

Question put and passed.
Bill read a second time.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: Report and return under Clause 64 of the Railways Act, 1904.

ADJOURNMENT—SITTING HOUR, TUESDAY.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) moved—

That the House at its rising do adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday next. It would not be convenient for a number of hon. members to attend at 2.15 p.m. on Tuesday, and as the Notice Paper would permit of the adjournment to the later hour it could be conveniently fixed for that time.

Question passed.

House adjourned at 4.45 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 27th January, 1911.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 10.30 a.m., and read prayers.

FRUIT FOR EXPORT—PRE-COOL- ING.

Mr. JACOBY (Swan): With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I desire to men-

tion a matter arising out of an answer given by the Minister for Agriculture yesterday in reply to some questions asked by me with reference to the paper prepared by Mr. Cairns which was included in the annual report of the Department of Agriculture for last year. This paper was read at the conference of the Central Fruitgrowers' Association, but that which appeared in the report of the department was not similar to the paper read before the association by Mr. Cairns. The Minister in reply to a question, as far as I can remember—I have not the Minutes before me just now—stated that the under secretary had informed him that there was no material difference in the two reports. I wish to protest against inaccurate information being supplied by the under secretary to the Minister, and to point out that the report read at the conference by Mr. Cairns was handed to the editor of the *Western Mail* and published in that newspaper without any alteration whatever, and that it occupied there 21 inches in a column $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches in width, whereas the report published in the official document covered 39 inches in columns 3 inches in width. Even if the columns of the official report had been of the same width as the columns of the *Western Mail*, the paper published in the report of the department would have been just double the length of the other. Under the circumstances I ask how could it be possible for the Under Secretary for Agriculture to truthfully inform the Minister for Agriculture that these reports were materially the same. In addition, I wish to point out that the report of Mr. Cairns omits to state certain arguments which were advanced against his proposal for pre-cooling, and as it appears now the report contains an answer to all those arguments which were put forth by the fruitgrowers at that conference; at the same time, the arguments advanced by the growers are not given. The result is that new matter is introduced, and the document is more than twice the length of the original one. Under the

circumstances I might be permitted to protest against the action of the under secretary in supplying the Minister with a statement which the Minister has, apparently in all good faith, given to the House.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. Mitchell): I would like to take the opportunity of saying that I shall have the differences in these two reports typed. I am satisfied that the under secretary did not knowingly give wrong information. I am not prepared to say that the report published in the *Western Mail* does contain the whole of the paper which was read to the conference.

Mr. Jacoby: We have evidence of that.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then the evidence can be produced. At any rate, I will have the differences typed and supply the hon. member with a copy. The hon. member, I am pleased to say, agrees that the second report is an improvement on the first, so that nothing is lost by including it in the report of the department.

BILL—ROMAN CATHOLIC LANDS.

Introduced by the Premier, and read a first time.

BILL—DWELLINGUP-HOTHAM RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Daglish) in moving the second reading said: I desire to indicate that this is a measure which, if carried, will have the effect of opening up a large area of our valuable timber lands; it will pass through timber along almost its entire length of 25 miles. There is timber growing on both sides of the line, and just before the terminus is reached it will come through the end of this timber belt, and will then serve a certain number of old settlers in one of the districts which has been populated, or partially populated and settled since the early days of Western Australia. There

can be no doubt that this line will ultimately have to be extended through the agricultural belt which, at the present time, it will only touch at the terminus, until it junctions at some spot with the Great Southern Railway. The present proposal must more largely be defined as a proposal to construct a timber line than as a proposal for an agricultural railway. It will serve a radius at the terminus of about 15 miles. The length of the proposed extension from Marrinup is about 25 miles. The line will commence at a distance from Perth of about 69 miles, the gauge will be 3ft. 6in., the rails will be 45lbs., and the sleepers 6ft. 6in. by 8in. by 4in., the ruling gradient will be one in 40. Hon. members will understand that the country which will be passed through is rather heavy country in which it would be impossible to get a better grade than this. The sharpest curve will have a radius of 12 chains. The estimated cost of the construction is £26,000, and of rails and fastenings £17,000, a total of £43,000, which works out at £1,870 per mile. The information I have received from the Lands Department with regard to this measure is that the Bill will serve an alienated area of 265,550 acres; there is reserved land there totalling 16,050 acres, and there is land available for selection totalling 208,500 acres; the total area within a 15-mile radius is 490,100 acres; the area of pastoral leases is 27,400 acres, and the number of large holdings over 1,000 acres is 17. Hon. members, I think, will be aware that only recently the railway from Pinjarra to Marrinup was completed and handed over to the Railway Department, and it was working during four months of the last financial year. During that period the total earnings amounted to £625 as against a working expenditure of £629. I quoted these figures in my general speech some two or three weeks ago. They can undoubtedly be regarded as very satisfactory for the first four months' working of a line when the industry mainly served could not be in full operation. We can safely assume that because of the valuable timber adjacent to this

line, which without the line could not possibly be worked, the railway will pay almost from the start. In November last a deputation waited on the Premier urging the construction of this line for the length now proposed, the original intention of the Government having been to recommend a 12-mile instead of this 23-mile line. This deputation was introduced by Messrs. Harper, Cowcher, O'Loughlen, and A. A. Wilson, members of the Legislative Assembly, who very strongly urged the extension of the line to the vicinity of the Hotham River, on the ground that they were convinced the line would pay from the very first and would serve a large number of settlers in the Wandering district, in addition to opening up the new areas and giving facilities requisite for the expansion of our timber industry. The year before that, a little over twelve months ago, 27 members of the Legislative Assembly by petition to the then Premier urged the continuation of the line to Marrinup. The present line had been reported upon by the advisory board, and I have also obtained certain information from the officers of the Forestry Department in regard to it. The report I have from that branch states, *inter alia*—

The timber north and south of the Marradong route is both heavy and of good quality. The large timber belt to the eastward an 15 miles on both sides of the proposed line cannot be successfully operated upon beyond the 17-mile post on the Marradong route. The Marradong route is that route immediately south of the proposed line. A new mill is about to be started by Millar's company about ten miles from Dwellingup, and Messrs. Port, Honey and Co. will probably work their area situated north of the proposed line when constructed.

Portion of the fauna and flora reserve comes within the influence of the proposed line and there is a large area of forest country, for the successful working of which this line is requisite. The present settlers at Hotham will also be served, while, to some extent the land north and east, taking in the old Albany road, will also benefit. The great bulk of our timber country adjacent to this line will,

later on, be largely utilised for fruit growing purposes. It is an undoubted fact that on the lands occupied by our good timber, excellent fruit can be profitably grown, and therefore, as portions of our forest lands are cut out we will have them occupied by orchards. I have pleasure in commending the Bill to the favourable consideration of the House and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. COWCHER (Williams): I have pleasure in supporting the Bill, and my only regret is that the line was not constructed several years ago. In the beginning it will be mainly a timber line, but the last four or five miles of its length will touch on the agricultural areas and will certainly serve old settlers who have been there for the past 40 years. Eventually this line must be continued farther on to better serve the agricultural land. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. HARPER (Beverley): As one of the deputation that waited on the Premier in regard to the extension of the line, I have pleasure in supporting the Bill. My only regret is that the line is not going quite so far as we would like to see it. It is going through the timber districts until it will border on the agricultural districts, but unfortunately there it is to stop. The proposed railway terminus is just where the country opens out into fine agricultural land; it will be on the Hotham River, and along that river is to be found very excellent land. We have been fairly successful in getting the railway extended in the direction in which it shall go, and we hope in the near future we will have it carried right up to the Hotham valley to join the Great Southern. A glance at the map, and at the returns showing how the land has been taken up, will convince anyone that it is nearly all good agricultural land. Therefore this line really will have two resources: first the serving of the timber area and, after the timber has been cut out, it will be supported by the agricultural and wheat-growing districts. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Question put and passed.
Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

Read a third time and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—BROOKTON-KUNJINN RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Daglish) in moving the second reading said: I may say this railway, if constructed, will complete the opening up of that large area of valuable agricultural land situated between the Eastern railway line on the north, the Great Southern line on the west, and the Narrogin-Merredin line on the south and south-west. There can be no doubt whatever that the area south of the Quairading line and its extension, and at present unprovided for by any railway, requires a line to serve it. Such line will serve some of our most valuable wheat-growing land. It seems to me the only possible question that might be raised in regard to this proposition is as to the starting point to be selected. The proposition I have brought forward on behalf of the Government has received the most careful consideration before being submitted for the approval of hon. members. It was first of all dealt with by the advisory board in their report of the 20th July last.

Mr. Bolton: Without a visit to the district.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the hon. member is incorrect in that. I cannot, of course, make a positive statement unless the report gives the information.

Mr. Bolton: One man only visited the district, and one man only signed the report.

Mr. Foulkes: Has the Minister got the report?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member will get the report on

the country east of the Great Southern Railway he will find the particulars in it. There is no report on this line individually. A general system of lines east of the Great Southern is dealt with in one report dated 28th July, and paragraph 8 of that report says—

The proposed line, as shown coloured red on the plan, from the Great Southern Railway, near Brookton, to the proposed Wickepin-Merredin line, near Kunjinn, 47 miles, is estimated to cost £67,000, including rails and fastenings. The area served would be 263,000 acres of which 98,000 have been alienated. In this area, of course, there is not included any land on the route within 12½ miles of the Great Southern Railway and 12½ miles of the proposed through line from Wickepin to Merredin.

The question of the starting point is there not definitely stated. Hon. members will observe that the board uses the phrase that the line should start "near Brookton," which, of course, might mean any point slightly north or slightly south.

Mr. Troy: Why is it not definite?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I repeat that the board might mean any point slightly north or slightly south, but it must mean a spot within a short distance of Brookton station. After that report had been received and laid on the Table of the House, a deputation waited on the Premier and discussed this railway and the question of route. This was an influential deputation in regard to both personnel, the local influence which it wielded in the district proposed to be served, as well as the strength of members from this House and another place who attended with it. The Premier carefully discussed this matter with the deputation, and after doing so, sent me a minute enclosing a copy of the notes taken at the deputation and saying, "I shall be glad if the advisory board could inspect this route"—that is the Mount Kokeby route—"because it seems that it would serve the greatest number of settlers." That remark was based on the representations made to the Premier by the deputation. On receiving that note, I promptly placed

myself in communication with the advisory board, to whom I sent the following memo., together with the Premier's note—"Forwarded in accordance with the promise of the Honourable the Premier for report by the board." In reply to that I received from the chairman of the advisory board, some little time later, the following:—

In reply to your memo. of 5th December, 1910, *re* commencing point of proposed railway eastward from the Great Southern line near Mount Kokeby or Brookton, the advisory board recognise that the actual commencing point of this proposal is subject to the natural contour of the country and must be definitely fixed by the engineers after survey. We recommend that alternative trial surveys be made from, say, a point south of Mount Kokeby in a south-easterly direction and also near Brookton so that the matter can be fully considered relative to costs and grades.

I sent that on to the Premier, and at the same time told him that I had given the Inspector of Engineering Surveys, Mr. Muir, instructions to proceed to the district, and make careful inquiry and examination, and to submit a recommendation.

Mr. Bolton: On New Year's Eve.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: My minute giving the information is not on the file, so I am unable to give the date. On the 15th January Mr. Muir submitted to me the following report:—

In accordance with your instructions received, I beg to report that I examined the country from Kokeby and Brookton on the Great Southern railway eastward to Kunjinn with a view of definitely fixing the commencing point of the railway recommended by the advisory board. After a careful inspection of the country, I have come to the conclusion that it would be advisable to make Brookton the commencement point of the proposed railway. A line from Mount Kokeby would certainly give better grades for a proportion of the distance, but it

would be some six miles longer, and would cost about £8,000 more than the direct easterly line; moreover, by making Brookton the starting point and going generally in an easterly direction the country as a whole is much better served, that is a larger proportion of the district would be brought within the limit fixed for the proper development of the country. I attach a plan which clearly explains the whole proposition.

Mr. Angwin: Who signed that report?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Muir, and it is dated the 15th of this month.

Mr. Angwin: If my information is correct he was never there; he could never have gone over the country in the time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think that Mr. Muir would commit himself to any recommendation without adequate inquiry. He had already been over the route, first of all with the board, and on the second occasion by himself. I have just received information that the advisory board did visit the district, and I am informed that the full strength of the board, Messrs. Paterson, Lowrie, Johnson, and Muir, inspected it.

Mr. Bolton: When?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not the date.

Mr. Bolton: In July of last year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It must have been prior to July of last year, because their report is dated July.

Mr. Bolton: A promise was made by the Premier that they should revisit that district and that promise was never carried out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the hon. member is referring to the promise of the Premier that he would again refer the matter of the starting point and route to the advisory board. As I have already told the House, that was done, with the request that they should fulfil the Premier's promise, but the board regarded this as being beyond their scope; they thought that a railway should be made, but they were not prepared to definitely fix the starting point. Mr. Muir visited the district with an

absolutely free hand, his only instruction being to consider the questions that were most important, the question of grade, length, cost, and of service to the greatest area, as well as to the largest number.

Mr. Bolton: Not the largest number of settlers.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have pointed out before when speaking of other lines, that we cannot consider only those who are already settled on the land; we must provide for the settlement that is to come, as well as for the settlement already there. We have to open up the country in order that it may be settled, and we must provide for the carrying on of operations where operations have been impossible in the past. Still keeping to this question of route, I desire to say that I have made further inquiry myself in regard to the proximity to existing or authorised lines. That is a very important point for we cannot afford to build two lines to serve the same area. The recommendations made in favour of the Mount Kokeby route, if adopted, would mean the running of the railway for a long distance within 17 miles of an existing railway, and at one point for some distance within 15 miles.

Mr. Angwin: Which existing railway?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Quairading railway.

