

what I may term the anti-slum question. In a country of large spaces such as this is it is reasonable that every precaution against slums should be taken by the Government in the interests both of health and administration. Power to deal with this question is by the Bill conferred on the roads boards, and members will notice that an alteration is made to the schedule, is it reasonable that every precaution regarding tenements are brought under the control of the local authorities. Evidence as to the necessity for a provision of this character is afforded as close to the capital as the roads board district of Bayswater, where there is a short street known as Rhode-avenue. This thoroughfare, which is just a little north of the station, leads to nowhere, and the blocks on it are very small, having a frontage of something like 16 feet. On these, what I may term pocket-handkerchief, blocks tenements have been erected. Though this might be permissible in a business thoroughfare, if it was necessary to erect small shops, I think few will refuse to admit that it is deplorable in a country like this that dwelling houses for families should be erected under such conditions. Provision is also made whereby roads boards may maintain libraries and agricultural halls. Some members may be surprised at the inclusion of this provision, but it has been rendered necessary consequent on the merging of many of the smaller municipalities into roads districts. Those smaller municipalities had town halls, agricultural halls and libraries, but there is no provision in the existing Act to enable money to be spent in that direction. Examples are afforded in Broad Arrow, Menzies, Kookynie, Goon-garrie, Burbanks, Derby, Capel, Serpentine and other centres, and these show in a volume evidence of the necessity of providing an amendment to meet the case. These are the principal amendments. The remainder are of a minor character, such as the correcting of clerical or drafting errors, which have been disclosed in the actual working of the existing Act. In more than one instance these errors have been revealed through cases entering the Supreme Court. I beg to move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan) : I am glad the Bill has been brought in. I hope that when we get into Committee the Minister will see fit to accept an amendment to Clause 29. Subclause 2 of that clause provides that every allotment of a subdivision shall front on a road and, if less than half an acre in area, shall abut on a thoroughfare or way, which shall be of not less than 10 feet in width. Those who have had experience in the subdivision of land agree that these rights-of-way are very unnecessary.

The Colonial Secretary: We will accept that amendment.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE (South-East) : While very ready to support the second reading of the Bill, I trust that the Committee stage will be left until to-morrow.

The Colonial Secretary: It will certainly not be gone on with to-night.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*House adjourned at 10.8 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 11th December, 1912.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTION—RAILWAY EXCURSION FARES, GREAT SOUTHERN.

Mr. GREEN (for Mr. E. B. Johnston) asked the Minister for Railways:—1,

Is he aware that special cheap excursion tickets are issued from Albany to Perth for £1 second class return, and 30s. first class ? 2, Is he also aware that special cheap excursion tickets are issued from Perth to Albany for £1 second class return and 30s. first class return ? 3, As Narrogin is half-way between Perth and Albany, will he extend the benefits of special cheap excursion fares to country residents, on the basis already enjoyed by the people of Perth and Albany, by reducing the special excursion fares from the Williams-Narrogin district to Perth or Albany to 10s. second class return and 15s. first class return ? 4, If not, why not ?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied : 1, Yes, on certain days only. 2, Yes, on certain days only. 3, No. 4, The special fares between Perth and Albany are competitive fares, and it is quite impossible to apply a pro rata principle for intermediate stations with the present special excursion fares as the maxima. It is considered that the existing conditions are equitable, and rather than reduce intermediate fares, the through fares would have to be increased if this principle was adopted, as the revenue could not bear the loss.

#### QUESTION — ADVERTISEMENTS FOR ENGLISH EMIGRANTS.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Premier : 1, Is he aware that advertisements for pick and shovel men, farmers, and miners are being inserted in the Lancashire papers in the name of John Ridgway, shipping agent ? 2, Is he aware that this John Ridgway guarantees employment in Australia at 9s. a day ? 3, Has the Western Australian Government any connection with these advertisements ?

The PREMIER replied : 1 and 2, No. 3, No; but careful inquiries will be made into the circumstances surrounding the advertisement referred to by the hon. member.

#### QUESTION—TIMBERCUTTERS ON CROWN LANDS.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Lands : 1, What is the approximate

number of hewers cutting timber on Crown lands — (a) the number employed by the State Government; (b) the number employed by timber companies and other employers ? 2, Is he aware that the action of several of those companies is at present detrimental to the peaceful carrying on of the industry ? 3, In view of the above will he restrict the cutting of timber on Crown lands for State Government requirements only ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied : 1, (a) 232. Both the Railway and the Public Works Department have let contracts for hewing, and the number of men so employed is obtainable only from the Field Officers of the Forestry Department who will be asked to report. (b) 4,005 including sawmill hands. 2, I understand negotiations *re* the points in dispute are taking place. 3, The matter will be closely investigated and a report obtained.

#### QUESTION — COMMONWEALTH NAVIGATION LAW AND BRITISH MAILBOATS.

Mr. FOLEY asked the Premier : 1, Has he noticed in the *West Australian* the statements that the State Government has represented to the Federal Government the advisableness of exempting British mail steamers from the operation of the Navigation Bill when it becomes law ? 2, If so, has any stipulation regarding black labour been made ? 3, If not, will he give the House the opportunity of discussing same before the session closes ?

The PREMIER replied : 1, Yes. 2 and 3. No conditions were suggested, this being a matter for the Federal Government to decide when dealing with any exemption of the provisions of the Act.

#### QUESTION—SEED POTATOES FOR EASTERN STATES.

Mr. GEORGE (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands : 1, Is he aware that potatoes are being exported from

Western Australia for seed purposes to the Eastern States ? 2, Is he aware that these are being shipped from a declared infected port ? 3, Will he issue instructions that shipment from declared clean ports only will be permissible? If we are going to supply seed potatoes to the Eastern States, Western Australia being the only clean State, we should take the precaution that they are sent from ports declared to be clean so that there can be no question about them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied : I may state that potatoes are being exported under inspection and in compliance with the regulations.

Hon. J. Mitchell : Are the Bunbury potatoes being shipped from Fremantle ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : No; they are shipped in compliance with the regulations.

Mr. George : But they are going from an infected port, that is the point.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning) leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Male on the ground of urgent private business and two weeks granted to Mr. Layman on the ground of ill-health.

#### BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

##### *In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Holman in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill. (Hon. J. Mitchell had moved an amendment to strike out of lines 13 and 14 of Subclause 3 the words, "only from the profits arising from other transactions of a similar nature and shall not be deducted.") :

The PREMIER: If this provision were not in the Bill a person might easily evade paying income tax by arranging a bogus sale of his land at a loss to his brother or cousin or aunt, and then he would set that loss against his regular income from his proper business, or it might be from his salary or wages, just to evade the responsibility of the

income tax. That was undesirable. There was nothing that pressed heavily on the taxpayer in the provision. If it was apart from his business and he made a profit on one and a loss on the other he might set the loss on the one against the profit on the other and then pay income tax on the other. That was, if it was not a business that he was carrying on. The commissioner assured him that there had never been a single complaint against this provision which was in operation to-day.

Mr. GEORGE: The Premier was trying to make out that a lot of people would be bound to defraud the commissioner unless this provision was in the Bill. Whatever a man's position might be, and he had to sell his property, and lost on it, that man had the right to say he had lost that on his income. If he made a profit on it he had to pay income tax on it, whereas if he made a loss the amount he should pay should be reduced accordingly.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: There was nothing unreasonable in the amendment, which was to protect not the strong but the weak. If a man made a tremendous profit on his sale he would pay income tax. There were many people who had bought land here in the early days and had made nothing out of it. If people bought land for £50 years ago and sold it lately for only £60 they should be permitted to deduct what they had paid in rates and taxes.

The Premier: That is not the point under discussion; that has been decided long ago.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause as previously amended put and passed.

Clause 14—Exemptions:

Hon. FRANK WILSON moved an amendment—

*That in line 1 of Subclause 1 the words "not being a" be struck out and "or" be inserted in lieu.*

The object of the amendment was to put companies on the same footing as individuals who were trading.

The PREMIER: It had to be remembered that under the existing Dividend Duties Act companies paid one shilling

in the pound without any exemption and there was no complaint from hon. members that we were over-taxing the companies. We were now bringing them under the income tax and the same provision would prevail. There was no reason in favour of placing a company on the same basis as an individual. The company, unlike the individual, did not have to provide first of all for a family and there was, therefore, no reason why a company should be exempt, as was done in the case of the individual.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There never had been any reason, so far as he knew, why companies should be taxed differently from private firms which were trading. The Premier had forgotten how this came about. The dividend duties tax, introduced in the time of Sir John Forrest was first of all to impose taxation on mining companies and then it was discovered that it would be unfair to differentiate between companies, and eventually it was agreed that all should come under that dividend duties tax. He (Mr. Wilson) had always thought that we should legislate to bring all trading concerns under the one form of taxation; now we proposed to do it but we said a company must pay differently from other trading concerns. A place like Foy and Gibson's would be treated differently from a limited liability company like the Bon Marché, and yet they were both concerns which traded in the same line of business. It was quite true the exemption was to enable the individual to provide something towards his sustenance before he was taxed, but that individual would get the benefit of the exemption to the company just the same. A company, after all, was composed of a number of individuals more or less, and it mattered not whether it be the individual shareholder who was being taxed or a combination of shareholders. Later on he wanted to see taxation equal so far as all were concerned.

Mr. WISDOM: The Premier argued that no complaints had been made with regard to the imposition of the one shilling dividend duty in the past and therefore there was no reason why any exception should be taken to the imposition

of the one shilling income tax. The two were separate and distinct. In the imposition of the dividend duty that was only paid on dividends actually declared by a company, whereas in this case one shilling would be levied on the taxable income which included all funds. There was no reason why companies should be treated differently from individuals in this case. There were many companies which did not make large incomes, making only a few hundred pounds profit, and that would be taxed, whereas the private individual making the same amount might be taxed fourpence, and yet the others would have to pay one shilling in the pound. It was unfair that a private firm carrying on the same line of business as a company should get off with a sixpenny or sevenpenny tax, whereas a company would have to pay a shilling.

The PREMIER: The object of the exemption was to permit an individual to retain from his income sufficient to enable him to live in reasonable comfort. That did not apply to a company in the slightest degree. It was not a matter of exempting for the purpose of exempting. The object was a definite one. The exemption applied to an individual, and not to a company.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. FRANK WILSON moved a further amendment—

*That in line 3 of paragraph 1 the word "two" be struck out and "one" inserted in lieu.*

This would make the exemption £150 instead of £250. When the original measure was introduced some years ago £150 was proposed as the exemption, but this had been ultimately compromised by inserting £200, which was the amount today. Now the Premier proposed to increase it to £250. This could not be regarded as anything but a proposal to exempt a number of people who were political adherents of the party now in power. Even the Premier could not argue that we must allow a man £5 a week for mere subsistence. Hundreds of civil servants were earning less than £250 per annum. We were entitled, of course, to give ex-

exemptions from income tax for the subsistence of the individual, but we did not require to make that exemption so high that a man would escape his obvious responsibility to the State. There was no such exemption in any other State of the Commonwealth. In Tasmania, for instance, the exemption was only £100. He would not object to making the tax a fixed sum for incomes below £150, say, from 10s. to £1 per annum, in order to save costly assessments.

Mr. HARPER: In these times of financial stress £250 was too high an exemption, in fact, £150 would be a very liberal exemption. If the exemption were reduced to £150, a sum which would support an average family in comfort, we would bring in a large number of people who, under the proposed exemption of £250, would escape. There were many single men and women in the State who had no one to support, and it was only right that these people should pay their quota towards the revenue. We required every penny we could collect, and in the circumstances it was altogether unwise to make the exemption unnecessarily high. The difference between the exemption provided in the Bill and that proposed in the amendment would represent £30,000 or £40,000 per annum to the State.

The PREMIER: Surely it was not necessary for him to explain that he could not accept the amendment. The Labour party had made it part of their policy for many years past that the exemption under income tax should be £250. He was not prepared to admit that this was a sop to supporters of the present Government, nor did the leader of the Opposition believe it in his own mind. If he did the hon. member would retire from politics for, seeing that the great majority of the electors were in receipt of less than £250 per annum, how could the hon. member ever hope to get back to the Treasury bench if this was in reality nothing more than a sop? In some circumstances a person in Western Australia might earn £250 and show a profit, but that profit would not be so great that the person deriving it could look to retire at middle age. In many parts of the State £250 per annum was not a penny too much

to enable a person to live in reasonable comfort. There was no desire to make any person practise self-denial in order that he might add two or three shillings to the revenue of the State when so many were getting off very lightly in point of taxation. The exemption of £250 was a general exemption for all; but the person who was earning £5,000 per annum could, if he wished, live under just the same conditions as the person exempted on a salary of £250, and have the balance of his income for use in any other direction which he might desire. It could not be urged that such a person was not in a much better position to contribute to the revenue, seeing that it was the energies of other people rather than his own which had earned that income for him. It was unfair to make a person just on the living line contribute on the same basis as another person who was receiving a large income, not as the result of his own energies, but in direct consequence of the energies of other people whom we were going to tax.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Did the Premier think it was fair to exempt all people alike? It was true that the married man had a difficulty in getting along on a couple of hundred pounds a year, but there were some, and they were to be seen in the House every day, who were scarcely entitled to exemption, men who elected to remain bachelors all their lives. Those persons ought to be made to provide some special contribution to the revenue. It should be impossible for them to continue under this exemption of £250.

The PREMIER: The difficult point to decide was just when a person became a bachelor. Salaries did not decide the point, and if we were to tax bachelors we must also tax spinsters if they were wage earners.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh, no.

The PREMIER: The equality of the sexes must be recognised. Then the question would arise as to when a person became a spinster, because after a woman reached 21 she never became any older, and if the age was fixed at over 21 no woman would come under the operations of the Act. So far as bachelors were concerned their responsibilities must be considered. A man's responsibilities

might be just as great at 40 as though he had married when he was 20.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Oh, no.

The PREMIER: In many cases that was so, and it was a difficult question to decide fairly. In the payment of salaries no difference was made on account of a man being married or single, and we had no right in the process of taxation to interfere with his private life. If some men were foolish enough to be unmarried they suffered enough, and why add to their burdens? In any case, if a bachelor tax was to be imposed it could not come within the scope of a Land and Income Tax Bill. If he was going to apply a bachelor tax he would make provision that it should be earmarked for the Charities Department for the rearing of children in their own homes when they had lost their breadwinners, or for the maintenance of aged persons. In the majority of cases it was the bachelor and not the married man who eventually found his way into the old men's home.

Mr. HARPER: If a spinster received £150 a year, she certainly ought to be taxed the same as bachelors. If it was true that the bachelor more than the married man found his way into the old men's home, that was an additional reason why he should be taxed in order to make provision for his maintenance by the State in his old age.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. GEORGE moved an amendment—

*That paragraph 4 be struck out.*

There was no reason why the funds of all registered friendly societies and trade or industrial unions should be exempt. The Premier had taxed limited liability companies whose income was derived in the same way as that of a friendly society from the surplus contributions of its members.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. FRANK WILSON moved an amendment—

*That at the end of paragraph 4 the words "and mutual life assurance companies" be added.*

Equally with an industrial union or friendly society, mutual life assurance companies were formed for the general welfare of the people who subscribed to

their funds, and they directly assisted people to make provision so that they would not become a burden on the public funds. Those companies had no capital, as it was understood in connection with ordinary trading concerns. There were no shareholders and there were no dividends or privileges. The operations of those companies were absolutely on a mutual basis. The premiums charged were worked out by exact actuarial calculations, and anything which would disturb those calculations would necessarily compel a further adjustment of the premiums charged. It must be obvious that if at the age of 30 years a man was able to insure himself for £100 by paying a premium of £2 a year it was only by careful manipulation that the insurance company could make the premium of £2 produce the hundred pounds which might become payable at any moment. Of course, the income of the company had to be carefully invested in order to meet the liabilities from year to year. There were two factors which governed the solvency of institutions of this description, namely, the vitality of the members and the earning power of the money and its capacity to produce a sufficient return to meet all claims. It would be seen that the premiums were based on actual cost, and although companies of this description always provided a certain margin of safety—for instance although £2 was charged as a premium the actual cost to the society might be only 35s.—yet the other 5s. was merely taken from the member of the society for the time being to provide against any unforeseen contingencies, such as an epidemic or lower earning power of the funds of the society. Everything had to be adjusted at the end of the year, and when the liabilities had been provided for and the working expenses paid, the excess premiums contributed by the shareholders were returned to them in the shape of a bonus which was added to the original sum assured for or could be withdrawn in cash. In no sense could it be argued that the bonus granted to a member of a life assurance company was a profit such as was derived by the members of a limited liability company. The largest company operating

in this State, the Australian Mutual Provident Society, for instance, had an income of something like  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions from all sources and it distributed  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions each year to widows and orphans who, by the way, paid probate duty, and also to others who reached old age. Portion of the income, less expenses and outgoings, was added to the funds which the company had accumulated to meet its liabilities. At present the company had about £38,000,000 accumulated and every pound of it was earmarked on a scientific basis to meet the total liabilities of the concern, which amounted at the present time to about £64,000,000. A tax placed on the balance of the societies would be simply taxation of the contribution paid into the funds of the societies by members, not to earn profits, but to provide for those who were left behind in the case of death, or for their own old age.

The PREMIER: The provision was the same as in the present Act and it was not desirable to make an alteration. There was an exemption provided by which the individual could deduct the amount he paid by way of fire insurance premiums, and there was a further exemption for a life insurance premium. Mutual life insurance societies were just like other insurance companies. They drove as hard bargains as other companies, they carried on their work just as other companies and they distributed profits among their shareholders.

Mr. McDowall: Among their policy holders; not shareholders.

