

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 14th December, 1909.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the President: The Public Accounts for the Financial Year, ended 30th June, 1909, accompanied by the nineteenth report of the Auditor General.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Public Works Department Report for 1908-9; 2, Report of the Chief Harbour Master for the year ended 30th June, 1909; 3, Norseman Local Board of Health By-laws.

QUESTION—TROPICAL CULTURE.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER (without notice) asked the Colonial Secretary: When will the papers by Mr. Despeissis with reference to tropical culture be tabled?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: I informed the member yesterday that I would make inquiries as to when the papers would be ready. I have done so but have not yet received an answer. When the papers are ready I will inform the hon. member.

QUESTION—RAILWAY, WORKSHOPS FIRE, INSURANCE.

Hon. B. C. O'BRIEN asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, In view of the serious loss to the State caused by the fire at the Midland Junction Workshops, is it the intention of the Government to continue the policy of departmental insurance in connection with all railway properties? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to extend the principle to

the Public Works and other departments? 3, To what extent have the Government already gone in the direction of departmental insurance of their properties in the various departments?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, It is now in force. 3, It has been adopted generally.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

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

That the Standing Orders relating to public Bills and the consideration of Messages from the Legislative Assembly be suspended during the remainder of the session, so far as is necessary to enable Bills to pass through all their stages in one sitting and Messages to be taken into immediate consideration.

This was the usual motion submitted at the end of the session so as to enable Bills to pass through all their stages in one day, and for Messages to be considered forthwith. When approaching the end of the session a number of Messages passed backwards and forwards between the two Houses, and it was necessary that consideration should be able to be paid to them at once.

Hon. C. Sommers: When do you propose to prorogue?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY hardly liked to venture an opinion. It was anticipated at one time that we would prorogue at the end of the week, but nothing definite could yet be stated.

Question passed.

MOTION—COLLIE COALFIELD, REWARD TO DISCOVERER.

Hon. E. McLARTY (South-West) moved—

That in the opinion of this House the services rendered to this State by Mr. A. Perren, the discoverer of the Collie Coalfield should be recognised.

He said: In moving the motion standing in my name I desire to inform members that I do not intend to take up the time of the House for many minutes. I feel keenly that some recognition should be paid to the services rendered to the State

by Mr. Perren, who was undoubtedly the discoverer of the Collie coalfield. Members will remember that some time ago a substantial sum was offered by the Government as a reward for the discovery of 1,000 lbs. of coal within 50 miles of a seaport. Mr. Perren was the first to discover it. He was shepherding a flock of sheep on the banks of the Collie, and happened to see something that occurred to him as likely to be coal, although he had no experience of the mineral. He tried it in the fire and found it was very good fuel. He did not make the discovery known, however for some months.

Hon. W. Patrick: What was the date of the discovery?

Hon. E. McLARTY: I cannot tell exactly but should say between 14 and 15 years ago. Sometime afterwards a search was made for coal, and it was reported that a find had been discovered. This, however, turned out to be incorrect. Then Mr. Perren confided in a friend, that he had discovered coal. He was perfectly satisfied that it was coal, and he told his friend that he knew where a coalfield existed. He took his friend for some 20 miles to the spot where he had found the coal, and showed him the exact locality. His friend came to Perth and laid the matter before the Government. Without going into more detail on the matter, I may say that a good deal of sharp practice was resorted to, and an endeavour was made to push Mr. Perren aside by other parties who endeavoured to gain the reward. At that time, as we usually have, there were a number of pessimists who said that coal would never be discovered in the State, that the alleged discovery was a hoax, and that whatever was found was of no commercial value. The late Mr. Venn, who was then Commissioner of Railways, took a great interest in the matter, however, and I am pleased to bring his name up in connection with the development of that field, for it was greatly owing to his enterprise and faith that the discovery was developed. He had a test made, and a large quantity of the coal was carted 27 miles to the South-Western railway. It was then proved that the article was of considerable value. Some

time afterwards the quantity of coal required to be raised in order to comply with the conditions of the reward was obtained, and naturally Mr. Perren applied for the reward to which he was entitled. There was some considerable delay and difficulty before anything was done in the way of paying the reward. The sum of £1,000 had been offered originally, and, I believe, the sum eventually paid was £500, and that only after a deal of struggling. The question arose whether Mr. Perren was entitled to the sum or the man to whom he had confided his discovery and whom he had taken to the spot. The Government got out of the difficulty by appointing a committee to go into the matter, and I believe that committee were satisfied that the other gentleman in question had taken an active part in bringing the matter under the notice of the Government, and, therefore, they decided eventually that the reward of £500 should be divided between that man and Mr. Perren. Naturally Mr. Perren was very dissatisfied. His claim as the discoverer was practically ignored, and he felt that he had not received the justice to which he was entitled. Whenever I have heard him speak of that matter since he has referred to the fact that £250 of his money was paid to the other party. He had a good deal of cause for complaint. The matter was settled in that way. What do we find to-day as the result of that discovery? Had there been no Collie coal in this State there is no doubt we should have had to pay scores of thousands of pounds more for imported coal than we have had to pay under present conditions. Now we are practically in an independent position, and I see that last week the output of coal from Collie was 25,000 tons. There is no complaint whatever as to the quality of the article. It is used largely for bunkering purposes, and, in fact, for other purposes, and so far as I am able to learn is giving perfect satisfaction. After the field had been partly developed the question arose as to the building of a railway line there, and we again found persons saying that the railway was not justified, that it would never pay, and that it was one of the

wildest schemes ever suggested. I saw in one of the papers the other day that the earnings of that line during the past week totalled £1,100. That is certainly a very good record for the Collie coalfield line. I need not again emphasise the value of the discovery to the State, but I do wish to emphasise the fact that Mr. Perren is the man who discovered it, and that the whole credit of the discovery is due to him. I am not going to ask hon. members to vote any large sum of money, knowing as I do that we have no money to spare, and that Mr. Perren is not in such circumstances that he wishes to go begging to the Government. All he desires is that his services should be recognised, and the modest request he has asked me to put forward is that by way of recognition of his great services rendered he should be given a free pass on the railways.

Hon. C. Sommers: He never rides on the railways.

