

Legislative Council,*Tuesday, 3rd September, 1912.*

	PAGE
Papers presented	1405
Tramways Purchase Bill Select Committee, Report presented...	1405
Questions: Ministerial Report on North-West	1405
Railway Station lavatories, Perth	1405
Railway Service, Kalgoorlie-Kamballie	1405
Bills: Health Act Amendment, 3a.	1405
Methodist Church Property Trust, 3a.	1405
Game, Report stage	1405
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Com.	1406
Fremantle-Kalgoorlie (Merredin-Coolgardie section) Railway, 2a.	1407

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1. Map showing proposed route of the Merredin-Coolgardie section of the Transcontinental Railway. 2. Amendment of the Goldfields Wafer Supply by-laws. 3. By-laws of the Dumbleyung board of health.

**TRAMWAYS PURCHASE BILL
SELECT COMMITTEE.**

Report presented.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into this Bill.

Ordered, that the report be printed and to be taken into consideration at the Committee stage.

**QUESTION—MINISTERIAL RE-
PORT ON NORTH-WEST.**

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (for Hon. F. Connor) asked the Colonial Secretary: Whether it is the intention of the Government to have the report of the Minister for Works on his recent visit to the North-West and North printed?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The report has already appeared in the Press and it is not proposed to give it any further publicity.

**QUESTION—RAILWAY STATION
LAVATORIES, PERTH.**

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (for Hon. F. Connor) asked the Colonial Secretary: Whether it is not considered necessary, in the interests of the health and the comfort of the travelling public, that the obsolete, dirty, and unhealthy system of sanitation and lavatories in the Perth railway station be abolished with the view of having more up-to-date accommodation?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: I am not aware that the sanitary and lavatory accommodation at the Perth railway station is as described by the hon. gentleman. Certain additions to the station buildings are contemplated, and a connection with the sewerage scheme will then be made.

**QUESTION—RAILWAY SERVICE,
KALGOORLIE-KAMBALLIE.**

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH asked the Colonial Secretary: What action has been taken to provide a suitable train service from Kalgoorlie to Kamballie via Boulder Block for the purpose of carrying the mine workers to and from their employment?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: This matter has had most careful consideration on many occasions. Considerable expenditure would be necessary in order to carry the proposal into effect, and the traffic would not be sufficient to justify such expenditure at the present time. Last year's revenue from passenger traffic on the Boulder and Brown Hill lines was much less than the expenditure.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Health Act Amendment.
2. Methodist Church Property Trust.

Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—GAME.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 28th August; Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair, the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 9—Apprehension :

The CHAIRMAN: This Bill had been recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering Clauses 9 and 13. Progress had been reported on Clause 9, to which an amendment had been moved by Hon. J. D. Connolly. "That in line 1 of Subclause 2 the word 'justice' be struck out and 'magistrate' inserted in lieu."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The amendment was contrary to the law as now established. Under Section 59 of the Justices Act of 1902 a warrant could be issued by a justice in connection with the perpetration of any simple offence, and a simple offence was defined as an offence punishable on summary conviction before a justice by a fine, imprisonment or otherwise. If the amendment was carried the Committee would be making a distinction in the case of cruelty to animals, because in the case of all other simple offences the right to arrest on warrant issued by a justice existed.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: There was a large extension of jurisdiction given in this Bill, and a number of things were made offences which were not offences at the present time. Members had pointed out that in the administration of the law relating to cruelty to animals there might be well intentioned persons over-zealous in their desire to punish offenders; and while the amendment did not take away from the justice the right to issue a warrant in a case where a constable was witness to the commission of an offence, it did take away the right of the justice to issue a warrant on the constable laying information of an offence reported to him by somebody else. So far as other offences were concerned under the Customs Act, the Immigration Restriction Act, and in fact under all Federal measures where there was power given to punish on summary conviction, the jurisdiction of justices of the peace was en-

tirely excluded, and none of these offences could be tried except by a stipendiary magistrate. He had no desire to defame the great unpaid of Western Australia. There were just as capable men amongst the honorary justices in Western Australia as would be found elsewhere throughout the Commonwealth, but justices did not exercise as clear and careful judgment as a stipendiary magistrate. As for the statement of the Colonial Secretary, that the amendment would be making a distinction between offences under this Bill and all other kinds of offences, the Bill already made a distinction between what magistrates could do and what justices could do. No doubt it would over-ride previous legislation. If not it would be another clear indication of the intention of Parliament that members of the police force must go before magistrates before getting these warrants.

