committee.

Mr. TROY (Mount Magnet) moved—
That the Bill be referred to a select committee.

The Minister, in endeavouring to refute the statements made by members on the opposite side of the House, had said that he intended to ignore the remarks regard-

ing the influence brought to bear in connection with agricultural railways; but, ignore it as he might, nobody could deny that in regard to the railways in the Great Southern district some influence had been brought to bear to conserve the interests of Katanning. In connection with the Katanning-Kojonup line, even though a prior survey had been made by departmental surveyors and the route declared, yet later on the route was changed, with the result that the railway now ran for seven miles parallel with the Great Southern railway, and then turned due west to Kojonup. Why was this done? Merely to divert the trade seven miles along the line from Broomehill to Katanning, enabling the latter town to get the trade that, geographically, did not belong to it. That was a scandal which nobody could deny and which nobody had attempted to deny. Then, again, what was the necessity for building this line north-east after it reached a certain point, when the line, geographically, should be built due east to connect later on with the Lake Grace country, if it were not for the fact that the Katanning-Nampup line turned north after a certain distance, and the termini of the two lines would be too close. Just as the Katanning-Nampup line had been turned north only in order to bring in the trade to Katanning, so this line was also taken north in order that it might not interfere with the traffic of the Nampup line, and its proposed ultimate extension to the Lake Grace country. Wagin had greater claims than any other town on the Great Southern to the trade of the Lake Grace country, and yet that trade was being diverted to Katanning. Those were his reasons for desiring a select committee, and they were good ones. He was not blind enough to accept wholly the reports of the advisory board, because he knew perfectly well that the board had not a free hand. They had certain instructions to determine the route between a given point and a given point.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. TROY: That was a fact. The board had been asked to report on the extension of the Wongan Hills line to Mullewa, whereas there were two alternative routes, but no matter what the desires of that

board where they had no opportunity of reporting on an extension to Yalgoo. They were tied down to the country between Wongan Hills and Mullewa, and could only bring in a report on a line between those two points. Then why ask members to accept without question the reports of the board, when the board had to act on instructions? Bearing that fact in mind he thought that a select committee could be just as impartial as any other body of men. The Opposition had no axe to grind; they did not possess a single acre of land in the country, and, personally, he was not acquainted with any selectors in the district, except Mr. Moran, who was once a member of this Chamber, and he did not even know how the line would affect him. His only desire was to serve the best interests of the country, and he would take the same action in regard to the Wongan Hills line when it came forward. The Minister, in a somewhat supercilious manner, had said that the committee would comprise three Opposition and two Ministerial members, and had implied that the three Opposition members would not be as fair and impartial as any three Ministerialists. On what had the Minister based such an insinuation? Whilst the Minister professed to have a lofty scorn for what he deemed to be insinuations, he was not above making insinuations himself. The Opposition had no axe to grind in this matter; they had no friends concerned, and no interests, but they wanted to see that this line served the very best country. The Ministry had power to appoint whom they chose to a select committee; and they had never scrupled to use that power before, even when members of the Opposition had moved for select committees to be appointed. When he had moved for a select committee on sweating, the Ministry had packed the committee; and the Government could, if they chose, put four Ministerial members on this committee, and he would be prepared to leave it in their hands. He wanted a fair and impartial inquiry made and was prepared to trust that duty to any five members of the Assembly. The Minister had pointed out that the future settlers must be con-