Hon. E. McLARTY: No; he lives peacefully on the banks of the Brunswick, 15 or 18 miles from Bunbury; and if the pass were given him he might go two or three times a month into Bunbury, and two or three times a year to Perth. It is not that he cannot pay for his passage on the railways, but he certainly deserves some reward, and his wishes appear to run in the direction of a free railway pass. It will cost little or nothing to the State, and will make a dissatisfied man feel perfectly satisfied with the recognition of his services. Other hon. members, as for instance, Mr. Clarke, are fully acquainted with the facts of the case, and perhaps they will have something to say on the subject.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Are there any other claimants?

Hon. E. McLARTY: None at all. The other person who received part of the reward is now dead. It is well known that Mr. Perren found the coal under the circumstances I have related. I beg to commend this motion to the favourable consideration of members.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West): I have much pleasure in seconding the motion. As Mr. McLarty said, I know

as much about Collie coal from its infancy as does anybody. Mr. Perren is one of those men who is somewhat suspicious yet, strangely enough, he committed a great error of judgment in trusting to the wrong man. Mr. Perren came to me some 15 or 16 months before anything was confidently known of the coal, and asked me certain questions in connection with the land regulations. He did not tell me exactly what he was after, and it was only from his remarks that I was able to challenge him and tell him that he believed he had discovered coal. He admitted it. I at once knew where the coal was, because I was almost as familiar with the runs as he was himself. Unfortunately for Mr. Perren he did not do as I wanted him to do, namely, go to Sir John Forrest and acquaint him of the discovery and get a minute made to that effect. Another person who had his head screwed on the right way bluffed Mr. Perren into taking him to the coalfield. From that time it was a matter of who should get in first, and it finished up in both of them laying claim to the discovery; but the other person, if he had been taken to the top of Mount Eliza, would have lost himself, so little did he know about bush work. An investigation was made into the claims, with the result that an award of £500, instead of £1,000, was divided between the two claimants. A great deal has been said about the Collie coalfields. I was one of the first adventurous few to put money into that field. We got together a little money, took out a party, and with the aid of a long pole discovered specks of coal in the middle of a pool not more than a stone's throw from the present Wallsend mine. Of course Mr. Perren had previously shown us the locality. These specks of coal came up on the stick, and we then put down a shaft and got into the present Wallsend seam. One of the difficulties we had to contend against was bringing the existence of coal under the official notice of the Government. One influential gentleman told me that I was as good as mad to attempt anything of the sort. That same gentleman, however, took the

matter up and brought it to a successful issue. Nevertheless, all that was done was to take out a Government party with a drill, and put the drill down our shaft into the Wallsend seam. I want to say in regard to Collie coal and its value to Western Australia that it is almost impossible to estimate that value truly. It is not a very high class fuel, but without it we would be having a hundred per cent. more for our imported coal. When firms in the Eastern States tendered for the supply of coal for the Government railways at a ridiculously low price, it was, of course, with a view to squelching Collie coal. We can safely claim for Collie coal that it has kept down the price of imported coal. I hope the House will agree to the motion and recognise the services rendered by Mr. Perren who will think more of a free railway pass than of a couple of hundred pounds. The only mistake he has made was in trusting to the wrong man.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT (South-West): I will only add a sentence or two to what has been said by my colleagues. I believe the facts as stated are absolutely correct. Mr. Perren stands unquestionable and unquestioned as the discoverer of that field. I will not say much about the gentleman who counted this as one of his triumphs, this leading aside of the worthy discoverer from the paths of common sense and reason, and inducing him to believe that he was his true friend. Anyone who knew that gentleman knows that in speaking he rarely expressed his real meaning. With regard to this discovery, it is surely one of the most important that has ever occurred in Western Australia. I am one of those who believe that its importance is only beginning to be recognised. There are even now in the laboratories of scientific men schemes for the employment of second class coals which, there is the highest probability, will entitle them to rank with the best. As a result of Mr. Perren's discovery we have the town of Collie, we have the mines themselves with their increasing output, and we have the fact

that it is mainly owing to the existence of that field that we are able to purchase imported coal for our railways, or for private consumption, at a moderate figure. Without this Collie coal we should be absolutely at the mercy of certain people not given to merciful feeling where profits are concerned. What Mr. Perren asks is so small that one could almost have thought it would have been granted without reference to the House. I hope the House will support my hon. friend, and that the Government will favourably consider the request.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): I have much pleasure in supporting the motion. I think Mr. Perren is entitled to be regarded as the discoverer of this field, and I think it would be a graceful act on the part of the Government to accede to the request.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary debate adjourned.

BILL.—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous sitting.

Title:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Progress had been reported at the last sitting in order that certain information might be obtained with regard to a statement made by Mr. Moss that a creditor could not take a conditional purchase holding as security. At the time Mr. Moss made that statement he (the Colonial Secretary) thought the member was in error, and he found that a conditional purchase could be taken by a creditor, as well as any other property, conditional on the approval of the Minister being obtained, so that it could be ascertained whether the improvement conditions had been fulfilled.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment; the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Read a third time, and passed.

BILL—GOOMALLING—WONGAN HILLS RAILWAY.

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

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): In moving the second reading of this Bill it is not necessary for me to go into the whole case of agricultural railways, as I did that fully in introducing a Bill of this kind a few days ago, namely, the Bill for the construction of a railway from Boyup to Kojonup. This is a proposal to construct a railway from Goomalling in a North-Easterly direction to Wongan Hills, a distance of about 40 miles. Members will see the route of the railway on the litho on the wall of the Chamber and also on the plan which is on the Table. This is a line, as I have already said, to construct 40 miles of railway in a North-Easterly direction from Goomalling to Wongan Hills. No doubt it will be the first section of a railway to connect the main system of railway to the Geraldton-Cue line. If we extend the line in a Northerly direction it will tap the Geraldton-Cue railway at Mullewa, or thereabouts, connecting at the terminus of the line at Wongan Hills, and opening up a lot of fine country—some of it slightly on the dry side—right on almost to Mullewa. It will also shorten the distance by some 40 miles, that is, the distance from the capital to the Murchison goldfields. Members have already the printed particulars before them, setting out a good deal of information in respect to the three lines of railway. For instance, as I have already mentioned, this line will be 40 miles long. The distance from Fremantle to the commencement of the line is 117 miles. The railway will be built on the 3ft. 6in. gauge, that is the standard gauge throughout the State, and it will be constructed with 45lb. rails. The ruling grade will be 1 in 40, and the radius of the sharpest curve will be 15 chains. The estimated cost of the construction is set down as follows:—construction, £30,000; rails and fastenings, £25,000; making a total of £55,200. The cost per mile will be £1,380. There are, along the route of

