

of redivision of a road district into wards, in some cases only a portion of the district may be affected: but Section 13 of the Act compels all members of the road board then to go out of office and seek re-election. I think members will agree that that is hardly right, fair, or necessary.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Does not the Bill empower the Minister to decide which members of a road board are to remain, and which of them are to seek re-election?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is the object of the amendment. The principal Act was amended last year, but apparently power was not given to limit the re-election of road board members to those affected by alterations in boundaries. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that three wards were not affected by alteration of boundaries; the representatives of those wards would, under the existing law, be called upon to seek re-election, as the Act provides that all the members shall retire and seek re-election.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: But Clause 4 provides that only such members as the Minister may think fit and determine shall seek re-election.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Clause 5 seeks to amend an ambiguous proviso in Section 16 of the principal Act. The Road Districts Act Amendment Act, 1932, altered the date of the annual election of members from the second Saturday in April of every year to the third Saturday; and the proposed amendments in Clauses 6, 7, and 8 are necessary to give full effect to the alteration intended. Clause 9 corrects a misprint, as obviously the 26th parallel of South latitude is intended, as provided in Section 69 of the original Act, and not the 28th parallel. Clause 10 is a consequential amendment following Section 17 of the 1932 Act, wherein it was provided that each member, including the chairman, should have one vote only, and that in the case of an equality of votes the question should pass in the negative. To be consistent it is necessary that in meetings of the committee, the chairman shall not have a second or casting vote. It is not considered desirable that the chairman of a committee should have greater power than the chairman of the board. Provision was made in the Act passed last session by which a board may, with the approval of the Minister, subsidise an agricultural society "within its district." There

are instances where an agricultural society, although composed of members of the road board, may not have its showgrounds, or its offices, in the road district, but in an adjoining municipality; such instances occur at Wagin, Northam, York, etc. Although the show operations would be for the benefit of the road district, the discretion of the Minister would limit the granting of a subsidy to an agricultural society related only to the road district affected. The remaining clauses of the Bill correct misprints only. If the second reading is agreed to, I do not propose to take the Committee stage until the next sitting of the House, so that hon. members may have an opportunity of examining the measure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.27 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Tuesday, 15th August, 1933.*

	PAGE
Electoral: Swearing-in of member ... ..	344
Questions: Secession ... ..	345
Water and sewerage works, as to local labour ...	345
Sustenance Workers, earnings towards rent, etc.	345
Bills: Workers' Homes Act Amendment, 2d. ...	345
Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act	
Amendment, Com. report ... ..	348
Financial Emergency Tax, Com. ... ..	349
Yuna-Darlamoor Railway, 2d., Com. report ...	353

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

### ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. A. A. M. Coverley (Kimberley) took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

**QUESTION—SECESSION.**

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: 1, Concerning the secession referendum held over four months ago, have the Government yet prepared for submission to the Imperial Parliament the case for Western Australia's separation from the Commonwealth, in accordance with his announcement at the Premiers' Conference on the 13th June last? 2, Have any arrangements yet been made to send delegates from this State in order to present the claims of the people of Western Australia? 3, Will Parliament be given an early opportunity of expressing an opinion on these matters of urgency, with a view to taking the best possible means of giving effect to the decision of the people, without any further delay?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Case is in course of preparation. 2, No. 3, Yes.

**QUESTION—WATER AND SEWERAGE WORKS.**

*As to local labour.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Water Supplies: Is it the policy of the Government, as far as possible, to absorb the tradesmen resident in districts in which water and sewerage works are being carried out?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES replied: Yes, but very few tradesmen are required on water and sewerage construction works.

**QUESTION—SUSTENANCE WORKERS.**

*Earnings towards rent, etc.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Employment: 1, Is there any definite ruling as to how much may be earned by unemployed persons towards rent, etc., when on sustenance? 2, Will he make a public statement in this connection?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT replied: 1, Yes. Persons in receipt of sustenance are permitted to earn their rent, subject to limitations. Consideration is also given to other expenses, but each case is considered on its merits. All earnings must be reported. 2, Publication of foregoing should render this unnecessary.

**BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 10th August.

MR. LATHAM (York) [4.35]: I have gone carefully into the amendment proposed by the Bill, and I fail to see any justification whatever for it. The greatest care should be exercised in making amendments to the Act, especially from one or two aspects to which I shall refer. First let me draw the attention of the House to the definition of worker under the Act—

“Worker” means every person, male or female, who is employed in work of any kind or in manual labour, and who at the time of his application is not in receipt of more than three hundred pounds per annum.

That amount of £300 was subsequently raised to £400 per annum. Thus it was provided that no person in receipt of £400 per annum or over should be permitted to have a workers' home. Homes may be attained on a leasehold basis under Part V. of the Act, and under a system of advances to workers under Part III. I shall deal only with the latter form. The proviso to Section 24 sets forth that at no time shall the total advance made to any person, and for the time being remaining unrepaid, exceed £850; which includes the cost of sewerage connection. The amendment proposed by the Bill deals with the position which arises when the board have found it necessary to foreclose on a worker's home. Section 33 of the principal Act sets out the reasons for foreclosure—

If at any time default is made by a borrower in the due payment of any instalment by way of repayment of the loan with interest as aforesaid, and such default continues for three calendar months, although no legal demand may have been made for the payment thereof . . . the board may enter upon and take possession of the holding with respect to which the loan has been made, and may sell the estate and interest of the mortgagor therein, either by private sale or public tender or auction, and subject to any conditions of sale the board may think expedient, and after such notice of the time, place, terms, and conditions of sale as the board think just and expedient, and may transfer such holding to the purchaser and give a good and valid title thereto.

That provision deals with the position which arises after a demand has been made by the board for the repayment of the money due. In the event of

a sale not being effected under Section 33, the board ask for additional power when they become owners of the property. They do become owners of it if it has not been disposed of under Section 33.

The Premier: But there are different obligations. One person has an equity in the holding, and another has not.

Mr. LATHAM: There is no equity after the board have attempted to dispose of the property as set forth by the Act. They then become the owners of the property. That is where the amendment comes in—

Where the board have foreclosed the equity of redemption in any holding the subject of a mortgage under this Act, or where the equity of redemption in any such holding has been transferred to the board, the board may, in lieu of disposing of such holding under the preceding provisions of this part of this Act, sell the said holding, either by private contract or by public auction, and subject to such conditions of sale as the board may think fit.

I submit that the board have power to do anything they like with the home after they have become the owners of it, just as when starting off on the transaction.

The Premier: Subject to the mortgage.

Mr. LATHAM: The Premier pointed out, in moving the second reading, that the object of the Bill was to empower the board to accept a lower deposit. However, the Act requires £5 deposit only, and in addition Section 25 of the Act provides—

Every application for an advance shall be made to the board and in the prescribed form and shall contain such particulars as are prescribed, and a fee of five shillings shall be paid therewith. . . .

There is nothing in the Act to say that the board shall require a deposit beyond £5; nor, I believe, is there even a regulation to that effect. It is simply an arrangement made by the board. Therefore the board may dispense with any other deposit, and I fail to see that they need this amendment. Section 38 of the principal Act provides—

The rights, powers, and remedies given to the board as mortgagee under this Act shall be in addition to and without prejudice to any rights, powers, or remedies given by or under the mortgage instrument or any Act applicable thereto or any rules or regulations made under this Act.

I understand that section to mean that the board have not only the powers provided in the Act, but also the powers provided by the ordinary law relating to mortgages. The

explanation given by the Premier does not make clear the reason for the amendment, so far as I am concerned. I contend that there is great danger of the amendment permitting the trafficking in workers' homes.

The Premier: No.

Mr. LATHAM: The Premier expressed himself to that effect the other evening, but if this power is granted it will enable any person to obtain a workers' home.

The Premier: Yes, any person whose salary or wage is less than £400 a year.

Mr. LATHAM: Some of these properties are held to-day by persons who are not workers within the meaning of the Act. The properties have been disposed of under Section 23. The amendment will enable any person who comes along to obtain such a property.

The Premier: Not anybody who comes along, but anybody with less than £400 a year.

Mr. LATHAM: Then that point had better be made perfectly clear in Committee. It should definitely be set out that these properties will be sold only to workers within the meaning of the principal Act.

The Premier: They cannot be sold otherwise.

Mr. LATHAM: The board may do anything they like.

The Premier: No; it is all subject to the £400 a year.

Mr. LATHAM: But the Bill does not say so.

The Premier: The principal Act is not altered in that respect.

Mr. LATHAM: Clause 2 of the Bill says—

... the board may, in lieu of disposing of such holding under the preceding provisions of this part of this Act, sell the said holding, either by private contract or by public auction and subject to such conditions of sale as the board may think fit.

I contend that if that power is given, the board will be able to sell to a speculator.

The Premier: No.

Mr. LATHAM: In these times of financial stress probably numerous homes will come into the hands of the board, and I certainly am not disposed to empower the board to dispose of those homes to people other than workers, especially as the board are bound to come along to the Treasurer in a little while with a request for money to allow of the building of new homes. Our first consideration should be to ensure that

houses in the hands of the board shall be sold to workers only. They can be sold to workers to-day, under the existing legislation, and subject to any conditions the board think fit, with a deposit of £5. In addition, such houses can be leased up to a term of 30 years. That is before it reaches this stage, while the mortgagor is in possession. On the information before the House, I do not think we are justified in passing this legislation, for if it were to pass as printed, a home could be sold to a person other than a worker. It is worth while safeguarding the interests the workers have under the Workers' Homes Act.

**MR. LAMBERT** (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [4.46]: I have listened attentively to the Leader of the Opposition and his plea of insufficient information. Possibly we may get further information when the Premier replies to the debate. I should like to draw attention to the necessity for widening the activities of the board. On the goldfields at present we have a most deplorable dearth of houses, and in some instances rather exorbitant rents are being charged by landlords, although not in every case. So we find the ordinary worker called upon to pay up to 35s. a week for what could be regarded as merely a shack. Possibly the most useful work that could be performed by this board awaits them on the goldfields at the present time. Up there, all assets are regarded as of diminishing nature, in respect of which it is necessary to exercise the greatest care. But if a house of proper design were built at a cost of from £300 to £350, with repayments spread over eight years—that period could be regarded as a reasonable life for the goldfields—the assets of the Workers' Homes Board would be amply secured. Undoubtedly there is grave necessity for immediate action being taken to relieve the congestion from which workers requiring homes are suffering on the goldfields. Possibly one could build there a simply designed home that could be bolted instead of being nailed, and erect it at a cost of from £300 to £350. Then if in the future it were found necessary to remove that building, it would certainly have a saleable value.

**Mr. Stubbs:** Of what do you propose to build such homes?

**Mr. LAMBERT:** Of wood and iron, with an ordinary lining. If those homes were built of a design rendering them easily

taken down and removed, that in itself would dispose of any objection on the part of the Workers' Homes Board that they were not a sound asset.

**Mr. Stubbs:** In a hot climate, would not an asbestos roof be better than one of corrugated iron?

**Mr. LAMBERT:** There is very little difference, if any, between the two. The cement and asbestos board, improperly termed asbestos board, would not be very much of an improvement on iron. However, the material to be used is beside the question, for the fact remains that there is on the goldfields urgent necessity for some action in the provision of workers' homes. The Workers' Homes Board, as constituted, and having regard to the limitation of its function, has certainly outlived its usefulness. Instead of the Workers' Homes Board, we ought to create a building trust, and give that trust power to issue interest-bearing bonds by way of part payment for wages or material, as the case may be. If I am not departing too much from the subject matter of the debate—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** The hon. member is beginning to wander a little.

**Mr. LAMBERT:** My transgression will be but slight. If a building trust were created in place of the Workers' Homes Board, then instead of a carpenter working three or four days a week he could work six days a week, taking out four days in cash payment, while the balance, whether material or wages, could be taken out in interest-bearing bonds. This would relieve the financial position and considerably increase building activities throughout the State. However, I will enlarge upon that at a later stage, on another occasion. I take this opportunity to again impress on the Premier that the whole aspect of the goldfields must be considered in the light of present developments and, viewing the revision of the conditions as they exist on the Eastern Goldfields, it is necessary for us to cope with a great shortage of building, which has proved a considerable hardship. We have up there three or four families living together in ordinary shacks and small cottages. Yet I believe that with the co-operation of the State Sawmills, who could supply the material, and a board or trust with enlarged functions that could pay, part in cash and part in interest-bearing bonds, we could erect 200 or 300 houses in

Kalgoorlie and Boulder alone. And it must be remembered that we would be building homes for people having the capacity to make the necessary payments, for there is not on the goldfields the same unfortunate economic situation as exists on the coast. Those men are working today and are quite capable of paying a reasonable amount for the homes to be provided for them. I ask that every consideration be given, both to the additional functions the board would have and also to the shortage of houses on the goldfields, which I am sure the Premier realises represents a great urgency. As the Premier is aware, if we could do this it would absorb a considerable volume of labour and of material, which in turn would absorb further labour, and so by those means a considerable number of skilled unemployed could be given profitable employment.