sidered, and yet his return showed that there were only 264,000 acres vacant, and all that could not be first-class land, otherwise when there had been such a rush for land it would have been greedily snapped up long ago. But in that total of 264,000 acres there was 148,274 acres of pastoral land, and the land available for pastoral purposes in an agricultural district must be of a very inferior character. That left only about 120,000 acres of land available for agricultural purposes, and that, if it had been first-class land, would have been snapped up ere this. People were looking for land all over the State and many miles away from a railway, and if they had ignored this land it was because of its inferior character. He did not think that the interests of the country were being best served by this proposed extension, and for that reason he was moving for the reference of the Bill to a select committee.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): In supporting the motion, he could honestly say that he did not know any settlers in the district, but he was aware that there had been a good deal of dissatisfaction on the part of persons settled there. That had been borne out by the Minister's statement that a deputation had waited on him, by a petition which had been presented, and by the statement of the member for the district, when speaking on the second reading, that he trusted that the Ministry would do justice to the greater number. That statement implied that, if the route at present laid down by the Government were adopted, they would not be doing justice to the greater number of residents in the district. In supporting the motion for a select committee he was not acting with the desire of opposing the Bill. Of his own knowledge he did not know whether the railway was justified or not, but the Government and the board had stated that a railway to that district was justified, and he was going to accept their word; for that reason he had voted for the second reading, but he believed that it was the duty of every hon. member, when it was pointed out that there was a possibility of an injustice being done to any person, even if it were only one person, to

see that that injustice was avoided. Therefore, he would support the motion, and the Ministry could not say that Opposition members did not intend to act impartially as far as this line was concerned. As the number of resident occupiers was 110 and the number of those who petitioned against the route was 80, it showed dissatisfaction existed among a large majority of those resident in the district. There were repeated statements that persons took up land because of the knowledge presented to them that railways would be built within a certain distance of their holdings, and that these promises were not kept because the routes of the railways were diverted. No doubt there was a similar happening in this district; persons took up land thinking they would be at the least not more than 12 or at the outside 15 miles from the railway, but now they found that the railway was to follow a different direction to that anticipated; and as the Government failed to tell us the reason for the railway not being built to suit the larger number of residents, it was our duty to refer the matter to a select committee to ascertain the cause. The necessary information could be speedily obtained and a report brought down to Parliament within a week.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. Mitchell): To carry out the determination of the Government to open up the whole of the South-West agricultural land of the State it was necessary that railways should be built not more than 30 miles apart, and the Government had appointed an advisory board, consisting of the best men at their disposal, namely, Professor Lowrie, Mr. Johnston, the Surveyor General, Mr. Paterson, the managing trustee of the Agricultural Bank, and Mr. Muir, Inspector of Engineering Surveys, with instructions to advise the Government in connection with any line necessary to open up the rainfall belt of the South-West of the State. It was perfectly true that in the case of the line from Wongan Hills to Mullewa the board were informed that the Government desired the land along that route inspected; and that they did not inspect the land to the eastward; but as much of that land to

the eastward was outside the rainfall belt, naturally, when considering the question of building an agricultural line, it did not come up for consideration. The advisory board which was composed of men quite capable and men who always said what they thought, went down into the Dumbleyung district and recommended the line in question. In every case they simply made their report, advising the Government that the line should be constructed in a certain direction, just where it was marked on the map and just where the Bill provided. The settlers referred to by the member for Mt. Magnet would, according to the map, be not more than 12½ miles from the line proposed to be built. The hon. member referred to a settlement of people occupying in all 61,000 acres. It would be perfectly patent to every member that 61,000 acres was a fairly big strip of country, and when it was remembered that the Katanning-Nampup and this extension railways were just 25 miles apart, it would be seen it was impossible for any people to be more than 12½ miles from one of these railways. Again, as an area of 61,000 acres would represent the country 10 miles each way, it would be possible for people in this area to be not more than five miles from either of these railways running 25 miles apart, so there was no argument put up by the member that could stand. Certainly one could get up a petition against any railway. If he understood he was to be more than 10 or 12 miles from a railway he would not mind signing a petition to bring the line nearer him. That would always happen. There must be some people more dissatisfied than others whenever a railway proposition was brought forward. Though he had visited this country he did not know enough about it to fix the route for a railway; but the advisory board had spent considerable time in the district and gone into the matter thoroughly, and they recommended the route the Bill proposed to take. There was no reason why we should appoint a select committee. What more could be done than to have an inquiry by an impartial body such as was sent down? It might be that the Lake Grace country when served by a railway

would be served from Katanning, and certainly the board would be asked to advise in that direction; but even if that were the case the district would be brought a little nearer to Albany; Albany would become the port of that country, which would not otherwise be the case. When the question came up the hon. member need not have fear but that justice would be done to the magnificent area to be opened up in the Lake Grace country. The Government had taken an absolutely fair course in connection with these railways. The board were sent out with an absolutely free hand.