this railway, 80 resident occupiers, and in regard to the acreage held by them the information was not obtainable when the particulars were printed, but I think I shall be able to give those particulars later on. The land under cultivation this year is 10,000 acres, and the average yield of wheat last season, which hon. members will remember was rather an indifferent season, was about 10 bushels per acre. The land open for selection within 15 miles of the line is 344,300 acres; the land alienated within 15 miles of the line is 493,700 acres, while the large holdings within 15 miles of the line, that is, holders of 4,000 acres and over, 109,700 acres; while the area of pastoral land within 15 miles of the line is 293,300 acres. The pastoral leases amount to 51,000 acres, and there is an area reserved of 9,360 acres. The total area of land within the influence of the proposed railway is 838,000 acres, made up as follows:—130,000 acres of first class land, 131,000 acres of second class land, and 266,000 acres of third class land. As I already remarked in introducing the Boyup-Kojonup Railway Bill, the cost of these agricultural railways has increased somewhat since they were first introduced; that is, the cost, as compared with building the light agricultural railways some four years ago has increased, and I explained how that increased cost was brought about. For instance, the earthworks on this line will cost £110 per mile extra to that of the railway lines I was referring to just now, the Goomalling-Dowerin, the Wagin-Dumbleyung, and the Katanning-Kojonup railway lines. Those lines were practically laid on the surface, but it was found that they were not altogether satisfactory for reasons which I have already explained, and it has been decided to increase the standard, and in this case there will be an extra amount for earthworks of £110 per mile. Bridges and culverts £33 per mile—owing to larger waterways, the Goomalling-Dowerin line has practically no bridges on it, and a few culverts—plate-laying, £15 per mile, and the cost of labour having increased very considerably. Station buildings and connections will cost £30, and sleepers, which is a big item,

£100. The cost of the sleepers is a big item, because along this line, as I have already mentioned, native timber cannot be obtained. Half round sleepers have been used, and they cheapen the cost considerably, but as I said, there is no native timber suitable.

Hon. W. Kingsmill : Salmon gum.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : No timber that would be suitable, within an easy distance of the railway—suitable for railway purposes—therefore, it is necessary to put in sawn jarrah sleepers, which makes the cost so much greater for sleepers. The total expenditure on this line, as I have already mentioned, will amount to £1,380 per mile; the cost of the line I mentioned just now was something like £1,150 to £1,180 per mile. It is only proposed at present to extend this line to Wongan Hills, but the reports go to show that there is excellent country North of Wongan for about 40 miles, so that there is even better land ahead of the railway than the land traversed by the railway itself. Between Wongan and Goomalling there is some exceptionally good country, and a fair quantity of sand plain, as we have in every part of the State. Fifty per cent., that is about 40,000 acres, of the land is very good indeed. Speaking of the land between Wongan and Goomalling, this land has been surveyed by Messrs. Terry, Lewis and Camm, and a classification of the land 40 miles from Goomalling has been made. The report of the land classified by these officers states that 25 per cent. is good forest country, the timber consisting of gimlet, salmon gum and morrell; while 25 per cent. of the land is second class, the timber being york, salmon gum and jam. There is a fair amount of rocky country, and in many cases owing to that fact, the land is unsuitable for cultivation, but it is splendid for grazing purposes. The balance of the land is third class. The rainfall is estimated right through the district at from 10in. to 15in. It is not what you would call wheat country, but anything over 10in. is satisfactory for wheat growing and purposes of that description. At the terminus of Wongan Hills the average rainfall is 15in., but going further East it diminishes. There

is a considerable area of Crown land reserved at Goomalling. This will be available for town lots, and it is estimated to bring in several thousand pounds. A township has been surveyed at Goomalling, and when the lots have been sold it is anticipated they will realise a considerable sum. I have seen the reports of the surveyors mentioned, and I have come to the conclusion that the line is well worth building. While not running through fertile country from end to end, it will undoubtedly open up a big area of wheat growing country and enable the settlers already there to extend their cultivation, and will add materially to the area under cultivation; while no doubt the land further North, within 15 miles of the terminus, will be brought within the influence of the railway. That land is not classified to-day, but it will be brought into cultivation. I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE (North-East): I beg to support the second reading of this measure, one of the reasons being that stated by the Colonial Secretary, that the line is going in the direction of the Murchison goldfield. I think it is a good move to push on railways in that direction, especially as the line will pay from an agricultural standpoint. I do not know when these spur lines are going to stop. We get a batch of them every year, and I think many of them are, perhaps, worthy of the support of members. Introducing all these measures in a batch, as is being done at the tail end of the session, is scarcely fair to the House. It does not give members an opportunity of visiting the centres, nor does it give members much opportunity of finding out whether the lines are worthy of support or not. I look upon this railway as one which will open up a great mining centre, and one which will enable the Government to be goods and passenger carriers over the balance of their railway system, which at the present time is separated by the Midland Coy's line. I cannot help feeling however that the Legislative

Council should have more information with regard to such large public works. Of course this is not the Chamber which deals with finance, but I take it that the Legislative Assembly will pay a good deal of attention to the matter in that direction. At any rate I think this line is worthy of our support because, in addition to opening up a good deal of agricultural land, it will be the means of connecting Government main lines.