Mr. Angwin: Look at the route drawn by Mr. Butcher on the plans.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member need not worry about that. If we started the line at Mount Kokeby and ran it more southerly away from the Quairading line, it would be almost parallel with the Great Southern. I gave no instructions as to whether that line should go almost south from Mount Kokeby, or generally in a slightly southerly and mainly easterly direction, but the representations made were in favour of the line that has been roughly indicated on the plans, and were not in favour of the line that has been roughly drawn by an hon. member in this House. The request of the advocates of Mount Kokeby was that the starting point of the proposed railway should

be either Beverley, which would bring it still nearer to the Quairading railway, or at a point not further south than Mount Kokeby, but in the representations made to the Premier I think that the request was that it should run in a general easterly direction, and the inference was that it should take an almost direct route to Kunjinn. I have had it marked on the map taking a direct route to Kunjinn. Hon. members will see how the southern trend would bring it for miles practically parallel with the Great Southern railway, and it would be worse if constructed in that particular direction than if constructed as marked on the map.

Mr. Jacoby: What is the shortest distance between the Quairading line and the proposed line?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: On the Mount Kokeby proposal the nearest distance is 15 miles. The proposed line will run, roughly, between 25 and 30 miles from the Quairading line over this whole distance. Those settlers who are alluded to as desiring the construction of the line from Mount Kokeby, are mostly settlers already adequately served by a railway; they are persons living within 15 miles, and some of them very much within 15 miles, of the Great Southern line. We are not proposing to construct this or any other line to serve those already within 15 miles of an existing line. In fact all the figures given to the House in regard to different railway Bills, exclude from consideration the land within that distance of an existing line. We regard that area, say within 15 miles of the existing Great Southern Railway, or within 15 miles of the Quairading line, or within 15 miles of the proposed Narrogin-Merredin line, as being already adequately served, and therefore it is only the intervening land which it is proposed to serve by this railway. I wish to stress this point, that the great complaint regarding this route has been raised by those already within 15 miles of an existing railway, and therefore by those for whom this railway is not intended.

Mr. Bolton: I do not think you are quite correct in regard to the County Peak settlers.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well I say "the great bulk of them." It would be absurd for me to argue that all of those who have asked for this alternative route were within 15 miles, and I would not like it to be understood as coming from me, but the great majority of them are admittedly within 15 miles of the Great Southern Railway.

Mr. Angwin: The member for the district advocated another route.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think that the views of the member for a district should be taken too much into consideration by the Government, or the House, when framing any railway proposition. The member's views should be taken into consideration only so far as they are supported by strong arguments; the mere fact that they come from the member for the district, if the arguments are weak and worthless, does not justify his expecting any consideration to be given to them. I do not propose to deal further at the present moment with the question of the route of this line, but I will ask the House to bear in mind that the policy which has been submitted by the Government and adopted by the House has been generally a policy of having lines somewhere about from 25 to 30 miles distant one from the other, so that as far as possible we may bring our settlers within a 15-mile radius of some railway to serve their purpose. This can only be effectively and satisfactorily achieved in regard to the particular locality under discussion by adopting the proposal to run the line from Brookton to Kunjin; and this connection, as I have pointed out in the report I have read from Mr. Muir, means the shortest line and the cheapest proposition as well as meaning a proposition that will serve ultimately for the more complete and thorough development of that part of our agricultural lands.

Mr. Butcher: You should not always take into consideration the shortest route.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Other things being equal, we must take into consideration length and cost.

Mr. Butcher: Things may be very unequal.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have tried to show they are equal. I have tried to show that shortness and cheapness are the culminating points of a very strong argument, to which perhaps it is unnecessary to add this further consideration. The length of the line will be 50 miles. This length must depend to some extent on the permanent survey of the Wickiepin-Merredin railway, but I have had it shown for the purpose of this railway at a length of 50 miles. The distance from Perth to the starting point, Brookton, is 118 miles; the gauge will be 3ft. 6in.; the weight of rails, 45lb.; the sleepers, 6ft. 6in. by 8in. by 4in.; the ruling grade one in 40, and the sharpest curve a 12-chain radius. The estimated cost of construction is £41,500, and of rails and fastenings £32,500, making a total of £74,000, or £1,480 per mile. The areas which will be served by this line, excluding all the land within 15 miles from the starting point, which is already served by the Great Southern line, and excluding that within 15 miles from the proposed Narrogin-Merredin line, is about 135,000 acres. The number of resident occupiers in this area is about 85; the approximate area held by them is 50,000 acres; the rainfall is a very good one, being 17 inches. The principal timbers on the land open for selection comprise patches of salmon gum, white gum, and murrell. Hon. members will notice that the cost of this line is estimated, owing to the possibility of cheaper construction, at a considerably lower amount than in the case of some other railways I have submitted to the House. As I indicated at the outset, the line is necessary, if for no other purpose, in order to complete the system of providing communication for the district between the Eastern Railway and the Great Southern Railway, and the projected Wickiepin-Merredin railway. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. HARPER (Beverley): I rise to support the second reading of this Bill. In the first place the line was recommended by the advisory board on the 29th July last.

Mr. Bolton: Not to start from Brookton.

Mr. HARPER: Yes, to start from Brookton. There was a report in the Press recommending the line to start from Brookton. That was on the 29th July last. The members of that advisory board consisted of Professor Lowrie, Mr. Paterson, Mr. Muir, and Mr. Johnson. At that time the Beverley electorate was unrepresented in Parliament. The board recommended other railways in the same report. They recommended the Wickiepin-Merredin line, and the Dumbleyung extension, and many other lines; and it is passing strange that this is the only line in the advisory board's report taken exception to.

Mr. Bolton: The advisory board have not reported on it.

Mr. HARPER: Yes, they recommended the line on the 29th July last, and at a time when Beverley was without a member of Parliament, or without representation. I warn members who may oppose this line that there is a large number of settlers from the goldfields in the Landscape district.

Mr. Angwin: The settlers are opposed to this line.

Mr. HARPER: They were promised a railway some four years ago. At any rate, I understand it was marked on the agricultural plan that there was a proposed line, and, owing to the prosperity of the agricultural districts, the line has been put out further every year, so that the people in the Landscape district and round about there took up land in good faith thinking they would have a railway within 30 miles of them. I introduced a deputation to the Premier some months ago, and the only persons who had a right on that deputation were those from the back blocks districts. There was certainly one from Beverley on that deputation, but he had no right to be on an agricultural deputation. It was only from a business point of view that he wanted the railway to go to Beverley. It does not matter much to me where the railway starts from, so long as we get it, and that was the opinion of all on that deputation. They wanted the railway, and that it should go far

enough south. That was the main object in supporting Mt. Kokeby, but the advisory board recommended it should go from Brookton. The people do not want the Bill pigeon-holed for the sake of arguing as to which should be the starting point. Before I was a member of the House the advisory board recommended this route, and I think in fairness to the people who took up the land, and in fairness to the advisory board, this route should be accepted. It seems to me very singular indeed that members on both sides of the House have accepted the recommendation of the advisory board on nearly every other railway, some eight or nine of them, and this is the only exception.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. Bolton: Where is the report of the advisory board?

Mr. HARPER: It was on the Table of the House for months. The board went over the country frequently, and they know it from one end to the other.

Mr. Bolton: They never reported on it.

Mr. HARPER: For the sake of the member for North Fremantle, I would mention that there are many of these settlers who are struggling, and they have the land in that state of preparation now that they are ready to grow wheat or any crop provided they can get the facilities to get their produce to market. They are hard-working and honest settlers struggling their best to make ends meet, and it will be a great injustice to them if this railway is pigeon-holed. To appoint a select committee means, as the Minister for Works said in regard to the Wongan Hills-Mullewa Railway Bill, defeating the railway. Members might just as well oppose the measure altogether as to ask for a select committee. The Premier in his speech on the Wongan Hills-Mullewa Railway Bill said that delays were dangerous and procrastination fatal. It would be certainly both fatal and dangerous if this Bill is not carried through during this Parliament.

Mr. Collier: Dangerous to whom?

Mr. HARPER: To the people I represent. They are deserving of some con-

sideration as well as other parts of Western Australia. They are pioneers, and many of them have been a long time on the land, and it would be a great injustice to them. If members of the Opposition knew the conditions as well as I do they would not oppose the line.

Mr. Holman: Is the information on the plan correct?

Mr. HARPER: Yes, and the Minister for Works has given a far bigger radius than the plan will bear out, because the plan will not bear out more than a 25-mile distance between the Quairading line and this line to Kunjinn. The line is to go to Kunjinn; there is no other point unless at a great increase of distance and cost; and, therefore, Kunjinn being settled on as the terminus, the question is as to whether the starting point should be Brookton or Mount Kokeby. Those from Mount Kokeby who had the most to say about having the starting point at Mount Kokeby are within 10 miles of the Great Southern Railway. I know this is a positive fact; and I have no sympathy with people who try to defeat a railway for their own personal gain and ends. I have worked for this railway honestly and fairly, and it is a fair request that the Government should construct the line. I am sorry to see members in opposition to it. If they knew the country as well as I do, and the bad roads the people have to contend with, and their hardships, and the way they are struggling to get ahead, they would not oppose it; but they are prepared to accept the selfish statements of one or two men who because they are 10 miles from a railway, want to be four miles from a railway. That is their object; they have no respect for the people to the south. There are people to the south as well as people to the north. Between the two lines there will not be more than 24 miles, so that no one to the north can say he is outside a decent radius. We cannot all have railways to our back doors. This railway should be built. If it is defeated now it will be defeated for years. The other day we noticed in the paper what Mr. Fowler had to say in regard to our railways if we go in for Unification, or if the referenda are carried and the Commonwealth gets

control of the railways. We will not then be able to get any railways built, because we know what a long distance we are away from the Federal seat of Government. It would be a great invasion of our public rights which I hope the people of Western Australia will not support. I do not want to say any more. The Minister for Works has given all the statistics in connection with the project and I hope hon. members will deal as fairly and as reasonably with the Bill as they have done with the others.

Mr. Bolton: It is not a fair Bill.

Mr. Harper: It is a fair Bill, and everything connected with it is perfectly square and above board. It is a fair and equitable proposition, and it should be carried. I do not want to see the Bill defeated and I hope members will see the fairness of the request and support the second reading.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): I can discuss this Bill without bias. I have no land in the district, and I have not been in the district in which it is proposed to construct this railway; but we cannot get away from the fact that there is a good deal of opposition to the line on the part of the settlers. When that is the case I hold that further inquiries should be made. We are in the unfortunate position of being unable to secure the services of surveyors or draftsmen to carry out the various works required in connection with the constructive policy of this Parliament, I will not say Government, and I want to point out that even if we allow this matter to stand over until next session no delay will be caused, because the hundreds of miles of railway which have already been approved would be more than sufficient to keep all the staff which the Government have at present busily engaged in the preparation of plans. The member for the district pointed out that if this matter was referred to a select committee it would mean delay, but I want to say that according to some of those who reside in that district, and who have been residents there for some years, they would rather see this Bill defeated than see it carried

out as proposed at present, namely, with its junction at Brookton. The dissatisfaction which exists must be very keen indeed. We realise that in a large number of the propositions which have been brought before this House, while those who live in the locality benefit by such propositions, and while it is necessary, in their opinion, that railway lines should be constructed in certain directions, there are many who would rather see the lines built even if they did start from another point. In this case the opposition is so keen that the people would rather have the line defeated at this juncture than have it carried as the Government propose. We have been told that the advisory board recommended that this railway should be constructed from Brookton. The member for Beverley stated this was done before he became member for that locality. I find in the first week in November the hon. member introduced a deputation to the Premier regarding this question, and he pointed out that the railway should run from somewhere in the vicinity of Mount Kokeby, and that he saw from the report of the advisory board that such a work would cost about £47,000. If the hon. member saw that report it must have favoured the starting point as somewhere in the vicinity of Mount Kokeby. To-day the hon. member states that the advisory board recommended the line to start from Brookton, and that there was a possibility of going even further south. If there has been a report from the advisory board with regard to Brookton, either the report which appeared in the *West Australian* in November last must be wrong, or the advisory board must have visited that district and again reported since November last.

The Minister for Works: If the advisory board contemplated Mount Kokeby they could not have quoted the length of the line as 47 miles, which is the distance from Brookton to Kunjinn.

Mr. ANGWIN: We find that an influential deputation waited on the Premier during Show week. At that time the Premier led the deputation to believe that he would send the advisory board down for the purpose of going over this dis-

trict and ascertaining the exact position, and he expressed the hope that the deputation which waited on him and the people there would be satisfied with the result of the inquiries, and that the decision which would be arrived at by the board would be accepted. What do we find? Instead of the advisory board going there as the Premier led the deputation to believe they would do, the Minister for Works sent one member only of the advisory board to the district. According to my information that member arrived at Beverley on the 31st December, and on the 1st January he spent the day in Beverley and met several of those people who are interested in the line, had a conversation regarding the matter, and on the 2nd January he took his departure from Beverley to Mount Kokeby, Brookton, and Kunjinn. It is supposed that this officer made a thorough inspection of this country for the purpose of guiding the Minister when introducing the Bill, but as Kunjinn is 50 miles away, and as he only left Beverley on the Monday and returned on the Wednesday, I do not see how it is possible for this officer to have made anything like an inspection of the country. This is the information I have, the accuracy of which has been vouched for by several gentlemen who are residents in the district. What time could this officer have devoted to an inspection of the country? If the facts I have given are correct it is certainly necessary that members should give the matter further consideration. I do not know the country, but those who reside there say that the best area to construct this railway through is the country which would have Mount Kokeby as its starting point, right through the valley, following the river out as far as Kunjinn. There is a sketch on the plan hanging on the wall of the Chamber which has been made by an hon. member who knows the country well, and that member endorses the statements made by the other gentlemen who have been there during the past week, advocating justice for the settlers in the district. I think the Government should postpone the consideration of this Bill until next

session. No delay will take place, and the railway will be constructed equally as soon by introducing the Bill next session because of the inability to secure the services of officers to do the work; then it would be possible to make due inquiries and satisfaction would follow. There is some justification for the statement made by the member for Beverley that referring this Bill to a select committee will in all probability mean that the Bill will not be dealt with this session, because if the report which appeared in the *West Australian* is correct the Premier intends to close down next week. At the same time let us not get away from the fact that it will be far better to put off the construction of a railway like this than to build a line which will not serve a useful purpose. That is the position.