The PREMIER: Policy holders were in relation to these companies in the nature of shareholders. It was very infrequently that these societies distributed any cash through bonuses until the policy matured, and then of course it was distributed. But what did they do with the bonuses, in other words, their profits? They invested them frequently in Government stock, and, when they did so, were given exemption under the Bill. So because a person happened to be insured with a mutual life insurance society, we exempted his premium, and we were now asked to exempt his profits as a shareholder or a policy holder, and we

further exempted the profits invested in taking up Government stock. We did quite sufficient in exempting the individual's premium, and the investment of bonuses in Government stock. It had to be remembered that the bonuses distributed by these societies were only distributed after they had made up the whole of their business transactions; in other words, it was a distribution of their profits on their transactions not only in Western Australia but in the other States. The policy holder in Western Australia would only get a bonus after there was deducted from the profits the claims made by Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia, by way of income tax, and these claims were heavier than were proposed in the Bill. To carry on the affairs of Western Australia we should be put on a somewhat similar footing, and should tap the same source of wealth as the other States tapped. It was a fair proposition to do this. The tax was imposed in almost every part of the world against these societies, and it was decided by people who made almost a life study of the question that a tax of 1s. in the pound was equitable. Why should these companies demand exemption?

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Because they made no profits.

The PREMIER: Their profits were distributed by way of bonuses. Instead of distributing cash they made further investments, principally in Government stock, which investments were exempted under the Bill. In Victoria the tax was 8d. in the pound on 30 per cent. of the premiums, which was over the 1s. in the pound on 20 per cent. proposed in the Bill; Queensland charged 1s. on 25 per cent., as against 1s. on 20 per cent. proposed in the Bill, and South Australia charged 9d. in the pound on the actuarial profits.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You should encourage these companies.

The PREMIER: But at the same time the State needed encouragement to make the progress desired by all. Revenue should be got from sources that would not be unfair, and this was one of those sources. The bonuses would not be affected very

much. On the other hand, the amendment would deprive the State of a revenue of £1,600.

Mr. McDOWALL: Sixteen hundred pounds for the encouragement of thrift!

The PREMIER: One could be thrifty and yet earn a great sum of money. Thrift did not come into the question at all. There was no difference between a shareholder of an insurance company and a policy holder, because the latter was a shareholder, inasmuch as the profits of the society were distributed to him; and the tax of 1s. in the pound on 20 per cent. of the premiums was lighter than that imposed in some of the other States, and was a fair proposition, seeing that the societies only paid bonuses to policy holders in Western Australia on the result of business in other States, after deducting what was charged in Victoria and the other States.

Mr. McDOWALL: We should exempt mutual life insurance companies. The Premier had a totally wrong conception of the work done by these societies. Policy holders were not shareholders. They were simply ordinary members who banded themselves together not to make profits in the sense the Premier indicated. They did not distribute cash. Every mutual society declared its cash value bonuses. If the policy holder chose to take that cash value bonus he could do so. If he chose to let it lie and add it to his policy the society created it into a reversionary bonus payable at the maturity of the policy or at death, the cash value of the bonus, plus the interest being considered for the expectation of the holder's life. According to the Premier these societies invested moneys in bonds in order to make money. As a matter of fact a life insurance company had an actuarial table to carry out its business, but at the inception these tables were supposed to be also based on the actual amount of interest they were supposed to earn. The company assumed that they would earn three or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. during the expectation of the policy holder's life. If they did so they were on a sound basis, but if they earned more it became profit. It was impossible however to calculate to

the utmost farthing, and the result was that the company frequently took too much from the insurer, and the premium table was really in excess to a certain extent. The result was that at the expiration of certain periods the company returned to the policy holders, what the Premier called the shareholders, the excess on the premiums by way of bonuses. That could not possibly be called profit. If a person gave another person £10 to make a certain purchase, and the second person made the purchase for £9 and returned the balance of £1 that was not used, that £1 could not be called a profit. But that was just the case of the premiums of these societies. The excess was returned to the person insured by way of a bonus. These societies saved the State in many ways thousands of pounds per annum, and it was better for us to forego the paltry £1,600 than to impose a tax on the societies. If people were not insured and their dependants were left penniless, the State would be called upon to pay for the maintenance of these dependants.

The Premier: We know all about the advantage of life insurance; we do not want a lecture on it.

Mr. McDOWALL: The principle of mutual life insurance should be encouraged, and it was absurd to tax it in its various directions.

The Premier: Industry of every description should be encouraged but we must get revenue.

Mr. McDOWALL: There were better ways of getting revenue than imposing a tax on mutual life assurance companies, especially when the tax would only bring in £1,600 per annum. It was a question of principle and he was giving reasons why he thought the societies should not be taxed. In Great Britain there was a great number of companies conducted on the proprietary principle but there were mutual societies such as the Scottish Widows Fund, and in Australia we had some of the finest mutual assurance societies in the world. He was in favour of exempting mutual life assurance societies.



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

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	24

Majority against	..	11
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# AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Moore
Mr. Dooley	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. George	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. McDowall	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. A. E. Plesse
Mr. Monger	(Teller).

# NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Green	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Harper	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lander	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Heltmann
Mr. McDonald	(Teller).
Mr. Mullany	

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. GEORGE: Paragraph 8 dealt with pensions. He objected to the proviso, which said that any pension received from the Commonwealth by a person residing in Western Australia should be taxable income. Was not this surplusage? Before granting a pension the Commonwealth took into consideration every penny a man got in the way of income.

The PREMIER: This had nothing to do with old-age pensions.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 15—Taxable amount, how ascertained:

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved an amendment—

*That in line 3 of paragraph (a) of Subclause 2 the word "paid" be struck out.*

The exemption as the clause stood applied to the amount actually paid.

The PREMIER: This clause dealt with how the taxable amount was arrived at; that was the net income. Each year must stand by itself. If a person was due to pay interest on borrowed money in the year in which he was assessed and he

did not do so and made arrangements by which the amount was carried over to a future year; he did not receive a deduction for that. It must be remembered that the next year he would make the deduction of the interest paid that year plus the interest of the previous year.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. GEORGE: Was this the proper place to move an amendment dealing with the Federal land tax?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could move a new paragraph at the end of the clause.

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved an amendment—

*That in line 1 of paragraph (d) of Subclause 2, the words "such sum as the commissioner may think" be struck out, and the words "the commissioner shall allow a" be inserted in lieu.*

The PREMIER: It was compulsory for the commissioner under the existing Act to make such allowances but the commissioner was given some discretionary power as to what sum he would allow. There had been no complaint that he was aware of that the commissioner had been unreasonable. In fact, the commissioner had allowed in most cases in regard to mining and agricultural plants much heavier amounts for depreciation than were really fair. The commissioner had never attempted to be unreasonable and he could not see why we should make any alteration, so long as the commissioner was just and reasonable.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The wording in the amendment was preferable. It should be imperative for the commissioner to allow a reasonable sum.

The Premier: So he does now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Probably no complaints had been received, but the Commissioner got all he ought to get and did not allow too much by way of reduction; in fact, he ought to allow more than he did. After the explanation of the Premier, and having such confidence in the fairness of the Commissioner he asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved a further amendment—

*That in line 4 of paragraph (d) the word "plant" be inserted before "machinery."*

The Premier: I will accept that.

Amendment passed.

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved a further amendment—

*That in line 3 of paragraph (e) the word "unproductive" be struck out.*

The Premier, he understood, would agree to that amendment.

Amendment passed.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE moved an amendment—

*That after "mining" at the end of paragraph (e) the words "or any other business" be inserted.*

It was only fair that this should apply to any other business including farming. The Minister for Lands had given the House to understand that such work as clearing would be allowed for. He would like to have an expression of opinion from the Premier.

The PREMIER: The amendment could not be accepted. If members looked at the definition clause they would see that if these words were included there would be no need to include "mining." The difficulty would be to define development work in other businesses. Ringbarking, fencing and clearing represented capital expenditure on work which was productive but capital expenditure on a mining proposition such as would be prescribed would not be for a class of work which would be productive. There would be no difficulty in prescribing this as regarded a mine. On the other hand if a farmer bought a piece of land at £1 per acre and spent another £1 per acre on clearing it, that was capital expenditure. It made the land productive. As regarded mining, a man might sink a shaft and expend capital, but the shaft would be useless unless he got some return. Even if he got a return, after the coal seam or gold reef was worked out, that money was gone.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Sometimes a man might sink a well and not get water.

The PREMIER: If a man purchased 6d. worth of nails and lost them on the way home, some members would want a deduction made for that. A considerable

sum of money was spent on the development of mining which was not productive and did not eventually become productive. When the seam or the reef was worked out, capital was lost. A farmer's position was totally different because when he disposed of his holding he sold his improvements, which represented an existing asset.

Mr. GEORGE: In some respects he was inclined to agree with the Premier, but the pioneer expended money which was unproductive for several years. Fencing could not be included because a man did not fence unless he felt that the land was in a suitable condition to use it for stock. In respect to ringbarking and blackboy chopping in the South-West, the farmer got no advantage for three or four years.

The Premier: The advantage remains with him.

Mr. GEORGE: The farmer could not use the land to any advantage because if he put stock on it immediately, he would suffer a tremendous mortality. There was also considerable poison on some of the land and he could give instances of where persons had been poison-plucking for 40 or 50 years, and still it came up. That was unproductive labour. If it was desired to make a class industry and further perpetuate what underlay a considerable portion of the Bill and allow a man who might strike a rich patch and become a millionaire—

The Premier: He will pay on his rich patch.

Mr. GEORGE: And the farmer would pay as soon as he could utilise his land, but the farmer should have the same exemption during the time of probation.

The Premier: Does it not always remain? Does not he dispose of it?

Mr. GEORGE: No, it did not always remain, but supposing it did and the farmer disposed of his land, the Taxation Commissioner would get his share of it.

The Premier: Of what?

Mr. GEORGE: Of any profit. The farmer should be placed on the same plane as the miner.

The Premier: If you could.

Mr. GEORGE: There was no desire on his part to suggest that the miner was on a lower plane than the farmer.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: An instance might be given of the case of well-sinking which might prove unsuccessful. This had been his own experience, having expended a considerable sum of money in sinking a well and going through many feet of rock only to strike salt water which was practically useless. In sinking dams also, the rock was sometimes most difficult to work, and the work had to be abandoned. A person incurring that expenditure which was unremunerative ought to be allowed to make that deduction from his income.

Mr. S. Stubbs: No fair-minded farmer objected to paying a fair share of taxation.

The Premier: There are not many fair-minded farmers in the community.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Under this measure the farmer was paying more than a fair share of taxation. The Premier had exempted miners from taxation, but there were scores of men in the agricultural industries who were in the same position as miners, and ought to be exempt from the operations of the Bill. He had travelled through the Great Southern districts over thousands of miles, and had come across many men who had had unfortunate experiences in regard to the expenditure of money, and most of these men were entitled to consideration.

Mr. George: No they are not, because they are farmers, not miners.

The Premier: Do not be so childish.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Of course if the Premier had made up his mind it was not much use going further.

The Premier: I would rather delete the clause than have confusion arise.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Members might be given a chance to move a clause to protect the men who, for instance, had suffered loss in connection with the sinking of wells.

The PREMIER: Hon. members forgot that only a few of the small farmers would pay any income tax, and therefore they would not need to make deductions. It was only the big millionaire farmers

that the members of the Opposition desired to protect.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: How many millionaire farmers are there?

The PREMIER: The expression was used merely to imply the wealthier class of farmers who were able to pay without any deductions, farmers like the member for Murray-Wellington.

Mr. George: Excuse me, I am not a millionaire farmer; I am only the salt of the earth having gone on the land, and I am prepared to sell my property to-morrow.

The PREMIER: There was no objection to the hon. member being the salt of the earth, but he certainly required a tremendous lot of refining. It might be repeated that the clause only applied to the person who could afford to pay better than a miner, who put his time and capital and labour into a shaft, and very often without any result.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The principle of exemption should be made to apply to the farmer as well as the miner, because the farmer was engaged in developmental work just as much as the miner. Developmental work on a farm should be brought under this exemption, because successful farming made a permanent contribution to the Commissioner of Taxation.

Mr. HARPER: Knowing something of the interests of both farmers and miners, he declared that the farmer had more claim for exemption than the miner.

The Premier: Well, will you tell us what ought to be taxed?

Mr. HARPER: Farming ought to be considered above all other industries in regard to the payment of taxes, which ought not to be inflicted until the industry was on a profitable basis. To tax in its early stages would result in preventing the advancement of the State.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY moved an amendment—

*That the following be added to stand as paragraph (1) of Subclause 2, "Sums paid for land tax, State or Commonwealth."*

We were providing in this Bill for a tax on a person's annual income, and then we went on further to provide what deduction might be made from the gross annual income. It was specified in the next clause that a person could not deduct his income or land tax from his gross income to arrive at his net income. If we were providing for a tax on a person's net income, we should allow him to deduct disbursements. This was not a novel proposal. It was included in the Victorian Act, which provided that all taxes except income tax might be deducted from the gross amount of a person's income.

The PREMIER: There was no reason why we should make this general abatement. We could not take into consideration the amount paid to the Commonwealth Treasurer. If we were to attend to all these claims we would have nothing left. The present conditions would continue to some extent, in so far as the abatement was made to apply to those cultivating their land. That would continue, but only that. In the case of a person deriving his income from rent of land the land tax was totally apart from the income tax. There was no connection between the two; but there was a connection between them when a person was cultivating his land, and deriving his income from the land. In that case an abatement was allowed. No consideration could be taken of the fact that the Commonwealth was levying a land tax. When a person was deriving his income from the cultivation of land he could make deductions, but not in any other case.

Mr. GEORGE: The Premier proposed that an abatement should be allowed in the case of land, the cultivation of which was bringing in an income.

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. GEORGE: That was all right, but he would go further and say that there were to-day two land taxes, one State and the other Federal, and this fact should be taken into consideration. When we were taxed by both Governments we should be allowed a deduction from our income tax assessment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	26

Majority against .. 13

AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Moore
Mr. Broun	Mr. Nanson
Mr. George	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Harper	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. A. E. Plesse
Mr. Monger	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Collier	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Dooley	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Swan
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gardner	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lander	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lewis	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Heltmann
Mr. McDowall	(Teller).
Mr. Mullany	

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. WISDOM moved an amendment—

*That the following be added to stand as paragraph (e) of Subclause 4:—  
"Provided that in the case of a club, association, or company formed for social or sporting purposes the amount paid by members as entrance fees or subscriptions may be deducted from the net income in ascertaining the taxable income."*

The Premier: I agree to that.

Amendment passed.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 16—Concession where land tax assessed on cultivated land:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It was understood that the Premier had several amendments. Perhaps it would save time if the Premier disclosed the nature of his amendments.

The PREMIER: The corresponding section in the existing Act had never been intended by Parliament to apply as it did apply. A comparison of the clause with the corresponding section in the Act would show that it had been amended by

the deletion of the word "use;" which would result in disallowing a pastoralist to obtain the abatement by merely running his stock upon the land. On the other hand, it had not been intended, when the clause was drafted, to prevent the farmer from going in for mixed farming. It was not intended that the rebate should not apply to the mixed farmer. It was proposed, therefore, to move several amendments. For instance, after the word "cultivation" in the second line, the words "or grazing, or cultivation and grazing" would be inserted. That would make it clear that cultivated and grazing land was intended to be included. Then, after the word "parcel" in "parcel of land" the words "or parcels" would be inserted; and the same amendment would be inserted in the last line but one. It was intended to add the following proviso:—"Provided this section shall not apply if the land is held for grazing purposes under leasehold tenure without the right to acquire the freehold." With these amendments made it would not matter if the several parcels of land were one mile or 100 miles apart, so long as they were in the possession of the same owner, and the land was not held under a leasehold which would preclude the acquiring of freehold.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The amendment proposed by the Premier was fair and reasonable, and it was nice to have it proposed with so little discussion. So far as the agriculturists were concerned the Opposition members had obtained all they wanted, but they had a duty to other people. Surely the persons who erected houses for other people to dwell in did something for the State, just the same as the miner or farmer. The man who used his land, whether in the city or the country, should be encouraged, and he would ask the Premier to go a little further and add the words "use or" before the word "cultivation."

The Premier: I cannot agree to it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We wished to see all land used, cheaper rents for the people, more business places erected, and town lands improved just as much as country lands.

On motion by the PREMIER, clause amended by adding after "cultivation," in line 2, the words "or grazing or cultivation and grazing."

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved a further amendment—

*That the words "or use" be added after the word "grazing" in the clause as amended.*

Mr. WISDOM: In the consideration of this Bill there had been two parties, those who represented gold miners and those who represented the farmers, and the third party, the people in the city and towns, had been entirely ignored. It was time a protest was made against the indignity placed upon the dwellers in towns and cities. He wanted to know why a person who held land in a town and conducted a business on it, and whose income was partly derived from that land, was not entitled to just as much consideration as country people. For that reason the amendment was a just and fair one. He hoped the Committee would try to do justice for once to the people living in the towns.

Amendment put and negatived.

On motion by the PREMIER the clause further amended by inserting "or parcels" after the word "parcel" in line 2.

The PREMIER moved a further amendment—

*That the following proviso be added to the clause:—"Provided that this section shall not apply if the land is held for grazing purposes under a leasehold tenure without a right to acquire the freehold."*

Mr. McDONALD: The people who held exclusive licenses in connection with the Shark Bay pearl fisheries might not be able to utilise this clause. Would the Premier make provision for them to be able to utilise it?

The Premier: We cannot do it here.

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

Clauses 17 to 28—agreed to.

Clause 29—Returns not open to inspection:

Mr. GEORGE: It had always been understood that the returns, whether of land tax or income tax, were secret and were

for the information of the Commissioner alone, but he had been told that by the payment of 1s. it was possible for anyone to go to the Taxation Office and obtain a copy of the return of any individual taxpayer.

The Premier: Of his land tax but not his income tax.

Mr. GEORGE: Even if it was only of the land tax that return should be kept secret.

The Premier: We are rectifying that in this Bill.

Mr. GEORGE: The Premier's assurance was welcome.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 30 to 42—agreed to.

Clause 43—Power to acquire land:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This clause should be deleted. The present method of having expert valuers to fix the value upon which taxation was to be paid was a preferable one. He realised that there were safeguards in this clause. The first was in regard to the method of acquiring land, inasmuch as the judge had to be satisfied that the owner had deliberately undervalued the land in order to escape taxation. It was not his desire that persons who undervalued their land, with a view to escaping taxation, should be protected, but he thought it was objectionable to have a clause of this kind in the Bill. It was better to abide by the valuations fixed by the Commissioner's officers. A man in Wyndham could not possibly give an accurate valuation of land held by him in Perth. Again, land often had a sentimental value. The system of valuing by valuers appointed by the Commissioner was a fair and just and proper one.