Hon. G. THROSSELL (East): I rise with pleasure to support the second reading of this Bill and in doing so I desire to say that it is not on all fours with the measure we passed the other day for the construction of a railway from Boyup to Kojonup. In that place there have been settlers for some three generations; in this instance we have a number of new settlers, and the land so to speak is newly discovered. We are told that there are something like 80 new settlers who will be served by the construction of this railway, and I am in a position to say that many of them are representatives of farmers in other parts of the Commonwealth, and they are working there to-day under great difficulties, having taken up land under the belief that this railway line would be constructed. I believe that the land there is admirably suited for settlement, and that it is of that nature which enables a large amount of inferior land to be sold with the good land. Objection has been taken in another place to the fact that the Midland Railway Company own a considerable amount of land which will be served by this railway. At first sight that seems to be a serious objection but it must be remembered that the object of an agricultural railway is to induce the population to create wealth from the soil, and reflection will show that the conditions under which the Midland Railway Company have sold their land will ensure settlement and development. We know that the Midland company have sold their lands on 15 years' terms, and at prices considerably in advance of those of Government land, and that a man who purchases from the Midland Railway Company is forced to improve his

land. Objection has also been taken to the fact that large areas were selected prior to the announcement of the intention to construct this railway. I held that objection too, but I am glad to say from enquiries which I have made that the selections are not as extensive, or as numerous, as I thought they were, and we need have no fear with regard to this matter as long as the department sees that the compulsory conditions are honestly and honourably carried out. I think it would be wise if we limited settlement for the time being to those who desire to settle on the lands and not throw the lands open under non-resident conditions, at any rate until the railways are well under construction, and then we could put such a price upon the land that would give us a better return. It must not be inferred, however, that I am opposed to the non-resident conditions; it goes without saying that a man living in Perth should be allowed to select land under non-resident conditions, and spend what money he can upon effecting improvements, but we should see that these improvements were carried out. As long as the compulsory conditions of improvement are insisted upon I do not think that any great harm can follow. I know of many men who have come from the Eastern States and who have been working for two or three years on the land in this country, and who are looking hopefully forward to the construction of this railway. They are men who are the very best that we can desire to have settled in our State; they are men who sold out in Victoria and came here. This line will do a great deal of good, and I desire to say, as one who had something to do with the construction of the line to Goomalling, that our hopes are now being realised. We were laughed to scorn so to speak when we undertook that work and drew attention to the wheat lands which extended into that part of the State. The last two or three years have proved that a very large area indeed in those parts is fit for settlement, and they have proved also that there is a great quantity of land, which we knew nothing at all

about, capable of development. With regard to this line I desire to say that it will not be completed until it junctions somewhere with the Midland Railway. That was our intention when we decided to construct the Goomalling line. Possessing the knowledge of the country that I do, I look forward with confidence to the time when the Government will not rest content by allowing the railway to remain at the terminus it is proposed to carry it to at the present time, but will go on and take it to junction with the Midland Railway. I was pleased to notice that another place decided to allow a deviation of 10 miles. On inspection it will be found desirable to take advantage of that deviation so as to serve the greatest number of people. I have very great pleasure in supporting the Bill. I believe it will mean a large influx of people and people of the right sort.

Hon. F. CONNOR (North): It is my intention to support the measure before the House. I think I expressed my opinion the other night with regard to the construction of these railways generally, and especially those having for their object the development of the country. These are the railways which deserve the support of every member of Parliament; but while we are doing that I think perhaps it is the duty of members in this House representing places to which railways are not built, to draw attention to the fact that those districts have been starved. If every district had to be starved each would have to put up with it, but I think it is due to me, as representative of the Northern part of the State, after having expressed my views with regard to the railway policy of the Government, to draw attention to the fact that it is possible, while we are building these railways to agricultural districts, to do an injustice to other parts of the State. I have supported these railways, and I intend to continue to support them, but at the same time it behoves the Government in power to take into consideration the fact that there are other people who are not getting railways

built, and who require some consideration. I will mention an individual instance, and in doing so will bring under the notice of the House a case where I think a mistake has been made by the Government. Hon. members know that there is such a place as East Kimberley; and they know, I presume, that there has been in connection with the financial world in London some big operations, the sale of cattle stations, and they also know probably that there has been discovered in those parts a goldfield called Tanami. Let me tell hon. members that the Government are neglecting their opportunity and that they are allowing the South Australian Government to walk all round them. I think I have the right to say this and the hon. member opposite need not snigger and laugh. I am talking common sense; it is a serious position, and if we are going to allow South Australia to get control of the trade which the Bovril Company will bring to Australia, well then we shall be permitting what should not be. There has also been a large amount of money spent in connection with the putting down of a bore at Wyndham; that bore reached a depth recently of 1,400 feet when the work was stopped.

The Colonial Secretary: The departmental officers reported that there was no use continuing it.

Hon. F. CONNOR: Which one?

The Colonial Secretary: The bore you refer to.

Hon. F. CONNOR: Then why was it started? It cannot be remedied now, but I wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that this bore was to have been sunk to a depth of 3,000 feet on the recommendation of Dr. Jack, who declared that it should not be started unless it was put down to that depth. By some management it has cost more than should have been the case, and now the work of boring has been stopped and the plant which was suitable for sinking to the full depth has been removed. "Don't start it unless you put it down 3,000 feet" was Dr. Jack's advice. They had tremendous difficulties to overcome before they got into

settled country and the very moment they reached that settled country, where they found that their greatest difficulties were overcome, instructions were issued that operations should cease. Moreover, they knew exactly after these great difficulties had been overcome, how much it would cost to sink to the depth at which Dr. Jack said the water would probably be found. There are two points that the Government ought to have given consideration to, one is to make sure of getting a sufficient water supply in Kimberley and secure the trade in connection with the Bovril Company and also the Tanami goldfields, which might develop into a place of importance but which would at any rate be a goldfield which for many years to come would attract a number of people. Now it was found that the South Australian Government were working their eyes out to find a port for it; they had sent men out to construct roads and put down wells, and in fact were doing those things which our Government should have taken in hand. These are the two matters which are deserving of consideration by the Government.

The PRESIDENT: Perhaps the hon. member will come back to the Bill.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I digressed so as to impress upon the Government the fact that if they expect support for these agricultural railways, and which members will generally commend them for constructing, they should also remember that there are other parts of the State which require consideration, and more consideration, than has been given them in the past.