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

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Mr. ANGWIN: The statement of the Minister for Works that the railway from Brookton to Kunjinu would be the means of saving several thousands of pounds is no argument when we take into consideration the question of construction. Cheap railways might prove costly, and for that reason I hope the argument will have no bearing whatever on hon. members in considering this question. There is one matter I wish to refer to, and I would not have touched upon it if the point had not been raised by the member for the district. I do not think in discussing a question of this kind we should take into consideration who is or who is not going to be benefited by the construction of the line, and I regret that in dealing with this question the member for the district should have drawn attention to the alleged fact that those who are dissatisfied with the proposal of the Government are those who cannot get this railway to their own back yards. I maintain it is unfair criticism of the electors in that district who sent that hon. member to the House. No doubt human nature is strong and sometimes it manifests itself in discussing a question of

this kind, while self-interest goes a long way in deciding the point at issue.

Mr. Harper: I said that everyone could not expect to get the railway to his back yard.

Mr. ANGWIN: I agree that the hon. member said that, but he also said the dissatisfaction came from those who could not get a railway to their own back yards. I think it comes with bad taste from the member for the district, more particularly as the proposal now before us will put a railway to his own back yard. I want the best done for the district, and I believe the Government will try to do the best for the district; but the implied promise of the Premier that the advisory board should again visit the district has not yet been carried out. I think the Bill should be referred to a select committee, and at the proper time I propose to move in that direction.

Mr. BUTCHER (Gasecoyne): I do not wish to have laid at my door the charge of having opposed an agricultural railway, but if delay in a matter of this kind means defeat I am afraid I shall be half inclined to support it, even at the risk of incurring the wrath of the member for Beverley. I know a good deal about this district, having been interested in it long before the member for Beverley was elected, and all the representations made to me by residents of the district go to show that the railway should not go off from Brookton, but from a point near Mt. Kokeby, further up towards Beverley. I do not advocate Beverley, because that is too far up. One argument in favour of carrying the line to Mt. Kokeby is that by so doing you are leading towards the market all the time and so shortening the distance, whereas in this proposal the reverse obtains. The Premier says that all the land is within a 12½ miles radius, but he forgets that the distance from the one spur line to the other is over 40 miles. This is due to the fact that on the other spur line we go off in a southerly direction and not at right angles to the Great Southern line as in this case. If this is necessary I say it is only fair that

we should be consistent and run all our spur lines at right angles.

The Premier: This line brings the whole area within 12½ miles of some railway.

Mr. BUTCHER: From the other spur line we go 40 miles before starting this line, and then we go off at almost right angles which brings us within the ten-mile radius. If we started off from Mt. Kokeby and traversed a little to the southward we would serve a large body of people who will never be served if the line goes from Brookton, while the people specially to be served by the Brookton line would still be served by the Kokeby line.

The Minister for Works: How far would you be off the Great Southern?

Mr. BUTCHER: How far are we off the Great Southern now?

The Minister for Works: We are running at right angles off it.

Mr. BUTCHER: But why adopt that as a principle now? None of the other lines go off at right angles. The object of the line should be to serve as many as possible. If you go off at Mt. Kokeby you do this, but not if you go off at Brookton. The Mt. Kokeby project is only six miles longer. From what I know of the country I am inclined to support the referring of the Bill to a select committee.

Mr. BOLTON (North Fremantle): Probably for the first time I am going to oppose the construction of an agricultural railway. If I were convinced that this had had proper inquiry, and that the people who are resident and who advocate that the starting point should be Mt. Kokeby were satisfied with this I would not raise my voice against the railway. If I felt I could not support the railway after due inquiry had been made I would resume my seat without any further remarks. So convinced am I that the Government are committing an error in making Brookton the starting point, that if it is resolved to send the Bill to a select committee and the reports from that committee and from the advisory board are favourable to the line I pledge myself to support the building of the railway, even though it starts from Brookton. So convinced am I that this is a genuine request

from the settlers who will not be served if the line starts from Brookton that I intend to support the proposal that the Bill be referred to a select committee. I have been in that district and have come into close contact with the settlers affected by this line, a great many of whom have visited the city within the last few days. I do not claim to have such knowledge of the country as is possessed by the member for York, but he should be at least sensible enough to give credit to others for knowing something about it. The arguments put forward by the member for the district mainly ranged round the report of the advisory board dated 29th July of last year. I almost expected to be called to order so frequently did I interject that no report had been made by the advisory board in respect to this railway. I repeat now that no report has been made by the advisory board in respect to this railway from Brookton to Kunjinn. The hon. member heard my interjections but took no notice of them. The report I have before me starts and finishes in much the same tone. I do not want to occupy much time, because my desire is to see the Bill referred to a select committee; but the report begins this way—

We beg to report on the question of railway extension to open up the country lying between the Eastern goldfields and the Great Southern, and extending east approximately to the longitude of Merredin and south to the latitude of Narrogin. We are satisfied there are large tracts of first-class land suitable for wheat growing within this area.

I have read every word of the report and no mention is made of either the Brookton to Kunjinn line or the Mt. Kokeby to Kunjinn line. The board were asked to report on the quality of the land in this particular district, and only upon the quality of the land and the possibility of giving railway communication to that land if it were found warranted. The report is genuine enough, but to say that the advisory board recommended the starting point should be from Brookton is going beyond plain truth.

The Premier: They said a point near to it.

Mr. BOLTON: The general expression was given that in providing a railway in that part of the country it should be somewhere out from Brookton or somewhere out from somewhere else; and when the deputation waited on the Premier and put the case sufficiently strongly before him he promised that the advisory board should visit the district, not only the Kokeby district but should visit both Brookton and Kokeby and travel from each of those centres to Kunjinn. If the question of route was to be discussed and decided by the advisory board it was only to be expected that they would traverse both routes. Had the advisory board visited that district I am prepared to say members would have accepted their report as they have on no fewer than nine railways passed through the Chamber. Not a word has been advanced against the advice and report of that board. This is the only railway put before members without that report. Why? Is it that it would be asking the board too much—would it be shady to ask the advisory board to report on this proposal because they would not perhaps be as sweet on it as are the Government? There is some reason for not having the report of that advisory board, and their report is due to members of the Chamber. As for the appointment of a select committee causing delay, there must be a session within the next twelve months, and in any case the first sleeper will not be laid within that time; because we cannot accept the statement that the Government will start each of these several railways between this and next year. I say the select committee would almost finish their duties by recommending that the advisory board should visit the district and go over the routes both of Kokeby and Brookton and report to the House. The select committee would have done good work if they had done that alone. Then, when Parliament again sits that railway would be consented to, I believe, with practically no discussion at all, because of the fact that the advisory board, gentleman whose integrity has never been impeached or questioned by members of this Chamber, would have made a report. I ask for the report of that board before

I can declare my vote. I know that it cannot be brought forward because they have not visited the district.

The Premier: Of course they have.

Mr. BOLTON: The advisory board have not visited the district to report on this railway.

The Premier: They have visited the district.

Mr. BOLTON: I repeat once more, that the advisory board have never visited that district to report on a Brookton-Kunjinn or Mount Kokeby-Kunjinn railway, and all the interjections of the Premier will not divert me from that statement. Yet the settlers who waited on the Premier were given to understand that the board would visit the district, and it came as a thunderclap when they saw amongst the Orders of the Day for Parliament a Bill for a railway from Brookton to Kunjinn, when they had been led to believe that their member, Mr. Harper, had been working to have an independent report made by the board as to the two routes, and they even went so far as to include Beverley. They were evidently misled, because on New Year's Eve Mr. Muir, not in the capacity of a member of the board, but as the Inspector of Engineering Surveys, visited the district to investigate the contour of the land, and for that alone. He did that, and whilst I have no doubt that Mr. Muir could go over the district very much quicker than members of this Parliament or any other layman, I shall never believe that it would be possible for him to go over the route from Mount Kokeby to Kunjinn or Brookton to Kunjinn in the course of three days; neither do I believe for a moment that he was asked to do so. I believe all that was wanted was to find the starting point from Brookton or Mount Kokeby, and the starting points only were visited by Mr. Muir. But if that was sufficient for the department, it should not be thought sufficient for all of us. With regard to every railway proposal that has been submitted to Parliament this session there has been a report by the advisory board, with this one exception, and are we to be asked to

swallow the proposal when, possibly, the board cannot report favourably on it? It has been argued by the Minister for Works that the people are already served by the York-Quairading line, but a very cute and cunning measurement has been put on the plan in this Chamber, taken from the nearest point of a little elbow that dips four or five miles—not running at the angle of the Great Southern line, but going directly down, and working towards the railway—in order to make the distance 15 miles between that and the proposed railway. It would be very much fairer to say that the distance between the two railways would be 20 miles, but the Minister for Works stated that we might take it at 17 miles, with that one exception. The settlers at Bally Bally and County Peak have never been able to cart to the Quairading line; they must cart into Mount Kokeby, and yet it is contended that they are within 12½ miles of the Quairading line; it is impossible for them to cart to Quairading.

Mr. Monger: There is no need for it; they have a closer station.

Mr. BOLTON: What is the closer station?

Mr. Monger: Beverley or Mount Kokeby.

Mr. BOLTON: Is County Peak 10 miles from Mount Kokeby? County Peak averages nearly 30 bushels—it is there where the good land is—and it is not 10 miles but 22 miles in some places from the railway, and last year the settlers had to cart their wheat 30 miles or more. Those people, I admit, are in some instances within 10 miles of the Quairading line, but, as I said before, they cannot get to that line, and unless this railway starts from Mount Kokeby these people never can be served by a railway. Once the line is built it would be madness to suggest another line running between the Quairading and Brookton railways. What is the object of this railway? To reach Kunjinn, a settlement that is sure to go ahead very fast, and is it not better to take the route which will serve more settlers than to take it through an area with less settlers? Where does the difficulty come in. The report by Mr. Muir said that Mount Kokeby route would

serve the most settlers. but that the Brookton route would serve the largest area. What of? Not first class land. If every acre of the Brookton land was first class, and could be put under crop, it could be said that the land would be taken up all the way from Brookton to Kunjinn, and would lead to greater settlement than would the line from Mount Kokeby to Kunjinn. It is said that we cannot study the settlers already there, but they have struggled on for years, they have been carting their wheat long distances, and the profits on their undertakings have been very small compared with the profits made by settlers in other districts. A great portion of the land is not taken up, because it is realised that only people with capital can deal with the land at County Peak. McLean Brothers and the McCooks, and other people with means are the only persons who can afford to take up this land.

Mr. Monger: What about the Forrests?

Mr. BOLTON: They do not cart into Mount Kokeby.

Mr. Harper: Then where do they cart to?

Mr. BOLTON: They may cart to Brookton or to Beverley for all I know, but they do not cart to Mount Kokeby. In any case they are not in a big way in that district, but if they were successfully farming in a big way there, that would only add strength to my argument that only people with money can do it. That land is not taken up as the Minister for Works stated. The member for the district must admit that the arguments in favour of a reasonable delay in the construction of this line, not the shelving of it altogether, are worthy of some consideration. It is all very well to say that certain settlers are served by a railway. The hon. member's property is only nine miles from Brookton, and he will not consider that that is outside a fair carting distance. If the line is built it will only be 1½ miles from his place, and is it to be argued that the line should not go from Brookton because the hon. member's land is already within a short distance? That argument should not be used by the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: I said we should not build lines for people within a 15-mile radius.

Mr. BOLTON: The difficulty is that in building out from a trunk line every settler for the first 15 miles is already served by that trunk line, and what is the good of our advancing that argument in regard to this line when it is forgotten in connection with others? In building a spur line we are bound to go over country that is already served for the first 15 miles, yet it is used as an argument now that the settlers who were complaining that they could not have the railway to their back doors, were already served because they had only 15 miles to cart to Mount Kokeby. It must not be forgotten that the railway is being built to serve Kunjinn.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: It will be served by the other railway as well.

Mr. BOLTON: Yes; I say that Kunjinn will be served by a line coming from Mount Kokeby. I have already pointed out that if we run the line from Brookton to Kunjinn, the settlers within the first 15 miles are already served; the same would be the case with a line from Mount Kokeby to Kunjinn, but the line would come in touch with more settlers from that point onward to Kunjinn, and there would be a better prospect of making it pay in the near future than there would be with a line from Brookton. Practically every acre between Mount Kokeby and Kunjinn is first class land, and could be put under crop within the first two years.

Mr. Foulkes: Do you say that it is not first class land between Brookton and Kunjinn?

Mr. BOLTON: Not having visited the district I am not able to say of my own knowledge whether it is good or not, but if I take the views of men who are settled on that country I am bound to say that it is not in it with the Mount Kokeby route. To show my fairness, I am almost prepared to ask the hon. member who knows the district, if he is game to stake his reputation that the land from Brookton to Kunjinn is equal to the land from Mount Kokeby to Kunjinn. But in any

case I do not believe that we should always run the line through the best country; the best country can look after itself, it is the poorer class of country that wants the assistance of a railway.

The Minister for Works: That is the point.

Mr. BOLTON: That is the point, but the Minister always argues that a railway will serve so much first class land. Admitting that the first 15 miles from the Great Southern railway, whether along the Mount Kokeby or Brookton route is already served, irrespective of whether it be good or bad country, I say there will be a larger area under crop and a greater increase in the first 24 months if the line is taken from Mount Kokeby to Kunjinn than there can ever be if the line is made between Brookton and Kunjinn. If the reference of this Bill to a select committee meant that this line would never be built I would not vote for the appointment of the committee. If a select committee were appointed to go into this question they need have but one sitting, and that sitting should be to recommend that the advisory board visit the district, go over the route from Mount Kokeby to Kunjinn, and from Brookton to Kunjinn and make a report and submit it to the House. Where is the delay in that? The select committee can report, and the advisory board can visit the district and make a report to submit to the House.

Mr. Angwin: That means two sittings.

Mr. BOLTON: Well they can do it in two following days. It is not that the Committee cannot report. The objection to a committee is that there will not be time to report, and the matter will lapse, but I undertake to say that members who would go on the select committee would pledge themselves to report. For my part, if I can be shown a report by the advisory board as to the two routes, I will support whatever route the advisory board advocate; but there has been no report; and fair minded members, whether they know the district or not, must admit that a little delay is justified, and that a report from the advisory board is absolutely necessary. Are we expected to take

the word of the Minister when the Minister probably knows nothing about it?

The Premier: Of course you should always take the Minister's word.