The PREMIER: It was impossible to value a great quantity of land until we had valuations by the Lands Department in operation; until then it was necessary to protect the revenue and to protect the honest taxpayer against the dishonest man. There was, so far, no penalty for putting in an under-valuation. The clause merely allowed the landowner a margin of 25 per cent., which was a fairly reasonable margin, and if the valuation went below that the Commissioner could

not step in at his valuation but must prove his case before a judge of the Supreme Court.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 44—agreed to.

Clause 45—Tax payable on net income:

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved an amendment—

*That Subclause 2 be struck out.*

This subclause provided that every company paying interest upon debentures or bonds should be deemed the agent of every holder of these debentures or bonds, and must pay to the Commissioner income tax on the amount of any interest payable to the holders of the debentures or bonds. Under the existing law, if interest was paid on debentures to people in Western Australia the Commissioner of Taxation collected in the usual way, but if the money was lent by people outside the State more power to them. Seeing that loan bonds were exempt, there was no reason why we should not exempt outsiders who lent money to private persons in the State, especially money for developmental work.

The PREMIER: The provision was only new in so far as it provided that the company should pay the income tax on behalf of the debenture holders, instead of the State having to follow up the debenture holders to get it. This was done in other parts of the world. We exempted the income of any company registered in the State derived from operations outside the State, whereas the English law did not give this exemption but provided that the company must first pay income tax on the profit before distributing the dividend. We were adopting that course in regard to interest on debentures or bonds. It was only taxing the interest which was claimed as an expense in the carrying on of an undertaking in the State. For instance, in the case of the Midland Railway Company the interest paid to debenture holders was exactly the same as a dividend distributed to the shareholders of the company. After paying working expenses this interest had to be provided, and the State claimed income tax upon it, and we merely asked the company to

act as agent to collect the tax before paying the interest to the debenture holders, thus obviating the necessity for the State to follow up the debenture holders. It was merely an adoption of the English law.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 46—Tax on profits undistributed at commencement of Act:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In Subclause 2 it was provided that any dividend declared by a company after the first day of January, 1912, must be deemed to have been paid out of the profits of the company acquired before the first day of January, 1912, until it was proved that all such profits had been distributed. This was an iniquitous proposition aiming at the exhaustion of reserve funds. The tax was a shilling, so that the company would only be able to put back 19s. in place of the £1 taken out of reserves for the purpose of distributing a dividend. It was a retrospective tax. We should be content to tax the earnings from now onward, but the Premier proposed to make it compulsory to pay dividends from reserve funds held by companies to-day.

The PREMIER: This was no alteration from the existing law. If the Bill would not pass, the undistributed profits of these companies would pay dividend duty; with the passage of this Bill these profits would pay income tax at the rate of a shilling in the pound. The provision was merely to provide that profits accumulated prior to the passing of the Bill should pay income tax in lieu of the dividend tax that they would pay should the Bill not become law. It was just as if the dividend duty continued in operation; these profits would pay income tax instead of dividend duty.

Mr. GEORGE: Notwithstanding the Premier's explanation, it was retrospective legislation, because it was taxing profits made in the past.

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

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved an amendment—

*That Subclause 2 be struck out.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The Western Australian

Bank made a certain amount of profit which it placed to a reserve fund. If that profit had been divided amongst shareholders they would have paid dividend tax on such profit. All this clause required was that if the bank should divide that profit after the passing of this Act the dividend tax should still be paid.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	23

Majority against .. 16

#### AYES.

Mr. George	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. A. E. Plesse
Mr. Moore	(Teller).

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Collier	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Dooley	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Swan
Mr. Foley	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Green	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Heitmann
Mr. McDonald	(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 47—Insurance companies, how taxed:

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved an amendment—

*That in line 5 "twenty" be struck out and "ten" inserted in lieu.*

The clause stated that 20 per cent. of the total premium income should be regarded as the taxable income. That was too high.

The PREMIER: This issue had already been decided on the amendment of the leader of the Opposition to exempt life assurance companies from the provisions of the Bill. This was the clause under which the life assurance companies came. Fire insurance companies were paying this rate to-day, and the rate was lower than that paid in some of the other States.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved a further amendment—

*That in line 11 all the words after "business" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"no income tax shall be levied or collected."*

The PREMIER: I will agree to that. Amendment put and passed, the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 48 to 75—agreed to.

New Clause—Rebate of tax on improved land:

Mr. GEORGE moved—

*That the following be added as a new clause:—"Every owner of improved land shall in respect of such land be entitled to a rebate of one-half of the tax levied on the unimproved value thereof as assessed under the provisions of this Act."*

Under the present Act there was a distinction made between improved and unimproved land. The justification put forward for the land tax was that the obligation of the owner of land was to improve his holding; if he did not improve it, he had broken the contract into which he had entered with the Government. There should be some inducement given to a man carrying out his duty in regard to the land. He should be entitled to an advantage over the person who did not improve his land. It would be better to increase the rates, if necessary, in order to allow a rebate to the man who improved his land. Otherwise, the land tax would not offer any incentive to a man to improve his land to the best of his ability. It would be an encouragement to the land shark, waiting for the opportunity to bleed people for the unearned increment.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Though the Premier was pledged to oppose a rebate it was a reasonable request that the man who improved his land should pay half the tax. This was the class of men we wanted in the State. The man improving his land and earning an income from it provided revenue in the shape of income tax and railway freights, and also gave work to our citizens, so that he merited consideration over the man who did not improve his land. The new clause would carry out

the desire the Premier expressed, namely, to compel people to make improvements.

The PREMIER: The Bill was to tax unimproved values and not unimproved land. It was well known that under the existing rebate there was a tremendous lot of land held out of use, because by one part of the holding being improved the balance escaped payment of the full tax. And it was also well known that the person who simply complied with the improvement conditions under the Land Act would absolutely starve on his farm. We should not encourage people just merely to spend a few shillings to improve their land and escape the land tax. The principle involved in the Bill was that all land should pay tax on the unimproved value. Certainly the person who improved his land was better able to pay a tax than the man who did not, so it would compel a man who did not improve his land to put it to use in order to pay the tax. The rebate now allowed did not have the effect of bringing land into use. Again, with city blocks, a man with two lots enclosed in one common fence could secure a rebate on one block by effecting improvements on the other, whereas in equity both blocks should pay a tax on the unimproved value.

Mr. GEORGE: If the Premier's idea was to be carried out we must decide what area of land a man should be allowed around his house. We could also stipulate that the improvements should be equal to the original cost of the land, but we should make a distinction between the bona-fide settler and the man merely waiting to bleed his fellows, the land shark, or the dummy so often referred to by the Minister for Lands. It might be claimed it was a tax on unimproved values, but the person who had to find the money understood what it was no matter what name the tax was given. We should allow the rebate to bring about the improvement of land holdings.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member urged that this should be a tax on unimproved land, whereas it is a tax on capital unimproved values, something altogether apart from the



improvements effected by the owner of the land. We should encourage the use of land by direct and well-considered means, more particularly through the construction of public works and through the work of the Agricultural Department, which could be carried out at a greater ratio in the future if the sinews of war were provided by the small amount that would be raised by the tax in addition to other sources of income. The proposal of the hon. member did not find a place in the taxation of the other States, and the object he sought could be attained much more effectively in other directions. Land could be of very little use to the State so far as its general welfare was concerned, and yet have sufficient improvements on it to secure the rebate proposed.

New clause put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	24

Majority against .. 13

#### AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Moore
Mr. Broun	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. George	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. A. E. Piesse
Mr. Monger	(Teller).

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Bath	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Dooley	Mr. Swan
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Foley	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Green	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnston	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Heitmann
Mr. McDonald	(Teller).
Mr. McDowall	

New clause thus negatived.

First and Second schedules—agreed to.

Third Schedule:

Mr. WISDOM: This schedule introduced the question of the amount of tax to be paid by companies, as distinguished from private firms or individuals. It was unfair that a small company, earning a small income, should be taxed at the rate of 1s. in the pound, while a

private firm doing similar business, and earning the same amount was only taxed 6d. or 8d. in the pound. He moved—

*That the words "not being a company" be struck out.*

The PREMIER: The amendment could not be accepted. If we were to agree to it we would be relieving the companies now paying dividend duties of the contributions they made to the revenue. Nobody had asked for this. As a matter of fact the feeling was the other way. During the elections the leader of the Opposition had proposed to relieve the companies of the payment of 1s. in the pound dividend duty and charge them 4d. in the pound income tax.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nothing of the sort. You said that I was going to let my rich friends off altogether, but I denied that.

The PREMIER: What had been said was that the hon. member proposed to relieve the companies of 1s. in the pound dividend duty and charge them 4d. in the pound income tax.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That was not the truth.

The PREMIER: Apparently, it was not, for the hon. member had since denied it, but now the hon. member desired to bring the companies under the same provisions as applied to individuals.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are bringing them under the provisions of the income tax.

The PREMIER: Yes, but with the purpose of making them pay 1s. in the pound, just as they were doing under the Dividend Duties Act. There was no intention to relieve them of that 1s. in the pound. No analogy could be traced between a company and an individual. The company paid duty on the profits they distributed after meeting all the expenses of carrying on, but in the case of the individual the profits represented his income, a certain proportion of which was necessary for family requirements.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The statement made by the Premier could not

be allowed to pass unchallenged. He (Hon. Frank Wilson) had proposed to repeal the dividend duties and bring the companies under the income tax, but not to charge them 4d. in the pound. What he had proposed was a graduated income tax. The Premier when on the hustings, had taken advantage of that announcement to charge him (Hon. Frank Wilson) with an attempt to let the companies off scott free. It was one of the many wilful misstatements made by the hon. member to further the political interests of his party. The Premier now proposed to perpetuate the wrong which had been done in the past by discriminating between companies and other trading concerns. Why should a firm which happened to have one or two partners be put on a different footing from its neighbour with perhaps 20, 30 or 100 shareholders? The collecting of 1s. tax on dividends was very different from collecting an income tax on the whole of the profits as shown in the balance sheet of companies who paid income tax on the whole of their profits just the same as did private individuals. Why should there be any differentiation? The Premier would do well to accept the amendment and put all these trading concerns on the one footing.

The PREMIER: The hon. member's statement that he had proposed something different from what he (the Premier) with others, had understood at the time must be accepted. A popular interpretation of the position was that in announcing the policy of his Government the hon member had stated that he proposed to repeal the dividend duties.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I went further.

The PREMIER: Yes, and proposed to relieve the rich supporters of the hon. member just as he now accused the Government of giving special attention to their supporters by the exemption of £250. The hon. member made no mention of the fact that the amount was 4d. in the pound. He explained that it would force companies to pay more, because he was going to tax undistributed profits. It was impossible to read what was in the mind of the hon. member.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is in black and white.

The PREMIER: After reading the files in his office, he had a clear recollection of what had caused the hon. member to decide that he would bring the companies under the Income Tax Act, and the reading of that had caused the Government to do what was proposed by the Bill but under different conditions. He had no knowledge of having seen on the file where the hon. member as Treasurer proposed to bring companies under the Income Tax Act and cause them to pay just as the individual would have to pay. The hon. member's proposal was to bring them under the Income Tax Act exactly as the present Government were proposing, and to still pay 1s. in the pound. Under these conditions there was no difference between the proposal of the Bill and the proposal of the hon. member. The member for Claremont (Mr. Wisdom) was evidently not in touch with the policy of his party at the time of the general election.

Mr. WISDOM: The little passage of arms between the Premier and the leader of the Opposition might tend to obscure the main point, but it did not concern him. The imposition of 1s. tax on companies was grossly unfair because a similar tax was not being imposed on private firms which might be doing business on as big a scale and earning the same income as a company. The Premier made a point that the companies were paying a dividend duty. A dividend duty and the present proposal were two different things. Subclause 5 of Clause 13 meant that income tax had to be paid on the whole of the profits. In the other case payment was made on the dividends, and the two propositions were totally different. The proposal was not the same as the provision under the existing Income Tax Act. He appealed to the Committee to put companies on exactly the same terms as private trading firms of a similar size and doing a similar amount of business. A company with a taxable income of under £2,500 would pay 1s. in the pound. A private firm with an

income of under £2,500 would pay only 8d. in the pound. He could not see where the difference came in, and why one should pay 8d. and the other 1s. The incidence was not fair, and the Premier ought, in fairness to accept the amendment and put the companies on the same footing as private firms. Levi Green was a private firm; Harris, Scarfe & Co., Ltd., did a similar business, and probably a similar amount of business, and yet Harris Scarfe would have to pay 1s. while Levi Green would get off with 8d. or 9d.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The member for Claremont (Mr. Wisdom) might not be concerned in the passage at arms, but he was concerned inasmuch as he had been misrepresented, and he wanted to make it clear once again that his position was unassailable. The Premier said he had never seen anything on the files, which would lead him to believe that he (Mr. Wilson) proposed bringing companies under the ordinary graduated income tax the same as private individuals. He (Mr. Wilson) could not remember what was on the files. He came back from the old country and launched into the campaign and was not concerned at that time about fashioning legislation. He was concerned about putting his policy before the country and having that policy criticised by opponents, but not misrepresented. The following was an extract from his policy speech—

We propose also the abolition of dividend duties and the substitution of income tax on the lines of the Queensland legislation, together with a repeal of the land tax, the imposition of a stock tax in view of the large and important works to be carried out in connection with this industry.

The Premier misrepresented him all over the country, and in the Queen's Hall he (Mr. Wilson) explained his proposals as follows:—

A graduated income tax, based on the Queensland lines, would be established, which would be more equitable, because it would fall on the shoulders of those best able to pay. The prosperous farmer, together with all others

earning profits, would have to pay the tax. It must also be remembered that the Commonwealth had stepped in and had imposed a graduated land tax. . . . He wanted to explain that the repeal of the dividend duty tax would not mean, as insinuated, that the wealthy companies were to escape taxation. They would all come under the graduated income tax and pay on the profits earned, and those who now evaded the payment of taxation, either by the income or dividend duties tax, would be brought to book. The cost of working the department would be lessened by about £4,000, while the same amount of revenue could be raised.

There was no question that he intended to bring them all under the graduated income tax.

The PREMIER: The position had been recollected by him fairly well, but still he was not clear just what the hon. member had proposed. In the first place he said his proposal was on the Queensland lines, and now he denied that he said anything of the kind. Queensland had a graduated income tax which imposed 1s. on companies and absentees, and the present proposal before the Committee was the same. He could not follow the hon. member.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But you know your charge about letting the companies off was wrong.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member desired to bring them under the graduated income tax, the charge was correct. They would then have got off by paying 4d. in the pound.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not unless they earned only £500 profit.

The PREMIER: The hon. member did not state his graduation. There were only about three graduations in Queensland, and as the hon. member had not made a more complete statement, he had to accept the Queensland lines and conclude that that was what the hon. member had proposed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is that any justification for your saying I would bring them all down to 4d?

The PREMIER: Yes. The hon. member distinctly said that he would repeal the Dividend Duties Act and bring the companies under the income tax on the lines of the Queensland taxation. He was not able to gather yet just what the hon. member proposed. Did he propose that they should be as they were in Queensland subject to 1s. in the pound?

Mr. Turvey: He said so to-night.

The PREMIER: The hon. member was not keen on allowing the public to know what he did propose. He (the Premier) had attempted to get a complete statement.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You were very keen on misrepresenting me.

The PREMIER: The keenness on his part was in stating what he believed was the hon. member's intention. If the hon. member considered he was not fair, it was due to his own statement not being clear. The amendment would test the Committee and give the public to understand exactly what the hon. member proposed—whether he proposed to relieve the companies of their responsibility under the Dividend Duties Act in order that they might get a special rebate down to 4d. in the pound or whether he proposed to continue as in Queensland at the rate of 1s. in the pound. That question would now be settled once for all—whether the hon. member proposed that companies should pay 1s. as they did at present and whether they would be prevented from evading the duty as in the past.

Mr. WISDOM: Why did the Premier insist in stating that he (Mr. Wisdom) proposed companies should pay less than at present? The Premier knew perfectly well that companies did not pay 1s. as proposed under this Bill. He knew they did not pay on accumulated profits put to reserve but only on dividends. That was very different from collecting money on the whole of the profits.

The Premier: They have been evading their responsibilities.

Mr. WISDOM: There was no objection to the proper and fair taxation of companies but there should not be any differentiation between companies and

private firms doing the same business and the same amount of business.

The Premier: It is operating now.

Mr. WISDOM: No; because the tax at present was on dividends. The Premier was trying to point out that companies were paying on profits. They were not; they were paying on dividends. Now the Premier was proposing to tax their profits, which was a totally different proposition.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It was perfectly fair to allow the small company to pay less than the rich company. A company making £50,000 would pay the same rate as one which made £5,000. The Premier's rich friends who made £20,000 would, under this Bill, pay just the same as the man who made £5,000.

The Premier: The same rate, not the same amount.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The graduation favoured the rich man. The small companies should not pay as much as the rich companies, and it was his intention to vote with the member for Claremont. We recognised that principle in regard to individuals, let us recognise it in regard to companies. If the Premier wanted to protect his revenue, let the rich companies who made £50,000 pay more than the companies that made £5,000.

The Premier: So they do.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They paid the same per pound.

The Premier: They pay the same in proportion.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier was the rich man's friend. Members of the Opposition desired to help and protect the small man.

The Attorney General: It does you good to be in opposition; it makes democrats of you; you will all be wearing red ties in a week or two.

The PREMIER: The member for Claremont did not know the provisions of the existing law. Companies carrying on business in Western Australia and elsewhere paid on their profits, not their dividends. It was only the companies

carrying on business in Western Australia that paid on their dividends. The Government proposed to bring them under the same conditions as the companies trading elsewhere. So far as the protestations of the member for Northam were concerned, they were such that the public would accept at once. The public knew that he was always a fighter for the poor man. If it was wrong that we should charge companies the same rate per pound, the member for Northam and his colleagues in the previous Ministry had done an equal wrong in calling upon the poor man to pay 4d. in the pound, the same amount which the rich man was paying.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We proposed to alter that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member was always proposing to do something. The present Government appreciated that that was wrong, and it was being rectified.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are the friend of the poor man all right.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition ought to accompany me to the agricultural districts, and he would get a better knowledge of that fact.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Wait until your assessments are out, and then you will find out.