**HON. N. KEENAN** (Nedlands) [4.55]: I fail to gather any reason for this amending Bill other than the fact that at present it is alleged the Workers' Homes Board is tied down to obtaining a certain fixed amount of payment from any person, being a worker, to whom the board sells a cottage erected on certain lands. That is the sole reason for this amendment. But perusal of the principal Act does not disclose any statutory obligation on the part of the board to require the payment of any fixed amount. Under Section 13 of the principal Act, a worker may apply to the board to purchase an allotment of land and to dedicate such land to the purpose of erecting a worker's dwelling thereon. He has to satisfy the board that he is a worker within the meaning of the Act, and is not the owner of any dwelling house in Western Australia. He has to deposit with the board the sum of £5, and has to pay a fee of 5s. with the application. Then an advance can be made by the board, with the approval of the Minister, for the purpose of enabling the worker to erect a dwelling house. It may be that regulations prescribe the payment of a certain percentage, but certainly Section 24 of the Act does not in any way fix anything, although it is true that it makes reference to regulations. The only proviso to that section is the proviso limiting the total amount to £800, inclusive of the cost of sewerage connections. There is, of course, provision for making the advance by instalments instead of in a lump sum, but that does not

affect the position. Then we turn to Section 33 of the Act, which provides that if at any time default is made by a borrower in the due payment of any instalment by way of repayment of the loan, or if the borrower commits any breach of any covenant or condition to be performed or observed by him, the whole of the loan then remaining unrepaid, with interest thereon, shall forthwith become due and payable by the borrower to the board, and may be sued for and shall be recoverable by the board; and the board is given the right to enter upon and take possession of the holding with respect to which the loan has been made, and may sell the estate and interest of the mortgagor therein, either by private sale or public tender or auction, and subject to any conditions of sale the board may think expedient, and may transfer such holding to the purchaser and give a good and valid title thereto. In that there is nothing to restrict the board to making a sale subject to a fixed deposit, though there may be a regulation to that effect. If it be prescribed by regulation, the regulation could be altered by an Order-in-Council. I fail to see the necessity for the Bill, and especially for the words "in lieu of disposing of such holding under the preceding provisions of this part of this Act." The board may dispose of a holding to a worker qualified to obtain a holding as they think fit, but only in accordance with the provisions of the Act which limit the sale to a particular class. Unless the Premier can give some reason for the Bill, it appears to be wholly unnecessary.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.**

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the 10th August. Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

[Mr. McDonald had moved to insert the following new clause:—"Section 2 of the principal Act is amended by deleting the definition of 'salary or wages'."]

**Hon. N. KEENAN:** The member for West Perth is absent through illness and has asked me to explain the reason for the

amendment. Section 2 of the Act contains the following definition—

“Salary or wages” includes fees paid to directors of companies or to members of boards, trusts or commissions, and commission paid to agents.

That presented no difficulty under the Act of last year because the rate was fixed at  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound, but as the rate is no longer a fixed rate but is a sliding rate dependent on the total amount received by the party over the period, the application of the provision would be impossible. No one would know what rate a commission agent should pay, and the commission agent himself would not know. The job would be done in a day and the only method of dealing with his commission would be by treating it as income under Section 5 of the Act, instead of collecting the tax at the source. Exactly the same revenue would be received, though it would not be received in the direct manner provided for in the Act.

The PREMIER: I am not able to distinguish between the difficulty of collecting the tax at the source under this measure and under the Act of last year.

Hon. N. Keenan: Last year the rate was fixed at  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. Now it may be 4d. or 9d.

The PREMIER: But the matter could be adjusted at the end of the year. I am assured by the Commissioner of Taxation that if the definition were struck out, it would open wide the door to evasion of payment of the tax by persons mentioned in the definition. I do not profess to be an expert in the matter of collection, but the Commissioner assures me that there will be no more difficulty in collecting the tax under the graduated scale than under the fixed rate of last year.

Hon. N. Keenan: Suppose you paid an agent £3 by way of commission, how much would you take out of it?

The PREMIER: Whatever the Act stipulated. I see no greater difficulty in collecting 9d. than in collecting  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Hon. N. Keenan: How would you take the 9d.?

The PREMIER: How would the hon. member take the  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d.?

Hon. N. Keenan: But the  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. was a flat rate.

The PREMIER: I am assured by the department that there will be no insuperable difficulty in collecting the tax. As the dele-

tion of the definition would admit of the possibility of evasion, I cannot accept the new clause.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am afraid I have not made myself clear. Suppose I paid an agent £2 commission, he might not earn any more that week and, if he were a single man, he would pay nothing. An agent, however, might earn up to £10 a week. How could I know what he was earning and what he was liable to pay? If I proposed to deduct 9d. in the pound, he might protest. Yet it might happen that the whole of his commissions for the year would render him liable to pay the rate of 9d. We must make statutes sufficiently clear for the ordinary man to understand and apply. Could any member say what sum should be deducted in the instance I have mentioned? Yet it is incumbent on the man paying the commission to make the deduction. We have no right to ask a taxpayer to do what we ourselves could not do.

The PREMIER: I am prepared to consider the point raised by the hon. member. There should be no difficulty in collecting a tax on fees paid to directors of companies or to members of boards, trusts or commissions.

Hon. N. Keenan: A director might collect many fees from various companies.

The PREMIER: Then he would be taxed at the rate assessed when he submitted his income tax return. There might be a difficulty in assessing the amount that ought to be collected at the source. I take it the hon. member objects to the difficulty of assessing the amount, not to the principle of the people mentioned having to pay at the source. If I find on further investigation that there are insurmountable difficulties, I will consider an amendment at a later stage. I am assured, however, there will be no difficulty about collecting the tax at its source from those mentioned in the paragraph.

New Clause put and negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

## BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX.

*In Committee.*

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Imposition of financial emergency tax:

Mr. TONKIN: I do not like this clause. It gives one a feeling of hopelessness. It seeks to impose a tax for a period that may last ad infinitum. I trust that the financial position may improve so as to give the Government a chance to reduce the tax some time in the near future. I should be glad if the Premier would consider an amendment to make this clause operate for only 12 months. Such an amendment would show the country we were not of opinion that the need for the tax would go on for years, but that we were looking forward to better times. Taxation is hard to bear, but, if a definite term were set upon this tax, people might be induced to pay with a better grace than would otherwise be the case.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I support the remarks of the hon. member. There is a feeling, I think, amongst members that a definite date should be set down for the termination of this tax, and that, if necessary, the Bill should operate only for 12 months. On all sides there is a great dislike to this tax because there is no limit to its duration. I trust the suggestion of the member for North-East Fremantle will be considered.

Mr. MARSHALL: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in lines 3, 4 and 5 the words "and thereafter for each year ending the 30th day of June until Parliament otherwise determines" be struck out.

If the amendment is carried, I would be quite ready to agree to "31st December, 1934" being inserted, so that a definite duration of approximately 18 months would be provided for. We should not pass a Bill of this nature without setting a limit to its operation. I agree that in its present form it savours of hopelessness. The Bill that we brought down provided for taxation to the end of June.

Mr. Marshall: Your Bill was amended at the suggestion of the then Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. LATHAM: That was not so. That was the original date set out in the Bill. The hon. member should not try to mislead the Chamber. Of course, we cannot tax wages and salaries men without taxing

other people who receive different forms of income.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I should like some direction from the Chair. If the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition is dealt with, will it then be competent for another member to go back and move to strike out the word "June" and insert "December"?

Mr. Latham: The Bill could be recommitted for that purpose.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The amendment I refer to could be taken now, and the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition dealt with afterwards. I desire to move that the word "June" be struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: We cannot go back on the clause, and I therefore cannot accept the hon. member's amendment.

The Minister for Justice: We have not started yet.

The CHAIRMAN: The Leader of the Opposition will have to withdraw his amendment in the meantime.

Mr. LATHAM: I left it to the Premier to alter the word "June" to "December" if he desired to do so, but he did not seem inclined to give his views to the Committee. I will, however, ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Leave, refused.

The PREMIER: I am not keen to make this a permanent tax, but I have some knowledge of the difficulties which Treasurers encounter in endeavouring each year to induce both Houses of Parliament to pass a tax of any kind. Although I do not wish to be pessimistic, I am not hopeful that the financial position of the State 12 months hence will enable us to dispense with some form of taxation like this, not necessarily in the same form, and not necessarily designed to bring in the same amount as it is hoped will be received under this Bill; but I have no doubt it will be necessary to pass some emergency legislation next year as well as this year. If the Bill had no limit to its duration, it would be open to any Government next year, if they found it desirable to vary the principles of the Act or to reduce the tax, to bring down amending legislation, as was done before. As a matter of fact there is no Act of Parliament that might be described as permanent, for they can all be amended year by year and session after session. No Government would desire to continue levying taxa-

tion if the money were not really required for carrying on the business of the country. In any case, the Government would have to be justified before the criticism of the House if it were decided to continue any measure of taxation which could not be shown to be required. However, since this measure is prescribed under the blessed word "emergency", I have no objection to a time limit being placed on it, but I would not agree to its being limited to the end of the present financial year, the end of June next. Last year's similar Bill was the only one in all our emergency legislation that was made to expire at the end of June, the remainder of the emergency legislation continuing until the end of December. That is a very sensible date, since the House does not meet until July in each year, and so Parliament is afforded an opportunity to review the legislation and re-enact it or amend it during the session. As the result of last year's Act being limited to the end of June, the tax for this year, if the Bill before us becomes law, will be reduced to 10 or 11 months, or whatever both Houses may determine. A tax, if it be imposed for a limited period, should not lapse until the House has an opportunity to decide whether it should be re-enacted. However, I will agree to an amendment limiting the operation of the measure to the end of December of next year, which would bring the Act into conformity with all the other emergency legislation. On the other side of the question, all taxation is very uncertain. A person has to pay tax on his previous year's income, but during that year in which he is earning the income he does not know what the tax is going to be, for that can only be determined when the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill is brought down late in the next session. The taxpayer may then find that the rate has been doubled, or that exemptions have been cut out, or, alternatively, that Parliament has decided to halve the tax, in which event the taxpayer will have been conserving his resources in the belief that he is to be called upon to pay a certain amount in taxation, only to find that, in consequence of his tax having been halved, he has missed an opportunity usefully to invest money for which there is later no such useful investment. So it is seen that the whole incidence of taxation is more or less retrospective. I cannot definitely say whether taxation is going to be increased or reduced, but I hope it will not be increased.

If the Bill before us goes through, in order to enable us to live within our financial resources, there will be no other form of taxation, nor any increased taxation. I think I can say that much. I am willing to accept an amendment limiting the operation of the Bill to the 31st December of next year.

The CHAIRMAN: The trouble is, the Committee has refused leave for the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw his amendment.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am afraid there was a misunderstanding. The point I raised was discussed, and we thought the Leader of the Opposition suggested that he might withdraw his amendment. He said he did not know whether the Treasurer would look favourably upon the new proposal, but that if so, he would withdraw the amendment.

Mr. Marshall: You cannot revise the Chairman's ruling.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The hon. member is very fond of doing that. I am within the rules of the Committee in saying I think the understanding is that the Leader of the Opposition should have leave to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. Marshall: Are you the Treasurer of the State?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The hon. member is too fond of trying to tell other members what they should do. I do not propose to take any advice from him.

Mr. Marshall: Particularly on the Yuna-Dartmoor railway.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I think the Committee misunderstood your ruling, Sir. If you would agree to put the question again, I feel sure that leave to withdraw would be given.

Question put: leave to withdraw given.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in line 1, of Clause 2, "June" be struck out and "December" inserted in lieu.