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

Ayes	14
Noes	7
Majority for				7

AYES.

Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. J. D. Connolly	Hon. M. L. Moss
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. W. Patrick
Hon. J. F. Cullen	Hon. C. A. Plesse
Hon. Sir J. W. Hackett	Hon. T. H. Wilding
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. McKenzie

(Teller).

NOES.

Hon. R. G. Arden	Hon. D. G. Gawler
Hon. F. Davis	Hon. B. C. O'Brien
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. M. Drew	

(Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

Clause as amended (also consequentially) agreed to.

Clause 13—Killing of animals :

Hon. M. L. MOSS: Although the powers in Subclause 2 seemed extensive, it was safe enough, because the animal was not to be destroyed until an order was obtained from a justice or with the consent of the owner. No justice would

enter into an inquiry unless the owner of the animal were present, so the owner would be able to protect himself sufficiently.

Clause put and passed.

Bill again reported with amendments.

BILL — FREMANTLE-KALGOORLIE (MERREDIN-COOLGARDIE SECTION) RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 27th August.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East): I do not intend to speak at any length in regard to this Bill. My object in speaking at all is rather to seek for information than to offer criticism. I think we must all be impressed with the idea that this is rather a novel form of procedure. Probably not since the Coolgardie Water Scheme Bill was introduced to Parliament has a measure of equal importance to this been submitted, and yet in this case we do not have the main principle submitted to Parliament for discussion, but we have some small portion of the work placed before us, and we are asked to pass this small portion of the work without any consideration whatever or discussion as to the general principle of constructing a broad-gauge railway from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle in time to link up with the Federal railway. To my mind, the question of route is one of very great importance. I am not prepared to speak with regard to that question, pending a report from the Government engineers on the matter, but it has always appeared to me that it would be a fatal policy for the State to attempt to run two lines of railway to the Eastern Goldfields. I think, we cannot make any secret of the fact that for the past 16 or 17 years our railway between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie has been by far the best paying railway proposition we have had; but it is extremely probable that had that railway not paid so well we should long ago have made the discovery that many other portions of our railway system were not profitable. It seems to me that if, in connection with the construction of our section of the Transcontinental railway,

we decide to build a second line, which will compete with the traffic of the existing line between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie, we shall inevitably destroy them both as profit earners. Both would be run at a loss, and we would immediately make an alarming number of discoveries in regard to the losses made on other portions of our railway system, with the inevitable result of all-round increases of freight. That is all I propose to say at the present time with regard to the general question of the route, though to my mind it would be far more satisfactory if the whole matter had been delayed until the Government were able to lay before us the concrete proposal in regard to this work as a whole. They could, of course, indicate what section it was proposed to proceed with first, and how it was proposed to do it, but I think it would be better in the interests of the country that the general principle and the question of route should have been thrashed out. I am well aware that an Act of Parliament, passed in 1903 committed the State to build the Western section of the railway on the 4ft. 8½in. gauge in time to link up with the Federal section from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie. That Act contained a proviso that, if the Federal Government had not commenced the work within five years of that date, the measure lapsed, so that so far as our statute-book is concerned—and I know nothing of any promises that may have been made by any Premiers—we are under no obligation to the Federal Parliament in this respect: and in any event the sole obligation we are under is the obligation to build our portion of the line in time to link up with that portion to be built by the Federal Government. I do not think any member is in a position to attempt to give an accurate idea as to how long it will be before the Federal Government build their work. Personally, I would hesitate to say that the work will be finished in three, four, or five years, and I think we would have a very great deal to gain and very little to lose by waiting until we saw what progress was being made with their portion of the work before committing ourselves to this under-