Mr. Heitmann: A free hand! Do you always act on the reports of this board and of your officers.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Mr. Heitmann: What about the officers' report on the Avondale estate? You said it was all good land; your officers said there were 2,000 acres of stone.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. Heitmann: You said every inch of the land could be cultivated.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I said nothing of the sort. The hon. member will see I described the land truly. It is very easy to make an assertion. The file was moved for and laid on the Table and I will produce it again if the hon. member wants it.

Mr. Heitmann: I was only speaking of the free hand; that is all.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Government took up the fairest possible attitude.

Mr. Heitmann: Of course. They always do, especially on the Redistribution of Seats Bill!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Judging from the hon. member's standpoint. At any rate the Government adopted a fair course in regard to these railways and intended to follow up the system adopted. They desired to take to every settler within the South-West division railway facilities, and until the settlers got facilities there would be no satisfactory settlement.

Mr. Angwin: You have robbed 80 of these settlers of a railway.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member did not tell us where these settlers were to be found, whether they were to be served by this railway or whether they were not near to the present terminus of the railway, as the Minister for Works suggested might be the case. However, the lines would be 25 miles apart, and no settler could be more than 12½ miles from a railway.

Mr. Angwin: My information says they are 35 miles apart.

Mr. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): After the somewhat severe lecture delivered by the Minister against hon. members who dared to criticise the action of the Government in connection with these railways, one would need the hardihood of a nomad to dare criticise their actions, but it was refreshing to hear the Minister speaking as he did. When the Minister was not a member of the Government, he occupied columns of the Press in taking the Government to task for their railway proposals, saying he had personally visited the districts and found the railways were not warranted; he supported the Bills in the House, but when he went to the country afterwards he admitted he was wrong, and said that, on further consideration, if he were given another opportunity, he would compel the Government to withdraw from their position. Yet now the Minister waxed indignant at the idea of someone else criticising the route of this line. Was it because the Minister had shifted from the cross benches into the snug Treasury bench? The Minister admitted knowing nothing about the route of this proposed railway though he had visited the district, and that he did not know whether the route was the proper one or not, but yet he asked members to accept without question the decision arrived at by an advisory board sent out to this district by the Ministry and reporting to the Ministry and not to Parliament. The members of the board were not controlled by Parliament in any way; they were civil servants, more responsible to the Ministry, their employers, than to Parliament. In view of the fact that we had no less than 80 residents to be served by this line signing a petition against the proposed route, we should

give some consideration to their request. It was no use the Minister for Works complaining about members at different times criticising railway propositions and referring to the fact that some of the lines had been built to serve a few individuals as against the mass of the community. The member for York would remember his (Mr. Scaddan's) severe criticism of the extension of the line from Greenhills to Quairading.

Mr. Monger: You will admit you were absolutely wrong.

Mr. SCADDAN: No. One of the objects in building that line was to serve a certain gentleman on the route. Of this he was absolutely as certain to-day as he was then. Was it not a fact that the railway passed through that gentleman's property, or along his fence; and was there not a townsite on portion of his property, and did not the member for York the other day open a temperance hotel in the district? What was stated at the time proved correct. The Quairading line was, in a large measure, to serve a particular individual, the line was taken in a certain direction for that purpose, and his (Mr. Scaddan's) information in that regard was not shaken. He knew nothing of the district to be served by the railway now under consideration, but he learned for the first time to-night that Mr. Moran, an ex-member of Parliament, was to be served by it. Of course, this had no bearing on the question; but there were 80 residents out of the 110 who were to be served who were dissatisfied with the route proposed, and that was sufficient to support our sending the Bill to a select committee. There would be no harm in a select committee giving consideration to the proposal. It would not mean delay, because the report of the select committee could be presented before the session closed. The Minister would admit there was no possibility of commencing the construction of the line during the present financial year. Probably not more than the commencement of the survey would be done during this financial year. There were quite a number of railway propositions on the Notice Paper, and they would not be commenced until the end of the next financial year.