Certainly that will make it the 30th day of December instead of the 31st, but if necessary we could amend it to read the 31st.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Under the amendment there would be no tax to be collected for the next six months, for Clause 2 would then read "for the year ending the 30th day of December, 1934," etc. Obviously that would give us the taxation only



during the next calendar year, and from now until the end of the present calendar year there would be no tax collectable.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The objection of the Minister seems to be a sound one. I suggest that we amend the clause to read, "For the year ending the 30th June, 1934, and thereafter until the 31st December, 1934." This would cover the point raised by the Minister for Justice.

The CHAIRMAN: It will first be necessary to withdraw the amendment before the Chair.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That all the words after "thereafter" in line 3 of Clause 2 down to and including "determines" in line 5 be struck out and the words "until the 31st day of December, 1934," inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. STUBBS: I move an amendment—

That in subparagraph 7 of paragraph (a) the word "four" in line 3 be struck out and "five" inserted in lieu.

Owing to the limitation placed upon the powers of private members to move amendments to taxation Bills, the amendment I have proposed does not go to the extent that I would desire. I would like to see the burden lightened for all those in receipt of wages, salaries or incomes up to £700 a year, with additional grades of increased rates applicable to those in receipt of salaries above that amount. Owing to the Standing Orders, it is utterly impossible for a private member to move an amendment such as I would desire. In answer to a question I asked last week, the Premier informed me that a rate of 4d. in the pound would yield £85,000; 5d. in the pound, £64,500; 6d. in the pound, £100,000; 8d. in the pound, £33,000; and 9d. in the pound, £105,000. I ask members: Would not a person in receipt of £1,000 a year be in a better position to pay the rate of 9d. in the pound than the individual who has a family to maintain on a salary of £480 a year.

Mr. Marshall: Of course he would be.

Mr. STUBBS: I ask the Premier to postpone the further consideration of the clause with a view to re-drafting it so as to make the burden fall more heavily on those who are best able to shoulder it, and at the same

time to bring in the amount of revenue that he requires.

The PREMIER: I want to know just what the amendment means. I am sorry the hon. member did not place it on the Notice Paper because it is impossible, or at any rate most difficult, to deal with amendments to a taxation measure on the spur of the moment and without having an opportunity to closely investigate the effect of such amendments. On paper and without close inspection, it might appear to be quite easy to suggest the imposition of a higher rate of tax to be paid by those in receipt of larger incomes, because such men should be in a better position to shoulder the added burden than those in receipt of smaller incomes. It has to be remembered that those who pay the tax on higher incomes also have to pay the State and Federal income tax, from which many of those in receipt of smaller incomes are free, because of deductions and exemptions. It has been suggested to me over and over again that taxation of this description should have commenced at a lower rate and continued to a much higher rate than is provided in the Bill. One of the matters that a Treasurer has to bear in mind all the time is the amount of money he desires to collect under the legislation he is to introduce. Unfortunately any considerable exemptions regarding the lower rates applicable to salaries and incomes, with increased rates applying to those who receive larger salaries, would bring in a considerably reduced amount to the Treasury. It is from the larger number of taxpayers who are in receipt of salaries to which the lower rates apply that the greater volume of the money is paid into the Treasury. Under the provisions of the Land and Income Tax Act, some of those who are in receipt of the higher incomes are paying as much as 14s. in the pound by way of taxation. They have to pay the State and Federal income taxes, the Federal super tax, property taxes and so on. If we were to legislate so that we would take the remaining 6s. from those in receipt of those higher incomes, the total amount we would receive would be wholly inadequate for our purposes.

Mr. North: There are so few of those people.

The PREMIER: Yes, and especially so in Western Australia. I commend for study the annual report of the Commissioner of Taxation. Therein members will be surprised to find that comparatively few

people in Western Australia pay taxation on the higher incomes. If we were to take the whole of the remainder of their incomes, as I have already indicated, we would not get anything like the amount we should receive.

Mr. Latham: That was the argument we used last year.

The PREMIER: Yes, but the argument was used then in support of a tax of  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound payable by the whole of the taxpayers.

Mr. Latham: On a pro rata basis.

The PREMIER: It was not on a pro rata basis, but a flat rate. When we argued that the tax should be on a graduated scale that would exempt those on or below the bread line and allow those in receipt of the higher incomes to shoulder the added burden, it was urged by members now sitting in Opposition that it was necessary for everyone to pay the tax irrespective of what his or her salary or wage might be. We disagreed from that point of view, and our disagreement is shown in the consistency displayed in the Bill before the Committee now. I consider the gradation embodied in the Bill a fair one, having in view the emergency taxation imposed in other States. I have given considerable thought to that phase and the Government's proposal compares at any rate favourably with similar legislation enacted in the other States. It has to be remembered that taxation of this description, in addition to ordinary forms of taxation, has been collected during the past three years. In New South Wales, for instance, the emergency tax is on a flat rate of 1s. in the pound on all salaries and wages of £2 and upwards per week. That tax was levied by a Labour Government, and in that State the man in receipt of £2 a week pays on exactly the same rate of tax as the man who has a salary of £20,000 a year. So it is in other States. I have particulars regarding the effects of this tax even in the higher ranges. If I take the middle rate, which I may cite as between £5 and £7 a week, the amount that will be paid by the individual will be very little more than he paid last year. It is not too much to ask those who are in receipt of higher wages, salaries and incomes, to pay a little extra in order that their less fortunate fellow-men in receipt of the basic wage of even less than that may be exempt. If we take the tax levied in some of the other States, we find, as I have already mentioned, that in New South Wales

the emergency tax is at the rate of 1s. in the pound payable by all in receipt of £2 and over per week. In Victoria the tax starts at a salary or income of £52 a year. Thus a person in that State receiving £1 per week pays 1.08d. in the pound, and the rate increases to 1s. in the pound. In Queensland, the tax is 3d. in the pound on all income up to £104 a year. Thus a salary up to £2 a week in Queensland is subject to a tax of 3d. in the pound. The scale of gradation in Queensland is steeper than we propose. It rises from 3d. to 6d., then to 9d., and then to 1s. in the pound. It may be convenient for the Treasurer of a State like Victoria to have a tax of 1s. in the pound because the proceeds from it would be considerable owing to the large number of people in that State receiving the higher incomes. The estimated deficit of Victoria or the current financial year is £800,000—about the same as our own. Whereas Victoria has  $1\frac{3}{4}$  million people to tax to make up a deficiency of £800,000, we have only 430,000 people to make up a deficit of £850,000.

The Minister for Employment: The Victorian tax realises £1,800,000 a year.

The PREMIER: Yes, and in New South Wales £6,000,000 was collected last year from that tax alone. Those figures show the difference between the taxable wealth of the people of New South Wales and Victoria and of our own people. In either of the Eastern States mentioned, the Treasurer could levy a rate of tax up to 1s. in the pound with the certainty of obtaining a substantial amount of revenue, but a levy of 1s. here would produce comparatively little revenue, and would impose burdens on a considerable section of the community. Speaking for myself, I say it is possible to carry the taxing of incomes to a point that will increase unemployment. If the State takes money from the taxpayers, that money is not available to the individual to extend his business, carry on his operations, or give employment that otherwise he would provide. Consequently we may defeat our purpose if, in a State like ours, we fix taxation too high, because there are not many people in receipt of high incomes. Reverting to Queensland, the tax starts at 3d. in the pound on incomes of under £2 per week, then jumps to 6d. on incomes over £104 and up to £208 a year. Thus on incomes between £2 and £4 per week it is 6d. in the pound—very much higher than our proposed tax. On incomes over £208 and up

to £499, the rate is 9d. in the pound. Thus anyone receiving a little over £4 a week in Queensland would pay 9d. in the pound. In comparison, our proposed tax is very moderate, being only slightly more than half of that.

Mr. Latham: Last year our tax compared more than favourably with the taxes of the Eastern States.

The PREMIER: Not for people on the lower rungs.

Mr. Latham: On all the rungs.

The PREMIER: Not for incomes of £1 and £2 a week. With some of the States it did compare favourably, but not with all of them. Last year we opposed the flat rate of 4½d. in the pound because we considered it unfair.

Mr. Latham: And you are amending it this year.

The PREMIER: Yes, to give necessary and reasonable relief to those who were compelled to pay under the Act of last year.

Mr. Patrick: Ours will still be the lowest emergency tax of all the States.

The PREMIER: I think that is so. In Tasmania, the rate is 4d. in the pound on the first £312. Tasmania has one of the lowest rates.

Mr. Latham: Tasmania is a poor State.

The PREMIER: Then the rate is increased to 5d. on incomes of £313 to £520, to 9d. on incomes of £520 to £1,500, and to 1s. on incomes of over £1,500. Therefore I think it will be agreed that the tax proposed here is fairly well graduated. If it were possible to reduce the rate on the lower incomes—on the incomes of £4, £5, and £6 a week—by increasing the rate on higher incomes and still obtain the revenue required, I would be only too willing to do it, but we have not the number of taxpayers to enable that to be done. A tax commencing at 4d. and moving by easy stages to 9d. in the pound is a fair one. Having regard to the taxation to be paid—State, Federal and other—I think that anything over 9d. in the pound would injure industry and produce a comparatively small amount of revenue. That is the reason why the tax is so graded. I do not claim that this or any other tax ever devised by the wit of man is perfectly equitable or metes out equal justice to all individuals. No doubt there will be anomalies under this tax—some sections will pay

more proportionately than will others—but no one can devise a tax to overcome all difficulties. Taking it by and large, I consider the gradation fair. It is not easy to estimate the amount we shall receive from the tax.

Mr. Latham: It is guesswork.

The PREMIER: There is a good deal of guesswork about it, because of the different rates for married and single persons. It is not so difficult to estimate the revenue to be received from those who pay under the income tax.

Mr. Stubbs: Will you promise not to increase the tax next year?

The PREMIER: Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to find the State in such a position that I could abolish the tax or substantially reduce it. I hope the fortunes of the State and the Commonwealth will take such a turn that taxation of the kind may be abandoned or considerably reduced. In the circumstances, I cannot accept the amendment.

Mr. STUBBS: My sole desire was to extend the incidence of the tax to the people who could best bear it. The Premier, however, has pointed out that the few persons drawing £1,000 a year or over may not be sufficient to return him the amount of revenue he requires, and, in view of his explanation, I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause, as previously amended, agreed to.

Clause 3—Operation of this Act in relation to assessment of tax in respect of salary or wages for the year ending 30th day of June, 1934:

Mr. LATHAM: As we have made certain amendments to Clause 2, I think it will be necessary consequentially to amend Clause 3.

The Premier: I do not think there is any consequential amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Leader of the Opposition wish to move an amendment?

Mr. LATHAM: Not if members are satisfied that it is not necessary.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That after "wages" in line 6, the words "earned and" be inserted.

The clause would then refer to salary or wages earned and received on or after the 1st August, 1933.

The PREMIER: I accept the amendment, though there was no intention of levying the tax on income received but not earned after the 1st August.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

## **BILL—YUNA-DARTMOOR RAILWAY.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 8th August.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON** (Guildford-Midland) [7.30]: I do not feel disposed to oppose the passage of this Bill, but I think as a general principle the economic conditions in this State do not encourage one to support further railway construction. We have a mile of railway for every 90 or so of our inhabitants, and a country that is burdened with such a large mileage of railway to so few people has a burden to which we should not be anxious to add. The Minister for Railways states that this is a good area of country, that it will produce wheat and other cereals, and is altogether a desirable agricultural district. To-day we have many desirable agricultural areas that are not fully utilised. I suggest to the Government, if they want to serve this State, that the first essential is to see to the utilisation of the land already served by railways in preference to opening up new land with new railways. To say that we have exhausted the possibilities of settlement alongside existing railways would be to cast grave reflections upon the capacity of our lands to produce and provide for our people.

Mr. Doney: But it has not been said.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON**: If it is wrong to suggest that our lands will not carry more people, is it not sounder economically to begin utilising lands already served for the people, than to encourage settlers to go out into other areas? I know the Minister will reply that we cannot dictate to people where they shall go, but I think the time has arrived when we shall have to do something of the kind. The Minister must realise that

a great proportion of our public debt is represented by our expenditure on railways, and that these railways are not paying to-day.