Mr. BOLTON: Unfortunately the rules of the House often make us take his word. But what does the Minister for Works know about practical railway building? Only what he gets from his responsible officers.

The Minister for Works: What do you know about it?

Mr. BOLTON: Nothing; the same as the hon. member; we are equal.

The Minister for Works: No, we are not.

Mr. BOLTON: We are not equal in some things, but the Minister does not know anything about practical railway building, and neither do I—just to keep the Minister calm. He gets his information from his responsible officers, and if we accept it that he receives his information from his responsible officers, is it not fair that we should ask that the Minister should produce the report of the advisory board? I ask whether the advisory board recommended this route from Brookton or Mount Kokeby? They cannot have done so. If we accept the Minister's word as representing the advice of his responsible officers, so we should get it from his responsible officers in this regard. I mean to say the advisory board should give us a report as to which is the best route for building this line in the interests of the State. I am prepared every time to accept the word of the man who is on the spot and who is working on the spot. I must do so.

Mr. Heitmann: The trouble is they are working on the two spots.

Mr. BOLTON: But we have heard not one word in advocacy of the Brookton proposition from the Brookton-Kunjinn people, whereas the Mount Kokeby people have been five years asking for a railway. In fact the Brookton people were intensely surprised when they found they were going to have a railway starting from Brookton. There has been no battle of routes between the Brookton people and the Mount Kokeby people. The Brookton people have not asked for the

railway, and they have not refuted the statements of the Mount Kokeby people, because they are prepared to accept them, knowing them to be just and fair. The Minister said that if this line was dipped south from Mount Kokeby it would run nearly parallel to the Great Southern Railway, but members can examine the map for themselves. If the railway is to touch anywhere near Kunjinn, how can it be possible; or how can it be possible if they want it to go even further south? No one would be foolish enough to advocate building a line running parallel to the Great Southern. The Minister must not take it that hon. members are babies.

The Minister for Works: But it would run too close to the Quairading line; it would be within 15 miles.

Mr. BOLTON: I admit it. I have explained how it comes about that it would run within 15 miles at one point, the little closest point on the sharpest elbow. We do not know what shape a line will take when we pass it. If we knew that a line was to be run through certain blocks and in certain directions, there would be considerable criticism in discussing the proposal. We pass a line to run straight through the country and suddenly discover after it has been sanctioned that it does not run straight, but dips in one direction.

Mr. Heitmann: That is allowed for in the deviation.

Mr. BOLTON: That is not a deviation, to dip away to the extent of five miles. The deviation is allowed only for running from point to point. Now, is it fair to make a measurement from the bottom corner of that particular line, the Quairading line, that does not run in the same direction as the Great Southern, but is a line running in an entirely different direction, and say that, because the Quairading line at this point would be within 15 miles of the Mount Kokeby-Kunjinn route, the whole route is within 15 miles of the Quairading line? It is not within 20 miles if we take the Quairading line generally. The starting point of the Quairading line is 40 miles from Brookton. Can we reasonably expect when we construct railways so far apart

as their starting points that they will come within 15 miles of one another? No; it is only at one spot that these lines come close together.

Mr. HEITMANN: But these people you speak of are served by the trunk line.

Mr. BOLTON: This railway is expected to be 50 miles in length. I have said already that, starting either from Brookton or Mount Kokeby, the people within 15 miles of the trunk line are already served; and I do not take them into consideration: but if the line goes from Brookton those people beyond 15 miles from the Great Southern railway in the district I have mentioned will never get a railway; because as these two railways are already 40 miles apart at the starting point, no one would suggest building another railway between the two, especially as they have a tendency to dip towards one another.

Mr. HEITMANN: What distance are they apart 12 miles out from the Great Southern line?

Mr. BOLTON: I should imagine they would be 25 miles.

Mr. HEITMANN: That is a radius of only twelve and a half miles, and you say the other people are already served by the trunk line.

Mr. HARPER: They are only 12 miles from a line.

Mr. BOLTON: The hon. member's statement shows what reliance can be placed on his figures. The very measurements make the hon. member look absolutely ridiculous. With the starting points 40 miles apart it would be impossible for the people 12 miles out from the trunk line to come within 12 miles of either railway. I trust members will not agree to the railway until the advisory board have reported on the two routes. I raised a protest in regard to another railway where no information was tabled; and if members pass this railway without a report from the advisory board any member of this Ministry, or of any other Ministry, can introduce a railway Bill with members to carry it without any report from a responsible authority, and pass it although

it may be an absolute job in the true meaning of the word. The reports of the advisory board have been received with such respect by all members of the Chamber that it would be safely left to them. Therefore, though I oppose the line being built from Brookton, believing that the advisory board should report on the proposition, I would be prepared to support a line running from Brookton if I could get the advisory board to visit the district and if, after reporting on the two routes, they still recommend Brookton as the starting point. The matter has been practically promised by the Premier, although I do not think he has had the opportunity of carrying it out. I desire to give him the opportunity of carrying out the promise he made to the deputation. If he cannot do it in time to pass this Bill, he should at least agree that, in order to carry out his promise, time should be given to the advisory board to visit the district.

Mr. HARPER (in explanation): The hon. member has said that the Brookton people and the people to the east have not shown any interest in this railway; but the people on whose behalf I speak left it entirely to the advisory board; and now that they find the Beverley people at the eleventh hour taking a strong hand in opposing the railway, and even ill-enough disposed to say they would rather see the Bill lost than carried, I have received a sheaf of wires from these people to the east of Brookton and all over the district strongly resenting the action of the Beverley people and those people with whom the member for North Fremantle seems to have become acquainted. I am sorry the hon. member has not made the acquaintance of the Landscape people and others out in that direction. If he had formed such valuable associations with them as he has with the County Peak people he would not have opposed this railway.

Mr. HOLMAN: Is the hon. member in order in quoting wires by way of explanation?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member rose in explanation as he is entitled to do but he is wide in his remarks.

Mr. HARPER: I have wires to show that the people alluded to by the member for North Fremantle strongly resent any private individual action in this case. They left it entirely in good faith to the advisory board, though they had been promised a railway for years, but as they feel there is personal influence being brought to bear, they strongly resent it as shown in these wires. That is all I wish to say.

Mr. FOULKES (Claremont): I attach the greatest importance to the reports of the advisory board. We can all agree on this point that it is a great pity we did not have these advisory boards appointed years ago with regard to the routes to be adopted in serving various districts recently supplied with railways. I have read the present report with the greatest care. Unfortunately it does not seem so definite as one would like the advisory board's report to be. In some cases they never hesitate to express their opinions. For instance they express in very strong terms the opinion that the proposed line from Wagin to Darkan was not warranted, and the Government had the good sense to drop the proposal.

The Premier: It is not dropped.

Mr. FOULKES: I hope it will be if one attaches any importance to the advisory board's report.

The Premier: We will deal with that in good time.

Mr. Holman: This is an important matter, and we are receiving good information. I desire to draw attention to the state of the House with four members on the Government side.

Mr. Heitmann: And three on this.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is the second time to-day that attention has been drawn to the absence of a quorum in the Chamber. If the matter is mentioned again I might say I will not put the question if I am satisfied that hon. members are within the precincts of the Chamber. Some notice must be taken of the weather conditions.

Mr. ANGWIN: Will you be good enough to inform me, Mr. Speaker, what Standing Order guides you in coming to that decision in regard to a quorum?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the Standing Order relating to a quorum is well known. If the Speaker is satisfied that there is a quorum within the precincts of the House he is justified in saying so to the House.

Mr. FOULKES: As I was saying, it would appear from this report that instructions were given to the advisory board regarding inspections on the eastern side of the Great Southern Railway, and the board seems to have dealt generally with the subject. They say—

We are satisfied that there are large tracts of first class land suitable for wheat growing within this area, which cannot possibly be exploited without railway facilities, and we suggest the accompanying scheme of railway extension to meet the case.

From that I take it the board recommend the construction of this line from Brookton to Kunjinn. Unfortunately they omitted to set out the class of land that exists between those two places, but the whole scheme of railway construction seems to have been suggested by them. They suggest Wickiepin to Merredin, and also another loop from Wickiepin to Kurrenkutton via Kulin, then also the Quairading extension eastward to junction with the proposed Wickiepin-Merredin line, and that these railways should take precedence over others. I have only risen to say that in the face of the report of the advisory board—and it seems to me a recommendation—if we are to attach any importance to the recommendation it is difficult to ignore it. All the same I should be glad to have seen a better description given of the country existing between these two places. Unfortunately no information has been given with regard to the character of the country there. The Minister for Works stated that the best plan was to construct railways through poor country. I do not know whether he was speaking seriously, but that is the construction I put upon it.

Mr. Heitmann: If poor land could be used profitably would you not construct a railway through it?

Mr. FOULKES: It remains to be proved whether poor land can be used profitably. Having regard to this report of the advisory board I do not see how we

can shut our eyes to the fact that the board definitely recommended that this railway should be constructed from Brookton to Kunjin, and the report is signed by Messrs. Paterson, Johnson, Lowrie and Muir. All the same I consider that the time has arrived when fuller reports should be given by the advisory board with regard to these projects. I suppose the board did not have much time to prepare reports, at any rate, this report does not give sufficient information. I have, however, sufficient confidence in Messrs. Lowrie and Paterson to lead me to support the construction of this particular line. With regard to Mount Kokeby, I know that Messrs. Paterson and Lowrie are familiar with that country, and if they thought that the line should have gone from there I am sure they would have recommended that the starting point should have been at that place.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson): I cannot help thinking that some hon. members who have addressed themselves to the subject of this Bill, and railway construction works generally, have not grasped what the advisory board were really appointed for. The advisory board were appointed nine months ago in order to advise the Government as to the further extension of agricultural railways throughout the agricultural areas. It was never intended that the board should take upon themselves the duties of classification officers; it would be impossible for them to give the necessary time to carry out that duty effectively. Their duty was to traverse the country generally and see as much of it as they could in their journeyings and get generally an idea of its value for agricultural purposes, and recommend generally the route for a railway which would serve the district they were passing through. The ultimate classification of the land is left to the officers of the Lands Department, who follow the advisory board. They make a survey and classify closely, as has been done for some time past. The starting point, in many instances, has been definitely recommended by the advisory board, but in other instances the advisory board have

not bound themselves down, to any great extent, with regard to the exact starting point of an agricultural railway. They have generally indicated it, and in this instance, they have suggested that the line should commence at a point somewhere near Brookton. Hon. members have made a great point of the fact that these lines are being projected to serve certain other hon. members or, perhaps, individuals, and that everyone is endeavouring to get a railway to his or her back door, as the case may be. I want to point out that it is the policy of the Government to bring the railway system of this State as near to the back door of every settler as possible. We cannot take the line to every settler's back door, but we are endeavouring to bring every settler within 15 miles of the railway system, that being considered the legitimate limit for the profitable carting of wheat and for produce. In this instance the advisory board was asked to report on the lands between the Eastern Goldfields railway and the Great Southern Railway, and extending east approximately to the longitude of Merredin and south to the latitude of Narrogin. My original request was that they should examine the lands to the east of the Great Southern railway and south of the Eastern railway, right down as far as Stirling Range, and that they should recommend to the Government what further railway extensions, other than those to which the Government were committed as part of their policy, should be undertaken to best serve the settlers. This is the report—

We beg to report on the question of railway extension to open up the country lying between the Eastern Goldfields Railway and the Great Southern Railway and extending east approximately to the longitude of Merredin and south to the latitude of Narrogin.

And attached to that report is a sketch plan showing the several railways. The red lines on the plan clearly indicate that the advisory board have examined that country, and I know from my own personal knowledge that they did it well and effectively, and they recognise that these railways should be constructed there or

thereabouts. It is idle for the member for North Fremantle to say that there is no report from the advisory board and that they have never visited this district. He is trying to mislead the House.

Mr. Bolton: I never said so, and I never said the advisory board had not visited the district. I said there was no report from the advisory board as to the railway between Brookton and Kunjinn, or from Mt. Kokeby to Kunjinn.

The PREMIER: I say there is a report from the advisory board, and I have just proved it. They examined this country and examined it effectively, and they attached a plan to their report, and they recommended that this line should start from a point near Brookton to where Kunjinn is situated.

Mr. Bolton: Where is Brookton?

The PREMIER: It is shown on the maps at the end of the line.

Mr. Bolton: Who said so?

The PREMIER: I say so, and if the hon. member will remain quiet he will soon be satisfied. Then the advisory board proceed in their second paragraph to state—

We are satisfied that there are large tracts of first class land suitable for wheat growing within this area.

That is this area between the Eastern goldfields railway and the Great Southern railway, and extending approximately to the longitude of Merredin and south to the latitude of Narrogin, embracing Mt. Kokeby. Then they go on—

We are satisfied that there are large tracts of first class land suitable for wheat growing within this area, which cannot possibly be exploited without railway facilities, and we suggest the accompanying scheme of railway extension to meet the case.

What is the scheme? It is attached to the report, and there is no suggestion that this line should be built from any other place but Brookton. They go on—

In mapping out approximate route, as marked in this scheme, we have endeavoured to place such routes as nearly as practicable 25 miles apart, as it is our contention that 25 miles will be found a desirable maximum to be

adhered to as closely as possible, only to be modified of course by such circumstances as the contour of the country or capacity of the land.

You could not have anything clearer than that. Now paragraph 3 reads—

In this scheme suggested we have not altogether succeeded in defining routes so that no selection shall be further than 12½ or 13 miles from a railway line, for the reason that the existing lines, and especially existing spur lines, have not been laid down as units of a broad comprehensive system, and it is consequently the more difficult to connect them up in accordance with this limit of 25 miles.

That refers to the Quairading line which, of course, hon. members know, from a practical point of view ought to have started from a point near to Beverley, and not from York as it did.

Mr. Bolton: This is the same trouble.

The PREMIER: It is just what the hon. member is advocating. The very error committed in commencing the Quairading line from York instead of from near Beverley he would have us repeat in regard to starting this line from Mount Kokeby. Now paragraph 4 of this report reads—

We have considered the Wickopin-Merredin line as the backbone of this scheme of extension, as it is likely to become a line of importance for through traffic of coal, timber, fruit, potatoes, and other produce from the South-West to the Eastern goldfields, seeing its construction would shorten the distance by more than 50 miles.