It only mattered to this extent, that we were approaching a general election, and the Government were endeavouring for electioneering purposes to pass as many railway Bills as possible prior to the election. A select committee could clear up the matter as to whether the interest of these 80 settlers was a selfish interest, as described by the Minister for Lands, or whether it was not in the interests of the district and the State that the line should travel along the route proposed in the Bill. In view of the statement made by the Minister for Lands that these 80 individuals out of 110 were only prompted by selfish motives, the matter should be taken into consideration by hon. members and in justice to those 80 persons a select committee should be appointed to clear up what had been said.

Mr. TROY: Since reference had been made to Mr. Moran's land it was well that he should make himself clear. He only mentioned Mr. Moran's case because Mr. Moran was the only person he knew in the locality. He did not know where Mr. Moran's land was situated and neither did he know how that gentleman would be affected.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	20

Majority against .. 4

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Ware
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Holman	Mr. Troy
Mr. Horan	(Teller).
Mr. Hudson	

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Male
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Carson	Mr. Monger
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Nanson
Mr. George	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Harper	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Jacoby	(Teller).
Mr. Layman	

Question thus negatived.

In Committee, etc.

Mr. Taylor in the Chair; the Minister for Works in Charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Deviation:

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Would the Minister in charge of the Bill explain whether he would take into consideration the proposal to deviate the line for something like five miles so as to serve the settlers to the south-east of the proposed railway, and who would find that if the line was constructed as mapped out that they would be over 20 miles away? He had been assured that there were 40 or 50 settlers who would be 20 or 25 miles away.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member could be assured that every inquiry would be made in connection with the matter before the railway was constructed. The clause gave certain powers to the Minister in connection with the construction of the line and if necessary a further report would be sought from the advisory board.

Mr. ANGWIN: The Minister for Works had pointed out that if necessary on the survey being made an alteration in the route might take place and he (Mr. Angwin) interjected that there would be only five miles to work on. Seeing that there was a possibility of an alteration being made he thought it advisable to increase the distance over which it would be possible to deviate. He moved an amendment—

That in line 3 the word "five" be struck out and "ten" inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There would be no advantage in accepting the amendment and the hon. member's purpose would not be achieved by adopting it. He had already pointed out that there was a possibility of making a deviation up to five miles and that he thought would be employed. If a larger deviation were allowed there would not be much likelihood of it being accepted.

Amendment put and negatived. Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 7—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—QAIRADING-NUNAJIN RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

Resumed from the 5th January.

Mr. BOLTON (North Fremantle): It should be the duty of hon. members to manifest to the taxpayers that merit has been the right and title of settlers to have railways built to their backyards, and care should be taken that no evidence is given of our having gone absolutely mad on railway building. To-night we have had three railway Bills carried practically through all their stages, and hon. members have accepted as sufficient the meagre information supplied. We now come to a railway in reference to which no information at all is supplied. It will be noticed on the information slips supplied to hon. members that the most important information of all, namely as to the land under cultivation, the land cleared, the land rigbarked, the additional area to be put under cultivation next year, etcetera, has not been supplied; and there will be found this very significant remark: "The Lands Department report that it has been impossible to obtain this information in the time allowed." We have in addition to the Bills passed to-night other railway Bills on the Notice Paper which, taken in conjunction with those already passed, will ensure more work than the department can carry out in the next three years. As the staff is at present it will not be possible for the department to carry out the work within the next three years.

The Premier: The hon. member is wrong.