Hon. B. C. O'BRIEN (Central): On similar grounds to those advanced by the hon. member, I desire to support the Bill. It has my hearty support, but as Mr. Connor has pointed out, there is just that feature of railway construction in this country that many areas needing consideration do not always get it. I do not begrudge the Southern districts all the railways and good roads they can get, but there is this fact staring us in the face that many people get railways at their front doors and are not satisfied until they get them

at their back doors also. In the South they are getting a network of railways, and it is time the Northern areas got consideration in that respect. I am aware there are three railways proposed in the Central Province, but they are only short extensions. From my knowledge of the country beyond Goomalling and of the areas extending to the North, I think this railway is justified, and I am pleased to support it; but at the same time there are some little extensions I hope will be favourably considered by the Government if they remain in power in future. As Mr. Connor has pointed out, members representing the Northern provinces have always given hearty support for railways for the Southern districts, and I hope the Government will not forget, when we bring our railway projects before them, to give us the same support. I refer to one or two areas, for instance an extension of the present Northampton line, and also an extension of the Upper Chapman line. There are magnificent areas to be opened up by these railways, and if the Government, instead of buying back estates, would spend the money in extending railways into these areas a great deal more good would be done. We have millions of acres of agricultural, pastoral, and mineral lands awaiting railway communication, and I do not think there is any need for spending money on buying back estates. Let us put the money into railways and roads, and we will find we can settle our own people on our own virgin country. I hope this railway to Wongan Hills will extend many miles beyond Wongan Hills, to the magnificent areas yet to be exploited. I will always give my hearty support to any extensions of this railway.

Hon. T. H. WILDING (East): I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill. I have driven through this country from Goomalling to Wongan Hills on two occasions, and I have met men there settled on the land, and a finer class of settler we could not wish to see on the lands of the State. It is wonderful to see the development that has taken place. When I first went out, 18 months ago, they were developing the land with a

view to the railway coming along to get their produce to the market, and in August last when I went out again they were still developing the country and clearing large tracts. If the railway goes through, as I feel sure it will do, there will be large quantities of produce to come over it straight away. That being so, I am quite sure members of the House will realise that this railway is necessary. I have not travelled much further North than Wongan Hills, but I understand there are 30,000 acres being made available for selection in that direction. Mr. Sommers tells me there are 200,000 acres. I believe that still further North there are areas suitable for settlement, so this railway is not only for Wongan Hills but for the country beyond. I feel sure members will support the construction of the railway.

Hon. W. PATRICK (Central): It is not necessary to say much in support of this measure, seeing the support the Bill has received from practically the whole of the House. I can only say I support it with no reservation, except that I think the last six or seven miles of the railway should go on the Western side of Wongan Hills instead of on the Eastern side. I notice there is ample provision made in the Bill for deviation, but it is possible some Government officers on account of slight difficulties in construction may report against carrying the line to the West side, and I would like to express the opinion that the mere fact that there are 70 or 80 settlers on the West side, where there is the better rainfall, while there are few settlers on the East side, appeals to me and leads me to hold that the line should go on the Western side of the hills. So far as extending the line goes, it will really make no difference on which side of the hills it is built. No doubt there is a large area of country to the North to be reached by an extension from either the East or the West side; but there is this to be said in favour of constructing the line on the West side, that at some time in the future it will be necessary to extend the Bolgart line and it would be unwise to build two parallel lines running North. It would

be much better for the two to junction so that neither of them would be a dead-end. Of course when this line reaches the Cue railway it will cease to be a spur line, and the other railway we are likely to consider this afternoon will be a loop line from the beginning. I do not agree with Mr. Connor that the Government have neglected the North of the State. At present they are building a railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar, one of the most expensive railway projects at present in hand; and I would remind Mr. O'Brien there is provision for £55,000 on the Loan Bill to extend the railway from Northampton to the Murchison river to open up a large extent of fine country. In fact I think the House and the country ought to be very pleased indeed we have a Government in power who have done so much for the development of the country through the building of railways. I think in the future the Moore Government will be known as the "railway-building and land settlement Government." I think that is the best thing they could be known by, at any rate it would be much better than to be known by passing legislation which might not be agreeable to everyone. Another argument that will make me vote for almost any railway going through the country, especially Government country, is that the cost of building railways particularly during the last few years, has been little more than the cost of building good macadamised roads. We all know that the present policy of the Government, in which they cannot help themselves, is to spend as little as possible on roads. In future, instead of main roads being macadamised roads, they are going to be railways. I have much pleasure in supporting this railway, and for the little time I may be in Parliament—I cannot say whether I will be returned again, but I intend to try to be returned—I intend to support any measure for the construction of a railway that goes through country with sufficient rainfall to grow wheat or support mixed farming.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (in reply): In reply to some remarks made by certain hon. members as to the short

time given for the consideration of these Bills, it is hardly a fair statement, inasmuch as the railway we have now under consideration has been talked of and practically announced for the last three years. Indeed it was publicly announced in the Premier's pre-session speech 18 months ago. Although the Bill has only reached the Legislative Council to-day it cannot be said that members have not had sufficient notice; because if they had so desired they could have gone over the country. Again, as Mr. Patrick just now remarked, a railway does not cost much more than a macadamised road. This railway will cost something like £17 a chain for construction, while a 10ft. or 12ft. properly macadamised road will cost £10 to £12 a chain. The rails and fastenings cost £25,000, but they will bring their money any time, and if necessary they can be taken away again. The greater portion of the cost of construction lies in the sleepers, and they are worth the money again if removed. So the country will not be taking a great deal of risk in building these lines. Although the Bill has only been here to-day, hon. members have had ample notice of it, and I do not think there is any need for complaint in that direction. In regard to whether the line should go the East or West side of the hills, a deviation was allowed for in another place to the extent of 10 miles, and the Minister for Works promised that further investigation would be made, and if it were found desirable to put the line on the Eastern side he would have it done, but if not it would go on the Western side. However, he promised proper inquiry would be made, and that is why the 10-mile deviation was fixed in the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—DOWERIN-MERREDIN RAILWAY.