That is the point. The backbone of the whole scheme is the line from Wickopin to Merredin, providing a shorter route from the South-West to the goldfields' markets, and all these other lines are subsidiary to that, all complementary. Let us see what they say about Brookton.

Mr. Bolton: You cannot find anything about Brookton there.

The PREMIER: Oh, yes, I can. This is what they say about it. After touching on the extension of the Quairading

line and dwelling upon the proposed loop from Wickopin, or Yeremilling I think it is called, they go on to this proposed line. Paragraph 8 reads—

The proposed line as shown coloured red on the plan from the Great Southern railway near Brookton—

The hon. member says Brookton is not mentioned.

to the proposed Wickopin-Merredin line near Kunjinn, 47 miles, is estimated to cost £67,000, including rails and fastenings. The area served would be 263,000 acres, of which 98,000 have been alienated. In this area, of course, there is not included any land on the route within 12½ miles of the Great Southern railway and 12½ miles of the proposed through line from Wickopin to Merredin.

This is the signed, official report.

Mr. Bolton: What report did you give hon. members?

The PREMIER: This is the same, this is the official report.

Mr. Bolton: Does that mention the rival routes of Brookton and Mount Kokeby?

The PREMIER: It embraces the whole district. They have examined the whole district and this is the conclusion they have come to. You might as well ask have they not considered Pingelly or some other point on the line?

Mr. Bolton: That report was made prior to the deputation waiting on you.

The PREMIER: Yes, I will come to that. I have shown that the hon. member has been misled by something he has or has not read. The report is very full and complete. The advisory board was never intended to go beyond the general principle, and the general routes they recommend, leaving of course the starting point and the actual route to be the outcome of a proper survey and recommendation by the engineers of the Works Department. Now we come to the point that a deputation waited on me. It was an influential deputation. It waited on me to endeavour to get this route changed from a point near Brookton to a point near Mount Kokeby.

Mr. Angwin: Brookton is not mentioned.

The PREMIER: I say it is mentioned, I have read it from the report.

Mr. Davies: The deputation knew nothing about that line.

The PREMIER: They did. The particulars were published in the *West Australian* long before. I gave the Press the reports, and as soon as the House met I put them on the Table. If the deputation did not know, why did they come to me; what need was there for them to come to me and combat the proposal if they did not know of its existence?

Mr. Angwin: You did not at that time intend to build the railway.

The PREMIER: I did. Of course I intended to build the railway. I intend to build hundreds of miles, even thousands of miles if I remain in office.

Mr. Angwin: I do not mean eventually, I mean immediately.

Mr. Bolton: Read your reply to the deputation.

The PREMIER: I will do so. I have not time to read all that these gentlemen said, but I will get down to my reply. In replying I recognised that it was an influential deputation, and of course repudiated any idea that the old settlers of Western Australia should be omitted from our programme of railway construction, because I recognised that they were entitled to that consideration and should receive it.

Mr. Bolton: They have not got it yet.

The PREMIER: They have got it. I want to point out that we had a large amount of work in hand, and I was not sure then that we should be able to put this measure through the House during the present session. However, I am happy to say the House has helped me in getting our railway Bills through, and we are going to start on a progressive policy of railway construction which will advance the interests of Western Australia as they have never before been advanced. I wound up my reply with those promises to which the hon. member has referred—

Mr. Bolton: You promised that the advisory board would visit the district, yet you have decided upon the matter without that visit.

The PREMIER: I concluded my reply by saying—

And I feel sure that after having referred this matter again to the advisory board—as I will after your representations this morning—we shall get a route suggested to us which will be satisfactory to the great majority. In conclusion let me say that the question of the battle of routes has always been, in my experience, the greatest obstacle to railway construction. As I see you are fairly unanimous I hope you will be unanimous in accepting whatever decisions the advisory board and the railway engineers give as to the best route for this railway connection, in order that there will be no delay when once we have got their decision.

Mr. Davies: The advisory board has not been there since.

The PREMIER: I sent this on to my colleague with this minute—

You will notice that the deputation was unanimous that the line should start from Mount Kokeby or near thereto, going generally in a south-easterly direction. I shall be glad if the advisory board could inspect this route as it seems that it would serve the greatest number of settlers. We could then provide on the Loan Estimates and introduce a measure next session.

This was sent on to the Minister for Works, and he passed it on to the advisory board. Mr. Paterson, the chairman of the advisory board, replied as follows:—

In reply to your memo of 5th December, 1910, *re* commencing point of proposed railway eastward from the Great Southern line near Mount Kokeby or Brookton, the advisory board recognise that the actual commencing point of this proposal is subject to the natural contour of the country and must be definitely fixed by the engin-

eers after survey. We recommend that alternative trial surveys be made from, say, a point south of Mount Kokeby in a south-easterly direction, and also near Brookton so that the matter can be fully considered relative to costs and grades.

He leaves it to the engineers. Here is the minute to him from my colleague—

For your information Mr. Muir has been instructed to proceed at once to the district in question to make the necessary report and recommendation.

Mr. Bolton: What date was that?

The PREMIER: It is dated 3rd of January.

Mr. Bolton: He went away in December; he returned on that date.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask the member for North Fremantle not to continue these interjections.

The PREMIER: What on earth does the hon. member want to get at? The engineer was instructed to make immediate inspection and report, and the fact that that was minuted to me on the 3rd January, after he had gone, does not prove anything detrimental to the board. Now, this is Mr. Muir's report—

In accordance with your instructions received I beg to report that I examined the country from Kokeby and Brookton on the Great Southern railway eastward to Kunjinn with a view of definitely fixing the commencing point of the railway recommended by the advisory board. After a careful inspection of the country I have come to the conclusion that it would be inadvisable to make Brookton the commencement point of the proposed railway. A line from Mount Kokeby would certainly give better grades for a proportion of the distance, but it would be some six miles longer and would cost about £3,000 more than the direct easterly line. Moreover, by making Brookton the starting point and going generally in an easterly direction the country as a whole is much better served, that is a larger proportion of the district would be brought within the limit fixed for the proper development of the country. I attach

a plan which clearly explains the whole proposition.

And here is the plan.

Mr. Angwin: It is not worth the paper it is written on.

The PREMIER: Here is the plan. What does it show? It shows that with the proposed route for this line and the extension of the Quairading line there is no portion of the whole of this vast area lying between the Eastern railway and the Great Southern, and the longitude of Merredin south and latitude of Narrogin east, or only 46,000 acres which comes outside the 12½ miles limit from some point of the railway. There is not one acre farther away than 15 miles from some point of the railway if this scheme be carried out. The evidence is conclusively in favour of the suggested starting point and route. And if we are going to carry out the scheme of bringing the residents within reasonable distance of the railway we must not allow the interests of some hon. members who are influential and who are in strong evidence in this agitation to stand in the way.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

The PREMIER: I was pointing out that there were only 46,000 acres out of the whole of the area that did not come within 12½ miles of any point on the line proposed to be constructed. I wish it to be clearly understood that the policy of the Government is to serve the whole of our settlers if possible, that is unless the natural contour of the country prevents us from so constructing our railways. Our policy is to lay down lines so that every selector shall be within measurable distance of railway facilities. Had that policy been carried out in the early days when the Quairading line was constructed, I venture to say it would never have found its starting point at York, it would have been some miles farther south, very much nearer to Beverley if not at Beverley itself. Then we would have avoided that awkward position which we have to face to-day and which means that two railway lines are running through one area, at an angle it is true, but for many miles running within a short distance of each other.

The member for North Fremantle wishes to perpetuate this evil.

Mr. Bolton: I want to prevent it.

The PREMIER: He may think he does, but his advocacy of the railway line which it is proposed to construct from a point near Brookton is that it should start from Mt. Kokeby.

Mr. Bolton: I ask for a select committee.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows what a select committee means. He knows full well that if this measure is submitted to a select committee it is tantamount to deferring the construction for 12 months.

Mr. Angwin: The people in the district want it shelved.

The PREMIER: They do not want it shelved; it is only a section of the people, who have made themselves very evident during the past week or two lobbying members to get the starting point altered. I do not know any of them personally. I cannot tell who the owners of the land are, either east of Kokeby or Brookton. I only know that the member for Beverley has an estate down there, and I think the member for North Fremantle has relatives who have some land somewhere east of the Great Southern Railway.

Mr. Bolton: Not an inch, I assure you.

The PREMIER: I thought they had. Anyhow, that is all I know. I do not know of any hon. member or private individual personally who owns land east of the Great Southern Railway opposite those points. I am perfectly unbiased, and my object is to avoid constructing a line which will, for a certain number of miles, follow the direction of the main line already in existence. I maintain if we are to serve this district properly we must construct the railway as proposed in the Bill before the House, and by that means it will not be said that we are giving undue preference to any settler, because we shall be bringing all the settlers within the distance I have referred to. I have proved, I think, to the House that the advisory board did report and reported very fully in connection with this project, as fully as was necessary and as fully, indeed, as they have reported on

any other project, and I fail to see why exception should be taken and a further report asked for, and why indeed the passing of the measure should be delayed for one moment. It is easy to argue that we will not be able to carry out the construction of the line for some time; some members made it a year, others six months, and some two years. The same argument has been advanced in connection with the other propositions, but I venture to think it is our duty to pass the measures, if they are justified, and then leave it to the administration to make the best arrangements they can to expeditiously carry out the works. At any rate we are doing this much for our people, we are giving the advantage, that we are letting the existing selectors and the new selectors know that Parliament has approved of the construction of the railway, subject, of course, to the necessary deviations to meet engineering difficulties, and that the Parliament of this State has approved of the railways to be placed in the position stated approximately, and that therefore they can safely go on with the development of their properties and the expansion of their industries in order that they may get the greater benefit from the results of their labours we all hope for. I hope the House will agree to pass this Bill and that no amendment will be made.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

To refer to Select Committee.

Mr. ANGWIN moved—

That the Bill be referred to a select committee.

There could be no stronger argument in favour of adopting this course than the words which had been uttered by the Premier. When hon. members had under discussion the York to Quairading Bill it would be remembered that an attempt was made by the present leader of the Opposition to refer the Bill for the construction of that line to a select committee, as it was clearly understood that the line was not being constructed in the best interests of the settlers of that district and the State generally.

Mr. Monger: Do you remember his authority?

Mr. ANGWIN: There was the Premier's authority to-day, which was sufficient.

Mr. Scaddan: It has been proved that I adopted the right attitude.

Mr. ANGWIN: That railway had started from the wrong point, it should have started from somewhere about Beverley instead of York, and if they had to build it again the starting point would certainly be near Beverley.

The Premier: You want to make a mistake again.

Mr. ANGWIN: There was no desire to do anything of the kind. A mistake had been made in the past, and to-day he wished, by referring the matter to a select committee, to avoid a repetition of that mistake.

The Premier: And shelve the Bill.

Mr. ANGWIN: The Premier thought that the appointment of a select committee would have the effect of shelving the Bill. He disagreed with the Premier and hoped hon. members on the Ministerial side would take the matter seriously into consideration. For some years a railway proposition in that district had been under consideration. It had been felt by the large majority of the settlers there that a railway line suitable to them would be a railway constructed from somewhere near Mt. Kokeby. The advisory board casually went over a very large area and they reported, and the Premier read their report, that a railway in the interests of the settlers of that district should junction about Mt. Kokeby.

The Minister for Works: Somewhere near Brookton.

Mr. ANGWIN: Mt. Kokeby was mentioned. The report of the advisory board was so unsatisfactory that a large deputation waited on the Premier in the first week in November and asked him to take into consideration the starting point of this railway, and the reply of the Premier to that deputation implied that the report from the advisory board received then was not satisfactory, and he promised the deputation definitely he would again send the advisory

board to the district for the purpose of ascertaining what the proposition was, or which would be the best place to start the railway from. That promise had not been carried out.

The Minister for Works: It has been carried out.

Mr. ANGWIN: According to the papers which the Premier had read out it had not been carried out. The Premier had stated in reading the correspondence on the file that he had referred the matter to the Minister for Works, who no doubt referred it to the advisory board. Mr. Pater-son, the chairman of the board, advised that an engineer should be sent there for the purpose of making a survey, one from Brookton to Kunjinn and another from Mt. Kokeby to Kunjinn. What do we find? The engineer was sent there, and according to his (Mr. Angwin's) informants, who were gentlemen holding public positions in that locality, this officer was in conversation with some of them on the Monday and on the Wednesday he had returned from his trip to Kunjinn. Could any engineer possibly make an inspection of the route to decide in what locality the line should be built in so short a time. It was impossible. The line should be constructed so that it would be in the best interests of the settlers. The member for Gascoyne, who knew the country well, stated that it would be detrimental to the interests of the district if the line junctioned at Brookton. If the Premier intended to close down next Wednesday of course it would be impossible to obtain the report from the select committee, but there was no reason why we should prorogue on Wednesday. The feeling in the district was so strong that people living in the district had asked several members to defeat the Bill rather than that the line should be constructed as proposed.

The Minister for Lands: How many?

Mr. ANGWIN: A deputation of five or six persons, public men living in the district. Though we occasionally had repeated requests made to alter the junction of a railway, or the route

of a railway, he never remembered previously of any person advocating that a Bill should be defeated rather than that it should go through as the Government proposed.

The Minister for Lands: Pure selfishness.

Mr. ANGWIN: It showed that the line was not in the interests of the people settled in the district. There might be a little self interest, but people had to consider the best interests of the State. It was only a short railway, and no one could accuse him (Mr. Angwin) of trying to block an agricultural line; no one could accuse him of not supporting a Government railway, except the Bullfinch line. Unless this point was settled by referring the Bill to a select committee some injustice might be done to the settlers in the district.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One need say but little because he did not want to encourage in any way a second reading debate. He ventured to think that the member had not made out a case that in any way answered the great case of the distance of this line as compared with the distance of the Mt. Kokeby line from the Quairading railway.

Mr. Angwin: The committee would settle that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was no doubt the committee would settle it very quickly and the House would settle it by sending the Bill to a select committee. It had already been settled, for it could be settled on the information that had been given to members. With the construction of the railway the whole area would be completely served by such a network of railways that every block within reasonable distance of some line would be served. The same thing could not be contended if the line started from Mt. Kokeby. From a railway point of view, if the line started at Mt. Kokeby the annual running cost would be greater and this district would not be so well served.