The Minister for Railways: That is true.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON**: The more we add to the mileage, particularly in newly settled country, some of this being country that is not settled at all, the more are we adding to the burden of an already overburdened railway system. It is questionable whether the time is opportune to build a new railway, except that it is proposed to lift one railway and transfer the material to the proposed new one. If this transfer can be effected in one operation, no doubt it will be more economical than to allow the material to lie where it is and have it utilised ultimately. That factor might be an inducement in the direction of constructing a new line. We must also appreciate the fact that there are very few people on the land in this particular locality, that the number of settlers is very limited. I know it has been said that large areas are available for selection, but there is a dangerous proposal in the Bill to which I would ask members to give consideration, namely, the introduction of a request to give authority to the Minister to acquire land. I think this is quite a new provision in a railway construction Bill. Evidently the land the Minister desires to serve is not Crown land.

The Minister for Railways: Oh yes.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON**: Then why does he ask for authority in the case of Crown lands?

The Minister for Railways: That is in all railway Bills.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON**: Not in the same sense as it appears in this Bill, I think.

The Minister for Railways: The Parliamentary Draftsman tells me that it is usual in all railway Bills.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON**: I have not looked carefully into the matter. My idea is that if land is alienated in any part of the State, the Government have the right to resume it. The resumption comes on automatically, and is a natural corollary to railway authorisations. Land can be resumed for railway purposes without an Act of Parliament of this kind.

Mr. Stubbs: On the basis of 10 per cent.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON**: Anything that may be required. If the authorisation of the Public Works Act is exceeded, the Government have to give compensation and pay

for that which is taken in excess of actual requirements. I am of opinion that we always rely on the Public Works Act in the case of land resumptions for railway purposes. In this Bill there is a definite proposal to authorise the Minister to acquire land, and the Land Purchase Board are directed in a certain manner. I do not remember seeing this in any other railway construction Bill.

The Minister for Railways: I will get copies of the other Bills and show them to you.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If the Minister will relieve my mind upon that point I shall appreciate it, because I am fearful lest something has been imported into this Bill that establishes a dangerous precedent.

Mr. Ferguson: It is in all the old Acts.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I thought the wording was different.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I rose before I was ready to speak on this Bill because the question was about to be put. On my copy of the Bill I had made some notes, but unfortunately I have not the document before me. Had I left the Chamber to get it, the question might have been passed. The second reading of the measure has been delayed in order that we might give consideration to the question whether the Bill has been framed on all fours with similar Bills that we have passed, Bills that have been brought down in too great a number, for the construction of railways in various parts of the State. I hope the Government will endeavour to ascertain the area of unused lands along existing railways, with a view to seeing whether we cannot relieve the unemployment problem by utilising such lands, seeing that in many such areas schools have already been built, water supplies established, and all the necessities required by a rural population have been provided without the rural population being there to enjoy them. I think that in introducing this Bill the Minister has gone a little too fast. I do not want to oppose it, but do not think it wise to bring down a Bill of this kind at this time. It would be better that this area should become more generally used before we build a railway to it, that more people should be settled there before we attempt to provide railway communication. Before we do anything of the kind we should take into consideration the special difficulties of the railway system and

its endeavours to make ends meet, and see whether we should not devote our energies towards bringing into use land that is already served by existing railways in preference to opening up new land by new railways.

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [7.40]: In adding a brief contribution in opposition to the measure, I would appeal to members to realise that I have no desire to oppose the construction of this particular line. Because of the statements made by the Minister when introducing the Bill, members may imagine that as I represent the electorate from which the rails required for the new line are to be pulled up, I find it within my rights and within my power to oppose the construction of the Yuma-Dartmoor railway. I hope they will not take that as being the position. At the moment I am not particularly concerned as to what rails are used for the line in question. I am more concerned about the expenditure of a fairly large sum of money in the construction of a line which according to the plan hanging in the Chamber, does not seem to present the slightest possibility for many years to come of paying its way, nor of serving a sufficient number of inhabitants situated within reasonable distance of the line, to enable it to make headway. If that were not the case, I should still be doubtful as to whether we should construct this railway. During last session or the session before, when the depression struck us, there was a hue and cry as to what we should do to help the wheat producers, and keep them on their farms. I suggested in all humility that the policy we had adopted for rural development in this country had taken the wrong track, and that notwithstanding the expenditure of millions of money to assist our wheat producers we had not so many farmers in the State. That argument holds good to-day. No doubt the expenditure was inspired by the price the producers used to get for their wheat, and the belief that such prices would be maintained. Be that as it may, millions of public money were spent in constructing railways to satisfy the demand for transport facilities for agricultural produce. The same remarks apply to the Yuma-Dartmoor railway. The whole of the argument of the Minister was based on wheat production. He did not suggest there would be a review of past policies, for the mistake in adopting which many Governments, including the Labour

Government, were responsible, but he suggested we should give authority to build this railway to assist the wheatgrowers in that district. Notwithstanding the huge expenditure that has already been incurred, and the authorisations which have been passed for the expenditure of other money in the same direction, we know that many lines have already been authorised for construction in the wheat belt, but have not yet been built. Moreover, they are not likely to be constructed while the present price of wheat obtains. But the Minister declares that another measure authorising a railway is necessary. He advanced no argument to show that there was any justification for building this particular line rather than one of the many lines already authorised. If the Bill is passed, no doubt the building of the Yuna-Dartmoor railway will precede the building of other lines which would supply facilities to more settlers and so would more speedily return interest on capital expended. I do not appreciate what is in the Minister's mind when he expresses a desire to proceed immediately with the building of this line. A glance at the map on the wall of the Chamber shows that for the first 15 miles the line will not serve any settlers.

Mr. Ferguson: The first 15 miles are all settled, and the first 10 miles are nearly all cleared and cultivated.

Mr. MARSHALL: Look at the number of farms shown on the map.

Mr. Ferguson: I have been in the district and seen the settlement.

Mr. MARSHALL: Let the hon. member look at the map and appreciate what he does not know. On the first 15 miles of the proposed route there is not one farm.

Mr. Ferguson: Not so. The first 10 miles are all cleared and cultivated.

Mr. MARSHALL: I can only be guided by the facts adduced by the Minister. One of those facts is shown in the map hanging on the wall. It is, I may say, the writing on the wall.

Mr. Ferguson: The map is 20 or 30 years old.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister's own argument is that there are about 3,000 or 4,000 acres under cultivation. Now what has the member for Irwin-Moore (Mr. Ferguson) to say?

Mr. Ferguson: I repeat, the first 10 miles are all cleared and cultivated.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister's own statement is that there are approximately 4,000 acres cultivated.

The Minister for Railways: Over 5,000.

Mr. MARSHALL: I will say 10,000 acres, if the Minister likes. That does not affect the argument. Ten farms in 10 miles are no good. The map indicates that for the first 10 miles there is not a farm.

Mr. Ferguson: You are quite wrong.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister, in introducing the measure, could only say that there were 4,500 acres under cultivation.

Mr. Ferguson: In one particular spot.

The Minister for Railways: Did the member for Murchison read the Railway Advisory Board's report?

Mr. MARSHALL: No.

The Minister for Railways: Oh, well!

Mr. MARSHALL: All I need to read is the Minister's statement made when introducing the Bill. Why did not the Minister use the Railway Advisory Board's report?

The Minister for Railways: I laid it on the Table.

Mr. MARSHALL: I read in "Hansard" what the Minister said about that report. Even assuming that what the member for Irwin-Moore has said is correct, and assuming that the land along the whole of the proposed route is under cultivation for a breadth of, say, 20 miles on each side, which is giving a very ample margin indeed, even then the House would not be justified in authorising the construction of the line. People who have lived and laboured in this State for years on the strength of promised railways should be served in preference to the district in question. Some of the people I refer to have worked for 12 and 15 years in anticipation of railway facilities. Then why build this line first? Assuming that the Minister is given authority to construct this railway—

The Minister for Railways: The Government, not the Minister.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not quibbling about terms. Suppose the Government were given authority to build this line and built it. Everybody knows that the State's railway system now shows a heavy loss.

The Minister for Railways: Not a very big loss, after all.

Mr. MARSHALL: Does the Minister suggest that the railway system is showing a profit? It is showing losses averaging about

£100,000 per annum. The loss has been up to a quarter of a million for one year. The Minister for Railways is in touch with the Minister for Works, who finds himself at his wits' end to combat competition against the Railway Department. And here I find myself at loggerheads with hon. members opposite, who invariably have been ready to advocate and support competition with the railways. Leaders of the parties opposite have moved resolutions in favour of motor transport, in preference to railway transport, since I have been a member of this Chamber. The fact is that they have ever been ready to champion private enterprise, and that they resent any State interference with it. I understand the Minister proposes to build 30 miles of this proposed railway for a start. Hon. members opposite have frequently stated that unless the railways brightened up and did their job, motor transport would defeat the Railway Department's objective, namely the development of the country. That is the argument which has been used. Now, if motor transport is such a brilliant conception and can do all that railways do over short distances, why are we discussing this Bill at all? Why do not hon. members opposite tell their friends engaged in motor transport, "Here is a wonderful opportunity between Yuna and Dartmoor"? If motor transport seized the opportunity, Western Australia would be saved £3,500 in respect of every mile of this proposed railway. But private enterprise will not touch this wonderful opportunity. What is it that will happen? The State will put down the railway and build up a community and develop intense agriculture, and the greater and more successful the efforts of the State, the more surely will the railway fail, because as soon as ever a prosperous community has been built up, our friends who now advocate the construction of this line will say to the Railway Department, "Get out of the road and let us have motor transport." That has happened before, and will happen again. Let us vote against this Bill and so give private enterprise a chance. Hon. members opposite, however, are as well aware as I am that private enterprise will touch nothing that has not a huge profit attached to it. The State will build the railway and carry wheat and super, and motor transport will pick the eyes out of the remainder of the traffic. As soon as the line has been

constructed, the Government will be called upon to build a road parallel to it, and then motor transport will pick the eyes out of the traffic as usual. Goldfields railways are now, and ever have been, called upon to carry the burden of the railway system. That applies equally to the Port Hedland-Marble Bar and Esperance lines. It is the goldfields communities that bear the burden of railway deficits. Even in the lean times of the goldmining industry, when it was hard-pressed to exist, the goldfields communities had still to pay maximum railway rates. The farmers, we are told, did not say, "Wheat must be carried at a certain rate, and super must be carried at a huge loss."

Mr. Patrick: Like oil for Wiluna.

Mr. MARSHALL: I object to any further railway construction which will mean that the goldfields people will be asked to dip even more deeply into their pockets and find more cash to meet railway deficits. After all the millions expended on railway construction in Western Australia, I venture to suggest that even my friends belonging to the spring onion growers' party cannot name 50 farmers in this State—not 50 real, actual, true farmers. Probably there are hundreds or even thousands of wheat-growers, but one will find more condensed milk tins and sardine tins around their homesteads than are to be found in a prospector's camp 700 miles inland. And now the Minister for Railways comes along and says, "Let us build more lines for wheat-growers." The Minister submitted a Bill of this description, and that was the only sort of argument he could advance! The member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) naturally supported the measure, for the line will be constructed in his electorate, and he would have to advance arguments in favour of it, whether the proposal was right or wrong.

Mr. Patrick: It is right.

Mr. MARSHALL: So long as the member for Greenough says it is right, I know it is wrong. I give him credit for doing his job as a politician and advocating the construction of the railway. Both he and the Minister know that while we are giving the Government authority to go ahead with the line, the best brains of the Empire and of other countries are advising restriction in the production of wheat. That is what is being done now, and finality has not been reached.

The Minister for Railways: You do not subscribe to a policy of restricting the production of wheat?

Mr. MARSHALL: The policy to which I would subscribe would be to encourage farmers who would first build up their homes and the State, supplying full local requirements, rather than encourage them to produce a commodity for export for which there is no market. That is my reply to the Minister's interjection. We had better get down to tin tacks. I ask the Minister for Railways whether he is prepared to announce the number of railways the construction of which has already been authorised by Parliament, the amount of money involved in each work, the mileage agreed to, and the districts through which the lines are to be constructed. If he were to do that and supply a map to give members a better idea of what his reply meant, we would not see a map such as that hanging on the walls of the Chamber this evening. If members examine that map, they will see that only a few farms are established in the area, while in one direction for over ten miles there is not even one farm. Yet the Minister can place the Bill before the House and attempt to justify the authorisation of such a line. One member of the Opposition must realise that the railway in his electorate is to be swept aside, because it does not pay. I refer to the Port Hedland-Marble Bar line.

The Minister for Railways: The Government have not said that line is to be taken up.

Mr. MARSHALL: I know, but we do not know what the Minister will do. A recommendation has been placed before the Government that the line should be closed down because it will not pay.