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

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) in moving the second reading said: Let me repeat again that it is unnecessary for me now to weary the House by going into the full particulars of the policy of constructing these light agricultural railways. I went fully into the reasons which justify the Government in continuing this policy when speaking to the second reading of the Boyup-Kojonup railway. The Bill now before the House is a somewhat bigger proposition than that previously dealt with. It consists of asking for authority to build 92 miles of railway, designed to tap the area outside of the present goldfields railway. The survey is carried out almost parallel to the goldfields line on the recommendation of a board consisting of Mr. Paterson, manager of the Agricultural Bank, Professor Lowrie, Director of Agriculture, Mr. Johnston, Surveyor-General, Mr. Muir, Inspector of Engineering Surveys, and Mr. Terry, a licensed surveyor, who has had a good deal of experience in that district. The board reported on the proposition, and as a result a survey has been carried out in accordance with their recommendation. This railway will run from Dowerin at the one end to Merredin at the other, and couples up the system from Northam right through to the goldfields line. It is probable that the extension of the Wickepin line will also junction with the goldfields line at Merredin. If members will again refer to the particulars given on the printed sheet they will see that the line is 92 miles in length, the route being shown on the map. There is a five-mile deviation allowed from a marked line to the North, East or West. The deviation is limited in this Bill to five miles, whereas in the last one dealt with the deviation was 10 miles, for the reasons I stated. The distance from Fremantle is 126 miles to Dowerin and 180 miles to Merredin. The ordinary light railway 45lb. rails will be used, and the cost of construction is estimated to be £73,600, while the rails and fastenings will cost £58,000, or a total of £131,600, showing an average of £1,430 per mile. This is slightly more expensive than the line just dealt

with. The average yield of grain last season per acre is estimated at 14 bushels—a very nice average. The land open for selection with 15 miles of the line totals 1,311,000 acres, while the land alienated within the same distance of the line is 398,000 acres. The large holdings within 15 miles of the railway are practically none except grazing leases which total 30,000 acres. The pastoral land available within the same distance of the line totals 847,600 acres, and as members know that land can be resumed at any time on 12 months' notice. The area reserved is 42,000 acres, while the total area of land within the influence of the proposed railway is 1,751,000 acres. The land has been classified as 450,000 acres of first-class land and 786,700 acres of grazing land. The total cost of the railway, as I have already said, amounts to £1,430 per mile. The increased cost is largely due to the country over which the line traverses. I need not weary hon. members by repeating the statements I have already made showing why the increase has arisen in the cost now as compared with what it was when the first section of the line was built about four years ago. The productiveness of this country is shown by the fact that the department have received a number of letters from different settlers all stating that they are most satisfied with the prospects. This is naturally, different country from that to be traversed by the Boyup-Kojonup railway, but it is very good land, although different in quality inasmuch as it is excellent for wheat-growing. It is estimated that the country is well within the rainfall sufficient for the successful growing of wheat. For instance, the rainfall at Mangowine, which is nine miles to the north of the 70-mile peg, has for the past 20 years been 11ins., of which 8½ins. fell between April and October. Mangowine is pretty well at the extreme point of this proposed extension, so we have a sure rainfall of 11ins., the major portion which falls during the time of the year when it is so necessary for wheat growing purposes. At Kellerberrin the rainfall for the past 14 years has been 11·8ins., of which

9½ins. fell between April and October. At Burracoppin the average recorded for the past 10 years is 10ins., while at Merredin, where the line junctions with the goldfields line, the average is 10·3ins. At Tammin, further West still, the rainfall averages 12½ins. The whole of this area, as will be seen, comes within a rainfall sufficient for successful wheat-growing purposes. At Yorkrakine there is a special settlement of 50 settlers. This place is situated midway between the Eastern goldfields line and the proposed line, about midway between Dowerin and Merredin. The settlers there have got a portion of their land under crop this season, and express themselves as quite satisfied with their prospects. Also in this area there is the settlement comprised of civil servants who have been retrenched. They will probably be not more than six or seven miles distant from the railway when it is built. There are a good many lots, some of which have already been selected, but a large area still remains to be cut up. It is expected that Merredin will become an important junction in connection with agricultural centres. The land available for selection consists of 1,311,000 acres within a 15-mile mark on either side of the railway; that is calculated as being the greatest distance from a railway at which wheat can be profitably grown. Within the area there are no less than 303,000 acres surveyed and ready for selection. This area will be thrown open for selection almost immediately, so that there is plenty of land not only fit for cultivation but already surveyed. The line will open up a fine stretch of agricultural land approaching nearly two millions acres, all of which is not good land, but the major portion is undoubtedly fit for wheat growing. Another feature in connection with this line is that it will facilitate the working of the railways, inasmuch as empty trucks returning from Kalgoorlie and the goldfields generally can be shunted off there, be laden with produce, and taken to Perth or back to the goldfields. It will enable wheat, chaff, flour, etcetera, to be put on the market at Kalgoorlie at a much

less rate than is at present the case, for it will save 50 miles of railway and give quicker despatch to the people who grow it. I have very much pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. G. THROSSELL (East): I regard this line as one of the most important agricultural lines ever proposed in Western Australia. We are told we are dealing with over a million acres of land, 450,000 acres of which is classed as first-class. The information before us is most unreliable, for it says there are 80 odd settlers, and that the average yield is only 14 bushels. I should say—and I speak from what I know—that if one were to multiply the number of settlers by three, and put down the yield at 20 bushels instead of 14, it would be much nearer the mark. From information which has come to hand, the peculiar richness of the soil in that district causes the enormous yield. Accounts from those who have seen the land are most encouraging, for they say that from 25 to 30 bushels are being reaped this year, and we are told by an expert like Professor Lowrie that a man after harrowing for three years can get from 14 to 16 bushels. I do not know the secret of the soil, but I know that the land is of peculiar quality, marvellous for its production in cereals. With regard to the 450,000 of first-class land the State should certainly be given some return. Roughing it out I see that the line will cost 6s. per acre upon the 450,000 acres of first-class land, and it seems to me not good business that we should give away our lands and get nothing back towards paying for the railway. I am inclined to the view that the first-class lands thrown open should bear one-half if not the whole of the cost of the line. As I have already said, this would only amount to about 6s. per acre. The land to-day in that district is changing hands on the idea that the line will be constructed. Not an axe has been heard in the forests and the land has not been touched, yet men from the Eastern States are there now who are looking for suitable holdings, and men who have obtained land for 10s. an acre,