The PREMIER: The assessments would give better consideration to the farmer than he was getting at the present time.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	24
Majority against	..	..	..	13

# AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Moore
Mr. Broun	Mr. A. E. Plesse
Mr. George	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Mouger	(Teller).

# NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Bath	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Dooley	Mr. Swan
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Foley	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lander	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Heltmann
Mr. McDonald	(Teller).
Mr. McDowall	

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Each graduation should stand alone for the purpose of calculating the tax. That was to say, we wanted a fourpenny tax to apply to the extent of £500; a fivepenny tax to apply only to amounts over £500 and so on down the Schedule; so that a person who drew an income of £1,500 should pay 7d. on the £1,500, and the person who drew £1,550 should pay 7d. on the £1,500 and 8d. on the additional £50. He moved an amendment—

*That the following proviso be added to the schedule:—"Provided that the amount of the tax to apply shall be that set out in the graduation, notwithstanding that the taxable income be £5,000."*

The PREMIER: The amendment could not be accepted because it would mean a tremendous loss of the revenue proposed to be raised under the schedule, and a loss from those persons best able to pay that revenue. Under the proposal of the member for Northam a person who was receiving £5,000 per annum and over would pay on the first £250 nil; on the next £250 up to £500, 4d., as against 1s., which would mean a loss to the revenue of 8d.; from £500 to £750, 5d. in lieu of 1s., again a loss of 7d. which would remain in the pocket of the rich taxpayer; from £750 to £1,000, 6d. in lieu of 1s., a loss to the State of 6d.; from £1,000 to £1,500, 7d. as against 1s., a loss of 5d.; from £1,500 to £2,500, 8d. as against 1s., a loss of 4d.; from £2,500 to £5,000, 9d., a loss to the State of 3d. The hon. member would see how much the State would lose in one transaction in the taxation of a person who was well able to pay it.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Well, include only men under £5,000.

The PREMIER: The same thing would apply there and tremendous relief would be given to the person receiving a very decent income. When he was in the position of enjoying that income he would pay a tax of 1s. in the pound without a grumble; in fact, he would be prepared to pay 2s. in the pound. The Government required revenue, and from persons who were well able to pay it. Persons receiving between £2,500 and £5,000 were well able to pay 9d. in the pound, and persons enjoying more than £5,000 a year could afford to pay 1s.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What about persons receiving over £10,000?

The PREMIER: If any hon. member would move to extend the scale so that persons receiving £10,000 and upwards should pay 2s. in the pound the amendment would be accepted.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was regrettable that the Premier could not resist the temptation to attack. This was not a matter of the poor man or the rich man, but a question of what was just. A man who was earning £499, after deducting the £250 exemption, would be taxed on £249 at 4d., and would pay £4 3s. A man with an income of £501 after deducting the £250 exemption, would be taxed on £251 at 5d. and would pay £5 4s. 7d. As a matter of fact the latter would have less income left after paying the tax, although he was earning a couple of pounds more. An illustration quoted in a leading article in the *West Australian* this morning showed the unfairness of this method of graduation—

Taxpayer A with an income of £4,999 would pay, at ninepence in the pound, £178 1s. 9d. on a taxable income, after deducting the £250 exemption, of £4,749. His total net income, after satisfying the demands of the Commissioner of Taxation, would be £4,820 18s. 3d. But taxpayer B whose income is £5,010 is compelled to discharge one shilling in the pound on £4,760. The unfortunate B pays £238 to the Taxation Department, leaving his

net income at £4,772, or nearly £50 less than that of A.

The Premier: The poor beggar will starve, will he not?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was not a question of starving, but of what was just, and it was absurd to say that because a man earned £10 more than the £5,000 maximum he was to be made to pay £50 more than the man who earned a pound under the maximum.

The Premier: Does that not apply to the man who is just under the exemption and the man who is just over?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It did, but because the graduation started on an error there was no reason why the error should be perpetuated throughout. Surely it was reasonable that a man with an income of £750 should pay on the first £250, fourpence in the £, on the next £250 fivepence, and on the third £250 sixpence. That would place everybody on an equal footing and would be an equitable proposal. The Premier was taking the wrong view altogether of the amount that he would lose as Treasurer if he adopted that principle. Better far for him to extend the operations of the Third Schedule and get increased revenue in an honest and equitable manner from those who were earning more than the maximum of £5,000.

The PREMIER: One could appreciate the position of the hon. gentleman opposite. Naturally the official journal of the hon. member's party would give him a lead in these matters, and as the proprietors of that paper were extremely interested parties in the passage of this measure—

Hon. Frank Wilson: I would not make any dirty insinuations.

The PREMIER: There was no dirty insinuation. The hon. member had quoted a leading article in the *West Australian* to back up his position. We did not want to legislate at the request of any newspaper or outside organisation. There was no newspaper tyranny about the party now in power.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There is according to the Trades Hall and caucus.

The PREMIER: Apparently the Opposition had shifted their Cabinet premises a few doors down St. George's terrace from the Palace hotel to the *West Australian* office. The Government admitted that the anomaly mentioned by the hon. member did exist, but it was remarkable that the leader of the Opposition and the *West Australian* could only find that the anomaly existed with persons who received £5,000 per annum or thereabouts. The poor man who received £250 or £251 was not considered at all.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did I not start by quoting the £500 man?

The PREMIER: It would be very nice to say that this was not a question of affecting the rich man or the poor man. This graduation would cause the man who was receiving more than £5,000 a year to contribute £250 to the revenue of the State, and that was not a very great hardship upon him. If it was a hardship and he would make application to the department, the commissioner would see if he could not make a refund so that the unfortunate person would not be embarrassed. The schedule was provided in the interests of the State, and called on the person best able to bear taxation to contribute his fair proportion of it, and although there was a slight anomaly in the cases of the man who received just under £5,000 and the man who received just over £5,000, yet it did not affect either of them to that extent that he required much sympathy from the Committee.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	25
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	14
				—

#### AYES.

Mr. Allen  
Mr. Broun  
Mr. George  
Mr. Lefroy  
Mr. Mitchell  
Mr. Monger

Mr. Moore  
Mr. A. E. Plesse  
Mr. F. Wilson  
Mr. Wisdom  
Mr. S. Stubbs

(Teller).

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Bath	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Dooley	Mr. Swan
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Foley	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lander	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lewis	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Heitmann
Mr. McDowall	(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Schedule put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

#### Recommittal.

On motion by the Premier, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clauses 13 and 45:

Mr. Holman in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 13—Income liable to taxation: The PREMIER moved an amendment:

*That the following words (inserted in Committee) in Subclause 3 be struck out:—"Provided that where a taxpayer is liable in respect of profits on sales of land the tax shall not be payable at the time when the sales are made, but as and when the instalments mature and are paid in cash."*

In Committee this amendment had been agreed to tentatively but it had since been discovered that it would make a tremendous alteration in the present conditions in the Taxation Department, and it was not considered a fair proposition to place a person dealing in land on the instalment system in a different position from a merchant selling machinery or goods on the instalment system. The person selling land on the instalment system had an advantage over the merchant selling goods on the instalment system, because if the person buying failed to continue the instalments the land reverted to the vendor, often at an enhanced value, whereas in the case of machinery or goods the articles sold, even if returned, had a decreased value. There were no complaints about the present system. The person selling land on the instalment system paid income tax on the

sale price only and was not charged on the interest received on those instalments.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We should not endeavour to frame legislation because there might be some little trouble caused in the Taxation Department. The merchant selling goods had the advantage over the person selling land on the instalment system because the merchant could claim a deduction for bad debts. The man honestly cutting up land and selling it on 20 years terms should not be asked to pay income tax on the gross amount of the sales when possibly during the first year his receipts amounted to little more than one pound deposit on each allotment. It would very often happen that the first year's payments would be absorbed in paying commission and in preliminary expenses. Any individual making this an occupation would have to pay tax on income which he never sighted. Of course he had to provide for that out of his sales and perhaps ultimately the Commissioner might consider it a fair deduction. But we had the fact that it was provided in the Bill that any difference between the actual cost price of the land and the price at which it was sold was to be deemed profit for the purposes of taxation. The Premier had done wrong in proposing to delete this amendment. Surely it was time enough to collect the income tax when a man had earned and received the money. It was a necessary provision which ought to appeal to the Committee.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: It had been held that the position of a man who sold land was the same as that of one who sold machinery on the time payment system. The positions were not analogous in any way. The merchant who sold machinery on the time payment system had a fixed price for cash, and to this price he added materially for the concession of terms. If the provision was deleted, it would be allowed for in the computation of this time payment charge, and the purchaser would have to pay an increased price accordingly. The Premier ought to ac-

cept the amendment, which had been agreed to on the previous night.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Would the Premier say how the tax would apply to the land resumed by the Federal Government in Wellington-street, the purchase money for which had not yet been paid over? Unless the amendment was retained in the Bill, the land tax would have to be paid on the amount owing by the Federal Government to the previous owners of the land, who, it was understood, had agreed to accept 4 per cent. and allow the purchase money to stand over for a time. It was only fair that profits should not be taxed until they were actually received. On the previous night the Premier had agreed that the amendment was a reasonable one, and the hon. member ought to stand by it now. Sales of country land were often effected on terms extending over five or six years. It would be wrong to claim income tax on any profit until that profit was actually made.

The PREMIER: The case instanced by the hon. member was not of much assistance. The Commissioner of Taxation did not make a claim under the clause until the year following the transaction. The Federal Government had not come into possession of the land referred to until some time in the present year. Therefore that transaction would not be noticed by the Commissioner of Taxation for the purpose of the clause until the taxation returns were sent in by the previous owners, some time in March next, and these people would not be called upon to pay up until about June, by which time, no doubt, the Commonwealth would have settled in full. In any case the Commissioner of Taxation was always ready to assist those people who, for the moment, could not find the money. If a big transaction took place, and the money was not available, the Commissioner invariably acceded to an application that it should be allowed to stand over. The Commissioner was expected by Parliament to be reasonable with people in such transactions.

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

Clause 45—Tax payable on net income:



The PREMIER: The main principle of the clause was that the income tax should be payable by a company on net income. But some business concerns were distributing their profits in exorbitant fees paid to directors, and in other ways, thus leaving very little taxable profits. This was being done to-day in order to avoid payment of the dividend duties, and in all probability it would be continued under this measure. He moved an amendment—

*That the following be added to stand as Subclause 3:—"the Commissioners may disallow as expenditure any money paid by a company as salary, fees, or otherwise to any director, officer, or employee of the company in so far as, in the opinion of the Commissioner, such payment was not made bona fide as remuneration for services rendered, but as a means of avoiding taxation. Provided that any sum so disallowed shall not be included in the net income of such director, officer or employee."* Amendment passed, the clause as amended agreed to.

Bill again reported with further amendments, and the report adopted.

## BILL — ESPERANCE-NORTHWARDS RAILWAY.

### *Point of Order—Speaker's Ruling.*

Mr. SPEAKER: The point has been raised in connection with this Bill that the measure is not in order because it is a contravention of Standing Order 176. The point taken is that no question shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any question which during the same session has been resolved in the affirmative or negative. The objection is that the Bills are the same in substance and that the arguments for and against one are the same which may be offered to the other. The question I have to determine therefore is whether the Bill now before the House is the same in substance as the Bill providing for the construction of a railway from Esperance to Norseman, a Bill which was rejected in another Chamber. I have considered this matter very carefully and with the

consent of the House, I want to make a few references to the authorities which I have looked up on this particular subject. As to the application of the rule forbidding Bills of this character, I shall quote from *Cushing*, which is the authority devoted more extensively and comprehensively to this matter than any other authority I can find. *Cushing* states—

When it becomes necessary to institute a comparison between the different provisions of two bills, which are already drawn, it may appear that, although intended for the same purpose, and consequently "of the same substance," and "of the same argument and matter," in one sense, they nevertheless differ so essentially in the mode and means by which that purpose is to be effected, as to be in substance different bills. In such a case, the judgment of the House against one of the bills, that is, against effecting a particular object in a particular manner, ought not to preclude it from entertaining the other, which proposed to effect the same object in a different manner. Thus, a Bill which creates a new offence, and punishes it in one manner, ought not to be considered as the same in substance with a bill which creates the same offence and punishes it in a different manner. The identity or similarity, therefore, which is implied in the rule in its application to bills, would be more fully expressed in the following form, namely: that two bills are the same when they have the same purpose in view, and propose to effect it by the same means, although, in point of phraseology, they may be expressed in different terms, and this, it is apprehended, will be found to be in accordance with the practice of both Houses.

I have decided therefore that a Bill for the construction of a railway from Esperance 60 miles northwards is not the same in effect and cannot have the same purpose as a Bill for the construction of a railway from Esperance to Norseman. These two Bills are not the same in substance. One, while it may cover portion of the same route as the other,

is to be constructed over less than half the distance. One provides for 60 miles of railway, the other provides for 125 miles of railway construction. A Bill to construct a railway from Esperance 60 miles northwards will not by any means construct a railway 125 miles from Esperance to Norseman. The second proposition will cost less than half of the proposed cost of the first. It cannot be the same in substance, neither will it have the same effect. I submit that the half is not substantially the same as the whole. To weigh the matter in my own judgment, I ask, could I vote for one as against the other? I could. To me they present two distinct propositions. Many of the objections to the one could be waived as against the other. I have looked up remarks in *Hansard*, made both by the Minister for Works when introducing the Bill for a railway from Esperance to Norseman, and by other members in this House, and I shall quote the references which will somewhat support my contention. The Minister for Works stated—

In conclusion I want to emphasise that the Advisory Board, apart from the officers already quoted, investigated this proposition and did not condemn it. They urged that a railway should be constructed, but they said that the line should be built from Esperance 60 miles inland towards Norseman. The Government claim, and I think Parliament will agree, that if the line is to be built at all it should be a connecting link between Esperance and Norseman. To take it 60 miles and leave it there is not a sound proposition.

That convinced me that so far as the Minister for Works is concerned, the two propositions in his mind were distinct propositions. The Hon. J. Mitchell stated—

The construction of this railway is no small matter. It will be 125 miles in length and the cost will be something like £3,500 per mile. It is true that the Advisory Board more than once visited this district, but the most favourable report came from two members of the board, who advised that the

wheat belt, starting some 40 miles from Esperance and ending about 60 miles from Esperance, should be served by a railway, and I believe they recommended the construction of 60 miles of line from Esperance. That 60 miles of line would cost £150,000, but here is a proposal to expend £312,750.

I do not want it to be understood for one moment that the arguments of the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) were not directed entirely against the whole of the Bill and every mile of the railway as also were the arguments of the leader of the Opposition, but I quote this reference to show that there was a distinction in their minds in connection with the proposal for the construction of a railway which will cost £150,000, and the construction of a railway which will cost £312,000. To the leader of the Opposition, who has raised the point, I want to submit these arguments. Supposing a Bill was introduced for the construction of a railway from Perth to Merredin, and being defeated a Bill in the same session was subsequently introduced for the construction of a railway from Perth to Northam, I do not think it could be argued that these propositions were identical even though the latter railway would be built over a portion of the route of the former. In like manner if a Bill were introduced for the construction of a railway from Bridgetown to Denmark and that Bill were defeated and in the same session a Bill were submitted for the construction of a railway from Bridgetown to the Warren, I do not think it could be urged that a railway from Bridgetown to the Warren was the same proposition as one from Bridgetown to Denmark. Again, may I say, that during this session a Loan Bill was introduced providing for the raising of a loan of £5,000,000. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that the Bill had been defeated it could not be urged that a Loan Bill for one million pounds could not be subsequently introduced. It could not be objected to on the ground that the one million was contained in the five millions. I therefore am strongly of opinion after

looking at the matter very thoroughly, that the Bill is in order, because the two propositions are not the same in substance, and cannot possibly have the same effect. I should like to quote a few extracts from the authority previously quoted on the application of the rule when a Bill has been rejected and re-introduced—

When a bill has been rejected in any of its stages, in the house in which it originated, the same bill cannot be again introduced in the same house ; but a new bill, which really presents a different question, or the same question in a modified form, however slight the difference or modification may be, is not objectionable in point of order. Hence, in matters of considerable importance, in reference to which the opinion of the house has undergone a change, some trifling variation on the question has been deemed sufficient to prevent the operation of the rule.

Again—

When a bill has been passed in one branch, the rule is equally peremptory, that no similar bill can be afterwards introduced. In practice however, when it has been ascertained that a bill which has been passed in one house and sent to the other, is there unacceptable in some particulars, a new bill may be introduced and passed in the house in which it originated, with such variations from the first bill as to make it acceptable to the other house.

I cannot, as I have already stated, determine otherwise than that the objection raised to the Bill is not a valid objection, and that the Bill submitted to this House for the construction of a railway from Esperance northwards is in order. I want to say that I endeavoured to be as careful as I could regarding this matter, because earlier in the session I objected to a discussion on a motion for the adoption of the report of a select committee on the Wickepin-Merredin railway, on the grounds that the question had already been determined in this House. Having raised that objection I asked for the time which was

so kindly allotted to me last night in order that I might not do anything which might be considered by the House to be unfair or unjust to any member. I find that the question objected to on that occasion could not be dealt with otherwise. Both select committees sat and inquired into a distinct opposition from end to end. Their inquiry was held as to the route of a particular railway and the same committees discussed the one matter, but here is an entirely different matter altogether, the difference being 60 miles of railway as against 125 miles of railway. That is, less than half of the original proposition. I am inclined to believe that had a motion been submitted proposing the construction of a series of railways such as one from Esperance to Norseman, one from Esperance to 60 miles northwards, one from Hopetoun to Katanning, and say, one from Denmark to the Warren, and if that motion had been defeated in this House it would not have been competent for any member to introduce a railway Bill in the same session providing for the construction of any one of those railways. Had that been done I believe the course would have been most irregular; but I find that in connection with this measure the Bill is in order and therefore I rule accordingly.