The Minister for Railways: The Commissioner of Railways has made representations to the Government, but the Government have not taken any action.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not blaming the Government, but I do not know what they will do.

The Minister for Railways: You know what the Government have done for the people in the back country.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, and I appreciate what they have done.

The Minister for Railways: Our policy has not varied from that standpoint.

Mr. MARSHALL: I hope the Sandstone line will not be interfered with, and I mention that just in passing.

Mr. Lambert: There is more justification for that line being pulled up than the other line you have referred to.

Mr. MARSHALL: I agree.

Mr. Lambert: One is costing nothing and the other has cost thousands a year.

Mr. MARSHALL: I agree with what the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie says. Members who do not understand the position can jeer in their ignorance. If they had a full appreciation of the facts they would know that what the hon. member said is correct. The prospects of the Sandstone line are not half what might be expected of the manganese line, but that does not affect the point I want to make regarding the Bill before the House now. Already it has been announced that because a railway does not pay, the Commissioner of Railways has recommended that the line shall be closed down.

Mr. Lambert: Wonderful vision!

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not arguing about the vision possessed by the Commissioner of Railways, but I am concerned about the requirements of the country areas. The very worst the Commissioner of Railways can say about the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway is that the returns from the undertaking are not sufficient to pay anything off the capital cost. If that argument be correct, the same contention can be raised with respect to many other lines, particularly to those in the rural districts.

Mr. Lambert: Yes, to 75 per cent.

Mr. MARSHALL: Probably to more than that.

The Minister for Railways: The Commissioner said that the line would have to be re-sleepered and it would cost so much money to undertake the work.

Mr. MARSHALL: What a damned pity it is that we must help the people in the North-West! What a pity it is there are people there, or that we have the North-West!

The Minister for Railways: I did not say that.

Mr. MARSHALL: I know that.

Mr. Lambert: There are more than sleepers that require to be renewed.

Mr. MARSHALL: Exactly. There are some sleepers in Government offices that should be replaced. If we may accept the Commissioner's recommendation as a guide



to what will happen regarding non-paying lines, the one now proposed should never be constructed, notwithstanding what the Railway Advisory Board may say.

Mr. Lambert: Who are the members of the Advisory Board?

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not know, and I do not care. We are asked to authorise the construction of the Yuna-Dartmoor railway, which will never pay, and the Minister knows it.

Mr. Lambert: It will not pay axle grease.

Mr. MARSHALL: Not even for the sparks from the flue. There are 4,000 acres or so under cultivation in the area to be served and the Minister regards that as justification for the introduction of the Bill. I do not desire to deny the settlers the right to a railway, provided the Minister can bind them down to an agreement.

Mr. Lambert: Let them build the line as we built our railway, if they think so much about it.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, let them contribute their quota by guaranteeing that all the freight available for or from their district will be hauled over the railway. The Government ask the general taxpayer to shoulder the burden of the deficit on the railway system and yet these people have the audacity to ask the Administration to construct a line that they know will not pay and that they themselves will not patronise when it is built. The farmers in the area will patronise motor transport when it is available. We know that when the line is constructed, a large community will be established in the area and they will want help.

Mr. Lambert: The Government will lend each settler £1,000 or more.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, and give them super and seed wheat and so forth. In return the farmers will patronise motor transport and ignore the railway. I am sick and tired of that sort of thing. I will not approve of any further expenditure by the State that will mean my electors having to put their hands deeper into their pockets to pay for the deficit on the railways. When the mining industry was receiving as low as a lousy £3 17s. 10d. for gold, the highest rates had to be paid for requirements carried by the railway. With wheat at 9s. a bushel, the farmers had their wheat grown at a profit and their super carried at a loss.

How can you expect me, Mr. Speaker, to adopt any different attitude? If motor transport is such a wonderful thing, here is an opportunity for those who advocate it. One who does so is standing behind your dais now. Let him interest himself in it. Let me inform members of the Opposition on a subject of which they know nothing at all. I do not know much, but still I can educate them a little. I tell the Minister he would serve the State far better if he were to re-condition the Meekatharra-Horseshoe line and link it up with the main system.

Mr. Lambert: It is in good condition now.

Mr. MARSHALL: More or less; I know, because I have just recently been over the line. Notwithstanding what the Minister's engineers may say, we could put that line into decent repair without tremendous expenditure. I appeal to the Government to appreciate the fact that though it may be convenient for them to take up the line because the Manganese Company owe them a few pounds, the line is of importance. Their attitude is like the kid's game in which one says, "You cannot swing on my gate because I have taken the hinges off."

Mr. Lambert: They said that because sleepers had been put down on Crown land they could claim the sleepers. That is the Government's legal position.

Mr. MARSHALL: Evidently some of the sleepers in Government offices to whom I referred, must be awake at the moment. We have been told that 30 miles of the line are to be laid down. As soon as the Yuna-Dartmoor railway is constructed, our troubles will continue. There will be deputations to the Commissioner of Railways urging a reduction in the freight charged for the haulage of wheat, super and so forth, and motor transport will be found competing more than favourably with the railways. I agree with the member for Kalgoorlie (Hon. J. Cunningham) that if the line is to be constructed, the whole 51 miles should be built and not 30 miles alone. If the shorter distance only is to be constructed, not a ton of wheat will be brought down over the line in a year. A lot of sneering and jeering is indulged in with regard to the Meekatharra-Horseshoe line.

Mr. Lambert: That is as good a line as any other in the State and those who built

it know as much as anyone else about railway construction.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is not the point I want to make. What the hon. member said is correct. Most members who talk about manganese have never smelt the atmosphere beyond the Darling Range, and would not know the difference between manganese and rice. Dr. Johnson said that a fool speaks eloquently on a subject he knows nothing about.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MARSHALL: There is no member opposite, and very few on the Government side, who understand anything about manganese, or who have even seen the line. Yet we find them speaking elaborately about the value of manganese when not a member here but the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie understands it. But let us set aside all possibilities of developing the manganese deposits. The Minister proposes to pull up this railway and with the material build the Yuna-Dartmoor line, which he admits will never pay, and never can pay if we have regard for motor transport. The goldfields people will be called upon to put their hands in their pockets and fork out still a little more. Let me remind members of that vast area, the North-West—

Mr. Lambert: A previous Government in five years brought over 25,000 cattle from pleuro country in the Eastern States, while allowing the North-West to be strangled.

Mr. MARSHALL: We find certain members supporting secession; they want to get away from the Eastern States. Do they appreciate that once we get secession, the Meekatharra-Horseshoe railway will become a national asset: for, should we get secession and be called upon to defend ourselves that line must become a national railway.

Mr. Lambert: All our scrap steel and iron will be taken away to Japan.

Mr. Ferguson: Members have not said anything against the manganese line.

Mr. MARSHALL: If not in the Chamber, they have done so in the lobbies. I suggest to the Government that, rather than expend £3,500 per mile in building the Yuna-Dartmoor line, which will never pay, they recondition the Horseshoe line for a fraction of that sum, and recover the whole of the money owing to them by the company by hauling the manganese down to Midland Junction. If the Government imagine that it will be cheaper to build the Yuna-Dart-

moor railway by first pulling up the manganese line, they are making a very big mistake, a mistake disclosing positive ignorance on their part. At the Horseshoe there is at least half a million tons of manganese available for about 2s. 6d. per ton for breaking costs; they can haul it over the line, bring it down to Midland, or take it to Geraldton and sell it and show a huge profit.

Mr. Lambert: And, in addition, absorb the unemployed.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is so. But we are to pull up this line because somebody says that if we can get these rails it will be a cheap way of building the Yuna-Dartmoor railway. The Government do not understand what they are doing in this matter. They are directed by individuals who have a common purpose, which is to recommend one thing, and in that recommendation deny another thing. They say, "You can construct the Yuna-Dartmoor railway very cheaply if you can get the manganese rails with which to do it." The Horseshoe line would serve the pastoralists of the North-West if it were conditioned and linked up with our main railway system. Surely the people of the North-West have not asked too much of the State. Our wool-growers have developed their own industry, paid for it out of their own pockets and produced some of the finest wools in Australia, and that without any of the valuable concessions that have been granted to the farmers. The wool industry has been developed practically at the expense of private enterprise, and the same may be said of the beef cattle industry. It is on record that the greatest trouble in the exportation of beef to the world's markets is that the Western Australian stock have to walk themselves off their feet in travelling so far to the meat works, and that in consequence their carcasses, when frozen, are valueless. There is a chance for the Government to do something for the North-West. Let me tell my friends opposite, who profess to have so much sympathy with the growers, that the growers of the North-West are pretty hard-pressed, and that members opposite, as loyal citizens of the State, should see to it that the Minister does not touch the manganese line at all.

Mr. Ferguson: We are not urging him to do so.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, but you will vote for him? B??.

Mr. Lambert: They have their instructions.

Mr. MARSHALL: And you will send men up to Broome to pick up mean, legal technical points to be used at an election.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member had better remain on the line.

Mr. MARSHALL: I will do so. That line would be of immense advantage to the people of the North-West. Surely to God they deserve some consideration, for all we have ever done for them has been to put down a stock route for the transport of their cattle; and now we have struck a pleuro line across it, and so they cannot bring down their stock. Surely to goodness we can do something for those people, instead of robbing them of their possibilities. Stock can be travelled down from the Kimberleys to within 50 miles of Peak Hill, during which journey they will lose 150 lbs. of condition. But the last 83 miles, over which the manganese railway now lies, is auriferous and stony, and in consequence knocks more condition off travelling stock than they lose all the rest of the way from Kimberley down. Yet that line is to be pulled up and no consideration shown for the people of the North-West and the goldfields, who will have to put their hands deeply into their pockets once more. Then there is the Waterloo Mine, 53 miles out. Operations on that property have been started again. It is a wonderfully big deposit, and adjacent to the railway. Then there is Peak Hill, only eight miles from the line. That district has wonderful possibilities, and only two weeks ago an influential party came along with money to invest in it. Yet the railway is to go.

Mr. Lambert: Then there is the chrome deposit, 100 miles on.

Mr. MARSHALL: I know; and there are other deposits, of immense possibilities. The development of all these deposits is to be sacrificed in order that we may build another line which will never pay. There should be no suggestion of pulling up the manganese line.

Mr. Lambert: If it were a Government line, would they suggest pulling it up? Of course not.

Mr. Hawke: Are you making a second speech on this Bill?

Mr. MARSHALL: We can look to the future with some confidence for the appreciation of wool prices, but we cannot hope to develop the wool industry if we are to

have a Government prepared to pull up a line running through an area where wool is extensively produced and, at a cost of £3,500 per mile, lay it somewhere else where it can never be profitable. I am not disposed to speak disparagingly of wheat, and I am influenced in my opinion only by what is going on throughout the world. Mr. Stanley Bruce, to whom I lift my hat, for he is all intelligence, and is paid by the taxpayers of this country to live in London—I wish to God I were—is already negotiating with other Dominions of the Empire to restrict the acreage under wheat. Mr. Bruce cannot say that the Far East, where I lived for nine years, is not rapidly becoming Westernised. The people of the Far East have finished with their blue dungarees of cotton. With their Western ideas they want wool—tweed—they want to be gentlemen, Asiatic though they be. They are becoming large buyers of wool, but never will they become large buyers of wheat.

Mr. Patrick: China is the second largest wheat-growing country of the world.

Mr. MARSHALL: The people of China do not want wheat. Where they used to grow rice, they will now grow wheat. The Horseshoe line, which the Minister proposes to pull up, serves the wool, mutton and beef industries.

Mr. Patrick: A lot of wool is brought from Meekatharra by motor transport.

Mr. MARSHALL: The railway caters for those three commodities, and we can look to the Far East to be good customers for our wool. I have always had confidence in wool, though not in wheat, because the Asiatic countries can and do grow a substitute for wheat. If they can get wheat cheaply, they will take it in preference to growing rice, but they cannot grow wool or beef. The Minister proposes to pull up the line, and deny our pastoralists the possibility of supplying the Far Eastern markets. Let members not imagine that the only purpose of the line is to serve the manganese deposit. If it were, I would not attempt to influence the Government to leave the line.

Mr. Lambert: That is only subsidiary.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, a merely secondary consideration. I ask members to realise that primary producers of the North want the line, and they want it linked up with the main system so that they can supply the markets of the world which demand their

commodities. Wool is not like wheat. The member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) says "God help us if we cannot sell wheat," but I say, "God help us if we cannot sell wool." A most remarkable fact is that while we cannot sell wheat abroad, thousands of families in this country are starving. I am not opposing the construction of the Dartmoor line on the ground that the Horseshoe line is to be pulled up.