with twenty years terms, are now asking £1 an acre for it, and there is no doubt that they will be able to get that sum. Now I say that the State should get back double that return. While strongly in favour of this line I desire to say again that there is a danger in connection with it. This danger does not apply to the Wongan Hills line, where the rainfall is good and safe. But in respect to this particular line we may bring disaster on some of the settlers, as was the case in South Australia, by inducing them to go too far East out of the rainfall. I would like to impress upon the Government the necessity of instructing the Lands Department, and Mr. Paterson's department, to protect the settlers from themselves so that they shall not be allowed to settle outside the safe rainfall. Otherwise we shall be spoiling a noble plan. I am sure that with these 450,000 acres of first-class land thrown open we shall have a very large number of good settlers pouring in upon us. Another thing to provide for is that these settlers shall not get too land greedy and, taking advantage of our liberal provisions, select more land than they can work. I am not against the large farm and the large holding, but certainly, within the sphere of our railways, for the construction of which we are borrowing money, our chief object must be to settle the largest number of people under the safest conditions. I cannot help observing how lightly the Minister for Lands deals with the fact that we have 20 million acres of land for settlement, and that we settled one million acres last year. Would it not be almost ironical to suppose that in 20 years time we would not have any land left? I am in a position to know, and the Minister for Lands knows even better than myself, that many men are obtaining a splendid living on 500 acres. The problem is as to what area in a given district is required to keep a family. In the Avon Valley 2,000 acres will bring in from £1,000 to £1,500 per year net. And we must remember that we are dealing with land on different lines from those prevailing in the old days, that in fact 2,000 acres of land to-day is equal to 4,000, 6,000 or even 8,000 acres in the old days,

the reason for this being, of course, that to-day we have better methods of cultivation and have learnt the value of superphosphates to the land. I have no hesitation in supporting this line, believing as I do that it will be a great success—always with the caution that the Government will have to be very careful indeed as to how they induce new settlers to go beyond a safe rainfall.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): I am not going to follow the hon. member along his digression into the land laws, but I would like to emphasise one point he made, namely, in regard to the experimental area this line is going through. This and the line just previously dealt with will, I presume, be recognised as our first experiment in dry country.

Hon. W. Patrick: Not the last line.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: What I mean to say is that they represent our first large opening up of dry areas. The line previously dealt with runs into dry areas; this one will lie a great deal in dry areas, about which we have as yet very little data. It is very well for an hon. member to say that there have been very satisfactory experiments on land with 10 inches of rainfall, but this will be the first opportunity given to settlers to experiment on a large scale with dry land; and I would emphasise the hon. member's warning that it would be a good thing for the administration to give new settlers the benefit of all the knowledge they have when following the opportunities opened up by this line. Of course the experience will guide us with regard to any lines of the future to be pushed into dry country. The only other point I wish to refer to is this: We have broken new ground in these three railway proposals, and have gone in for long sections. This line is 90 miles long, the one just dealt with is 40 miles, and the one before that is 50 miles long. I want to emphasise the point that heretofore nearly all our agricultural lines have been hampered, handicapped, and prejudiced, by their shortness. I need not point out that the terminal costs are just the same on a short line as on a long one, and that a

certain part of every line, which is closest to its junction with the trunk line, must be unproductive. Our branch lines heretofore constructed have been 20 and 25 miles in length, and only over short distances have they been freight carrying, the other half being too near the trunk line to contribute towards a profit. Now we have rational projects, lines of sufficient length to make it worth while constructing them, and I hope this new departure will be followed in the future, and that instead of building a few miles of a line all future projects will be of sufficient length to make them reproductive.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): I want to put my colleague right in reference to the statement that this is the first experiment on dry land. This line will run parallel to the Eastern Goldfields line and we have had all the experiments necessary to show that agriculture may be safely followed along that line.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: I was speaking of agricultural experiments.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: So am I. We know that settlers up as far as Nangeenan are doing wonderfully well; we are going to be asked in the near future to approve of railways from various points, running some distance from the goldfields line, and parallel to it, and also from the Great Southern line. There is not the slightest doubt that these earlier spur lines have been too short; still it is understood that they are all to be looped up as the starting of main lines. I have great pleasure in supporting this railway, and I see no need to be afraid so far as its experimental aspect is concerned. The country has already been proved; history will repeat itself in a very short period and we will be asked to approve of several other lines running east.

Hon. E. McLARTY (South-West): I preferred to remain silent on the last railway Bill before the House, because I have no desire to oppose railway construction, and I presume the Bill was only brought in after careful inquiry. But I could not help feeling that it was a line that should have stood over for a little

longer, a line for which there is no immediate necessity. In respect to this Bill I am glad to support it, because during the last couple of days I have been in a position to secure reliable information in regard to this particular district, and it has surprised me to learn of the development in this part of the State. I am assured that in certain places 22 bushels to the acre have been cut, and this without a plough having ever been on the land; while on other land, properly tilled, the results have been magnificent. The point made by the Colonial Secretary in regard to this loop line is a strong one indeed, and one that should help to make the railways of the Eastern districts far more remunerative than in the past. If agriculture is going on, as it will go on, increasing for another three or four years, all these empty trucks from the goldfields will be wanted for produce for the coast, or else they will be returned over short distances to the goldfields loaded with produce; and so the enormous expense of railing these empty trucks all the way from the goldfields to the coast will be obviated. Settlement will follow this line, in fact there is a great deal of settlement along the route already. A short time ago I met a settler of three years' experience in these Eastern districts. He assured me that, having failed to get an area large enough to satisfy him closer in to Northam, he had gone out 60 miles East of that town, and, notwithstanding the depressing predictions of the people of Northam, who had told him that he could not expect to exist in the district, the results of his three years' work had been gratifying in the extreme. I believe the drawback out there is one of water, and that the settlers are experiencing a good deal of difficulty in getting a sufficient supply. Yet I suppose that after a time this trouble will be overcome as it has been in other places. I feel satisfied that the construction of this railway will tend largely to the development of agriculture in that part of the State. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Hon. T. H. WILDING (East): I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