Mr. BOLTON: I am glad the Minister has made that interjection, and I hope it will be recorded. I know the staff cannot deal with the details for the construction of the railways on our Notice Paper in less than three years' time, and I know Ministers have said that the utmost to be expended on these railways this year will be £750,000. The details for the construction of the railways on our Notice Paper cannot be prepared by the staff

within three years, yet we are asked to consider a proposal for which the Lands Department have not had time to submit a report, while tenders for this railway will not be called within the next 24 months. Is it because railway Bills have been passed to-night on insufficient information that hon. members are expected to swallow a proposal such as this, in regard to which no information has been given? It is going altogether too far. In my opinion it is because a promise was made that the railway should be extended in this direction, a promise given after some banquet during a visit to the district. Certainly I honour the Government for carrying out their promise; but I do object to these promises being hurled about, rendering it necessary for the Government to introduce proposals this session as promised, even though the necessary information is not available. I ask that the Government should defer this proposal until that information is forthcoming. In the Bills passed we have information with regard to the resident occupiers, the acreage under cultivation, the extent of land acquired, and of land ringbarked, and the additional area to be put under cultivation next year; but on this present proposal all this information is withheld. Moreover we are not given the average yield of the district, but are told that the crop just gathered is estimated to be 15 bushels per acre. It suggests that there has been only one year's crop in the district, and that, in consequence, last year's average cannot be quoted. What other reason can there be for this omission unless it is that previous yields have been very small indeed? Then again, in respect to the Bills we have dealt with, we are supplied with information as to the land open for selection within 15 miles of the line; but in regard to this proposal we do not get even that information. Taking it altogether the information given in respect to this proposed railway, information which was only put before members to-day, is altogether insufficient and I hope in the circumstances the Government will not ask the House to adopt the proposal. If there were any hurry for the construction of the line, or if the Government proposed to call tenders

forthwith for its construction, I would be the last to prevent the Bill passing. I do not desire to delay the construction of the line, but I believe the proposal is made merely to carry out the promise of the Government to introduce it this session. Surely it is not a fair thing to put this proposal before hon. members without any information as to the resources of the district. What little information is given is totally insufficient. I am not desirous of opposing the measure. If the other proposals have been accepted by members on meagre information it is only fair to ask for at least the same information in regard to this proposed extension, and if that information cannot be produced then it is but reasonable that we should ask that the proposal be deferred. I believe we must build railway lines for the opening up of the country. I have never yet opposed the building of an agricultural line, but I enter my emphatic protest against this proposal coming before us without any information.

Mr. MONGER (York): I would like to call attention to the fact that the Loan Estimates submitted to the House last session included an item of £5,000 for the survey of this particular line. Why did not the hon. member enter his rabid protest on that occasion?

Mr. Bolton: The information was not wanted then.

Mr. MONGER: The information is here to-night.

Mr. Bolton: Where?

Mr. MONGER: The only omission is that of the area ringbarked. I have information from a small section of the community which has been settled out there for the last four or five years.

Mr. O'Loghlen: What does the country yield, 15 or 50 bushels?

The Minister for Lands: It says 15 in the report.

Mr. Bolton: Why is it not supplied to us?

Mr. MONGER: I have been through the country to be served by this line of railway with the largest Parliamentary party that has ever traversed any proposed railway route in Western Australia, and that party came away unanimous in the opinion that the district was more de-

serving than most of those previously served by agricultural railways.

Mr. Bolton: Then don't you think this lack of information is disgraceful?

Mr. MONGER: I would ask the hon. member to be a gentleman for once. I say the advisory board have gone there, and their report has been before hon. members not for half an hour, not even for a day as the hon. member would have others to understand, but for a considerable time; and the board have declared that this is one of the most important agricultural railways yet proposed.

Mr. Angwin: It is reported that they did not go south of the proposed line.

Mr. MONGER: I beg to join issue with the hon. member. They traversed, I believe, the proposed line from Brookton to a point on the Wickepin-Merredin extension. I would like to ask the members for North Fremantle and East Fremantle if they desire to oppose themselves against the advisory board as greater experts in the construction of agricultural railways, knowing as they do the constitution of that advisory board?

Mr. Bolton: Now you be a gentleman. Did I oppose the construction of the line?