Mr. Collier: How is that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : There was the increased mileage. The large proportion of the people who complained against the Brookton starting point were people nearly all living within 15 miles of the Great Southern Railway. It had been said all those who had spoken were in favour of the Mt. Kokeby starting point. Those who favoured a railway proposition did not usually waste time by speaking, it was always the opposition that made themselves energetic and most busy. Naturally those who were dissatisfied expressed their dissatisfaction, while those who were content did not make any effort to advertise their contentment. There was one point raised he wished to refer to, that was the question of the quality of the land. The member for Claremont said he (the Minister) had urged that poor land should be supplied with railways. Nothing of the kind was said by him. It would be a rather remarkable statement to make. What he did say was—and it was a remark he was prepared to repeat—if we had both first and second class land, and if the second class land was capable of successful cultivation with reasonable facilities, it was the duty of the State to give those facilities. The man who had the second class land, at all events, required as much, perhaps more consideration than the man who rejoiced in the possession of a more fertile area ; therefore, the comparative value of two areas should not be considered unless one of the two areas was impossible of profitable cultivation. Rather than kill the Bill by sending it to a select committee it should have been killed by a straight out vote on the second reading.

Mr. MURPHY : There were certain things in connection with railway proposals that members of the House could know nothing about, and those who did not know were called upon to give a vote of as much importance as that of members who knew all about the line ? There was one thing that those members who were in an unfortunate or unique position like himself required before they were called upon to give a vote, and that was the report of the advisory board.

The report was lacking in this particular instance. It had been furnished, as far as he knew, in regard to every other agricultural railway this session.

The Minister for Works : It is here.

Mr. MURPHY : One single copy, which would take members, if it had to go right round, three weeks to make themselves acquainted with its contents.

Mr. Monger : It had been lying on the Table since the 19th October.

Mr. MURPHY : And no doubt the hon. member himself had not read it. Whether it had been on the Table since 19th October or the 19th August, this was the first time he (Mr. Murphy) had had it in his possession, and he was called on to give a vote for the Government proposal, or whether the project should be referred to a select committee. This was the first agricultural railway that he ever remembered, since he had been in the House, that a deputation from a particular district had been so much interested in preventing becoming an accomplished fact, as to send a deputation to interview members of the House. This deputation had not interviewed him ; in fact he did not know the deputation was at the House, but he had come to the conclusion that this railway should have further consideration. This railway should be delayed because those who were directly interested had thought it of sufficient importance to come to the House and try to point out to individual members that a select committee should be appointed. Suppose the select committee was appointed. The gentlemen who came here and formed the deputation would be able to produce evidence to show that the proposal of the Government was not in the interests of their district. How long would that delay the railway ? One year, and he did not think either the district or the State would go bankrupt because the railway was delayed for one year. It was very much better to delay the railway for one year than to have what was flashing through his mind, a doubt as to constructing it along the route proposed by the Government, thus inflicting a life-long injury on a large class of deser-

ving settlers. Many members had a doubt, and had given expression to it, and until that doubt was removed he was not inclined to give his vote to inflict an injustice on any body of settlers in the State.

Mr. HARPER : Mr. Rennick was said to have spent only three days on his trip but he left Perth on the Saturday, arrived at Beverley the same day, left Beverley on Monday at noon for Mount Kokeby and returned to Beverley on the Friday evening, during the interval taking trial surveys of the land. The advisory board having already decided that Brookton was the correct starting point of the line, it was left to the engineers to say whether there were any engineering difficulties ; and it was fairly shown from the engineer's report that there would be a saving of £8,000 in starting from Brookton, and that there would be a saving of six miles in distance. By scaling the map it would be found that 16 miles out from York the Quairading line was only divided from the Great Southern Railway near Beverley by about 11 miles. It would not be fair to defeat this Bill by sending it to a select committee. Those who were proposing a select committee were not friends of the farmers, and they were acting against what would be a very important matter for the district. It was shown by the Minister for Works that with few exceptions those opposing the measure were personally interested. The people of the district accepted the assurance of the advisory board, and it would be a disgraceful position for the House to defy them. It was strange there were so many against the Bill.

Mr. DAVIES : It is because it is a one-man railway.

Mr. HARPER : That was not the case. The advisory board went over the country and decided on the line before he purchased any land in the district. He had not interfered in any way with the railway. He was anxious to get a line passed through whether the starting point was at one place or the other ; but the advisory board having decided that the line should start

from Brookton, he supported that route. As to the deputations that waited on the Premier, they were all people in the back country who did not care where the line started from so long as it ran out to serve them. The stumbling block regarding the Mount Kokeby route was the fact that it would be running too much parallel to an existing line. If members knew the hardships these people suffered they would not try to defeat the measure. It would be a serious injustice to them if the Bill were referred to a select committee and the railway delayed for a couple of years.

Mr. HOLMAN : Knowing nothing of that part of the State, and having listened to the arguments advanced, he was satisfied we should have a select committee to have more information. No doubt the member for Beverley came forward on this question and put up a strong argument, but it was time a different policy was adopted. Instead of leaving railway Bills to be passed in the last dying days of the session, they should be introduced earlier to give members a chance to get information, and to give the people in the various districts an opportunity of setting forth their views. It was absolute twaddle for the member for Beverley to say that anyone supporting the amendment was opposed to the farmers. All the hon. member had to go on was the fact that he held a big area in the district which would be materially benefited by the building of the line. He (Mr. Holman) would be sorry indeed if he held land in a place and came forward to advocate a railway to serve that land as the hon. member did. It brought forward another fact. When the Works Estimates were before the House, and a certain officer was in prominence, it was a remarkable thing that immediately after the trip was taken by that officer—and the member for Beverley was down on the trip with him according to what was said in the House to-day—the hon. member came forward strongly advocating an increase in that officer's salary.

The Minister for Works : The member for Beverley was not with Mr. Muir.

Mr. Bolton: I say he went down in the same carriage with him.

Mr. HOLMAN: I heard the statement made in the House to-day that the hon. member was on that trip with Mr. Muir.

Mr. Jacoby: It is not true.

Mr. HOLMAN: At any rate the statement was made in the House and certainly the member for Beverley strongly advocated an increase in Mr. Muir's salary. There was nothing in that, because he (Mr. Holman) also advocated the increase. We should pay these officers decent salaries to place them in a position where they were independent of everybody. Submitting the Bill to a select committee would not delay the construction of the line. It was impossible to build the lines already passed. If the reports were ready so long ago there was nothing to stop the Government introducing the Bills and having the second readings moved, thus allowing the people to make every inquiry and send along information. The only information now available was from a few interested people. According to the Minister for Works, instead of diverting railways to tap rich country, we should extend them to tap the poorer land.

The Minister for Works: I did not say that; I said that if second-class land was capable of profitable cultivation, we must provide facilities to enable it to be cultivated.

Mr. HOLMAN: That was exactly the same thing, and it was a good policy, because holding richer land recompensed a man for not having a railway, and it was necessary to recompense the man holding poorer land by giving him a railway. It was a mistake to divert the true course of a railway to tap rich little parts. We should have evidence to show what starting point would suit the most people and the best interests of the State, and we should take some example from what occurred year after year, and have the measures brought down earlier in the session to give ample time for inquiry. It was disgraceful conduct of business to put a number of measures through at one sitting after Standing Orders were

suspended, and put them through without their getting proper consideration, preventing people in any part of the State sending forward information. The sooner an alteration was made in this regard the better it would be for all. Because members asked for information and that the matter should receive a little more consideration, they were accused of obstructing the business or of attempting to do some damage to the agricultural industry; but no measure placed before the House in a satisfactory manner in connection with the agricultural industry received the slightest opposition from members of the Opposition. Some members on the Government side were willing to refer this Bill to a select committee because they had some knowledge of the part of the State affected, but it was a pity that, instead of blindly following the Government on any question brought forward, they had not adopted the same policy in regard to other matters. It would teach those members that in future, if they had the opportunity of being in the House, they should not give the Government the same servile support as they now gave on every occasion. Because just as good a case for a select committee had been made out in regard to other measures.

Mr. Jacoby: You have never been seen voting against your party.

Mr. HOLMAN: That was incorrect, for he had voted with the Government on one or two occasions when all the rest of his party were against them. However, time after time members who would now support this motion for a select committee had supported the Government against similar motions even when they had not heard a word of the debate. On this occasion he was satisfied that by referring this to a select committee we would be taking the right course. It would serve to teach the Government that it was bad policy to delay the passing of railway Bills till the last moment, when the Standing Orders were suspended and it was impossible to get additional information. He intended to support the sending of the Bill to a select committee. That course

will not result in delay, because the line would be constructed just as soon as if we were to pass the Bill now, and the advantage of it would be that the report of the select committee would furnish the latest possible information in regard to the district and the proposed line. The construction of the line had to a great extent altered the original policy of the Government in regard to the Wickepin-Merredin line. There might be scores of settlers down there affected by the alteration of that Wickepin-Merredin line. That matter had been sprung upon us in the last hours of the session. We had seen in the Lands Department maps showing the proposed Wickepin-Merredin line as being a great distance from the route now adopted by the Government. The map we had here was only marked a few days ago, and this particular railway had not been thought of until a fortnight ago.

Mr. MONGER: The advisory board's report is dated the 9th July.

Mr. HOLMAN: But this line had been brought in as a later consideration. The Minister for Railways had land out near the proposed deviation of the Wickepin-Merredin line.

The Minister for Works: That alteration was made at the request of the House.

Mr. HOLMAN: But people affected by the alteration should have some little consideration also. He would be sorry to think the members of the House were prepared to make alteration only when it suited themselves and their own interests. We had had to-day a deplorable example of members directly interested in large areas down there fighting hard to get the line to their back doors. He was satisfied from the arguments brought forward that further inquiry was necessary, and he was going to vote for the referring of the Bill to a select committee, knowing that a little time would not affect the building of the line.

Mr. COLLIER (Boulder): Like the member for Fremantle he knew very little about the merits of the rival routes. In view of the conflicting opinions expressed in the Chamber to-day members would be wise in delaying the passage of the Bill in order to have some more definite in-

formation. As between the merits of these two routes the advisory board had made no pronouncement. The board's report merely stated the line should junction with the Great Southern "somewhere near Brookton." Those, he thought, are the actual words.

The Minister for Works: There is no "somewhere" but "near Brookton."

Mr. COLLIER: Showing there was a doubt as to the best starting point. The advisory board should be asked to pronounce as between the rival routes. When the advisory board reported in July last there was apparently no dispute as between those routes.

The Minister for Works: It was Brookton.

Mr. COLLIER: But there was no rivalry. Since that date the rivalry had sprung up between Brookton and Kokeby. Why not let the advisory board decide between these two routes?

The Minister for Works: They have dealt with the two routes.

Mr. COLLIER: Where?

The Minister for Works: I read their reference to it to-day.

Mr. COLLIER: There had been no agitation until recently as to these rival routes. He desired to protest also against the manner in which these Railway Bills were being pushed through in the last days of the session. The railway policy of the Government should be the first to come down in the beginning of a session. We should have all these Bills laid before us quite early in the session. Then if hon. members had any doubt they could move for select committees or make other motions involving brief delays without having the charge hurled at them that they desired to shelve the railway. He had no knowledge as to the merits of these two routes. Why, then, if he voted for the select committee should he be charged with entertaining a desire to shelve the Bill altogether? If the Bill had come in earlier we could have had inquiry made, and acting on the result of that inquiry, hon. members could have given an honest vote on the matter without being charged with an anxiety to shelve the Bill. He protested against that charge made by the member for Bev-

erley. Although the hon. member represented the district through which the line would pass it would have been wiser on his part if he had refrained from expressing any opinion, seeing that he had 3,000 acres of land within a mile and a half of this proposed line to Brookton. Because the member for Beverley owned this area of land so close to the proposed route he (Mr. Collier) attached no weight whatever to his arguments as to the merits of this Bill. During the session we had passed more Railway Bills than were passed in any previous session in the history of Western Australian Parliament, and in the passage of the whole of these Bills there had not been so large a deputation come to Perth or such strong protest made against the construction of any line as there was against the construction of this proposed railway. The deputation had come down from that district to place their views before members in respect to this railway.

The Minister for Lands: Who were they?

Mr. COLLIER: Their names were not known to him, but he knew they were here, and the Minister knew it also.

The Minister for Lands: They came to interview the member for East Fremantle.

Mr. COLLIER: It showed they had appreciation of an honest politician. The fact remained that a number of gentlemen interested in land settlement in that locality had come to Perth to enter a protest against the proposed route, while there had been no counter-protest on behalf of the proposed route. He would venture to say that since the Bill was introduced three-fourths of the selectors affected by the railway, especially those in the remote areas, at the far end of the line, had known nothing at all about it. Communications were slow, in the back country, and he would not be surprised to learn that most of the settlers at the far end of the railway knew nothing at all about the proposed route. It was all very well to say the report had been on the Table since July last. Would it be too much for the Government to supply each member with a copy of a report like this? Because it was impossible for every

member to make himself acquainted with all the papers laid on the Table during the session. In any case, in view of the fact that during this session the Government had passed Bills for railways which, no matter how enthusiastic they might be in carrying out their railway policy, the financial position of the State in conjunction with the labour market would render it impossible for them to complete within the next three years—in view of that no harm would be done by temporarily delaying the Bill. Even if we were to pass this Railway Bill, he was certain no work would be started before this day 12 months. If a start was made with the line then other railways passed this session must be delayed, and in view of the fact that hon. members on both sides of the House were in disagreement as to the merits of the case, and many hon. members had not that knowledge of the country which would enable them to give a conscientious vote, he thought that the amendment should be carried, and the measure referred to a select committee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. Mitchell): This was purely a question of distance; there never was less need for referring a Bill to a select committee. If we were going to put aside the policy of having a 25 mile limit, and were going to accept the idea of building lines every 15 miles, then by all means let us start the railway from Mount Kokeby; the land to be served from either point would be more or less the same. He acknowledged that his friend, Mr. McLean, had done great work, but he had come to Perth, and, apparently, had exercised a wide influence over hon. members.