#### *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in moving the second reading said : This Bill is introduced by the Government because of the defeat of a Bill that was introduced for the construction of a railway from Esperance to Norseman. The Bill is submitted because we are of the opinion that while a majority in the people's Chamber agreed to the construction of a line from Esperance, a section of Parliament decided otherwise, and there is just a possibility of that Chamber agreeing to adopt the report of the Advisory Board which recommended the construction of a line from Esperance 60 mile northwards. When I was introducing the second reading of the Bill from Esperance to Norse-

man I stated, and I desire to repeat it, that from a railway working point of view it is not a sound proposition to build a line isolated as this line will be from Esperance 60 miles north, and I am strongly of opinion that when, as I think, Parliament will endorse the construction of this line it will ultimately be found to be of advantage to Western Australia to connect it with Norseman and make it a through line to be operated and connected with the whole railway service so that it may be worked economically. It would be a better paying proposition right through than to have it constructed from Esperance 60 miles inland. It is a portion of the same railway, but I do not desire to go into that because we have dealt with it so exhaustively, and anyone with an open mind must realise that your judgment, Mr. Speaker, is I desire to emphasise this that we are introducing the Bill because we recognise our responsibility to all the people who hold land in all parts of the State. We are not limited in our view of our responsibilities. We recognise that people are farming in Esperance and that we have a responsibility to those people. If people are farming at Wyalkatchem, Cowcowing, and Mount Marshall we have equal responsibility to them and our duty is to the people of Western Australia. It has been laid down that everybody who is operating must be brought within 12½ miles of a railway to farm successfully, consequently, it is because we recognise our full responsibility to the whole of the people and not to a section of them that we are introducing this Bill for the purpose of serving people who deserve consideration at the hands of Parliament. I have been requested to state how many people there are on this land. I think I have already stated that there are 50 resident settlers there and that the total population along the route of the railway is 500 souls, and I want to emphasise as I did before, that railway propositions have been introduced, in this Chamber, and railway propositions will again be introduced, where the population is less than that number, but there are members in this Chamber who

believe that because these people are within goldfields territory they do not count in Western Australia, or in other words, as they are limited to that portion of the State, they do not feel that they have any responsibility to them.

Mr. George: You have no right to say that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I say it and emphasise it, and I want to point out that we who are fighting for justice for these people were not responsible for placing them where they are to-day. The land was thrown open by a previous Government and these people who are sacrificing themselves down there to-day were encouraged to go there by the previous Government.

The Minister for Mines: They were told they could get assistance from the Agricultural Bank.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And, as the Minister for Mines has just interjected, they were led to believe that they would get assistance from the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They were not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They were told that by Mr. Paterson, and there is no denying the fact. They took up the land on the distinct understanding that they were becoming settlers on the land in Western Australia and they were going to get equal consideration with other settlers.

Mr. Foley: They would have got it but for the fact that they were near the goldfields.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Although there are members in this Chamber who opposed the second reading of the Esperance-Norseman line, I think there were few who did not admit that this is an agricultural area. The two bitterest opponents, if one is justified in using that term, were the leader of the Opposition and the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), and yet both those gentlemen admitted that the area is an agricultural one. The member for Northam stated that the land would produce 10 bushels to the acre and there are railways built to-day to areas that have not produced that quantity.

Mr. George: And not likely to during a drought.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are judging Esperance lands under exactly the same conditions as we should judge other lands. The good land is not limited to Cowcowing or Mount Marshall, and a drought has visited those areas equally with the Esperance lands.

Mr. George: They never have anything but a drought down there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The very fact that the hon. gentleman admits that there has been a drought and that ten bushels to the acre were got off the land during the drought is clear evidence of the value of the land.

Mr. George: I do not admit that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, because the hon. member is biased against the proposition. The member for Northam has stated definitely that the land will produce ten bushels to the acre and as far as the opposition to the Bill went on the last occasion it was confined to statements and arguments advanced that the line should go east and west instead of north and south; consequently we arrive at the decision that hon. members opposite admit this to be an agricultural area. We have got beyond the stage when people state that these lands will not produce crops. They have produced crops and therefore I ask why should these people not receive the consideration which we are justified in saying they are entitled to. Let us go away from this Chamber, where I am pleased to say the Bill was endorsed by a big majority and take another place where the Bill was defeated. I have read *Hansard* with the desire of learning something of the opposition to the Bill and seeing exactly why members of another place do not desire to give consideration to the people of Esperance. But I found that there was only one speech delivered against the Bill and in going through that speech I was unable to find a sound argument against the Bill. As a matter of fact, the principal arguments advanced during the speech were against the amount of money it would be necessary to expend on the establishment of a har-

bour. The question of the harbour should not come in when we are considering the railway, for this reason: to-day we can take boats into Esperance and we can load cargo there, and if the land will produce a little we can take that little under existing conditions, but if the land is going to produce a lot, I think then the construction of a harbour will be justified. Therefore, instead of being afraid of the ultimate expenditure which would be involved in the construction of the harbour, we should be pleased at the prospect of having to construct that harbour in order to cope with the production from the Esperance lands. I view with a great deal of favour the fact that a number of members claim that ultimately a large amount of money will be required to give better harbour facilities at Esperance. I hope that that day will come, and the sooner it comes the better. No one argues against the expenditure of money at the port of Geraldton because there is a big production of cereals in the surrounding country, but before the agricultural lines in that part of the State were built there was little or no argument in favour of increased harbour facilities at Geraldton. With the building of agricultural lines, however, production has increased to such an extent that we have to go into the question of the export of wheat and it is because we have got to that stage that additional facilities are now being asked for there. It is the same at Bunbury and so I hope it will be that all the ports will have harbour facilities granted to them to cope with the export trade. I maintain that we should not view with fear the fact that ultimately money will be required for improving our harbours, rather should we view that matter with favour. We find all the opposition to the Bill in another place was confined to this question. It is true that the hon. gentleman who spoke urged that further inquiry should be made, but after all are not those the tactics of the opponent every time. If a man does not want convincing he will simply state that the evidence is all right but he wants that evidence checked and so he could go on forever. It is inconsistent for that hon.

member of another place to support other agricultural lines and oppose this one. The argument has been advanced that we want further investigation and I am prepared to admit that Mr. Paterson, whose judgment I admire stated that further investigation should be made. Mr. Paterson did not condemn this area. It is true he did not sign the report of the Advisory Board, but he did not condemn the area. He admitted it was good but stated that further investigation should be made. The Government have made these further investigations and the settlers themselves have made further experiments with the result that we now have the crops to show what the land will produce.

Mr. George: How much?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: More than is grown in some agricultural settlements where they have received railway communication. The hon. gentleman in the other place stated he wanted this further investigation, but he did not go to the trouble to investigate the further reports the Government had obtained. It is true that he gave some consideration to the report of Mr. Middleton, but he immediately proceeded to endeavour to cast a reflection on the ability of that gentleman to give a report. It must be borne in mind that not only did Mr. Middleton report but Mr. O'Brien also reported and no one will question Mr. O'Brien's judgment and knowledge as an engineer.

Mr. George: What did he report on?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am just coming to that. Mr. O'Brien reported and also Mr. Middleton, and the latter was not selected by the Government, but by the Surveyor General as being one of his most competent men. Mr. Middleton has given a report on the land generally and that report is favourable to the land being what it is represented to be, a good agricultural area. Mr. Sutton also investigated this area and his report is favourable to its being capable of producing wheat, and after all we are only introducing the railway for a belt of country that will produce cereals. Thus we have Mr. Middleton's report generally, Mr. O'Brien's report dealing

with another phase of the question which I will touch on presently, and Mr. Sutton's report, and yet the hon. gentlemen who opposed this Bill said that further investigations should be made over and above that made by the Advisory Board. Those further investigations have been made, and still hon. members ask for more. It is clear evidence that they are not prepared to view this proposition in the same way as they view other agricultural railway propositions. Their attitude is absolutely unfair. It is a crime to allow those people to select that land and say that we will not give them the same consideration as is given to other settlers. We are sacrificing 500 souls who are there to-day, and I say that hon. members should view this question in a manner different to what they have done in the past. We have introduced this Bill in accordance with the report of the majority of the Advisory Board for the building of a line from Esperance 60 miles inland. I wish to read from that report—

From an agricultural point of view we consider that at present it would be sufficient to construct a length of about 60 miles of railway from Esperance in the direction of Norseman, following generally the main road. This 60 miles of line is estimated to cost £1,700 per mile including water supply, making a total cost for the whole length of £102,000. One great difficulty which presents itself in respect to the exploitation of this belt of mallee country will be the provision of a water supply for settlers. Practically the whole of the district proposed to be opened up is a waterless area, the physical conformation of the country being gently undulating with very few distinct water-courses traversing it. The soil is of a very porous nature, and apparently absorbs the rain almost immediately it falls. The salt too, as far as can be judged from the few tanks already constructed in the district, is close to the surface. This difficulty, however, we do not consider by any means insurmountable.

These gentlemen recommend the line 60

miles inland from Esperance and any doubt they had as to the ultimate success was based on the porous nature of the soil and the proximity of salt to the surface, but that has been very closely investigated by Mr. O'Brien, the engineer who is now connected with the Water Supply Department.

Mr. Monger: Since when?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Since the Advisory Board's report was submitted, and Mr. O'Brien has given a report stating that there is no difficulty in regard to water conservation. He has also reported that the tanks filled—and many of them have been filled—are free from salt. Consequently the further investigations made prove that these men were sound in their judgment that the difficulty they anticipated in this regard was not insurmountable. The difficulty they anticipated does not exist, because we have got a water supply to-day, not only in Government tanks, but the settlers themselves have constructed tanks and those tanks can hold water and are free from salt.

Mr. George: The salt will come up as you cultivate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member will carry his mind back a few years he will know that exactly the same remark was made in connection with the Cowcowing country. I know that settlers from the goldfields went years ago to investigate that country with a view to selecting land, and they were told by experts in the department that it was a salt area, that there would be great difficulties in regard to water conservation, and that the salt being so close to the surface would prevent successful farming. There is no question that such was generally considered to be the case.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I never heard of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course the hon. gentleman would not hear of it, but it is on record in the Lands Department and it was circulated very freely six or eight years ago. I am speaking of something I have knowledge of, because I investigated in behalf of men who selected land in other portions and they were prevented from taking up land

in the Cowcowing area for the very reasons advanced in regard to the Esperance railway. But experience has proved that we can conserve water in the Cowcowing area, that we can crop successfully, and that there is no great difficulty in regard to salt in that district. The experience gained at Cowcowing is also being repeated at Esperance.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is totally different country.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Totally different country! We have always the same remark. The hon. gentleman is opposed to the people there, and he is opposing the railway because of his opposition to the people. But the two areas are identical. The Cowcowing country is no better and no worse than the Esperance land, but one is called Esperance and the other is called Cowcowing; that is the whole difference. The Advisory Board continued in their report—

We may state that this large extent of wheat growing country—some 1¼ million acres—is the greatest area of wheat land as far as we know, at present in the State in possession of the Crown, with so good a rainfall.

Perhaps I had better read that portion again, because it has been confirmed by the officers who have reported on the area since the Advisory Board visited it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Where are the reports?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They were quoted by me, and if the hon. member will look up my speech on the second reading of the Norseman-Esperance Railway Bill he will find the reports there.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are they printed *in extenso*?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but of course hon. members do not want to read them. They are afraid of being convinced.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Where are the reports? I ask you a civil question and I expect a civil answer.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are in *Hansard*, but I do not propose to weary the House by reading them a second time. If the hon. member is sincere in his desire to read the reports he can

turn up my speech in *Hansard*. I will read that paragraph from the board's report again—

We may state this large extent of wheat growing country—some 1¼ million acres—is the greatest area of wheat growing land, as far as we know, at the present in the State in possession of the Crown, with so good a rainfall. We recommend the construction of a railway northward from Esperance for a distance of some 60 miles, and when necessary branch lines extending west and east.

We are introducing this Bill in accordance with that report. The only doubt that is expressed in the report is a doubt in regard to the conservation of water and the porous nature of the soil, but that has been fully investigated and reports have been submitted showing that water can be conserved and that the salt difficulty they anticipated is non-existent. I want to ask hon. members as to whether those people who were put there by the member for Northam to a large extent—

Hon. J. Mitchell : That is not so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : The hon. gentleman took their application fees for the land.

Hon. J. Mitchell : I never saw their fees.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : But the hon. gentleman was in the Lands Department and those fees helped to swell his lands revenue. Mr. Paterson, the managing trustee of the Agricultural Bank, when the member for Northam was the Minister controlling that bank, promised financial assistance through the bank to those settlers. It is true that was afterwards withdrawn, but nevertheless those people were settled on the land by the previous Government and they were promised financial assistance; or in other words, they were told that they would get the same consideration as every other settler in other portions of the State.

Hon. J. Mitchell : They were told that by a newspaper in Kalgoorlie.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : They were told it by letter from the Agricultural Bank.

The Minister for Mines : As the hon. member knows; he has read the letter. What is the use of his denying it ?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : How can hon. members who oppose this line consistently support a measure for a railway to serve the Cowcowing and Mount Marshall area ? The people there are the same Australian people as we have at Esperance. They are no greater in number, very little cultivation has been done in a large portion of that area, and yet we find that hon. members opposite would support a line to open up that Cowcowing area without asking any question as to the reports submitted by experts or without any great discussion as to the wisdom of the construction of the line. But when it comes to a line for Esperance, which has been reported on by expert officers as being a good wheat belt, the largest in the possession of the Crown, hon. members ask for further investigation. How can the member for York (Mr. Monger) consistently support the Cowcowing railway, the extension of the Kondinin railway northwards through Mount Arrowsmith, which is a drier area than the Esperance country, the extension of the Bolgart line, and other railway propositions into dry areas where the rainfall is not as good as it is at Esperance, where the development is not equal to that at Esperance, and where the class of settler is no better than those at Esperance ? I do not wish to take up the time of the House in going into a lot of details. *Hansard* is full of details as to the soil qualities of the Esperance district and full of arguments in regard to the merits of the line. Those opposed to the project admit that to be an agricultural area; I appeal to them to realise that we have a number of people there who have been farming, and I wish to emphasise the point that a considerable amount of clearing and cultivation has gone on there, and that quite a number of people have their homes in the district in spite of the fact that they were told on a previous occasion by a section of



Parliament that they could not have railway communication. Those people believe that Parliament is going to do justice to every part of the State and refuse to accept the decision on a previous occasion as being the true intention of Parliament towards them. Compare the work of these men with the work of the people at Mount Marshall. These people knew that they were going to get a railway, they knew that Parliament was favourable to it and despite all the encouragement they got from the Agricultural Bank and the fact that Parliament was going to give them a railway, there is not a great deal of cultivation at Mount Marshall in excess of what has taken place at Esperance. Yet we are asked how many people are there and what has been done. Have the people been encouraged to do anything? They have been discouraged in every possible way; yet they have toiled on in anticipation that eventually justice will be done. I appeal to Parliament to recognise that these people are there and have their families there, that they are developing a portion of the State which is worth developing, that they are a party of pioneers coming from the goldfields, pioneers who to a large extent made Western Australia what it is and who instead of coming down to a more favourable clime to spend the latter days of their life, have taken their families to this area and said, "We are going from the goldfields to the natural agricultural area of the goldfields and are going to develop it. We are going to take on a new belt of country and bring it under cultivation." And all the consideration they get is the rejection of the Bill the passing of which alone will enable them to make that cultivation profitable. The Advisory Board has reported in favour of the construction of this line. The report was not given to the present Government but to a previous Government and was obtained at the request of a previous Government. I appeal to members to see that justice is done to carry out the report of the Board and assist us to convince another Chamber that these people are worthy of consideration, that they are farming an area which is worth developing and which will produce a con-

siderable quantity of wheat and other cereals for the benefit of the State. I submit the second reading and trust these people will not be sacrificed. It will be a crime to sacrifice them, and I appeal to the House on their behalf. I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

Mr. Monger: You sacrificed people in this State for your own personal gain.

Mr. Heitmann: Is the hon. member in order in saying that the Minister for Works sacrificed people in this State for his own personal gain? I ask that the statement be withdrawn.

Mr. Monger: I do not feel disposed to withdraw it without any attempt to explain.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member should withdraw it. These references are not made when one is in calm blood.

Mr. Monger: When I heard the Minister for Works going into heroics—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Monger: I will withdraw temporarily, but later—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Monger: I withdraw.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I do not intend to delay the House very long in debating the motion for the second reading of this Bill. I am satisfied with your ruling, Sir, as to the propriety of the Bill being introduced, but at the same time I wish it to be pointed out that all the arguments on every occasion for the construction of a railway from Esperance to Norseman have been based upon the fact that we had a large area of agricultural land which was waiting to be developed by railway communication. The proposal now to construct this line for a distance of 60 miles northwards from Esperance is merely, as the Minister has pointed out, to carry out the recommendation of the Advisory Board who were appointed some three years ago to report on this district; at any rate, it is to carry out a certain portion of that recommendation. The recommendation was to construct the line some 60 miles north and then towards the east I think, in order to run through the centre of what is deemed to be a good agricultural district.

The Minister for Works: They said later on we could run out spur lines. It was never suggested that that should be part and parcel of the first construction.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was their recommendation. There is no need for the Minister to work himself up into a rage or to indulge in heroics when introducing this measure.

Mr. McDowall: I think there is valid reason for it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is no reason for him to cast insinuations at members who deem it advisable to oppose the passage of the measure as I do again for the second time during this session of Parliament. It is not on account of the goldfields people, it is not because there happen to be several settlers who came from different goldfields and took up land there that any member on the Opposition side of the House is opposing the construction of the line.

Mr. Green: They are to the east of the 120th meridian; that is the trouble.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I know what is the trouble with the hon. member. He happens to have been west of the 120th meridian. It is a pity he would not remain east of it.

Mr. Green: That is something like what you said the other night about the goldfields.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is what I say to the hon. member now. It would be a good job if he remained on the goldfields. It would be the right place for him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Certainly he is out of place here.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This must cease.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I cannot get on if the hon. member will interject.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not interject.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is unworthy of any consideration that a measure of this description should be favourably received because of the individuality of some of the settlers. I do not know

a single settler in that district. I do not know who the settlers are.

Mr. McDowall: Who is considering them on account of individuality?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister accuses members of the Opposition of being personally opposed to the settlers.

Mr. McDowall: Not to the individual settlers.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, to the individual settlers because they came from the goldfields. Such an argument will not hold water.