Mr. MONGER: If the advisory board make a recommendation, and they have done so in this case, I think it only fair and reasonable, whether one sits on this side of the House or on the other, that the recommendation be deemed worthy of receiving fair and honest attention by members generally. I have here from one section of the community to be benefited by this railway a report showing that this year they had 3,500 acres under cultivation, and that in anticipation of the railway they have prepared over 12,500 acres for next season. And this is only a very small section of that community to be benefited by the railway. With all due respect to the interjections that have been asked for the construction of the line House, I can confidently recommend this as one of the finest agricultural railways that have been proposed since the inception of the system.

Mr. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): I remember that on the occasion when authority

was asked for the construction of the line from York to Quairading—

Mr. Monger: That was never under construction.

Mr. SCADDAN: Well, from Greenhills to Quairading. I have such a lively recollection of the manner in which I was treated by the member for York that I am somewhat courageous in daring to criticise this proposal. However, I propose to do so, and on this occasion, as on the last, I have been unfortunate enough to receive correspondence from gentlemen in that district complaining of the route proposed to be taken. After all, this is not from one individual, but from a number, who have signed a petition, and who represent holdings of approximately 35,000 acres. They draw particular attention to the fact that the line, after leaving Quairading, takes a north-easterly direction, and, according to the plan, it will at this most northerly point be only about 15 miles from the goldfields railway.

The Minister for Works: No, about 19 miles.

Mr. SCADDAN: I have measured it according to the scale provided on the map in this Chamber, and this line will be not more than 15 miles from the Eastern Goldfields railway.

The Minister for Lands: You have proved the scale to be wrong.

Mr. SCADDAN: This goes to show what reliance we can place on the map provided by the Works Department for the information of members. If the statement of the Minister for Lands is correct the map is not worth any consideration at all. On that map the line is only 15 miles from the goldfields railway, and the point made by those who have written to me is that they have settled in a certain area between the district which will be served by this line and the district which will be served by the Wickiepin-Merredin line, and they will be outside the 15 mile radius which they believe to be the policy of the Government. There is a space left between the district which will be served by the Wickiepin-Merredin railway and that which will be served by the line under discussion, and

these people, being in that space, are certainly not receiving proper consideration. I would like to know from the Minister for Works what has prompted the department in turning the line in the direction as proposed, and leaving this area without any communication, or at any rate more than 15 miles from a railway. I would like to point out to the member for York that I am not opposing this line any more than I opposed the Greenhills-Quairading line, but I certainly do think it is due to those settlers in that particular portion of the district that they should be served by this railway rather than that it should be taken north to within 15 miles of the Eastern Goldfields line. I would like the Minister for Works to measure the distance by the scale on the map in this Chamber.

The Minister for Works: I have not got a scale with me.

Mr. SCADDAN: But the scale is on the map, and I repeat that I measured the distance in the presence of the Minister for Lands, and there is not more than 15 miles between the goldfields railway and this line at its most northerly point.

The Minister for Lands: The scale is wrong.

Mr. SCADDAN: It may be wrong, but if it is wrong what sort of information are we receiving when we are expected to pass Bills for the construction of these railways? This means that the people already served within 15 miles of the existing railway will have this other line passing their doors, whilst others who have written to me and protested against taking this line in a northerly direction, will not be served at all. There must be some reason for that curve being made in the line. Is it because there are engineering difficulties which will prevent that line being taken more directly eastward?

The Minister for Mines: Their own sketch plan shows about 18 miles.

Mr. SCADDAN: Well, that just shows how unreliable is the information we are given. I want the people in the country to understand that we are called upon to pass these measures without being given the opportunity of visiting the country, and we are supplied with a state-

ment that the distance between the Eastern line and this one will be 19 miles, and are supplied with maps which show that the two lines will be within 15 miles of each other at one point.

The Minister for Works: You do not expect the Minister to prepare the maps, do you?

Mr. SCADDAN: No, but I expect the Minister to see that correct information is given.

The Minister for Works: Well, I say that the distance is 19 miles.

Mr. SCADDAN: Well, is the map incorrect?

The Minister for Lands: The scale is wrong.

The Minister for Works: I will let the hon. member know to-morrow.