Mr. Horan: I have never heard of the gentleman.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We should never have heard about Mount Kokeby if it had not been for the visit of Mr. McLean to Perth. There had not been a single argument put forward in favour of Mount Kokeby as a starting point. The advisory board, after having inspected the district, decided on Brookton, and he had had an opportunity of discussing the question with Mr. Paterson, who said that Brookton, and

not Mount Kokeby, was the right starting point.

Mr. Bolton: When did he say that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Mr. Paterson had said it to-day on the telephone. The advisory board visited this district, examined the country, and determined on Brookton. The only argument that could be urged in favour of Mount Kokeby as against Brookton would be the argument to reduce the limit from $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles to $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles, but he did not think that was the desire of the House. He hoped members would pass this Bill providing for the railway starting from Brookton, and that the matter would not be referred to a select committee. If hon. members wanted to know anything about the proposal they had only to turn to the map on the wall and they would see that the line from Brookton would practically bring the whole of the land between it and the Quairading railway within $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and he took it that that was all that the House could do for the country at the present time. He hoped that a select committee would not be appointed, but that the line would be built without delay. Certainly if the Bill was referred to a select committee, the building of the line must be delayed for a considerable time.

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

Ayes	12
Noes	18

Majority against .. 6

AYES.

Mr. Angwin
Mr. Bolton
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Collier
Mr. Davies
Mr. Holman
Mr. Jacoby

Mr. Murphy
Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Swan
Mr. Troy

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Brown
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Draper
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Harper
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Horan

Mr. Male
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger
Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Nanson
Mr. Osborn
Mr. F. Willson
Mr. Layman

(Teller).

Question thus negatived.

In Committee, etc.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Authority to construct:

Mr. ANGWIN moved—

That progress be reported.

Motion negatived.

Clause put and passed.

(Mr. Taylor took the Chair.)

Clause 3—Deviation:

Mr. ANGWIN moved an amendment—

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

The object of the amendment was to give the Minister an opportunity of considering the route of the line as requested by the people who resided in the district. He regretted that some members voted for things to suit themselves; these people did not want the line for themselves, but for the benefit of the State. The matter should be reconsidered so that the Premier could fulfil his promise to send the advisory board to the district before the line was constructed. The amendment, if carried, would enable the Minister to have the promise made by the Premier fulfilled. If the people of the State could not really depend upon the word of the Premier the sooner the Premier went out of his position the better.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member was mistaken in his assertion, which had already been disproved by the Premier, that the Premier had broken his promise. The Premier made a promise to a deputation that the matter would be again referred to the advisory board, and he (the Minister), as the vehicle of communication with the advisory board, had had imposed on him the duty of seeing that the promise was fulfilled. The promise was fulfilled. It was unfair to the Premier that the statement should be frequently made that he had broken his promise. The hon. member's statement was entirely opposed to fact.

Mr. Bolton: Who says so?

The Minister for Works: I say so.

Mr. Bolton: Your word is no good.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member was always offensive. He

was an all-round authority on everything that came before the House, but that did not warrant the hon. member contradicting the statement made not only by the Premier and himself, but the accuracy of which had been proved by the documents already read to the House. It was to be hoped that neither the member for East Fremantle nor the member for North Fremantle would use the clause as a means of delaying the Bill because the amendment could not effect their object. The member for East Fremantle had overlooked the fact that he could not deviate the starting point or the terminus. The House had decided that the starting point should be Brookton and that the terminus should be Kunjinn, and the question of deviation would not enable the hon. member's object to be made, that was, if he desired to vary the starting point or if he desired to give an instruction that the line should be carried from Brookton in a northerly direction and curve around south-easterly towards Kunjinn. The amendment was unnecessary, because the 10-mile deviation would carry the line on the northern side almost due east to Mt. Kokeby. The 10-mile deviation was quite ample for all purposes.

Mr. ANGIN: There was no necessity to go north from the starting point. If we included the words "north of Brookton to Kunjinn" that would get over the difficulty that the Minister feared would take place in the event of this alteration. It made no difference to him where the railway started from. He had stated that his honest conviction was that a mistake was being made, and he thought it his duty to try and prevent that mistake being carried into effect.

Mr. BOLTON: It was a remarkable feature that when one offered to criticise a measure introduced by any member of the Ministry that criticism was put down as being offensive. It was not the first time the Minister for Works had made use of a similar expression with regard to him (Mr. Bolton), and he took exception to any Minister, and especially the Minister for Works, saying that he was always offensive because he offered criticism to anything that Minister introduced. The criticism was honest, and he

would not offer it if he did not believe it to be so. It was all very well to say that the hon. member was always offensive; that was the opinion of one member. He did not think it was the opinion of most members that he was always offensive; most members would admit, at any rate, that he was always sober, and if he was led into saying anything offensive it was because he was forced into the position by such remarks as that made by the Minister. The concluding remarks made by the Premier in reply to the deputation which waited on him were that he promised that the advisory board should report on the routes, and that board had not reported on those routes. That had not been disproved, and it was no use the Minister for Works waxing indignant and eloquent over it. The fact remained that the advisory board had not been there since. The advisory board had not reported on those routes and, consequently, there was no justification for the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

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

Mr. JACOBY: The other night he raised a query on one of the railway Bills as to whether the Government under this clause would have power to purchase the whole of an estate if only a portion of it happened to be within the radius, and he was informed that unless the whole of the estate was situated within the 15 miles the Government would not have the power. It might occur that nine-tenths of an estate might be within the 15 miles radius and one-tenth of it might be outside of it. He presumed under these conditions we could not exercise the powers conferred by this clause. In order to overcome the difficulty he would move an amendment—

That in line 9 the word "and" be struck out and "any portion of which is" inserted in lieu.

That would give the Government a wide discretion. The Minister could not object to the addition of these words; they merely extended the powers of the Gov-

ernment, and would allow them to get over any difficulty that might arise.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was to be hoped the hon. member would not press the amendment for it was not of any value as far as this particular Bill was concerned. He (the Minister) had examined the plan carefully, and the only land that might be affected by the Bill, if there were any portion outside the 15 mile radius of this line, would come within the 15-mile radius of another line.

Mr. Jacoby: It could not do any harm.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Already the point had been noted in regard to future Bills, after the hon. member brought the matter up earlier in the week, and he (the Minister) intended to have the provision inserted in future Bills. If the amendment were persisted in it would have the effect of delaying the measure and the provision was not required in connection with this railway.

Mr. JACOBY: If the provision would not be of any use in this Bill then he would not do anything that would delay the measure, but if members insisted on the amendment being put he could not withdraw it. He wished the amendment to be inserted the first opportunity, so that all railway Bills in future would include these words.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Instructions had already been given that that should be done.

Mr. JACOBY: Under the circumstances he would ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6, 7—agreed to.

Schedule:

Mr. ANGWIN moved an amendment—

That the following words be inserted after "station yard" or "within 10 miles of the said yard."

That would give the Minister power to deviate the starting point of the line, it would give a 10 miles deviation on either side of the Brookton station if on further consideration the Minister desired to alter the starting point.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was hardly necessary for him to say that he was not prepared to accept the amendment. There was a provision in the Public Works Act as follows:—

Every railway shall be made only under the authority of a special Act, which shall state as nearly as may be the line of the railway and the two termini thereof; but it shall be lawful to deviate from such line at a distance of one mile on either side thereof.

That provision was unrepealed, that the Bill should state as nearly as possible the route of the railway and the two termini. The Bill at present stated the two termini but the hon. member proposed to practically take one terminal point out of the Bill and give to the Minister power to alter the other terminal point. If that power could be legally given to the Minister it would be an unwise power to entrust to any one individual, that was to construct a railway that could start either 10 miles north, or any less distance, or 10 miles south, or any less distance, or could start at Brookton. The amendment he thought was *ultra vires*, but if it was not he did not think there was one member who would accept, as Minister for Works, the responsibility, after Parliament had dealt with an Act, of interfering with it in any way. If he (the Minister) were Minister at the time he would not agree to make any alteration in a schedule passed by the House. However he thought the amendment was *ultra vires* on account of the section of the Public Works Act which he had read.

Mr. ANGWIN: If that was so then the 10 miles deviation in the Bill was also *ultra vires*. If members decided to give the Minister power, after further investigation, to start the railway 10 miles from Brookton, what had the Minister to complain of? If the words were inserted it would show there was a doubt, and the Minister could make further inquiries, and the responsibility after the inquiries had been made would be placed on the Minister to decide. Members had voted against the select committee because they were afraid of delaying the measure, but this amendment would cause no delay,

better surveys could be made and action taken on receipt of the further information.

Amendment put and negatived.

Schedule put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th January.

Mr. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): As the Bill now before the House has previously passed this Chamber and has been rejected by another place—rejected because it did not obtain the statutory majority which would entitle it to be passed—I do not propose to deal at any length with the measure itself. We are desirous of helping at this stage to do what, I contend, the Government should have done long ere this, get the measure to another place in order to allow them to reconsider the decision previously arrived at. But I desire again to protest against an important measure of this nature being left to the very end of the session before being submitted for the consideration of the Chamber that would be most affected. There could be no possible reason why the Government should not have asked us to pass this measure in the first or second week after Parliament assembled in order to permit another place to have the Bill and properly discuss it and come to a decision at a time when they were in a position to give proper consideration to it. After all it is a measure that affects another place, and I contend they are justified in protesting against receiving a measure of such importance at such a late stage of the session. I regret the Government have not considered the advisability of attempting to place upon the statute-book the real wishes of the people in this connection. I would like some member to call attention to the state of the House.

Mr. Swan: I call attention to the state of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The leader of the Opposition was not in the Chamber when I said that I would be satisfied if members were within the precincts of the Chamber.

Mr. SCADDAN: I do not propose to talk to empty benches.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think out of respect to the leader of the Opposition members should be in the Chamber.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is now a quorum present. I said this morning that, owing to the hot weather, it would meet the wishes and convenience of members if they were within the precincts of the House; but, as the leader of the Opposition has protested that there is no one in the Chamber, and as it is an important subject, I think it is only due to the position of the hon. member and to the subject that members should be in the Chamber.

Mr. SCADDAN: It only goes to show that my protest against the introduction of this measure at this stage of the session is proved by the fact that members are not prepared to attend to their real Parliamentary duties by remaining in the Chamber. If it is a matter of attending Parliament for the purpose of passing railway Bills only, then I contend the sooner we pass these Bills and close up Parliament the better. The method of procedure adopted during the past fortnight is by no means to our credit. Here is a measure the people have been crying out for year after year. In 1905 it was definitely promised by Mr. Rason as one of his first pledges that it would be put into operation, but here we are to-day in exactly the same position, and every policy speech made since 1905 has included a reference to the reduction of the franchise of another place, yet to-day we are at the close of another long session and the Bill has not left this Chamber, and we are told that another place is expected to give it consideration and find the statutory majority for the purpose of passing it at a

stage when it is possible members of that other place will find just as much interest in it as members in this Chamber seeing there are so few in attendance.

Mr. S. F. Moore: There are only six on your side.

Mr. SCADDAN: I admit it applies to both sides of the House unfortunately. Personally I am not over particular as to whether this Bill becomes law at this stage or not; because we are approaching a general election when the people will have another opportunity of expressing an opinion on matters of legislative reform, and I am certain that if the Bill is not passed and a reform of some description put into operation regarding another place, people will insist at the next election that a party will be put into power that will insist on the other House accepting a legitimate reduction of their franchise, or they will insist that it should cease to exist altogether. Personally I believe the consensus of opinion of the people of the State is against the retention of that Chamber at all. The member for Kimberley shakes his head, but the Government have never been courageous enough to test public opinion on this question. If the hon. member is so certain about the matter, I would suggest that he induce his Government to put the question to the people by a referendum; and he will find, even if they go to the extent of asking that it should not be put into operation unless a fair majority should be in favour of it, that there would be such a majority that it would be put into operation very quickly. There is no gainsaying the fact that to-day we are arriving at one of two positions—either the State Assembly is to be put into a position to deal with all matters that crop up from time to time in an effective manner, or some other Parliament is going to be put in the position to do it. No doubt to-day the people of the Commonwealth are giving more attention to the Federal Parliament because through that Parliament they have a better opportunity of expressing their opinions and having them recorded on the statute-book than they have through the State Parliaments.

There would be no desire for an amendment to the Federal Constitution in the direction proposed by the Federal Government, which will be placed before the people in a couple of months' time, if it were not for the fact that the State Parliaments through the retention of the Legislative Councils are getting out of touch with the people. The reforms the people are determined to obtain either through one course or the other are being set back under our State constitutions, and therefore the people are looking to the Federal Parliament, and I have no doubt in my mind as to what will be the result of the referenda for a further increase of powers to the Federal Parliament to deal with matters the States will not undertake to deal with. Even in this State which is supposed to be one of the most democratic of the Commonwealth—though I very much doubt it under existing conditions—if it were necessary I could give instances that we have quite a number of measures on the statute-book which from the names of the measures appear all right on the face of them, but really are not. For instance the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. We say we have a Conciliation and Arbitration Act on our statute-book, and therefore we can deal with industrial matters, but is it not a fact that the measure has proved to be practically unworkable to this extent that serious questions have arisen dealing with industrial matters that the arbitration court has not been able to deal with effectively? And yet our State Government have neglected to deal with the matter, or, through fear of being unable to get the Bill through another place, have declined to give any attention to the question at all. The result is that the people who are most affected, the working classes of the community, are looking in another direction for protection in these matters. I could instance many others, but the fact remains that our Legislative Council, if they do not hrow out a Bill which is likely to tend towards the betterment of the conditions of the working classes of the community, at least go about it in such a fashion by amendments that the measure becomes practically useless, as in

the case of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Moreover, not only is that a fact: but some of the most important statutes, supposed to have the one purpose of redressing grievances of the working classes of the community, are being administered by the Minister who is leader of the other House and who does not administer them as strictly as he would do if he were sitting in this Chamber where he could be dealt with from time to time. So long as the other Chamber exists under its present franchise, so long will the working classes of this State, together with the working classes of the other States, pay more attention to the Federal Parliament than to the State Parliaments: and we are permitting it to take place with our eyes open. Those people who are complaining against the intrusion of the Federal Parliament in these matters sit quiet and then attempt, by appearing before the people as States-rightsers, to claim that what is taking place is in a large measure unconstitutional and not to the benefit of the people.