Mr. McDowall: I do not think the Minister made use of that argument.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister did make use of that argument and it was unworthy of the Minister or of the Government, but the argument which I think ought to appeal to members is that the Minister definitely declared when the second reading of the original Bill was being moved, and he has repeated the statement to-night, that to construct this 60 miles of railway would be an unsound proposition. He did not hesitate to admit it would be an unsound proposition.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That is from a working point of view.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It does not matter what the point of view is, it is an unsound proposition, and I agree with him, that it is an unsound proposition from a working railways point of view. It is an unsound proposition from the financial position of the State at the present time. Then we are asked to believe that the Administration of which I had the honour to be the head induced these people to settle on this land. There is not a scintilla of truth in such an assertion.

The Attorney General: The statement was that Mr. Paterson did.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, the Attorney General has been out of the Chamber and he is again on the wrong track. He has interjected on an assertion made by the Minister in his speech different from that to which I refer. We were charged with inducing these people to settle on these lands. That was used as an argument why the railway should be constructed.

The Minister for Mines: He did not say "induced"; he said they were settled there during the time you were in office.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister said we induced them, and that is absolutely incorrect. We did not induce them to go there.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You threw the land open for settlement.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We never threw the land open for settlement and never promised financial assistance from the Agricultural Bank.

The Minister for Mines: The manager did.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know whether he did; I am doubtful about that.

The Minister for Mines: The hon. member knows the Government cannot make such a promise. The matter is entirely in the hands of the manager of the bank.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am replying to the Minister for Works. The Minister for Mines can make his statement afterwards and put any construction he wishes on the remarks of the Minister for Works. We never induced anyone to go on the land. We never threw the land open for selection. Contrary to offering them financial assistance, they knew full well that they were going there at their own risk. Why? because the reports were not sufficiently favourable to warrant us in believing at that time, and at the present time even we have no reports which will warrant us in believing that a man can settle on that land and make a competence for himself and his family. It is quite true some settlers, very few, at the time we were in power took up land in the district and took it up in just the same way as they could go to any portion of the South-West, and select land there before survey. My colleague, the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) absolutely refused to have this area surveyed. Why? For the simple reason that by surveying any areas such as this into farming blocks he would only have given the people an impression, and a just impression, too, that railway facilities would follow and all

the other facilities which were being granted to other agricultural areas which have been referred to and which were then being thrown open for selection after survey. The fact remains that while we acted perfectly above board, not being convinced that we would be doing right in inducing anyone to settle in that district, our opponents did not act quite in the same straightforward manner. They made it a burning cry; they made it a cause of hostility between the coast and the goldfields. They were never tired of advertising the fact that here was a splendid area of country on which the goldfields people might safely settle and it was only the hostility of the coast that prevented these people from getting railway communication.

The Attorney General: Which is perfectly just and right this hour.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They never tired, notwithstanding that they knew what the Attorney General knows that he is perhaps inducing people to go there to certain failure—

The Attorney General: I know nothing of the kind. I know the country is good country.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If failure follows in the case of these poor deluded settlers, that failure will rest on the shoulders of the Attorney General.

The Attorney General: I will take the risk.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of course the Attorney General will. He will take the risk of anything as long as he gets votes.

The Attorney General: Is that right?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes.

The Attorney General: I rise to a point of order. That is practically an accusation of dishonesty and dishonour, and I ask the hon. member to withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, I think it is a remark which might well be withdrawn.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What is it?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member said the Attorney General would take the risk as long as he got the votes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Certainly.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a very nasty imputation. I think debate can be car-

ried on without that sort of thing. I think the hon. member will recognise that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The debate can be carried on if members will permit it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister's speech has been an attack on members who oppose the railway.

Mr. SPEAKER: When exception is taken to the Minister's remarks he will have to withdraw.

Mr. George: So it is only when exception is taken.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Murray-Wellington will withdraw that insinuation that statements are withdrawn only when exception is taken to them.

Mr. George: It is no insinuation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! It is a reflection on the Chair to say that no objection is taken unless attention is drawn to the remark. The hon. member will withdraw that reflection.

Mr. George: If you think there is any such intention I withdraw, but I say there was no intention of reflecting on the Chair; it was simply a repetition of the words used by yourself. I know what is necessary without having to reflect on the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is all the hon. member need say. I do not think any member in the House can accuse me of having favoured one individual more than another. I strenuously endeavour to give fair play all round, and I shall not allow any member to insinuate to the contrary. I hope the leader of the Opposition will withdraw his remark seeing that exception has been taken to it. I can assure the hon. member that like protection will be afforded to him when necessary.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I withdraw anything that implied dishonesty to the Attorney General.

The Attorney General: The words were used.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What words?

Mr. SPEAKER: The matter need not proceed further.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I repeat what I intended to convey, that this was made a political plank; it was made a

cause of attack on the present Opposition during the recent campaign; and every month in and month out it has been the cause of complaint and attack in the goldfields Press on the present Opposition. Surely we can also lay claim to some shreds of political honesty as well as our friends who occupy the Treasury benches and who are prepared to take all sorts of risks in connection with the development of this area. But I do protest against this constant accusation from men who fill responsible positions in the service of the Crown, Ministerial positions, that the members of the Opposition are actuated by base methods, by personal animosity, against the goldfields residents, because some of them have been induced, not by us but by others, to settle in this area.

Mr. Monger: Read the very recent article in a goldfields paper.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We have to consider whether we are justified as a Parliament in spending £150,000 at the present juncture to construct this 60 miles of railway; and it is idle for the Minister to say that we must not go beyond the cost of the construction of the line, because we must take into consideration also the further expenditure that is necessary in connection with the extension of the Esperance harbour. We have also to consider whether we are justified in adopting this route at all. For my part I have on more than one occasion invited the earnest consideration of hon. members to the proposition as to whether the line should not run east and west and ultimately go through to the Great Southern railway, whether it is a proper proposition to run the line northwards from Esperance in order to tap this area, presuming that all the favourable anticipations of the Minister and hon. members opposite are to be correct.

Mr. Foley: And the Advisory Board's opinion.

The Minister for Works: And the reports of the expert officers.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If we are to pass a measure of this description, which means a huge expenditure of public money, on the flimsy material that the

Minister has been able to put before the House on this occasion, then I have not the slightest doubt that our finances will go on getting into a worse and worse tangle year by year, until the happy demise of the present occupants of the Treasury benches relieves the overburdened country of the baneful influence of their maladministration.

Mr. McDowall: Is that not what you desire?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We have been referred to reports of gentlemen named Middleton and O'Brien—Mr. O'Brien in connection with the Goldfields Water Supply, I presume. I have asked for these reports, and when I suggested by interjection to the Minister for Works that he might well produce them I got nothing but abuse showered on me. I cannot find any trace of these reports either in this place or another place. I am referred to *Hansard*. I cannot use *Hansard*, the Minister knows it, to quote from, but I have glanced through the Minister's speech in November last when introducing the Railway Bill from Norseman to Esperance, and I find disjointed extracts quoted from some communications which were supposed to have been received from these gentlemen, but nothing in the nature of a report which could convince hon. members that at last the difficulties which had been so clearly set forth by Mr. Paterson some three years ago had been overcome, nothing which could be left on record on the Table of the House as a report which would justify us, who are honestly opposed to the construction of this railway at the present moment, in so soon changing our views and our opinions. Now the Minister is simply counting upon gathering up one or two extra votes in another place because he can say now what he could not say then, that he has got two members of the Advisory Board to recommend the construction of this line; in other words that he is not going beyond the recommendation of a majority of an Advisory Board which we appointed but which he has never ceased condemning from that day to this on every occasion. What does the Minister care about the Advisory Board?

"It was brought into being to carry out the behests of the Government that appointed it."

The Minister for Works: Hear, hear!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: "Advisory boards are machines swayed according to the views and the wishes of the Minister and the Premier who brought them into being and asked their advice in connection with undertakings." The Minister for Works will probably say "hear, hear" to that also. He has a nice opinion of these advisory boards; and now, despite his condemnation of these very gentlemen, he wants Parliament to accept his measure because, perchance, two out of three have recommended the construction of this 60 miles of railway. Any man who voted against the original measure without further information, which the Minister also decries and denies, would stultify himself if he voted for the measure which the Minister has introduced to-night.

The Minister for Works: What are you going to do for the people down there?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What is the hon. member going to do for them? He put them there; he and his friends induced them to go there; the mining Press on the goldfields induced them to go down there to take up selections.

The Minister for Works: And you took their money.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They never went down there by any wish or by any recommendation of the past Government. We were only too anxious to prove that district to be good agricultural land with a sound rainfall, and we are still only too anxious, but I am not satisfied to go beyond Mr. Paterson's recommendation in connection with that land. I give more for Mr. Paterson's recommendation and opinion than I give for the rest of the members of the board put together.

The Attorney General: Well, he promised them the support of the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then why has he not given it?

The Attorney General: Because your Ministry blocked him.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Nonsense; I have not been in power for 14 months. Why is he not giving it to-day?

The Attorney General: We have been giving it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Not the bank. The bank is not making advances to settlers down there. The Government are giving it out of their Agricultural Development Vote.

The Attorney General: I say we are giving it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Exactly, but why is not the bank giving it? Because Mr. William Paterson and his co-trustees do not think the security is good enough.

The Attorney General: Until the railway is made.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Because they do not think the security is good enough. And the Minister, the same gentleman who went down and said, "We will not only find the money but we will buy your produce"—no doubt until the railway is made; that is a nice sort of thing to do—

The Attorney General: A just thing.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is a nice thing to go to the electorate and say "We will buy your produce at the nearest point on the main road." Is that Minister going to mete out equal justice to every portion of the country?

The Minister for Works: Yes, we are doing it to-day.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Will he buy the produce of every settler on the main road? Will the Minister buy the produce of the settlers at Emu Hill, whom he has deprived of a railway?

The Minister for Works: The trouble is they have nothing to sell. At Esperance Bay they produce.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The position is too contemptible altogether.

The Minister for Works: Yes, it is contemptible.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If Ministers treat these people differently from what they mete out to other agricultural settlers, I have no hesitation in saying that they are doing a wrong thing, an irregular thing, and something which they must know does not redound to their credit.

The Attorney General: Absolutely it is the right thing to do.

The Minister for Works: You object to it because it is Esperance. If it was Busselton it would be all right.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I object to it because it is a political railway at present, and there is no justification for it.

The Minister for Works: If it was Busselton it would be all right.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is no justification for it and the Minister knows there is no justification for it. He is not going to get any increased traffic to the railway system because of the construction of this line.

Mr. McDowall: He is going to open up land.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He is not going to open up land at present until he has a report that the land can be successfully cultivated. If it is proved that the land can be successfully worked to produce a profit for those who are tilling it, then I maintain it will be time enough, in accordance with the recommendation of Mr. Paterson, to embark on this large expenditure of money to give railway facilities; and then, and then only, will the right time be to decide as to whether this line should run from Esperance or run from the Great Southern railway.

The Minister for Works: Why penalise them by taking them to the Great Southern railway? Why should they not go to their nearest port?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister knows that he cannot construct this railway even if he pushes the Bill through, and he is only pushing the Bill through on this occasion as an advertisement, so that he can say, "Yes, we lost the Norseman-Esperance line, but we introduced a line for 60 miles northwards and it is only the first section; we will carry it on to Norseman." How is it that he cannot bring in a Bill for the Busselton to Margaret River railway, which was definitely promised by the Premier 12 months ago to be brought down this session? Is it because I happen to represent that district that the Bill can go hang, can go into the waste paper basket,

and is not to be introduced this session, notwithstanding a definite promise given? And the only justification for this breach of promise is that if we did pass the Bill, the railway could not be constructed because of financial reasons, and also because of the congested condition of the Public Works Department. The same argument will apply in regard to the Esperance-Northwards line.

Mr. McDowall: Then it is no use putting through any of the lines which are on the Loan Bill.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am not controlling the policy of the Government, but if a Bill for a railway which was distinctly promised eighteen months ago is not introduced, and the promise is broken on the grounds that the line cannot be constructed even if the Bill be passed, that argument I contend holds so far as this proposed 60 miles of railway is concerned. The department is congested and has been congested ever since the present Minister for Works has been there. He cannot build railways for "sour apples," if I may use the expression without being offensive. They will cost more than before and they will take longer to construct. Why introduce this Bill? Simply to say, "We passed the Bill; we brought it in," and to enable the Attorney General to go down to his constituency and say that it had been introduced by his Government.

The Attorney General: I wish I could have that lasting honour.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I wish it were the last honour the hon. member could do in his political life. We should then be getting rid of him cheaply at the price.

The Attorney General: Your personalities are only equalled by your impudence.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am so sorry, Mr. Speaker; I think the heat of the day or of the evening is having some effect on the Attorney General. I am sorry the hon. member feels it so much.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must discuss the Bill.

The Attorney General: He cannot discuss the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is an imputation on my ability. May I ask that the Attorney General withdraw that statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the leader of the Opposition considers the remark offensive, it must be withdrawn.

The Attorney General: In deference to your ruling, I withdraw.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I thank the Attorney General. I do not propose to delay the House much longer. This proposal has been considered from every point of view on more than one occasion in this Chamber, and I am satisfied, no matter what hon. members sitting on the Ministerial side may think, no matter what biased goldfields members may write, and no matter what politicians may say to further the prospects of their own political views, the Opposition are doing only their bare duty to the State, especially considering the congestion in the department controlled by the Minister for Works, and the absence of anything like congestion of coin of the realm in the Treasury controlled by my friend, the Premier, by opposing this measure for the third time since our friends have been in power. Once we have proper evidence to show that that area can be cultivated profitably and that the people who are settled thereon are not likely to suffer disaster, which to use the mildest expression at any rate, is before them according to the evidence we have now, then I shall be the first to suggest that railway facilities should be granted to the district, even should there be no settlers there, just as I would suggest that railways should be constructed in other agricultural areas.

The Minister for Works: With your tongue in your cheek.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That remark is offensive and must be withdrawn.

The Minister for Works: I withdraw.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister might rise and withdraw properly.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must rise.

The Minister for Works (rising): I will withdraw.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am sorry hon. members are interrupting my flow of eloquence. I cannot get my peroration out. I repeat, once produce the evidence that this large strip of country can be satisfactorily and successfully settled, I shall be the first man to pledge the credit of the country to construct this railway. If the Government are convinced that this is already proved, why has not the Minister for Lands subdivided the area and thrown it open for selection? It is left like any other portion of the State for odd members of the community to take up patches as might be deemed advisable to be surveyed after selection.

Mr. McDowall: It is reserved.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the land is what they claim it to be, why is it not subdivided and thrown open for selection?

The Minister for Works: We are waiting for the construction of the railway.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the members of the Government are satisfied that it is suitable for selection, the proper course to pursue is to cut it up the same as other areas have been subdivided during the past three or four years. The fact of the matter is that the hon. gentlemen have not confidence in their own proposition, and the Attorney General offers to take the risk. He knows well that if disaster overtakes the settlers he cannot make them reparation. He knows well that it is only a figure of speech to say "We will take the risk," but until the responsible officers say that this area is suitable, and it is what we believe it to be, that it is within a decent rainfall, and that the settlers will have an equal chance with the settlers in other parts of the State to make their occupations successful and profitable, we shall be doing wrong if we pledge the funds of the country for this large expenditure.

The Minister for Works: You are doing wrong now.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member has done wrong to the settlers. He put them there and induced them to go there, and if there is any trouble down there that trouble will rest on the shoul-

ders of the hon. members sitting on the Ministerial side.

The Minister for Works: You took their cash.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is a childish sort of interjection to make. Let me say to conclude, that I feel perfectly justified in opposing the measure on this occasion, as I did before. I realise whilst it may be properly introduced, as Mr. Speaker has ruled under the authorities he has quoted, it is really the same proposition as we had before, and whilst the Minister on that occasion was going beyond the recommendation of the majority of the Advisory Board in order to placate his goldfields friends, yet the 60 miles that it is now proposed to construct will be only the first section of the complete line if he remains in power, and he will couple it up with the railway system as he originally intended. No proof has been adduced which would warrant this House in the present state of the finances at any rate, and even if we had a satisfactory report, to approve of what must eventually be the expenditure of the better part of a million of money.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker): I confess I am puzzled to understand the motive, if it be honest, of the hon. member who has just sat down.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I object to the insinuation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Attorney General must not question the honesty of any hon. member.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not questioning the hon. member's honesty. I am saying that if his motive be honest I cannot understand what has induced him to make the speech we have just heard delivered.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no necessity for the Minister to question at all the hon. member's honesty.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am questioning my understanding. I am at a loss to understand human motives at all after listening to the speech of the leader of the Opposition. Analysed, what is that speech, but an accusation of political corruption against this side of the House.



Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There has not been an accusation of political corruption. Moreover, it would not be permitted by the Chair.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I say, analysed, that speech has nothing in it except an accusation of political corruption against those who are proposing the introduction of the measure.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This must cease. I will ask the Minister not to repeat the accusation of political corruption, because it would not have been permitted by the Chair. The Attorney General is only aggravating the position when he says "analysed."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: With all due deference, and with every desire to obey your ruling, surely I am allowed to express to this House what impression is made upon my understanding, what the impression is upon my feelings, and what is the general conception arrived at by the House after listening to the hon. member's speech. I will say this to put me more in order: the hon. member has not credited this side of the House with a single honourable intention in introducing this measure. He has not told us that we have adduced in the course of arguments either in this or the previous discussion, any substantial evidence of our bona fides in introducing the measure. What, therefore, is the natural inference? That we are not actuated by good intentions, that we do not mean the welfare of the country, that we have not in purpose the development of the State, but that we are moved by political motives to catch a few votes on the goldfields. That accusation was distinctly made, and it was for that reason, we were told, this line was introduced. I want the hon. member to turn back his recollection to the time when maps were published by the Government of the State—long before there was talk of a Labour party in Western Australia or of a goldfields party—in which this part of the country was shown to be of an agricultural character, and in which a survey of the line which we are now proposing in part was marked out on those maps. I want you also, Sir, to carry your mind back to the time,

when in the early days of government, before we had Responsible Government, it was a live proposition even then to construct a railway northwards from Esperance, and on the grounds that that railway would traverse good agricultural country. I want you further to bring your mind back nearer to our own times, when the member for that constituency, not a Labour man, not belonging to the party now in office in any sense of the word, proposed solemnly in this House that the line we are speaking of to-night and the line we spoke of the other night as a further extension of it, should be constructed by the State; and on the ground too, that it would not only be a mining line, not only a line to connect the goldfields with their natural port, but on the ground that it would tap good agricultural country. Now I want to know what has become of the sense of responsibility of the leader of the Opposition, when he in so many words derides and belittles the reports of responsible officers of the State; an officer of the Mines Department, Mr. O'Brien, and Mr. Middleton, with the imprimatur upon his name of the Surveyor General of the State as being the ablest man capable of doing that work whom he knows of in the State. These men come forward with a distinct declaration that this country is good agricultural country. They pledge their credit upon it. They are Mines officers, and they are backed up by the Surveyor General. If the statements made to-night by the leader of the Opposition are true, then the Surveyor General's resignation should be in the hands of the Government straight away, and Messrs. O'Brien and Middleton should be for ever debarred from exercising their abilities in the service of the State henceforth. They are pledging their reputations upon the statements they made, and upon those statements we stand. Their statements are that the land is good wheat growing country. Moreover, we have in the Agricultural Department an expert, not engaged by the Labour party, not brought to the State by the Government now in office, but installed in his position and specially selected because of his

honour, his integrity and his great ability in agricultural matters. I mean Mr. Sutton, who was brought here by the Government of which the hon. leader of the Opposition was Premier. Mr. Sutton goes to that country, and upon Mr. Sutton's assurance that the country is agricultural country, wheat growing country, safe to invest upon, he was appointed the distributor of a large fund spent for the assistance of the settlers in that district which this railway is intended to serve. The money of the State has been spent, not only with his cognizance but with his approval. He has given his word, his honour, that the country is wheat growing country.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): He is so sure of it that he recommended the erection of a flour mill in the district.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, as my colleague reminds me, he is so convinced of the good character of that country that he recommended the expenditure of the State's money in the erection of a flour mill in the neighbourhood of this wheat area. Are we to have no confidence in any of our officers? Is Mr. Sutton incapable of giving an opinion? Is he actuated by purely political motives?

Mr. George: Nobody ever suggested it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: But that is the statement of the leader of the Opposition, namely, that we have it in evidence that this is purely a political proposition. The hon. member heard him use that expression, and it was that imputation, that insinuation of impure motives, which I resented in my remarks.

Mr. George: He did not attack any of the officers. He would not be such a cad.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If this gentleman is not to be attacked, if his reputation is not to be impugned, if his abilities are not to be questioned, if his judgment is to stand the test, then this country is a country warranting the construction of a railway.

Mr. George: But one may differ from his opinions without attacking his character.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not an opinion, it is a statement of fact, a statement of his knowledge. Will the hon. member put up his opinion as an agricultural expert in comparison with that of Mr. Sutton?

Mr. George: I am not doing anything of the kind.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then why does the hon. member interrupt me when I am referring to Mr. Sutton as one of my authorities for saying that this railway line is not only desirable, but necessary?

Mr. George: Because you imputed to my leader things he did not say.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, I have imputed nothing. No language of mine could adequately rebut the tone, the spirit, the innuendoes, and the veiled, well-concealed, glove-covered accusations he made against those sitting on this side of the House, and the gold-fields representatives who, he said, were engineering this line through, not because they believed in it, but because they wanted to serve their own political ends. That was the accusation, and in response to that I justly ask, has Mr. Sutton any political ends to serve? Has Mr. O'Brien, who was never appointed by the Labour party, any political ends to serve? I desire to read for a moment from what Mr. O'Brien says as to the rainfall there, which was questioned by the leader of the Opposition. Mr. O'Brien states in his report—

Various reports and statements have been published to the effect that the mallee country is porous, that no watercourses exist, and that great difficulties would be met in providing settlers with water, and so on. A few words on the above will show how a half-truth given out in all innocence may leave a bad impression. The mallee "surface soils," and to some extent the sub-soils, are porous, and it is fortunate for the State that they are. The soils on the mallee belt can easily absorb all the rain which falls, and hold it for a considerable time

before the sun's heat pulls it out. The sandy loams which prevail over the surface assist the retention of moisture in the soil below, and require less cultivation in fallow than heavier and stiffer clay soils. Condensing the above we have—surface soils and subsoils absorb rain and lose it again by evaporation, less the quantity used by scrub and trees. Taking this in conjunction with the character of the rain (slow soaking falls) and the easy grade of the country, the absence of watercourses is explained. After an examination extending over six months and carried out in a systematic way, I see no serious difficulty in providing a reliable, economical, and clean water supply all over the area of one and a half million acres, including railway requirements.

Mr. George: Why could we not see those reports?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: They were sent to another Chamber and laid on the Table in order that members of another place might have the information. I want to say that the Advisory Board went there and examined this country, and after a most cursory and not detailed investigation—certainly not after a six months' investigation—they did express some doubt, but here is a distinct answer to that doubt, an absolute answer to that doubt. I personally have seen water conserved there when dams made in dry districts nearer our own coast have been empty at the same period of the year. I say that the soil there holds water better, or the construction is better, or something is better in the Esperance district for the conservation of water than along the Dowerin-Merredin line, of which I know something. I want to draw special attention to the sophistry of the argument of the leader of the Opposition. The hon. member said "Let those people prove that they are successful farmers and I will be the first to advocate the line." Is that the way we treat other portions of the country? When we know that there are portions of the country that will support settlement, do we not resolve

on a railway, not to prove the character of the soil, but to give the settlers a chance of proving the character of the soil? Do we not build railways in order that we may make settlement successful? We do not wait until successful farming has taken place all over the State before we construct railway lines. We say, "Go into the wilderness, cultivate it, hew down the forest, and sow your harvest, and by the time you are ready with the harvest we will have a railway waiting for you." That is the doctrine we preach to other portions of the State. Hon. members know that in all the outlying agricultural districts we have taken railways simultaneously with the inducement to settlement, and that is the course that should be taken at Esperance. Why is Esperance to be the exception? Here is an enormous belt of country, almost a new State; in fact, I venture to say that if all the rest of Australia were to be buried and this part alone could be left above the ocean, and settlement taken there, we could build a nation within the area of land waiting for settlement, east, west, north, and south of this line we are now proposing.

Mr. Monger: What has it produced to date?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Is the hon. member at all sincere in his sneering interjection? What has it had a chance to produce? Has it not been derided and sneered at, has not the hon. member poured the vials of his scorn upon it every time he could through his half bewildered interjections? On every occasion of late, when this subject has been brought up in this House, those settlers have been practically labelled fools by hon. members.

Mr. George: We would not be so rude.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, the hon. member would be ten times ruder. He has yet to go to the school of politeness and learn the first lessons of respect to his fellows.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am speaking roughly, I know, but what

are these interjections but a stimulus to disorder.

Mr. George : I am not stimulating the hon. member to disorder. I have not made a single interjection without a desire to get some knowledge.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must not make a statement.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : I said the hon. member was rude—

Mr. SPEAKER : Order !

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : I am not anxious to continue with the matter. The subject of my speech is of too vast an importance for me to be drawn from it except to answer interjections that will tend to throw further light upon it. I say that those people who have taken up their lot in that tract of country have done so under the most trying conditions, they have gone away from railway communication, almost from road communication ; they have gone veritably into the wilderness and undertaken every species of human hardship and suffering, but in spite of the drawbacks, they have retained brave hearts and are still striving to make the country fertile and add wealth to the State. That being the case, it ill becomes hon. members who are always anxious to press settlement and support all settlers, to belittle the enterprise of that class of citizen in this portion of the State. I wish only to resent that spirit which we have seen exhibited, and which we shall perhaps see exhibited further against those people. I want to say that the Government have shown honest conviction as to the bona fides of these settlers and the character of the land to be settled.

Mr. Monger : The reports have not proved that statement you have just made.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : Which one, I have made several ?

Mr. Monger : I will explain later on.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : I submit that we have proved our bona fides, our conviction as to the character of these lands and the character of the country. To-day we are spending the money of the people upon it, and we should not be deserving of occupying

these seats for one hour longer if it could be proved against us that we were doing this without conviction, without faith in the country and without a desire to help the State. If we are only doing it for popularity, for applause, or for the ring of a political cheer, we are not deserving of the confidence of our fellow men for one hour longer. It is because many of us have seen the country, because we rely on the judgment of experts, even the judgment of Mr. Paterson, who admitted that the country would warrant a line to the agricultural area, but said, with the usual caution of a gentleman of long experience and character, that he would like to see more experiment. And therefore, I aver, that the same Mr. Paterson encouraged settlers to go there and over his own signature upon paper, promised support to certain of these settlers. What caused him afterwards to recede from that position I know not, but that he did take up that attitude and that his first move was one of helpfulness to those who have settled on that portion of the soil is certain. We know that afterwards, for some reason or other, the Government of that time did not think it wise to go on with this proposal, but it stands upon record that Mr. Paterson gave his approval, a majority of the board gave their approval, and even the member for Northam (Mr. Mitchell) himself admitted that it is a fair wheat belt and that it is deserving of some kind of a railway to the agricultural portion, even so late as during the discussion on the Norseman-Esperance proposal. What then are we to say ? Our opponents are obliged to admit so much. Now, as it was rightly put by the Minister for Works, it can be no disparagement to the proposal we make to-night to say that if it be completed we shall be compelled to spend money on opening out the harbour at Esperance. Are we to stop our hands to supply a different method and adopt a different principle with regard to Esperance, differing from the application of the principles we apply in all other agricultural districts ? Are we to say that because the people may want some help in the future they shall forever

remain wanting all help? Are we to say this for the reason that if the people are successful there will be demands for more public works and more spirited enterprise for the whole of the State, because growth means more money? Are we to say we will give these people no money? Are we to starve this portion of the State, and leave the land waiting for settlement, a desert and a wilderness, simply because we fear we may have to spend money to keep pace with the march of events in the future? It is a niggardly, a narrow and a parochial policy. It is one of those views that men sometimes adopt which warp their own natures and show they have not the capacity to perceive the welfare of the citizens of Western Australia as a whole. I take this view having seen the country, having seen that magnificent harbour that equals in its possibilities any in the State, having travelled in the country and seen the nature of the soil and its possibilities, having met the earnest settlers, the brave pioneers in that district.

Mr. Monger: What?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I say the brave pioneers in that district. I say that to leave that natural wealth ignored, to leave it idle, to deliberately waste it, to blot out this agricultural future as a desert is a national wrong and a positive crime to the whole of the State, an injury to every citizen, for I care not from what place a member may come, whether he represents Fremantle, with its magnificent developments, Bunbury with its expanding trade, Albany with its growing facilities for commerce, or the north, Geraldton or any of our ports, still further to the eastward the line of settlement must have further growth and broader expansion to awaken kindred sentiments and fraternal feelings, and the State growing in magnitude and comradeship and oneness of purpose, and the wealth growing, as it may, beyond all computation, must shed its lustre and spread its greatness and extend its benefits to every port and every harbour and every inland town in the whole of this State. We cannot make that part of the State wealthier without making Western Aus-

tralia wealthier. We cannot turn that desert, as it now is, into flourishing homesteads and townships without making every citizen in the whole of Western Australia more prosperous, with better chances in life, with better contentment, with a better sense of patriotism in the citizenship he has. If we neglect it we make the State poorer for the fancied parochial good we are going to do in some isolated spot where we are favoured, and known, and move, and have our being, merely to wed ourselves to the little spot our feet can cover, and doing all this we show a lilliputian mind, a smallness of character, that is unworthy of our political life. It is our duty to rise from our little circumscribed interests into the wider interests of nationhood to develop that portion of the State, as it is capable of being developed, to go out into the wilderness and make the wilderness burdened with towns and villages and make it fairly beautiful with its roads for traffic and its railway communication, until, as it were, we link together the whole body politic and make the State beat with one heart, the blood of life running through every portion, so that we no longer hear of this dissension between coast and goldfields, between this political creed and that political creed, but having done our duty to every section and made nature yield its wealth in every portion, each and every citizen may share in the general prosperity and be happier and more contented with the sense of duty well performed.

[*The Deputy Speaker (Mr. McDowall) took the Chair.*]

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): I have listened with interest to the speeches delivered by members on the Government side. I want to say at the outset that I realise just what the possibilities of this district are. While I have already said in this House and outside of it, that there is country in the Esperance district that will pay for cultivation, so I say to-night, we are not doing justice to this area by the proposition now before the House. Before dealing with the proposition I want to disclaim any knowledge of anything that led up to the

refusal of the Agricultural Bank trustees to advance money in the Esperance district. I want to say too that I disclaim any responsibility for settling the people in that area. It is unfair and absolutely wrong to say that I went out of my way to encourage people to settle there, because it will be remembered that I was absolutely frank from the moment I entered the district. I expressed my opinion as to the capabilities of the district and the possibility of a railway being built some day. I said as far as I was concerned I would not agree to the building of a line from Norseman to Esperance, and I refused to cut up land ahead of settlement, as we were doing in other parts of the State, because I believed then, as I believe now, that where land is deliberately subdivided and thrown open for selection, the Government, by the very fact of doing that, guarantee railway facilities to the selectors who select. I want hon. members to realise that the Esperance district or this portion of it at any rate, is within the South-West Division of the State, and anywhere within the South-West Division of the State, except where land is reserved for subdivision or for timber, any man is entitled to select where he pleases. He may go to the outer rabbit-proof fence, he may go to the extreme corner of the South-West Division round Esperance, and he may go to the Murchison river in the North; anywhere within the South-West boundaries men may have land where they please. Men went into this district against my advice. They certainly did not go there under any special encouragement from me.

The Minister for Works: You did not close it for selection.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And I did not close the whole of the State from selection. I closed against selection any land I meant to be subdivided ahead of settlement, land which I thought ought to be supplied with a railway. I did not close the Esperance district against selection; there was no reason why I should; and neither did the Minister who succeeded me close the Esperance district against

selection. As a matter of fact the man who was discouraged in my time has been encouraged to the full by Ministers opposite.

The Minister for Works: You took their application fees.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: As I have already pointed out, we had no right to refuse their fees or to refuse their applications.

The Minister for Works: You got their cash.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Land was selected in the Esperance district long before I came into office. The Minister for Mines and his colleagues, including the Attorney General, visited Kalgoorlie and discussed ways and means with the Esperance farmers.

The Minister for Mines: The Attorney General was not there.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister for Mines was there, and some other Minister. Perhaps it was the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Mines: Yes. Two good men.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Then I apologise to the Attorney General and I blame the Minister for Works. At any rate these Ministers met the settlers, and they did all that could be done for any settlers and a great deal more than has ever been done for any wheat grower in the State. They said, "If you go on developing this country we will find the cost of development; we will find the cost of putting in the crop; and when you have a harvest to crop we will buy it and calculate it at its worth as if a railway were running to Esperance."

The Minister for Mines: We recognised that justice should be done to those who went there in your time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There was no discrimination between the man who went there in 1910 and the man who went there in 1911. They told the settlers this, and I think there were over 80 there. The arrangement was to extend to all of them. The Minister for Works says that there is not the development at Mount Marshall he finds in the Esperance district; but let the Minister make the same offer to the people at Mount Marshall that he made

to the people in the Esperance district and he will speedily realise how quickly development will take place.

The Minister for Works : But they have the assistance of the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : They may have that, but they have not the Government willing to buy their wheat at more than its worth, and to cart their fertilisers and seed to them as was done in the case of the people at Esperance.

The Minister for Works : We gave them the seed wheat and fertilisers last year.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : Gave whom ?

The Minister for Works : The people at Mount Marshall.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : Gave it to them ?

The Minister for Works : Yes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : Ministers did nothing of the sort. They advanced the wheat and fertilisers to the people and the people are to pay for them.

The Minister for Works : They never paid a bean last year. They got exactly the same conditions as the Esperance people.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I do not say the Ministers gave the wheat to the farmers of the Esperance district, but the Minister says the Government gave wheat to the farmers at Mount Marshall. I venture to say these people have to pay for everything they got from the Government.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER : If the Minister states that the Government gave wheat the hon. member cannot flatly contradict him.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : Then I hope the people of Mount Marshall will accept the Minister's statement and accept the wheat they got as a present.

The Minister for Works : Last year they never paid for it. It was on time payment. It was exactly the same arrangement as was made with the Esperance people.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : And so we give these things on time payment. That is an Irishman's present. The people of Mount Marshall will find that they have to pay, and pay fairly well, for the wheat they got.

The Minister for Works : The same as the people at Esperance.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : It is not the same. At Esperance the people had the wheat and the fertilisers delivered to their farms, but the people at Mount Marshall had to cart their wheat and fertilisers from the railway.

The Minister for Works : The people at Esperance had them carted for them, and they paid for the carting.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : Of course they will pay for it.

The Minister for Works : Just the same as the Mount Marshall people. They are just as honest as the Mount Marshall people.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I am not questioning their honesty. Of course they will pay, naturally they will pay, but are the people of Mount Marshall receiving a price for their wheat as if they had a railway. Not they. The Government have taken all sorts of trouble to induce people to settle on the land to the south of Norseman, and they have taken a serious responsibility. They have sent people down there practically guaranteeing a railway. They have said to them, "Work on with your development and you will have facilities." The people who are there to-day are not there because of encouragement the last Ministry gave ; we talked to them frankly and squarely ; they are there, after Parliament said a railway should not be built, because of the encouragement given by the present Government.

The Premier : You took their brass and broke the promises of the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : Took their brass ! What does the Premier mean by "their brass" ? I am surprised to hear the Minister for Works say that we have any hostility towards the people living in that district.

The Minister for Works : Most certainly you have.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I have nothing but the kindest of feelings for the people in that district.

The Minister for Works : All the same you would sacrifice them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No. When I was there I met Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Lewis, and Mr. Thompson. I think they were the three settlers who were there when I went through, the three who were doing work. The rest of the men have gone into that district knowing my views in regard to the railway and in regard to the capabilities of the soil.

The Premier: Formed before you went there.

Mr. Monger: Like the Minister for Works on a certain railway.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have the kindest recollection of all they did for me. I did not come here to-night to oppose a railway to this country. I came here to discuss the question, but Ministers evidently wish to keep the matter evergreen; it is never to reach finality; there is never to be a railway, but there is always to be a proposal. The Loan Estimates show it. The schedule to the Loan Bill of £5,600,000 has an item of £10,000 for this work. It will be many years before we spend the five and a half millions, and it will be many years before we have another Loan Bill that will include a sum to build this line.