I cannot say on this occasion that I have travelled over this part of the State, but at the same time I have a very good idea of the nature of the land, and I have been told by those on the land of the possibilities of the district. knowing this, and that there are so many people settled in the district, I feel it is necessary that this railway should go through. Mr. Throssell sounded a note of warning, but I do not think he meant it to apply to this railway; he was, I fancy, thinking of further lines to be proposed in the future. There is no doubt that at Kellerberrin wheat, and all kinds of cereals, have been successfully grown for many years past. Even in our worst years, when we have had only nine inches or ten inches of rainfall in the Northam district, good crops have been produced at Kellerberrin. The Macedons and Leakes have been up there for the past 30 or 40 years—to my own knowledge they have been there for the last 30 years—and they have never had a failure.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

Hon. T. H. WILDING: Continuing my remarks in connection with this railway, I would like to say that as far East as this line is going, to-day there are crops growing averaging 25 bushels, and only just this side of the Eastern portion of the line on its junction with the goldfields railway I am told they are reaping 35 bushels to the acre, which goes to show the quality of the land there. Something was said about water conservation, and the land not being suitable for the purpose; but I understand from men living in the district that there are plenty of places where water can easily be conserved by means of dams. It has yet to be proved on the plains. We can by sinking wells secure plenty of good water. This is a stretch of fine land, and if necessary we could run the main out from the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme and give the settlers the necessary water they require. The land itself is so good that the Government would be perfectly justified in doing this to bring about

the development of this fine belt of country. I heartily support the Bill.

Hon. S. STUBBS (Metropolitan Suburban) : I desire to support this railway, and my reason for doing so is chiefly because having had some experience with land situated at a distance of 17 miles from a railway, I am convinced that if it is the intention of this or any Government to settle people on the land, living at a greater distance than 10 to 12 miles from a railway, it is utterly impossible for them to make a success of their holdings. The distance for carting cereals, also for taking supplies and the necessary manure to make the land ready for the next season, is so costly that it is utterly impossible for people living at a greater distance than from 12 to 14 miles of a railway to make it pay at all. Notwithstanding that they may have a fairly good yield this year, next year the yield may be less if the rain does not come at the right time, consequently I am of opinion the building of these railways, especially at the low cost we have before us, and from the knowledge of previous railways which have been built, it would be wrong for any member not to support the construction of light lines of railway to the agricultural areas. I have also had the pleasure and privilege of going over the route this line will take. The magnificent land there only requires means of communication to carry the produce that the land can and will grow to the nearest market. I have much pleasure in supporting the line before the House, and I hope it will pass through all its stages and become an absolute fact within the next 12 or 18 months.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

All Stages.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) : In moving the second reading of this Bill I may say the terms of the measure are familiar to members of the House. This is the third occasion on which a similar Bill has been placed before them. When the land and income tax was first imposed members knew the principal measure was that contained in the Assessment Act, and provision for imposing the tax itself is contained in this small Bill before the House. When the measure was enacted two years ago, it was provided that the machinery portion should be in one Act, and the tax in another. All I need say in regard to this Bill is that it simply imposes the tax for another year of one penny on unimproved land, or a halfpenny on improved land, and fourpence on incomes. The Bill simply re-enacts the Act now in force. There is no alteration from the Act passed last year. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. G. RANDELL : (Metropolitan) I only want to mention one clause for which I do not see the reason. It says Section 56 is not to apply to the collection for the financial year ending 30th June, 1910.

The Colonial Secretary : It is the same as last year.

Hon. G. RANDELL : We have already got six months ; it will really be collecting it in two half years.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East) : I only wish to say that no good end would be served by debating the Bill now, but later on when the Roads Act Amendment Bill comes up, if the Government have not taken the action I propose to take, I shall do it ; that is to say, I shall propose that we follow the example of the wisest and oldest Legislature of Australasia, that of New South Wales, and relegate the whole taxation of country and urban lands to the local authority. This course was taken a couple of years ago in New South Wales by a very simple clause. The Legislature there proceeded on this basis, that it was unwise to duplicate all over the extensive territory of the State land taxation machinery, and that Legis-

lature got over the difficulty by providing that wherever a local authority corresponding to our roads board machinery, raised a certain minimum rate and thus relieved the Consolidated Revenue, the central treasury, of subsidies that local authority ousted the State land tax; the result being that one tax is collected at a cost of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., as against two taxes which amount to anything up to 15 per cent. When the Roads Act Amendment Bill comes on for consideration I shall ask the very serious attention of the Government and this House to the wisdom of following the example of New South Wales; but I recognise it would not serve any good end to delay the House over this Bill which under our present circumstances, seems absolutely necessary.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Read a third time and passed.

House adjourned at 4.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 14th December, 1909.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By Mr. Speaker: Public Accounts to 30th June, 1909, with Auditor General's Report.

By the Premier: (1.) Report of the Chief Harbour Master to 30th June, 1909.

(2.) By-laws of the Norseman Local Board of Health.

By the Minister for Works: Report of Public Works Department for 1908-9.

QUESTION—VACCINATION ACT PROSECUTIONS.

Mr. BOLTON asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that the Health Department are engaging counsel to appear for prosecutions under the Vaccination Act, thus putting defendants to unnecessary expense? 2, In view of the direct assurance given to myself that the Compulsory Vaccination Officer should conduct the prosecutions will he issue an instruction in accordance with that promise? 3, In view of the above mentioned promise will he favourably consider the remission of the 15s. 6d. costs in each of the four cases tried at the Fremantle police court on Wednesday, the 8th instant.

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, Arrangements have been made by the Medical Department for counsel to assist the Compulsory Officer, owing to the Magisterial Bench at Fremantle having recently held that that officer had no legal standing. 3, Enquiries will be made into the specific instances referred to, and the hon. member duly advised of the decision.

QUESTION—IRRIGATION EXPERT.

Mr. ANGWIN without notice asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has an irrigation expert been appointed for the Agricultural Department? 2, If so, what is the name of the expert? 3, Has the expert been in charge of irrigation works in any other part of the world outside of Western Australia; if so, what works? 4, Were applications for the position advertised for in the Eastern States as well as in this State. 5, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Arthur Henry Scott. 3, Yes; at Renmark, S.A. 4, No. 5, It was not considered necessary.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1, Leonora Tramways Act.
2, Cottesloe Beach Rates Validation.
3, Roads Act Amendment. Introduced by the Minister for Works.