Mr. Withers interjected.

Mr. MARSHALL: The member for Bunbury is getting all he wants, but I have to fight for my constituents. I am opposing the construction of the Dartmoor line, not because the Horseshoe line is to be pulled up, but because members opposite who advocate the building of the railway know full well that as soon as it is constructed we will have to carry the financial burden and they will be the advocates of private enterprise to compete against the line. They have done it before; they will do it again. They want the Government to pull up the line, and then they will appeal for consideration for private enterprise and no interference. They will argue that if the railways cannot compete with private enterprise, they deserve to go under.

Mr. Patrick: The road to Wiluna is the worst in the State for motor transport to compete with the railways.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the Government are prepared to introduce a measure to prevent the competition of motor transport and to give no concessions, I will vote for it. There are many individuals who adopt an attitude to the railways similar to that of the hon. member opposite.

Mr. Patrick: All my produce is forwarded by railway.

Mr. MARSHALL: Recently I found myself engaged in an argument at Wiluna about railway versus motor transport.

Mr. Lambert: In only one argument?

Mr. MARSHALL: My friends argued that railway freights were too high. I agree that there are many anomalies, but that is a matter to which the Minister ought to attend. When the Midland Railway Company can haul goods at a flat rate of £2 10s. a ton, the Commissioner of Railways should be able to do likewise. My friend said that motor transport could take certain goods all the way from Perth to Wiluna for 2s. I replied, "That is remarkable. Two years ago everything carried from Meekatharra to Wiluna, a distance of 142 miles, cost £7

14s. 2d. It is remarkable how the motors can reduce their charges after a railway has been built." The Minister is asking us to authorise the building of another railway—Yuna to Dartmoor—and then we shall find ourselves engaged in an argument about sanctioning a nice road, which the Minister for Works will construct.

The Minister for Works: Talk nicely to me, and I may construct it.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister for Railways will attend to that. A nice road will be provided alongside the line and then the advocates of private enterprise will undertake to show us what can be done at the expense of the taxpayers. On behalf of the people of the North-West, who deserve a line and in whose interests the Government should recondition the Horseshoe line and link it up with the main system, and in the interests of the goldfields people who will be required to help make good the loss on the Dartmoor line, I oppose the Bill.

Mr. Stubbs: You had better come over to this side.

MR. PIESSE (Katanning) [8.38]: I am not acquainted with the country that the Dartmoor railway is to serve; nor am I acquainted with the country supposed to be served by the Horseshoe railway. It seems to me rather a pity that the Government have not taken the House into their confidence regarding their proposals for dealing with competitive road transport as it affects the railways. Until Parliament has been apprised of the Government's policy and until we know what is to be the future policy on this important question, we should not embark on further railway construction. At the same time I do not wish my remarks to be interpreted as meaning that I am opposed to the building of the line. It seems to me that the work is being proposed, as much as anything, to create employment. During the past three years railway construction has been allowed to remain in abeyance.

Mr. Lambert: The report of the Advisory Board should be printed and circulated, instead of being merely tabled. Then we would know what justification existed for building the railway.

Mr. PIESSE: Usually the reports of the Advisory Board carry a good deal of weight with members.

Mr. Lambert: Not with me.

Mr. PIESSE: On the report of the board, the Government have seen fit to favour the construction of the line. For a considerable time members of Parliament and representative public men have urged the need for legislation to deal with motor competition, and Governments have been lacking in their duty in not dealing with the question and thus affording the railways the protection due to them. The people who own the railways own the roads, and yet during the past six or seven years we have been building roads parallel with railways and enabling services to be built up in competition with the railways. I cannot altogether excuse the railway management. Doubtless we are proud that our railway losses have not been as heavy as those of the Eastern States, but the Railway Department have been lacking in their duty in allowing road transport services to pick the eyes out of the traffic, especially in regard to the "small minimums." They have allowed competitive services to be built up and thus the difficulty has been increasing day by day. The longer the solving of the problem is delayed the more difficult will the position become. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) was not altogether fair in accusing members of the Opposition of supporting road transport in preference to the railways. I know that members on this side of the House have drawn the attention of the Commissioner of Railways to the fact that motor transport was making inroads into railway revenue, have warned the Commissioner of the danger and have offered suggestions to help him. Complete records have been kept. The amount of traffic being carried by road is known, and the Commissioner of Railways should have some influence with the Government to secure legislation to enable him to combat the motor competition.

Mr. Lambert: Would you support such legislation?

Mr. PIESSE: Any reasonable measure I would support, but the Government should not have allowed the road transport services to sink so much money into their concerns, thereby legalising the traffic. On this account, the road services are entitled to some consideration.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is getting rather outside the question before the Chair.

Mr. PIESSE: Before we are asked to authorise the expenditure of more money

on railway construction we should know what is in the minds of the Government and what is in the minds of members generally. We should stand to our responsibilities and have the courage to say what we think on this matter, and be prepared to support the railways.

Mr. Raphael: Why did you not do that during the past three years?

Mr. PIESSE: I have no desire to pursue my remarks further in that direction. It seems strange that authority should be asked for the construction of this line when other railways which have for many years been authorised have not been seriously thought of. During the early part of the depression one would not have had the temerity to ask the Government to build a new railway, because we know how difficult it was to raise funds. Now we seem to be getting back to the old borrowing methods, and it therefore behoves Parliament to be more careful at this stage to see that loan moneys are spent on reproductive works and only to the best advantage of the State. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) referred to the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway and the Mt. Barker-Manjimup railway. One of these has been authorised for over 10 years but neither has yet been constructed. If the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook line had been constructed at the time it was authorised, much greater development would have occurred in that part of the State than we see to-day. The next best thing has been done, namely, to build a main road along the route of that railway. In the circumstances that was a good move, and should be the forerunner of a railway to be built later on. I wish the Government would turn their attention more to that part of the State. The previous Government did devote some attention to it, more attention than any other Government had devoted to it. We know that certain development has occurred in districts west of Mt. Barker, and that it was a good thing to construct a road along the route of the proposed Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway. Although that is not reproductive now, I think it will ultimately prove to be a profitable venture. I have visions of that country being more closely developed, if proper assistance is given to it and the right policy is followed by the Government of the day, than is likely to be evident in any other part of

the State. I know of no part that offers better opportunities for closer settlement. It is not subject to droughts, and there is no doubt about the rainfall. During the last 70 years there has never been a failure in the rainfall in this district. It is the most suitable country we have for mixed farming, and a good deal of it is readily cleared. The land that would be served by the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway is most of it easily cleared. During the last two years of the life of the previous Government that country was inspected by a responsible officer of the Lands Department, and classified. It was proved to be suitable for closer settlement. If more attention could be paid to its development, and more of it could be cleared and brought into use, it would prove of great benefit to the State. In this district 200 or 300 acres of cleared land are sufficient for the support of a farmer and his family because he can grow upon it practically all the foodstuffs he requires. Indeed, many things can be grown profitably there. It comprises some of our best fat lamb country and best fruit-growing country. Good wheat crops can be grown on most of it, and it is eminently suitable for oats and fodders. I would urge upon the Government to give close attention to the report by Mr. Surveyor Hicks, and I hope they will not lose sight of the necessity in the near future for opening up this district by means of a railway.

**MR. CROSS** (Canning) [8.50]: I doubt the wisdom of spending the considerable sum of money that will be involved in the construction of the Yuna-Dartmoor railway. Despite the argument advanced by the member for Irwin-Moore (Mr. Ferguson) that all the land for the first 10 miles along the route is cleared, the fact remains that those very people are already served by the existing railway at Yuna. It goes without saying that the Yuna-Dartmoor line cannot be said to be a reproductive work. It will never pay.

The Minister for Railways: That is mere assumption.

Mr. Raphael: You do not expect any Government concern to pay, do you?

Mr. CROSS: I am of opinion that the Minister was ill-advised to bring down this Bill. The money could be better spent on reproductive works nearer the metropolitan area.

Mr. Raphael: You are getting closer to it now.

Mr. CROSS: It should be spent in the more congested areas, where there would be more likely to be a return for the expenditure. Many farmers are growing wheat 20 or 30 miles from a railhead. In some cases they are subsidised by the Government for doing so. Those people are more entitled to a railway than are the settlers in the Yuna-Dartmoor district. One of the reasons why I am opposing the construction of this line is that it is apparently the intention of the Government to take up the Horseshoe line leading to the manganese deposits. I have a piece of manganese here. I am going to put up an argument for a change in the present policy, and suggest that the Meekatharra manganese line be left where it is. If the railway is taken up, I believe that inside 10 years there will be a great clamour to have it relaid. It is true, as the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie interjected, that the Japanese have in this State been buying up all the scrap iron and steel they could ship to their country. That metal is worth not more than one-third of the world parity value of manganese to-day.

Mr. Raphael: What about when the next war comes on?

Mr. CROSS: At a conservative estimate, I should say that not less than half a million tons of manganese are available at the mines, and a railway now leads to the very spot. Considerable developmental work has already been done by the company concerned. Manganese is worth £2 a ton at the very least, and that is leaving out of consideration the 25 per cent. exchange. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie estimates the value at £2 10s. a ton. It is said that the ore could be broken up for 5s. per ton. I think the line should be reconditioned and the manganese brought down to the coast and exported. Such an undertaking would bring a good deal of new money into the country.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Who would pay the wages for mining?

Mr. CROSS: There are people prepared to put the manganese into trucks at 5s. a ton. It is said this could be done for 2s. 6d. a ton. If the Government were to utilise some of the unemployed to break down the ore, truck it, and despatch it to the port, it could be the means of new money being brought into Western Australia. Instead of constructing a railway to carry more

wheat to the seaboard when that commodity is a drug on the market, it would be better from the State point of view to adopt my suggestion. For the reasons I have outlined, I oppose the second reading of the Bill.

**MR. RODOREDA** (Roebourne) [8.57]: I am speaking as an unbiassed and unprejudiced observer. No one in my electorate is asking for railways. The only interest that we in the North-West take in the construction of railways is due to our knowledge that we are taxed to make good the deficit the railways incur every year without fail. The railways are of no more use or benefit to us than if they had never been constructed. It is high time Parliament called a halt to this policy of merrily proceeding with the construction of new lines. While we are saddled with a system which under present conditions can never hope to show a profit, we should do nothing to add to the difficulties of the situation. I am struck by another aspect of the question. It has always been the policy of this House to authorise the construction of railways very much in excess of the mileage that it is contemplated shall be built. Whether that is good practice or not, I am not sufficiently experienced to say.

Mr. Raphael: That is done in case the engineers find they have made a mistake, and have not estimated a high enough expenditure.

Mr. RODOREDA: I thank the hon. member for his illuminating interjection. That policy does not appeal to me. I do not know why Parliament should be asked to consent to the construction of a greater length of line than the Government contemplate laying down. We are now asked to authorise the laying down of 51 miles of line when the Minister himself says he only wants to construct 30 miles. Why should the Government ask for a greater mileage than is required? Why not authorise the length required, and then let us deal later with a Bill for the extra mileage, and discuss it on its merits? This policy of authorising the construction of railways but going no further with them has a very bad effect upon the farming community generally. The inference to be drawn from the passing of a railway Bill is that the line will be built. Consequently, people take up land along the suggested route of the railway, but find they are left for 10 or 15 years without anything whatever being done

to construct the line. This is misleading the people. It would be advisable to accept the principle that railways should be built in the order of their authorisation. On that account alone I oppose the construction of this line, and the construction of any new line unless the Minister can tell me beyond any shadow of doubt that there is a chance of its paying its way. The Minister asks us to vote for the expenditure of at least £100,000 to construct 30 miles of the Yuna-Dartmoor railway; so that we may lose £2,000 odd a year, merely for the purpose of hauling about 3,200 tons of wheat next year assuming that there will be no more acreage under crop. That, it seems to me, is a reasonable view. We are asked to lose £2,000 annually in order to haul 3,200 tons of wheat, or about 10 train loads.

Mr. Ferguson: Much more than that is now coming from Yuna.