The Minister for Mines: But did the Legislative Council do anything to destroy the utility of the Arbitration Act?

Mr. SCADDAN: Certainly. The point is that if it were not for the Legislative Councils as they exist in various States to-day—I am not referring only to Western Australia—the Governments in the Assemblies would be more courageous in the measures they bring down. Will the Minister for Mines deny that frequently he has to draft a measure he is presenting to the Assembly in such a manner as he hopes will induce another place to pass it? Is it not a fact that in many of the measures the Minister himself has had to admit we have to accept an instalment, not because this Chamber is not prepared to give the full measure of reform, but because he is afraid another Chamber will make an amendment or reject it altogether?

The Minister for Mines: I thought you made a charge against the Legislative Council of having prevented the Arbitration Act being of any use.

Mr. SCADDAN: I do not make that charge, but I say the existence of the

Chamber under its present franchise prevents the Government from bringing down the reforms they otherwise would. The Council have also made amendments to other measures—I mention the Conciliation and Arbitration Act as only one in point—that really make the reforms of no benefit to those they are intended to serve, with the result that the people look in other directions and will continue to do so. Is it likely that with the reduction proposed by the Government we are going to get any nearer the desires of the people in this matter? Will a reduction in the franchise from £25 annual value to £15 clear annual value make so much difference that it is likely to bring about any great change in the personnel of the Legislative Council or in its democratic representation of the community? I hold it will not. It was only in order to stave off the evil day from the Government standpoint, or from the conservative or so-called liberal party standpoint, that the promise was given that a reduction to £15 would be made. Outside the Conservatives, who have only done this for the purpose of staving off the time for a few years, there is no desire for a reduction of £15; but the desire is that, if there is to be a reduction at all, it should be to household suffrage; or, on the other hand, I believe there are many people who claim it should be adult suffrage. I do not believe in that because I hold that if we have two Chambers on the one suffrage one is going to be the negative of the other. If it is necessary at all to reduce the franchise to that extent, I hold it would be just as well to abolish the other Chamber.

Mr. Horan: You could elect them on a fuller electorate.

Mr. SCADDAN: True, we might have them representing provinces as to-day on adult suffrage, and in that way we would probably get a more democratic Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly; because members of the other place would be representing bigger districts than members of the Assembly representing single electorates, and they would take a more national view of the questions than we do. But I am satisfied those who believe

in the retention of a second Chamber would never agree to such a proposal. There is no doubt there is a genuine desire on the part of the people for a reduction of the franchise of another place to at least household suffrage. I was in hope the Government would accept the wish of the people in this matter and reduce it to that extent rather than to the £15 as proposed. Another point to which I desire the Attorney General to pay attention is to be found in the qualification clause. It will be remembered that prior to the last Legislative Council elections the question arose as to the interpretation of that clause. The ex-Attorney General (Mr. Keenan) held the phrase "clear annual value" compelled the householder to show that it was of that value to him or to the owner, exclusive of rates and other charges upon the property, with the result that in most of our districts the value had to be up to about £30 per annum, which excluded a great number of people who, ever since the passing of the constitution, had been permitted unquestioned to enrol. The ex-Attorney General's interpretation of that word "clear" disfranchised these people. The point has never been cleared up. Sir Newton Moore, when Premier, promised a deputation that the interpretation would not be put into operation, and even went so far as to say he would ask the Attorney General to have the interpretation withdrawn from the instructions issued to registrars. But I believe that to this day these instructions are still in the hands of the district registrars. Does the Attorney General not think we should make it perfectly clear that the interpretation placed upon it by the ex-Attorney General was not the desire of Parliament? Would it not be well to strike out "clear?" After all, although we make it appear to the people that we are effecting a substantial reduction in the qualification for the franchise of another place, we are really doing nothing of the sort. If the Attorney General does not give consideration to this point as to the word "clear" I propose

when in Committee to move to strike out the word in order to get over the interpretation placed upon it by the Electoral Department. It was never intended when the Bill was passed that such an interpretation should ever be put upon the clause. I believe this measure should reach another place at the earliest possible moment, in order that members of that place may not be able to say they had no time to deal with it. I know that any attempt to make the franchise household suffrage is not likely to be passed by this Chamber. We attempted it on a previous occasion and were defeated, since when the personnel of the Chamber has not undergone any material alteration, so such an attempt would only mean defeat again, and probably delay. Therefore I hope the second reading will be carried and that the Bill will reach another place without delay in order that they may have an opportunity of considering it. I want to know, however, what is to be the attitude of the Government on this particular question in the event of another place again refusing to pass the Bill. Because it must be remembered that although members in that place did not reject it by putting a majority against it, they knew well that an absolute majority was required before it could pass, and to remain away in such circumstances was merely another way of defeating it. Do the Government propose to test the feeling of the country in the event of another place refusing to pass this measure? When we recognise that it has been the policy of the Rason Government, the Moore Government, and the present Government to bring about this reduction, when we remember that this movement has been afoot ever since 1905, and we have not got any further, I say it is time some definite step was considered. However, I do desire that the Attorney General should give consideration to the striking out of that word "clear." The department knows it would make no difference to the enrolment of people if the word were struck out while it would do away with the

necessity of withdrawing the interpretation, which I believe was a correct one, but which has been held in abeyance to a large extent, although still before the registrars in their instructions.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (in reply): As regards the protest made by the leader of the Opposition as to this measure being delayed, I explained on the second reading that there is no pretence to originality in the measure. The proposal to reduce the franchise to £15 annual value has been before the country for some years now, has been discussed *ad infinitum*, and it would indeed be difficult for the most acute or original mind to find anything new to say on this subject. All the arguments have been repeated again and again almost *ad nauseum*. As regards the late introduction of this measure into another place and the possible consequence of that late introduction, what I had to say in regard to its late introduction into this Chamber applies equally in reference to another place. We are not asking those hon. members there to deal with a novel proposal. We are bringing forward a proposal with which they are perfectly familiar, and one which will be decided by voting rather than by talking. If there be a difficulty elsewhere in passing this measure, I take it it will arise more from the fact that since the measure was last before another place there have been elections for the Legislative Council. And I believe that in no case where the retiring member opposed this reduction did he fail to secure the election. So that if any argument is used at all in another place against this measure it will probably be based upon that fact.

Mr. Scaddan: Who returned them? Not the people who are asking for this reform.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is the answer. I am merely anticipating what would probably be the objection. The answer is that the people who ask for a reduced franchise for the Upper House did not return those members. I do not think I need deal at any length with the charge brought against that House in regard to its unwillingness to

pass legislation of a certain kind. It seems to me that so far as the Arbitration Act is concerned, the difficulty has not been with that Chamber so much as with this Chamber. The difficulty which the Government have to face whenever there are measures of a controversial character is to know how they are to be disposed of within a reasonable period of time. Unfortunately there are in this Chamber some hon. members who, one would almost imagine, think they have an unlimited overdraft upon eternity, judging by the lengthy way they address themselves to almost every subject that comes up. We have had an instance only to-day, where a Bill for a small railway of 50 miles in length has absorbed the energies of some of the members of the House for the greater part of the sitting. I cannot regard that sort of thing as a practical way of doing business, and I do not know that the result would be any different if the arguments for and against a measure were compressed into a smaller space—I do not think the result would be affected in the slightest degree.

Mr. Collier: You would gag us right off then.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I rather fancy that instead of any gagging, the deliberations of this Chamber would under those circumstances be more closely followed outside. If the arguments were compressed into reasonable length the busy man outside could find time to master the subject fully and follow the speeches of hon. members.

Mr. Scaddan: You have been pretty lengthy in more ways than one.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have had to be pretty lengthy occasionally when dealing with such measures as the Licensing Bill and the Redistribution of Seats Bill. But most hon. members will admit that so far as even important measures of that kind are concerned I try to compress everything needful to be said into the smallest compass. I speak from some practical experience when I say that what does frequently deter us in bringing forward measures is the uncertainty as to when we shall be able to get through the work of

the session, owing to the very great length of the debates. One does not wish to interfere in the slightest degree with freedom of speech, but one could hope that freedom of speech were not incompatible with brevity and directness of utterance. As to what the leader of the Opposition said in reference to the words "clear annual value," these words are not causing any difficulty at present in regard to the placing of names on the roll. All the Electoral Department has to do is to place persons on the roll whose premises have an annual rental of £25 or, if this Bill is passed, of £15. Assuming that the Electoral Department does not take into account the rates made payable—as a matter of fact in this country in the majority of cases rates are paid by the landlord and we do not take into account the question of whether the tenant pays the rental or is in his own premises—the Electoral Department ascertains what rental the premises would command, following the usual custom in Western Australia of the landlord paying the rates and the tenant only paying the rate value. I should not object to an amendment of that kind if any difficulty were being caused. But I have ascertained that the putting of people on the rolls is working with perfect smoothness, and that no one is kept off on account of any difficulty as to whether rates were to be taken into account or not. I do not consider it necessary to make any re-arrangement.

Mr. Scaddan: As a matter of fact there were a lot of names struck off the roll on account of that interpretation.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think so.

Mr. Scaddan: Yes, there were.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It must have been before my time.

Mr. Scaddan: Yes, it was when Mr. Keenan was Attorney General. That interpretation was sent out to the registrars.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Within the last 12 months or more, I understand that there has been no difficulty at all on that score and consequently no change has been made. I am anxious to get the Bill through to-day so that it

may be in another place on Tuesday, but in the meantime I will look into the matter and confer with the leader of the Opposition, and if it should be necessary to get an amendment made I can arrange to have it made in another place. There is one other point I would like to deal with, and that is a question by an hon. member as to what would be done in the event of another place not passing this measure. I refuse altogether to contemplate that contingency; it will be time enough to deal with it when it arises. I hope that on this occasion it will not arise, but that the opportunity for reflection given to another place has been well availed of, and on this occasion the amendment will become law.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is my duty to point out before the question is put that, this Bill being an amendment of the Constitution, it must be carried by an absolute majority of the House. If there are the requisite number of members in the House and there are not any noes I can conclude that there is an absolute majority in favour of the Bill.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already stated, that unless a division is called for, I have only to be satisfied that there is an absolute majority present. I am satisfied that there is an absolute majority of members present, and on the voices that there is more than an absolute majority of members in favour of the Bill.

Question passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Taylor in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of 63, Vict., No. 19, Sec. 15:

Mr. SCADDAN: After the assurance given by the Attorney General, that he would look into the question as to the interpretation of the word "clear," he (Mr. Scaddan) did not intend to move an amendment.

Mr. BOLTON: Would the Attorney General give some indication as to what action he would take if an amendment

was moved in another place? It was common report that members of another place were going to amend the Bill by substituting £20 for £15. If that compromise was going to be accepted it was well that members should know beforehand, because it would be waste of time to reduce the qualification by that small amount. He did not know whether the Minister was aware of it, but it was common knowledge that the amount would be amended to £20, and if that were done it would lead to a very big discussion when the Bill was returned.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was to be hoped that the rumour, of which he had not previously heard, would prove to be without foundation. If it should unfortunately happen that such an amendment was made the matter would have to be decided by this House, but the Government had given no consideration to anything of the sort. They anticipated that on this occasion the Bill would become law, and he trusted that that anticipation would be realised.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment; and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. J. L. Nanson) moved—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am satisfied that there is more than an absolute majority of the House present, and in the absence of any Noes I declare the third reading carried.

Question passed.

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Railways: Return showing amount received by Railway Department for postal work performed at each station by railway officers for twelve months ended 30th June, 1910. (Ordered on motion by Mr. Johnson.)

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. District Fire Brigades Act Amendment.

2. Fremantle Harbour Trust Act Amendment.

Received from the Legislative Council.

BILLS (7)—RETURNED FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

1. Health (with amendments).

2. Katanning-Nampup Railway (without amendment).

3. Quairading-Nunajin Railway (without amendment).

4. Wagin-Dumbleyung Railway Extension (without amendment).

5. Wickepin-Merredin Railway (without amendment).

6. Tambellup-Ongerup Railway (without amendment).

7. Northampton-Ajana Railway (without amendment).

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. J. L. Nanson) in moving the second reading said: The object of the Bill is to provide that where the lessee of a Crown lease has executed a mortgage, and the lessee becomes entitled to a Crown grant in fee simple of the land comprised in such lease, the mortgage shall be transferred and apply to such Crown grant and to the land granted in all respects as if "Crown grant" had been referred to in the mortgage. This is, I believe, the law at the present time, but there is some difference of opinion upon the subject. Some authorities lean to the belief that it is advisable to place the matter beyond all doubt and make this amendment to our Transfer of Land Act. A similar clause is to be found in the Victoria Transfer of Land Act. This Bill was originally introduced by the member for Dundas at the request of the Associated Banks, who deal largely in advances on Crown leases since the Transfer of Land Act Amendment Act of last year. It was the intention of the Government in any

case to have introduced this amending measure, and when, owing to what we hope to be the early close of the session, it became necessary to give precedence to all Government measures, and there was a doubt as to whether measures introduced by private members would be passed through during what remains of the session, the Government took over the measure from the member for Dundas. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Taylor in the Chair.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Mortgage of Crown lease to be transferred to Crown Grant:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL moved an amendment—

That the word "lessee" in line 1 be struck out and "holder" inserted in lieu.

It was possible that the lessee might be a holder by transmission or assignment, and it would be better to say "Where the 'holder' of a Crown lease has executed a mortgage."

Mr. Holman: Would "holder" include "lessee"?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

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

Clause 3—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 5.9 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 31st January, 1911.

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

PETITION — WONGAN HILLS-MULLEWA RAILWAY BILL.

Hon. W. PATRICK (Central) presented a petition from the Midland Railway Company praying that the Wongan Hills-Mullewa Railway Bill be referred to a select committee and that the company might be represented by counsel and call and examine witnesses.

Petition received and read.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: Report by the Chief Electoral Officer on the principal electoral systems for the election of members of the Legislature in self-governing countries.

QUESTION—OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER (without notice) asked the Colonial Secretary: Will the Government take into its early and serious consideration the necessity for amending the provisions of the Criminal Law with a view to providing such a punishment in the case of offences against children as will have the effect of checking the recent increases in crimes of this nature?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The Government some little time ago gave notice of their intention, in