The Premier: You are rambling.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In connection with the development of this country, of course a railway is necessary and must eventually be built. Ministers are not sincere in this matter like many other supporters of the line. When the Minister for Works brought down a Bill before, he said it was to be an agricultural line. The Attorney General said it was not to be an agricultural line, but a short cut to South Australia. It must be remembered that the line for 60 miles is going a bit too far north if we are only to serve the belt that is capable of producing wheat. If this line is to receive the approval of Parliament it should run about 50 miles to the north and then west as far as Ravensthorpe. If Ministers brought down a proposal now to open up the wheat belt that would make it worth the while of Parliament to authorise expenditure in connection with harbour facilities, and in connection with the opening up

of the country, the proposal might receive earnest consideration. I believe that this belt east and west is worthy of development and when the right time comes I will be prepared to support the railway that will have the opening up of this country for its object.

Mr. Green: You have your tongue in you cheek now all right.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Just at present there are some railway propositions that demand the attention of the Government. There is the Wyalcatchem to Mount Marshall and the Wongan Hills lines yet to be completed, and there is land to the east and west of the Great Southern that has to be served. I might mention the line to the westward of Beverley and there is also a line from Tambellup west that is well worthy of consideration, and all these lines should come before the present proposal.

The Premier: We have the responsibility, and we do not want directions from you.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I repeat these lines should receive attention at the hands of this House before the Esperance northwards proposal. Ministers make a strong point of the question of the construction of this line. I think that is a pity, because they have never yet approached the subject fairly. They base the justification for the complete line upon accusations levelled against members of this side of the House. We have endeavoured to do our duty to the country, and it cannot be denied that we are willing to build railways to any wheat belt, but it must be conceded that we are the best judges of the lines to be built.

The Premier: Who are the best judges?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Parliament of the country. I should not have spoken but for the fact that I wanted to repudiate some of the statements made by the Minister for Works and the Attorney General. Let us view this proposal calmly, and let hon. members remember that they have a duty to perform to the State. If they will remember this they will ask the Ministry to reconsider the question and determine



to build a sufficient mileage of railway not only to the north, but also to the west, so as to make the line a business proposition.

Mr. Green : Too funny.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : It may be funny to the hon. member because he knows nothing whatever about it. If the Ministry can submit a business proposition most certainly they shall have my support. It is the duty of the country to see to it that the people who have been unduly influenced by the present Ministry to live in the Esperance district should be given some railway facilities, and it certainly is the duty of the Government to take into consideration the question of opening up the wheat belt to the east and west instead of proposing to construct this line in a northerly direction only.

*[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]*

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. P. Collier) : The speech of the hon. member who has just sat down is, I think, the most extraordinarily inconsistent that that gentleman has ever delivered in this House. He is opposed to the railway, and he is afraid he is going to vote against it because he does not believe the Government are sincere. Then again, he thinks that the railway east and west of Esperance would be more suitable than the one now proposed. He rambled all over the country, and on every possible subject, but never once mentioned the merits of the Bill. The hon. member says that he visited the district, and he is satisfied now that it is a wheat-growing country, and that a railway will be justified eventually. Is the land going to improve in value in years to come, and will the rainfall be better as years go on ? What are the arguments that are going to justify to a greater extent the construction of this railway in the future ? The hon. member failed to tell us before he sat down the reasons for his opposition to this proposed line.

Mr. Green : It is east of the one hundred and twentieth meridian.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : That might be the case. During the years I have been in this House there has never been a Bill for the construction of an agricultural railway that has been more justified, that has been backed up by more independent expert opinion than the one now before members. I remember some years ago when Bills for the construction of railways were thrown on the Table of the House at the last moment.

Hon. J. Mitchell : What about this one ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : This was introduced some time ago. But for our friends in another place we would not now be discussing it.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order ! The hon. member cannot refer to another place in that way.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : In those days Bills were placed before the House on practically no evidence whatever. So far as I know this is the first time our friends in Opposition have refused to accept the opinion of a majority of the Advisory Board they themselves appointed. The leader of the Opposition states that he places more value on the opinion of Mr. William Paterson than on those of all the other experts put together. If so, why has he been spending the public money in having two other gentlemen on the board when he has such absolute confidence in Mr. Paterson ? Mr. Paterson would have been a board unto himself quite sufficient for the hon. member. It is only when we come to the Esperance railway that the hon. member and his friends express any doubt at all as to the opinions held by other members of that board, namely, the Surveyor General, and Mr. Muir, who have always been accepted by our friends as authorities on these matters in other parts of the State. Their opinions are put aside on this occasion, together with the reports of Mr. Hardy, Mr. May, and Mr. Watson in confirmation of the value of the land for wheat growing. Their opinions are put aside as well. Last year when the Bill was before the House members in opposition to it declared that if they could be satisfied

that water could be conserved in the district they would be prepared to support the construction of the line.

The Minister for Works: That is so; that was the only objection.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: During recess the Government took steps to obtain a reliable report from a qualified man to prove or remove that doubt. Now, when that report is before them those hon. members shift their ground. The leader of the Opposition has now found a new route and thinks it is worthy of inquiry, that perhaps it would be better than the one now proposed, just as the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) thinks we should go further east or further west. It all boils down to the position, not as expressed by the leader of the Opposition that the Government are introducing the Bill to placate their political supporters; but the whole position to-day is due to the fact that the people in that part of the State hold different political opinions from those opposing the Bill. In order to show their intentions towards this part of the State, I may remind hon. members of the fact that the member for Northam, then Minister for Lands, definitely and clearly expressed his opposition to the construction of the railway before ever the Advisory Board visited the district at all.

Mr. Monger: Can you show that from the files?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, the hon. member is pretty good at collecting clippings of newspapers. I am glad to see that he is industrious enough to peruse the goldfields papers and preserve the cuttings. As I said, the then Minister for Lands determinedly expressed his opposition to the line before the Advisory Board visited the district, and he has maintained that ever since. Is it to be expected that a gentleman of the character of Mr. Middleton, recommended by the Surveyor General as being the best qualified for this work, and who spent four or five months in an investigation of the district, is it to be supposed that he would bring down the report he has without justification, and that other men holding responsible

positions, such as Mr. O'Brien, are going to stake their reputation on something which cannot be supported by facts?

Mr. Foley: He has the best reputation in the State.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The railway is backed up by more independent expert opinions than has been any railway ever submitted to the House, and I say there is only one reason for objection to the Bill, whether this Bill or the previous Bill, and that is because of the fact that the people in that district, or those who reside in the goldfields districts and who are supporting the construction of this line, have not been favourably disposed politically towards our friends opposite during the last year or two. Because of that fact this district is going to suffer. It comes ill from the leader of the Opposition to make insinuations in the manner in which he did this evening. His was a speech less worthy of the hon. member than any I have ever heard him deliver. He declared that the Government were not bringing down the Bill this session for the construction of the Margaret river railway simply because it was in the Sussex electorate; and he declared that this Bill was being introduced because it was in the interests of our political supporters. Those statements come well from an hon. member responsible for some of the Acts passed through the previous Parliament. I would not be in order in referring to any of these, but I could refer to a long list which would show political bias in favour of his own side and against those opposed to him to a far greater extent than it would be possible to show in connection with a Bill of this kind. I hope the Bill will be carried, not only in this House but in another place, and that justice will at last be granted to those people who have been struggling along down there under great difficulties for the past year or two.

Mr. MONGER (York): I have to congratulate the Minister on the way he has introduced the Bill. I wish I could prove that all he said, that his remarks were absolutely sincere, and in strict accordance with the policy adopted

by him since he has held office. He was good enough in the course of his introductory remarks to speak about the railway policy of his Government, and he was also kind enough to make some reference to the carrying out of the policy of previous Administrations, or he wanted to know why the promises of the previous Administrations had not been given effect to. From the time the hon. member assumed office as Minister for Works, if ever an opportunity has been given to him to deviate from the policy of the previous Administration, he never lost that opportunity.

*12 o'clock, midnight.*

Mr. Lander: He did not do that in connection with the Wickpin-Merredin line.

Mr. MONGER: I have heard the yappings from East Perth so frequently that I have no time to take them seriously. I was attempting to prove that during the time the Minister for Works has been in office he has never lost an opportunity of deviating from the recommendations of those who preceded him. I refer to one particular deviation, and we have never had a proper explanation up to the present moment of the reasons for that deviation. To-night the Minister comes before us coldly and calmly and makes those criticisms which to me are of such a nature that I feel inclined to get rather warm and a little bit excited. but seeing how cool everybody in this Chamber is to-night, I shall deal as leniently with this proposition as I possibly can.

The Premier: We are very nervous.

Mr. MONGER: I am not nervous and I would not be nervous in the face of twenty like you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. MONGER: I am, but I have no desire to be bluffed by the idiotic remark of the Premier, and I am glad to see that my friend the Minister for Works is not looking at me. We have heard a lot about the area that is to be served by this 60 miles of railway. I would like to give the House a return of the Esperance-Grass Patch production for the season 1910-11. So far as I can remember, the

figures were 564 acres under crop, which produced 275 tons of hay, or less than half a ton to the acre. and 111 acres under wheat which produced 864 bushels.

The Minister for Mines: Where did you get those figures?

Mr. MONGER: I have them here, and I defy the hon. member to contradict them. I also have the anticipated production for 1911-12, according to a very late issue of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*.

The Premier: That will be the best part of your speech.

Mr. MONGER: If anything is going to damn the construction of this blessed railway it will be what I am going to read from the *Kalgoorlie Miner*—

In the course of conversation with a *Kalgoorlie Miner* reporter, Mr. Seiver said he was more than satisfied with the agricultural prospects of the locality. The crops benefited greatly by the late rains which fell towards the end of October. Notwithstanding that this had been the driest season experienced for 15 years, some of the crops are yielding 15 cwt. of hay to the acre, and others are yielding half a ton. The average should be about 12cwt.

Mr. Green: Without superphosphate.

Mr. MONGER: I am glad of that interjection. When I quoted some information in the course of my speech on the Address-in-reply I was told later on that last season's low yield was owing to the fact that the crops had been put in haphazard, and without manure, but the Minister went down there a few months ago and promised to buy up everything the settlers could produce and to provide them with manures, and yet the hon. member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) says, in connection with the anticipated yield for this season, that no manures have been used. What sort of mixture are we going to have, when one year the excuse is that no manures were used, the next season's excuse is a drought, and now the hon. member says again that no manures were used, notwithstanding the promise given on that memorable trip which the hon. member with two or three of his Ministers took some few months ago in ample time to

provide all the manures that were requisite for this great wheat-growing belt which is going to be the saviour of Western Australia ?

Mr. Green : There was a drought there last year, the same as was experienced in other parts of the State.

Mr. MONGER : We had a drought in certain parts but the droughty areas gave better results than the Esperance district did in one of the most favourable seasons it has yet experienced.

Mr. Green : You know that is not so.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs : He does not know ; do not excuse him.

Mr. MONGER : The hon. member for Subiaco is very kind in his interjections. He is one of those great and intelligent men who have had so much experience in land settlement that I do not think it is worth while taking any notice of him.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs : He is one too many for you.

Mr. MONGER : One of the dirtiest reports ever presented to this Parliament was presented by the hon. member for Subiaco at the beck and call of caucus or his party.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order ! The hon. member must withdraw that remark.

Mr. MONGER : Well, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER : It must be withdrawn unreservedly.

Mr. MONGER : As you desire, I will withdraw. But will you kindly ask the member for Subiaco to make gentlemanly interjections, and not these football interjections ?

Mr. SPEAKER : Order ! The hon. member must withdraw without supplementing his withdrawal with any other statement.

Mr. MONGER : Then I will do so. I absolutely withdraw. One member, I think the Attorney General, when speaking, asked what chance had been given to the producer in this district. I will tell the Attorney General and the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) that the people had in the Norseman field one of the finest markets for produce in Western Australia. Before the line was constructed from Coolgardie to Norseman this great Grass Patch area was well known and while the people had only 60

miles of carriage to convey any produce to that market they preferred to haul it from Northam or Kellerberrin to Coolgardie and cart thence to Norseman, or take it from Albany by boat to Esperance and cart up through Grass Patch to Norseman. Yet we are asked what opportunities have these people had to show the productivity of their land. I say, what bigger opportunity was ever given for advancing what has been described as the greatest wheat belt in Western Australia. That, I consider, is a fair argument in reply to the question as to the opportunities the people have had in the past.

Mr. Green : What, cart wheat 70 miles !

Mr. MONGER : They preferred to cart it 170 miles and rail and boat it goodness know how far.

Mr. Green : Why did you not cart it from Emu Hill ?

Mr. MONGER : I would be wanting if I lost the opportunity of saying that when one stands on the top of Emu Hill looking north, south, east or west, one will gaze upon the finest belt of agricultural land in Western Australia, and the biggest area of it in one lump. The Minister for Works, in order to vent his spleen upon one individual, has sacrificed, not 50 settlers, but 150.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order !

Mr. MONGER : We are told, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER : Order !

Mr. MONGER : We are told that this Esperance line of railway—

Mr. SPEAKER : Order ! It is hardly fair to make an expression that the Minister, to vent his spleen, has sacrificed somebody. The hon. member must withdraw.

Mr. MONGER : I will withdraw, but I will add that we have 50 settlers who are to be benefited by this line of railway from Esperance northwards 60 miles, and that through the deviation of a line of railway since the present Government came into power, 150 of the finest settlers occupying any portion of Western Australia are going to be almost ruined.

Mr. O'Loughlen : Are they better settlers than in other districts ?

Mr. MONGER: They are as fine. If the hon. member looks at what they have done, he will be able to come to no other conclusion.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They are doing the same work in other districts.

Mr. MONGER: They may be, but I venture to say in no district in Western Australia within the period of the settlement of this district to which I am referring, has more developmental work been done. On a previous occasion when the Speaker disagreed with me, I was not allowed to give proper vent or expression to the feelings I held. Yet these people were thrown over, and now we are asked to incur a tremendous liability to give 50 settlers some consideration. I will go one point further and say that in order to carry it—I can hardly find a fitting word for the moment to use in connection with the transaction. I might go a point too far, and I do not wish to do so again to-night. If ever a peculiar transaction was committed by the Government it was the deviation from the Advisory Board's report in connection with the Wickepin-Merredin railway. I have brought it in at last. I was rather pleased to listen to the Minister to-night, and I would like him to give to the House and the country his reasons for deviating on one occasion and his strong desire to abide by the wishes of a majority of the board on an occasion when it suits him. I say it is impossible for the Minister to give a proper explanation of his speech of this evening and his attitude towards the line to which I have referred. However, I do not want to take up the time of the House unnecessarily. I have said my little say. Before I sit down I want to make a reference to an article which appeared in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* the other day. If anything is likely to cause dissension or unfriendly feelings between the coast and the goldfields it is an article inspired as this one was. As an agricultural representative I have no ill-feeling against the people located between Norseman and Esperance, but one has only to read articles such as the one which appeared, in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* in

order to develop the most unkindly feelings towards our brothers on the fields. I would like to say I have no animus against the people who reside between Norseman and Esperance, and when they can show some reasonable production that will warrant the building of a railway that is to cost a quarter of a million or more, then I, for one, will be only too glad to support a railway, but to attempt to spend a quarter of a million of money to carry 275 tons of hay, 864 bushels of wheat, and a somewhat smaller quantity this year, I say that we who are representing all the people would be adopting one of the most idiotic policies in carrying out the Government's recommendations under such circumstances.

Members: Question.

After a pause,

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know whether any other member desires to speak, but I would point out that when I rise I shall put the question. The practice has grown up in the Chamber to wait to address the House until the Speaker gets on his feet.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly): There is nothing new to be discussed that has not already been discussed. We have heard about the report of Mr. Sutton. I have not seen it. We have heard mention of the report of an advisory board which comprised Messrs. Muir and Johnston, but neither of these gentlemen can claim to have any knowledge of agricultural pursuits. They may probably be very eminent engineers, but that does not qualify them for this position.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Why were they put on the board?

Mr. HARPER: They were members of the board of advisers which included Professor Lowrie and Mr. Paterson, both of whom have expert knowledge of the capabilities of the agricultural resources of a district. This is another line like the Ravensthorpe line, disconnected from the railway system of Western Australia, and it will probably be awkward to carry out the necessary rolling-stock repairs away from the workshops at Midland Junction. We have had other, experts mentioned, men who have been brought

into prominence in connection with no other railway perhaps in Western Australia. We have had a very peculiar illustration as to what is good land. It is said to be good land because it is very porous land and the water soaks through and is not available for conservation on the surface. In my opinion that is a very weak argument. I do not think the area is capable of very much wheat growing, and from what I have heard from old experienced hands who have done a lot of sandalwooding in Western Australia, they have the same opinion about the country as they have of land much closer to the rainfall. I think it is a very doubtful proposition to-day, and I think it would be worth the while of the Government to go in for a board of examiners, a board of capable men who understand farming and the conservation of water and have a thorough knowledge of the great industry they are asked to report on. It would be necessary to have some experiments made, which Mr. Paterson recommended. Mr. Paterson would make a very good member of any board that would be formed, and I think a board free from any political influence should examine this country, and give an expert opinion to the House before we should go in for what I call an experimental railway practically in an unknown country. For that reason I certainly think it is premature for this House to pass the Bill.

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

Ayes .. ..	22
Noes .. ..	7
Majority for ..	15

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Dooley	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Swan
Mr. Green	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Holman	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lander	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Heltmann

(Teller).

#### NOES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Harper	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Monger	(Teller).

#### PAIR.

For Mr. E. B. Johnston; against Mr. Thomas.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### In Committee.

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

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Deviation :

Mr. MONGER : In the past too much power had been given to the Minister in the ten-mile deviations, and on one occasion, to suit his party or to suit himself he deviated to the full extent. As the Minister should not have such a big deviation, he moved an amendment—

*That in line three "ten" be struck out and "five" inserted in lieu.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : I endorse the remarks of the hon. member. I think it would be safer to make the deviation five miles.

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

Clauses 4 to 7—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 12-37 a.m. (Thursday).