Mr. RODOREDA: I am allowing the Minister an average of 18 bushels. Formerly, when a Railway Bill was introduced, there used to be a pretence that the line would pay. Undoubtedly every line authorised in the past was going to pay its way, but now we are asked to consent to the construction of a line on which the Minister admits there will be a loss. It is pretty hard to ask the House to pass such a measure. Business men would not consider the proposal for a moment. Apart from that aspect, I have not heard of any great crowd of farmers in acute distress storming Perth in order to get the railway built. True, there are not enough of them to make an uproar.

Mr. Patrick: They are a long way from the city.

Mr. RODOREDA: It is not the actual railway which the people in question require, but transport facilities at about the same cost as a railway would offer. We have no assurance from the Minister—and I doubt whether he has power to give one—that motor competition with this proposed line will be prevented. As has already been said, it is the greatest certainty in the world that motor competition will obtain alongside the proposed railway. I suggest to the Government that that aspect of the situation be looked into. The Minister said that when no railways were available, motor freights were high. However, there is such a thing as calling tenders. If the Government did

not think that the tenders received were low enough, what would be wrong with the Government themselves giving the district a 12 months' trial with motor traffic? That would afford the district a chance to prove itself. When it had proved itself, and had grown too big to be handled by motor transport, Parliament might well be asked to give consideration to the provision of railway facilities. It would be a far better procedure on the part of the Government to endeavour to develop the abandoned farms which are now on their hands and which are already provided with railway facilities. Many of the abandoned farms are situated in districts where railways were authorised years ago but have not been constructed, these farms being abandoned on that account. However, that is not the case with all the abandoned farms. There must be many of them which have railway facilities and which therefore could be utilised. Let us first develop the lands already served by railways. It is foolish to extend our railway system further and so bring still more areas of unprofitable land under wheat. As the member for Katanning (Mr. Piesse) remarked, it seems as though the railway is merely being put up as a means of providing work for the unemployed. Surely it is not beyond the Government's mental capacity to devise other means of putting the unemployed to work, or to think of another scheme, one on which the money could be expended with advantage. If wheat stops at the present low level, all Australian Governments, including the Commonwealth Government, will be compelled to pay the farmers a subsidy on their wheat production, or perhaps a fixed price enabling the farmers to produce wheat at a profit. I am not worried about the individual farmer, but under the present system we must export wheat in order to pay interest on our debts. The wheat industry is a national one, and we as a nation have to keep the farmer producing wheat for export, whether it is exported at a loss to the individual farmer or not. The expenditure proposed for this railway could be applied much more advantageously in that direction. I do not see how we as a State or a nation can get away from that aspect of the question. We must export wheat and other primary products to pay our interest oversea. If the individual farmer cannot show a profit without a subsidy, the State must seriously consider the

advisableness of subsidising him. There is another point I wish to touch upon. I assume that the building of this unique Yuna railway is contingent upon rail-being obtained from the Meekatharra-Horseshoe line. I ask the Government to consider seriously the question of leaving that line in its place. Not for one moment would I urge the construction of that line if it were not already built; nor do I take the stand that it will pay to rail or ship manganese. I do contend, however, that there will be more freight coming over the Meekatharra-Horseshoe railway in cattle alone during the next few years than can possibly be expected from the Yuna-Dartmoor railway during the same period.

Mr. Marshall: Four lots of special stock trains came over the Horseshoe line four weeks ago.

Mr. RODOREDA: Cattle freight is a high freight, a payable freight. If the Kimberleys are not to go out of existence altogether, the cattle restrictions will have to be lifted: and then there is the railway as a means of moving the cattle. The last 80 or 90 miles traversed by the railway are difficult to get cattle over, being stony and hilly, and marked by scarcity of water. Consequently that stretch of country is very hard indeed on cattle. Further, there are no feeding grounds around Meekatharra when the cattle arrive there. So that it seems a good proposition to consider the Meekatharra-Horseshoe line from the stock aspect, especially bearing in mind that only a small amount of money is needed to put it in good working order. Accordingly I urge the Government to give serious consideration to the question of leaving those rails where they are. In addition to cattle freights, a large quantity of wool would be carried over the line, as well as stores and equipment for stations right up to Marble Bar. This latter freight is now put off the train at Meekatharra and loaded into motor trucks. On the grounds I have mentioned I oppose the second reading of the Bill.

MR. HAWKE (Northam) [9.11]: No doubt the Minister, when introducing the Bill, anticipated for it a rapid, unopposed passage. The fact that his anticipation has not been realised is, in my opinion, a credit to the members of this Chamber. After all said and done, undoubtedly the time has arrived when every member should realise that he has a serious responsibility in re-



gard to the construction of new railways. We all know that the general railway system of Western Australia has been losing fairly heavily during recent years. We all know that at the present time the customers of the Railway Department have to provide first of all the million pounds of interest payments on the capital cost of the system. The building of additional lines, therefore, is a serious matter, firstly for those controlling the existing railway system and charged with its financial management, and secondly for the taxpayers of Western Australia generally. Therefore, although the Minister may be disappointed—I do not know whether he is or not—that the discussion has continued at such length—

The Minister for Railways: Not at all.

Mr. HAWKE: I think the Minister should welcome the fact that hon. members are determined to discuss the question from every angle and consider closely whether the proposal is justified, looked at from the general point of view of every interest affected. Although the majority of members who have already spoken have expressed themselves in favour of the proposition, I think that the minority who have spoken against it have put up the better case. So far as the debate has proceeded, I am inclined to use my vote against the proposed line. When the proposal was mooted, the highly active member for the district which adjoins mine, the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths), immediately got extremely busy in connection with the Yarramony Eastward railway, distributing through the electorate some of those letters for which he is famous, because of the fact that several different coloured inks are utilised for the writing of each letter. The hon. member urged upon the whole of the settlers interested in the Yarramony Eastward proposal that they should set to work and agitate and organise to see that the claims of that line received fair consideration at the present time, when the Government look like having some money available for new railway construction. Portion of the Yarramony Eastward route runs through the Northam electorate. It may surprise some hon. members to learn that in the Northam electorate there are many farmers more than 18, 19, and 20 miles from a railway; and that they have been in that position for many years. In view of their unfortunate situation it is not surprising that during recent years they have had a

hard battle indeed. In the course of the election campaign I was asked at the centres affected whether I was in favour of fighting for the construction of the Yarramony Eastward railway, so that the settlers might obtain reasonable transport facilities. I replied by stating that I was of the opinion the time had arrived when the construction of new railway lines should cease for at least a period in Western Australia. I contended that, with the uncertain state of the world's markets, it was a very risky proposition on the part of any Government to engage in the construction of new railway lines when the possibility of their paying was indeed remote. I do not know anything at all about the manganese railway that it is proposed to pull up to make possible the cheap construction of the Yuna-Dartmoor line. I leave the discussion of the manganese line, its possibilities and its worth, to those who are acquainted with the facts. On the other hand, I am concerned a good deal with the proposal to build a new railway from Yuna to Dartmoor. During the progress of the debate, there has been a good deal of open contradiction regarding certain claims as to what the railway will do. The member for Kalgoorlie (Hon. J. Cunningham) pointed out that the first 20 miles of the railway would be constructed through sand-plain country of a poor productive character. That statement was denied during the debate, and I think the member for Irwin-Moore (Mr. Ferguson) claimed that the first ten miles to be covered by the line was already settled, that the land was of a highly productive nature, and that for the first ten miles a great number of settlers would be served.

Mr. Ferguson: That is a positive fact.

Mr. HAWKE: I am prepared to accept that statement.

Mr. Marshall: I am not. It is absolutely wrong. Look at the map!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Northam is addressing the Chair.

Mr. HAWKE: I suggest that the map may be out of date.

Mr. Marshall: Then what is it doing on the wall of this Chamber now?

Mr. HAWKE: I am not in a position to say.

Mr. Marshall: It is in support of what the Minister stated.

Mr. HAWKE: It may be that the map has as little worth as the graph beside it. I am prepared to accept to the full the statement by the member for Irwin-Moore because, in his capacity as Minister for Agriculture in the previous Government, he probably regarded it as his duty to travel through the Yuna-Dartmoor country to make himself acquainted with its character and its possibilities. Although it may be true, and probably is, that the country for the first ten miles to be served by the line is already settled and is of a highly productive character, that is no argument at all for the construction of a line, because every settler within the first ten miles from Yuna is already within easy reach of existing railway facilities. As I have already pointed out, in the Northam electorate there are farmers at least 20 miles from an existing railway line and it is absurd to argue that a railway should be built because it will serve settlers located anything from one to ten miles from a line. We can therefore omit from our calculations the first ten miles to be served, no matter how closely it may be settled, and irrespective of the productive quality of the area. Every one of the settlers in that area is already well served with railway facilities. What I am anxious to learn from the Minister, from the member for the district or from anyone else in a position to supply the information is, how many settlers are likely to be served by the line outside a distance of, say, 15 miles from Yuna? It is those settlers only who are in urgent need of railway facilities. If the number of settlers beyond 15 miles from Yuna do not represent very many, then the justification for the construction of the line melts into thin air. It is said that beyond Dartmoor there is a huge area of Crown land of considerable productive value that could be developed when economic conditions improve. That is altogether too hazy and distant. No member of this Parliament is justified in bringing forward such a contention in advocacy of the proposal now under discussion. No one can say when the economic conditions will improve. It may not be for years, if ever. If we could be assured that the Douglas credit proposals of the member for Claremont (Mr. North) would become operative within the next five years, then

we could say with some certainty that this great area of Crown lands beyond Dartmoor would be developed within a short period, because the economic conditions would be sufficiently improved to permit of that being done. If the basic argument in favour of the new line is one of providing employment for those now without work, then let the whole proposition be decided upon that basis. Let the Yuna-Dartmoor railway proposition stand in fair balance and judgment amongst the numerous other works providing opportunities for the unemployed that can be brought forward by various members of this Parliament. We all realise that work is needed for employment purposes, but it is very questionable whether the proposition under discussion would provide as much reproductive employment as, for instance, the member for Avon's favourite scheme, the Yarramony eastward railway. It is necessary, therefore, that the whole position regarding this proposition should be clarified, and that there should be a definite statement as to the number of people likely to be served by the line beyond 15 miles from Yuna and as to its effect upon the employment problem. My own opinion, based on the evidence so far tendered, is that the money the Government propose to use in tearing up one line and constructing another, could be better expended on strengthening the numerous and important weaknesses that exist in the present railway system. Since the Labour Government took office, we have read various statements by the Minister for Railways, and by the Premier as well, commenting on the fact that the railway system of Western Australia has been so badly neglected during the last three years that it is in drastic need of repair and reconditioning. If that be so, then the money that the Minister may have available could, perhaps, be better used in improving and strengthening the present railway system, and also in improving the service that is being given to the people in the country areas. Without desiring to delay the debate any longer, my opinion at present is that the proposed construction of the Yuna-Dartmoor line has not so far been justified, and unless the Minister, in the course of his reply, can justify it to a greater extent than has been apparent so far, I shall deem it my duty to cast my vote against the proposal.

## THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS

(Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton—in reply) [9.25]: The member for Northam (Mr. Hawke) said that in placing the Bill before the House, I evidently anticipated there would be very little debate, and he suggested that I was probably disappointed that the proposal to construct the line had been debated to such an extent. So far from being disappointed, I am more inclined, with the member for Northam, to congratulate the House and to express the hope that every proposal advanced for the development of the country will have the serious consideration of members generally and that everything necessary, without wasting time, shall be adduced for and against the proposal, so that it can truthfully be said that all the information possible was available to enable members to cast intelligent votes on any such proposals advanced by the Government. I am not a bit disappointed, but I am particularly pleased that the Bill has caused so much discussion, and brought forth so much information. I am pleased that members' opinions have been voiced with regard to the proposal. There have been some who have spoken in opposition, but the majority have been in favour of the construction of the line. The proposal itself is not dependent upon the manganese railway being pulled up; it has nothing whatever to do with it. The position regarding the manganese line is that the railway was constructed and has been down for six or seven years, during the whole of which time two or three trains only have run over it. When there is a proposal to deal with railway construction, and the Government have an asset involving material worth £100,000 or so, lying idle, whereas the rails and fastenings could be used for a reproductive purpose, we, as a Government and Parliament too, would be neglectful of our duty to the State and its development if we did not deal with the position and use available assets for the production of wealth and the development of the country. As to the part the railways have played in the development and wealth-production of Western Australia, if people sound a pessimistic note regarding the future of agricultural production, they must realise that agriculture cannot fail without the State failing too. The Government are not prepared to allow the development of the State to be retarded. If we are to find employment for the people

and desire to encourage the production of wealth, we must not be content to sit down and do nothing, particularly with regard to the agricultural areas. At this stage, when there is talk of restricted agricultural production, it is not too much to say that for Western Australia a policy of restriction is a policy of despair. If that is the best that can be done for the world, and the restriction of the production of that which is of use to all mankind is to be our salvation, then surely it is nothing but a policy of despair.