taking. I offer this view particularly on account of the need we shall be in for money, by reason of the fact that the present price of money is far higher than it has been for many years past. There should be good reason to hope that in the next two or three years it may probably be decreased; at any rate it will be a gloomy outlook for us if it is to go on increasing; but at present, when money is dearer than it has been for some time, and when we need more money than ever before, I think it is incumbent on the Government and incumbent on the House to watch very carefully any proposal for the expenditure of a large sum of money like this. I should be sorry to weary the House with repeated references to the vital need there is for providing additional facilities for settlers in all portions of this country. During last week I, in company with other members of Parliament, had the privilege of traversing some hundreds of miles of the finest agricultural land in Western Australia, and I say it is absolutely appalling to think of the enormous number of people who are settled out in these districts without any immediate hope of assistance in the matter of railway construction. I do not blame this Government in regard to the matter at all. The case I am referring to now is a case that should have been attended to even before the present Government came into office; but I say that if members of the House were to travel about the country as we did during the last two or three days, they would be aghast to see the number of men with wives and families round them who are so situated that it is impossible for them to live, I will not say in decent comfort, but without undergoing day after day the cruellest hardships. I am not speaking of little isolated knots of settlers; I am speaking of families by the hundreds; and in view of that circumstance, I do not think it can be too often repeated in the House that we should look at every pound we spend that is not going to give additional facilities to the settlers throughout this country.

Hon. J. Cornell: You are not opposed to the railway?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: No, but I say that, if pledged at all, we are only pledged to complete our section in time to link up with the Federal Government's section, which may be three or four years ahead. In the meantime very much might be done to meet the requirements of those settlers, many of whom cannot wait three or four years. Unless something be done quickly for those people we will have a big exodus of agricultural settlers, and Western Australia will get out of it the worst advertisement any country has ever had. What is South Australia going to do in respect to these varying gauges? Does South Australia propose to build a 4ft. 8½in. line to link up with the Trans-Australian railway? What is it proposed that South Australia will do? Nothing at all. There will still be breaks of gauge at Port Augusta and Terowie. Why, then, should Western Australia, the State that has the least of all to gain, why should we be the only State called upon to make this great sacrifice? We shall have to find, not only the three-quarters of a million involved in the Bill, but nearly three millions for the completion of the whole work. If the Bill is passed we shall have to find this money, just at a time when money is dearest and when all our resources should be strained, almost to breaking point, in order to meet the requirements of the people settling in different parts of the country. I would like to make a passing comment in regard to the lack of information furnished, not only here, but in another place, in regard to this proposal. It is, as I have said, probably one of the most far-reaching matters placed before Parliament since it was decided to carry out the great Coolgardie water scheme; yet we know practically nothing at all about it. The line is first to be built as a narrow-gauge line for 180 miles, and then it is to be altered later on to a broad-gauge line. The work of alteration is going to cost something. It should be within the knowledge of the Government what it is going to cost, and if it is within their knowledge then that information should be furnished to the House.

Hon. M. L. Moss: Why not have a select committee?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I think these matters ought to be furnished freely and voluntarily. We should not be asked to pass such works without every information that can be afforded to us. If the Government consider that because of their enormous majority in another place they may submit to us just as little information as they like, notwithstanding which the Bill is bound to go through, then it will be for this branch of the Legislature to show the Government and the country that something more than this is required. It has been said that the cost involved by building this line first on a narrow gauge and subsequently altering it to a broad gauge will be less than it would be to build sidings along the present line in order to permit of the carriage of materials and supplies needed by the Federal Government for their section of the railway. If the Government have that information, if they know it is going to cost less to do this work in this manner, why not let us have the figures? Surely members of the House are entitled to know things of this kind in regard to a great public work on which ultimately three millions will have to be spent? Apparently this work is to be done now solely to oblige the Federal Government. Obviously we are asked to go into this three or four years ahead of real necessity. It is being done at a most inconvenient period solely to oblige the Federal Government. What, I might ask, has the Federal Government done to oblige this State, or any other State for the matter of that? When they took over our transferred properties after a considerable delay they had lent us money at $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., and then they said, "For the money we owe you for these properties we will pay you three per cent." In the case of Western Australia it happened, curiously enough, that we owed them almost as much as they owed us. In any ordinary commercial enterprise that would have meant a squaring of the ledger, or at least an equalising of the interest on each side. But not so with