Mr. SCADDAN: Will the Minister agree not to pass the second reading until that information has been supplied definitely and correctly?

The Minister for Works: I will make a definite statement that the approximate distance between these two lines at the nearest point is 19 miles.

Mr. SCADDAN: I am prepared to accept that statement, although the gentlemen who have written to me complaining about the curve being made in that line will certainly contend that the two lines will be closer than 19 miles.

The Minister for Works: I saw some of them in my office the other day, and they accepted my statement then.

Mr. SCADDAN: I accept the assurance now, and probably the time will come when I will be able to prove or disprove it.

The Minister for Works: You will never disprove it.

Mr. SCADDAN: There is this about it, either the Minister is making an incorrect statement or the information supplied to members to enable them to record their votes on this question is absolutely incorrect, and somebody is responsible for it.

The Minister for Works: I admit that the map and the scale are not quite true.

Mr. SCADDAN: It only shows the reliance we can place on the information supplied. It is possible the information supplied in the returns is just about as

correct as the map. Without attempting to disparage the quality of our land, I may point out that it is a remarkable thing that there has never been a Bill presented for the construction of an agricultural railway but the average yield for the whole district is set down as not less than 13 bushels, and they have even gone so far as to have the average yield of a district at 16 and 18 bushels, yet the average for the whole State is something like 11 bushels; but when we get from the Statistical Department the actual figures of the yields of the various districts they do not compare with the returns supplied to hon. members who are asked to pass Bills. Hon. members might have the correct information supplied when asked to pass measures of this kind. Outside the question of the line being brought so near to the Eastern Goldfields Railway, I would like to ask the Minister for Works why that particular curve is made in it and why it is taken so far north. As I said previously, it will bring some of those already served, even if the statement made by the Minister is correct, within four miles of the line, while others, according to the plan, will be left out and not even served by the extension of the Wickepin line to Merredin. In the circumstances, what can have prompted the Works Department in making that curve in the northerly direction as shown on the map? It is due to the Minister to explain this, and it is essential that those settlers who are complaining about not being served by this railway should have the information, should understand clearly and definitely what has compelled the Government to take that northerly curve. These are all genuine settlers who have written to me, and each of them has signed his name. They number, I believe, about 25, holding a total area of about 35,000 acres. They are not being served by this particular line, not because they could not be served if the line was taken in a more easterly direction, but because the line has been taken in a curve to the north. I have heard all sorts of rumours about curves in agricultural railways. The member for York knows why I made similar complaints in regard to the Greenhills-Quairading line.

Mr. Monger: I give an absolutely emphatic denial to that.

Mr. SCADDAN: I suppose I must accept the emphatic denial given by the member for York, but it does not satisfy me by any means. If there are no engineering difficulties there can be no other reason assigned for this curve to the north except to serve a few settlers as against others who have not been served at all. I hope the Minister will give consideration to the desirability of taking this line in a more easterly direction to serve those settlers to the south who will not be served by the route shown on the plan.

Mr. HARPER (Beverley): I desire to point out that the Minister for Works received a deputation the other day introduced by myself from East and South Caroling people, and he gave the assurance that the member for Ivanhoe is now asking for; that unless there are some particular engineering difficulties in connection with this line of railway, it will go straight from Quairading to Nunajin. So the matter the hon. member has been discussing for some time has already been practically decided upon.

Mr. Angwin: We have not heard the Minister say that.

Mr. HARPER: No; but it is so. I introduced the deputation and that was the reply the Minister made. I am speaking of people in my electorate, that is, the people of South and East Caroling, the people the member for Ivanhoe is now championing. But their wants have already been attended to; we got a favourable reply from the Minister for Works that, as far as he could possibly judge, and as far as his knowledge went, provided there were no engineering difficulties in connection with it, he would consider the matter favourably. I want just to make this clear, that the matter has already been attended to, and we think, as far as I can judge, the line will go pretty nearly straight to the locality mentioned. I hope it will. It is only fair to those who are to the south of the line. A 25-mile distance between lines is a very reasonable distance and should be adhered to as strictly as possible, not for this line only but for other lines. A radius of $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles is not