Mr. Stubbs: It would throw thousands of men out of work.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Thousands of people will be in want and the world will be in a state of chaos.

Mr. Tonkin: Surely the Minister does not agree to the extension of a losing proposition?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If we are discussing railways from the standpoint of losses, it must be realised that the whole of our railways represent a losing proposition.

Mr. Tonkin: I meant that the wheat industry was being operated at a loss.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The industry is being conducted at a loss wherever it is in existence. Will it be suggested that because the country districts are not engaged profitably in the production of wheat, we should leave that industry alone and that there should be no further development? The trade of the world is such today that, in view of the conditions that obtain, practically every industry is carried on at a loss. There is not an industry, primary or secondary, which is being run at a commercial profit at present; sugar, milk, butter, eggs, wheat, wool, almost everything that can be mentioned except gold mining, is being produced without profit, and the world is becoming bankrupt because the people cannot make proper arrangements to market their products. Because that state of affairs exists all over the world, are we to sit down without hope that the position will right itself at some time? Then why should we not take the opportunity at this stage to develop land which, when the position improves, will be of very great value to the State? The Victoria district has the best wheat-growing average in Western Australia. Wheat can be grown there more profitably than in any other district. Also it is the largest area of wheat growing land

close to a developed port. The most remote part of the area to be served by the proposed railway will be less than 100 miles from the coast, and all within a most reliable rainfall. So I say the natural advantages of this district, including its soil conditions and rainfall, make it pre-eminently a district where wheat production can be successfully carried on. Something has been said of railway management. It is true that the whole of the railway system is being run at a loss at present.

Mr. Patrick: Still the position is better in this State than in any other State.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** That is so. Many years ago this State deliberately set out on a policy of building railways and carrying agricultural commodities at an unremunerative rate merely for the development of the country. But for agriculture our population, when the mining industry went down, would have been at a standstill and the State would have retrogressed. To avoid that, the Government of the day deliberately set about developing the agricultural industry by giving the agriculturists cheap railway freights. Somebody said the railways do not pay. How can they be expected to pay when we charge about a quarter of the cost of carting one big commodity all over the country in order to assist the agricultural industry?

Mr. Hawke: The railways mean a million pounds a year in interest.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** I do not wish to discuss that aspect at this stage, but members generally have agreed to what the Government had to say, through the medium of the Lient.-Governor in His Excellency's Speech, about the conversion of loan to reduce the tremendous interest burden the State is bearing at present. If the interest on the capital cost of our railways were reduced by 1 per cent., it would mean, instead of the railways making a loss last year, there would have been a profit of £90,000—and that in spite of the very low prices of wheat and wool, and the low rate that was charged on the carriage of commodities necessary to the agricultural industry. So I am with the member for Northam in every move he might initiate to relieve the burden of interest now lying on the people of the State.

Mr. Stubbs: I believe there is £27,000,000 invested in the railways.

[14]

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Yes, 25 millions in the railways, one million in the tramways and a little over a million in the Electricity Department. In every possible way the Government stand for the reduction of interest which is such an incubus on the railways.

Mr. Stubbs: But our railways could not now be built for the money they cost.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** No, they could not. The asset we have now would cost many millions more than it originally cost. But, as I said to a deputation the other day, our railways have been put down more or less haphazardly, and if all the rails could be picked up and redistributed on a better basis we could do with 700 or 800 miles less than we have at present. As I say, that is because the railways have been developed piece-meal. For instance, the line was run out first in Northam, and then extended to Goomalling, and in turn to Dowerin and Wyalkatchem and Bencubbin, and so on. Every time an extension of the railway system is mooted, people say, "Now at last you have reached the limit of profitable agricultural production in Western Australia." Many will remember when Kellerberrin was supposed to be an unsafe district. However, there is no question about the district which it is now proposed to serve by a railway.

Mr. Latham: Some day Geraldton will be one of the best agricultural ports in Western Australia.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Seven or eight years ago only 300,000 bags of wheat per annum were being exported through Geraldton, whereas now Geraldton handles 10 times as much, or 3,000,000 bags of wheat.

Mr. Hawke: Is that due to a good member or to good farmers?

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** To good farmers, good rainfall and good soil. It is an indication of what the district is like when I am able to say that in seven or eight years the wheat production has grown tenfold, or from 300,000 bags to 3,000,000 bags.

Mr. Latham: And a short railway haulage at that.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Yes, the whole extent of this proposed railway will be within 100 miles of the port, whereas in most other wheat districts agriculture only begins 70 or 80 miles from the coast.

As to something that has been said about the land and the number of people in the district, those who know anything about Western Australia and its agricultural production know that one of the peculiarities of the soil in every district is that it is patchy. The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Cunningham) when visiting the district, took a road which led him over some sand plains. That was when he was up there as a preliminary to carrying out the splendid work he did in point of water supply. He saw some excellent land, appreciated that the district was worth developing, recognised the difficulties the settlers had in regard to water supply, and arranged that some money should be expended in opening up the district. He had some bores put down and in consequence artesian water has been found in many places, which has made the problem of developing the district very much easier. But because he travelled over a road which crossed some sandplains, he may have got the idea that that was the class of land within the first few miles of the proposed railway. I went out into the district by one road and came back through a country which was dotted with farms all the way. Of course with no railway communication for 30 or 40 miles, we cannot expect people to be actively engaged in wheat production. From 50 to 100 settlers are there now clearing the land, getting ready for the production of wheat when railway communication is granted. They will then be able to go on with the development of this district and so the 3,000,000 bags of wheat going into Geraldton will be added to by another half million bags.

Mr. Lambert: Why not give them a carting subsidy instead of the railway? That is being done all over the State.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is not. It would be a hopeless proposition if we had to continue that policy in every districts. If the settlers in the district south of Southern Cross were to be asked by the hon. member if they preferred railway communication or the doubtful expedient of a carting subsidy, to transport their produce, I venture to say that 98 per cent. of them would vote for a railway.

Mr. Lambert: There is a great difference between the two proposals.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Perhaps I know the other district better than I know the Southern Cross district. I

have not said anything disparaging of any other part of the State.

Mr. Lambert: They are both entitled to a railway.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: And I hope they will both get a railway. I hope that in a few days the Government will bring down a Bill to authorise railway facilities for that part.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What about other authorised railways?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: As the member for Roebourne said, we do not want to start out on an orgy of railway construction. So long as we are making some progress, it is better than the Asquithian method of wait and see. To wait and see is an entirely different proposition from hastening slowly. So long as we are making progress, we are achieving something.

Mr. Lambert: Napoleon spoke about hastening slowly.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That quotation originated 2,000 years ago.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member had better get back to the line.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member criticised the Railway Advisory Board. For many years it has been the policy for Governments not to deal with railways, not to recommend as a party that a certain railway should be built. We have an independent tribunal constituted of representative officials who inspect the districts where it is proposed to build railways, make a thoroughly impartial and exhaustive report of the possibilities and submit the report to the House.

Mr. Lambert: I do not think you are right in saying that I criticised the Advisory Board.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member criticised the personnel of the board. How could we secure a more authoritative opinion? On the board we have the highest expert on wheat growing in the person of the Director of Agriculture. We have Mr. Camm, who, in addition to his duties as Surveyor General, is responsible for the classification of the land so that people may know the quality of the land and its productive capabilities. The third member of the board is a representative of the Railway Department.

Mr. Stubbs: An engineer?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. His duty is to formulate ideas as to

cost and to give some indication of the commercial possibilities of the proposed railway.

Mr. Lambert: Do you consider that those officials should express the railway policy of Parliament?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, but I consider we could not possibly get a more representative group to submit a report and guide Parliament on the question of constructing railways.

Mr. Lambert: We do not know what is in the report.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The report was tabled last year for every member to see. We know the opinion of the Advisory Board. I cannot see how the board could be made more representative or how it could be composed of individuals better fitted to advise us. Fortunately, I think, railway construction policy has never been a party matter. The board consists of permanent officials who are quite independent and have no axe to grind and they present a perfectly impartial report.

Mr. Hawke: Have the Advisory Board recommended other railways authorised and not yet constructed?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Some of them.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They recommended the Cranbrook railway. Why not lay the rails there?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Advisory Board have reported to Parliament and it is for Parliament to decide whether there is justification for building the railway.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The sleepers for the Cranbrook line were stacked there eight years ago and have not been used.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The board brought in a report stating that the construction of the railway was justified, and their opinion should be respected because we could not get a more competent board.

Mr. Lambert: You should have the Under-Treasurer on it to advise on the question of finance.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know whether he could advise on the agricultural possibilities of a district.

Mr. Lambert: That would not be his job.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the Minister should deal further with the composition of the board.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The member for Murchison said there might be a loss on the railway and the people of the goldfields would have to help to make good the loss. Regarding the Wiluna line, I wish to point out that the previous Labour Government and Parliament considered that there was an element of risk in constructing that railway, but we were prepared to take the risk and the action of the Government at the time has been justified by the success of the line.

Mr. Marshall: Have not other Governments taken risks regarding other lines?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. The hon. member said the mining community would have to put their hands in their pockets to help to make good any loss on this line.

Mr. Marshall: So they will.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Wiluna line would not have been constructed and the thriving town of Wiluna would not have been there had not an arrangement been made to carry goods at a loss in order to assist the mining industry.

Mr. Marshall: You have not the facts of the case when you make such a statement.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Does the hon. member know that the crude oil, that makes possible the whole of the treatment plant at Wiluna, is transported there at a loss to the Railway Department?

Mr. Marshall: Yes, and I could tell you a lot, too.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has already made a speech.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: An arrangement was made to transport to Wiluna the oil fuel necessary to generate the power to work the plant at an absolutely unremunerative rate to the department.

Mr. Marshall interjected.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The oil is carried at 50 or 60 per cent. of the average rate per ton mile for the whole system.

Mr. Lambert: Are you carrying crude oil to Kalgoorlie at the same favourable rate?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Crude oil is not carried to Kalgoorlie. The member for Murchison has the least cause to growl.

Mr. Marshall: That is not fair, because the best paying line of the system is that from Meekatharra to Wiluna.

Mr. Patrick: I do not think that is correct.

Mr. Marshall: If you use one argument, use the lot.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That statement is not correct.

Mr. Marshall: It is.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Marshall: Do not try to put that over me.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must keep order.

Mr. Marshall: He will not put that over me.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will not put it over me, either; otherwise I shall have to take action.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I wish to tell the hon. member—

Mr. Marshall: I know everything you can tell me.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We are running one train per day on the Wiluna line.

Mr. Marshall: A deliberate untruth. Nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is how rows start sometimes, and I do not want a row at this stage.

Mr. Marshall: Only three trains per week are run to Wiluna.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is one train a day each way.

Mr. Marshall: What a great argument that is and you a Minister of the Crown!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I think it is right. I do not wish to discuss the project further at this stage. I have produced sufficient reasons to justify the House in passing the authorisation. A number of members have signified their support of the proposal and I shall not labour the question further. I lay the plan on the Table.

Mr. Lambert: Is that in order after the Minister has concluded his remarks?

Mr. Marshall: After everybody has spoken?

Mr. SPEAKER: The second reading cannot be put until the plan is laid on the Table.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	29
Noes	..	..	..	10
Majority for				19

#### AYES.

Mr. Brockman	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Clotbier	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Collier	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Seward
Mr. Doney	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. J. H. Smith
Miss Holman	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Latham	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Welsh
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Willcock
Mr. J. I. Mann	Mr. Wiss
Mr. Millington	Mr. Withers
Mr. Moloney	Mr. Wilson
Mr. North	

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Cross	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Raphael

(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

*House adjourned at 10.7 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 16th August, 1933.*

	PAGE
Assent to Bill	371
Question: Trolley buses, cost	371
Temporary Chairmen of Committees	371
Return: Ministerial travelling allowances	371
Bills: Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act	
Amendment, 1A.	371
Yuna-Dartmoor Railway, 1B.	371
Financial Emergency Tax, 1A.	371
Government Tramways Act Amendment, Com.	371
York Cemeteries, Com. report	38
Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 1), 2A., Com.	381

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