all that is desired, but it appears to me as much as we can expect in the present state of affairs in Western Australia. Anyone within a $12\frac{1}{2}$ mile radius will not be very badly served. I am glad to have the opportunity of knowing that the Minister has been favourably impressed with the deputation he received the other day, and I am glad indeed the member for Ivanhoe is advocating the same cause.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): For the information of the member for York I may say he jumped at a conclusion rather too soon. I know this is a district in which, of late, a large number of new settlers have taken up their residence, and this is one of the railways I intend to support; in fact, more so than I would any other railway brought forward by the Government at the present time. At the same time, it is also a railway where the route laid down has not given satisfaction to the largest number of the residents of the district. I admit that all of us who want a railway would like to have it just to suit ourselves. I was pleased to hear the remarks of the member for Beverley, but I would be better pleased to hear them coming from the Minister himself. We do not want on some future occasion, when we are bringing it forward that the Minister has not kept his promise, that he should turn round and say, "I did not make the promise; it was made by the member for Beverley." We want it from the Minister that he will run this line further south to suit those in the southern portion of the district. I believe the great difficulty some of those residents have is owing to a sandplain between their holdings and the railway, in consequence of which they have to take a roundabout way of conveying their produce from the land to the railway to send it to market, entailing a greater length of mileage than the actual route from their holdings. There is no justification whatever, so far as I can gather, for putting this railway with a humpback, as shown on the plan, in a northerly direction. It is true there are one or two large estates there. It has been said that because these persons have been there a little longer than the new settlers they should get more con-

sideration, but when we realise the Minister's statement that this line is only 19 miles from the Eastern Goldfields railway, the bringing of this railway in a straight line from Quairading will not inconvenience any person between it and the Eastern Railway, because it will only mean a difference of a few miles, five or six at the outside. I hope that the Minister will bear out the remarks made by the member for Beverley, that it is his intention to construct this railway along a straight line from the present junction eastward.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): I went into this matter with some settlers from Caroling and East Caroling last week and I then told them, as the member for Beverley has stated, that I would endeavour to have the line deviated a little further south than is shown on the plan, provided, of course, there were no engineering difficulties, and no other objections of a strong nature to taking that course. I recognised that the distance of 18 miles only from the Great Eastern railway was too slight in my opinion, and that it required a strong justification to carry the line far enough north to bring it within that distance of the eastern line.

Mr. Scaddan: You go up north and come back again?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I propose, presuming the engineering circumstances will allow me, to have that curve straightened out. I can assure hon. members that that met the wishes of those representatives of the district who waited upon me and I think it meets with the desire of hon. members who have spoken to-night. The reason that actuated the advisory board in connecting that particular route was in order, not that they might serve any big areas, but that they might touch certain new settlements, and fairly thick settlements, such as Jennaberrin, and Quallyinn. The route, therefore, runs right into these two settlements. Whether it was necessary to do that is a matter, that cannot be discussed now. As I have stated, the matter will be subject to further inquiries and an effort will be made to

take that course which is the most advantageous to the bulk of the settlers in that locality. With regard to the amount of information supplied, I desire to point out all that is really vital for the discussion of this Bill has been submitted to the House. What has been omitted and what I have frankly told the House has been omitted is the amount of land under cultivation this year, the land cleared, and the land ringbarked, and the additional areas to be put under cultivation next year.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Have you last year's yield?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Fifteen bushels. All this information which has not been given, while it might be interesting to the House to have it, is not vital to the consideration of the measure. What the House wants to know is what the possibilities of the district are. As I pointed out on the second reading of some of these Bills, we have to rely, not upon what has been done up to the time the railway is provided, but what will be done as a consequence of providing the railway. With regard to that, the particulars given here are sufficiently complete and as full as it would be possible to make them. I am pleased to find that there has been only a slight criticism of the measure, and that the second reading has been so well received.

Mr. Scaddan: How long will it take you to construct all these railways after you make a start?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will tell the hon. member to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.