the Federal Government; they charged us $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. while, on the other hand, they paid us three per cent., and they said, "In addition we will put aside one-half per cent. as sinking fund." Even then they were paying us $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. while we paid them $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., and at the end of a certain period their one-half per cent. sinking fund would have liquidated their debt to us, while our debt to them would stand the same as at the start. It seems to me that our old friend Shylock was a generous-hearted man as compared with the Federal Treasurer. Shylock demanded his pound of flesh because he could not get his money, but the Federal Treasurer demands his pound of flesh and the money also: he has taken the properties and charged us $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.

Hon. B. C. O'Brien: You forget that Sir John Forrest was Federal Treasurer during the greater portion of that period.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I do not care who was Federal Treasurer at some previous time; the loan to this State was made by the present Federal Treasurer, and the taking over of the transferred properties and the fixing of three per cent. as the rate of interest to be paid to the State was made by the present Federal Treasurer. I know that Sir John Forrest, or rather the Liberal party, were in power at a time when they might have taken over these transferred properties, but did not. In any case that has nothing to do with the question. I say we are asked to do this work for the convenience of the Federal Government who have treated us so harshly and so unjustly. This brings me to another point. The State Government have made a contract with the Federal Government for the supplying of sleepers for the Trans-Australian railway. Does that contract, including the charge that is to be made as freight upon the sleepers, does that contract provide a sufficient profit for the State to justify us in undertaking this work? Will the profit on carrying these sleepers over the railway to Kalgoorlie so far exceed the profit that we should gain in respect to ordinary traffic as to justify us in agreeing to this work?

Hon. M. L. Moss: We have no right to ask these questions at all, you know.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I am merely suggesting a few questions which I would like to see answered. There is another point. We have been told that in order to expedite this work the Government were enabled to countermand an order given for 260 miles of 60-lb. rails and substitute an order for 80-lb. rails. I understand that a considerably enhanced price had to be paid for those rails. No doubt we will be told that it was justified. That is not my point. My point is that these 260 miles of 60-lb. rails were not ordered merely to lie in stock. They had been ordered for some specific work, and I maintain that we are entitled to know what that work was, to know what work is going to be hung up on account of this new line. We know the 60-lb. rails are not generally used for agricultural lines. It is the intention to use this weight of rail for the Wickiepin-Merredin line and, of course, it would be folly to hang up that particular section, because it is over that section that these sleepers will be carried. Therefore it is not that line which is to be hung up. Is it the relaying of the Great Southern line? Because if so let us know, in order that the people of that district may become aware that this work, for which they have been waiting so long, is going to be hung up. I do not know whether it was the intention of the Government to construct the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line as a through line with 60-lb. rails. Whatever lines it may be that these 60-lb. rails were ordered for, and which are now to be hung up for a considerable period—for there must be some considerable saving in time effected by substituting the order for 80-lb. rails as against the 60-lb. rails—I would like to know what work those 60-lb. rails were for, and how long it will be hung up. I should also like some information as to the effect the putting in hand of this work is going to have on our railway construction policy generally. We have been told that the work is to be done by the Working Railways. If this means that the arrangement will

leave the Works Department free to push on with agricultural and other railways, then the position will be satisfactory; but if we are to be told that the Government will not let contracts, but insist upon doing everything by day labour, are not prepared to increase plant and equipment, and yet can build only at the rate of 200 miles of railway per annum—if we are to be told all that, and on top of it that this railway from Merredin to Coolgardie is to take precedence, I think the country should know it. People who are right down to bedrock, who know they cannot go any further, without railways, should know that this work of duplicating is going to be put in hand, and that in consequence they must wait.

Hon. B. C. O'Brien: Would you not give precedence to it?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: No; nor would any man who knows the conditions of the people at present trying to develop the country, who knows the promises and representations under which they went on the land, who knows how nobly they are fulfilling their part of the bargain; no man who understands these things would give preference to the duplication as against supplying the settlers with what they cannot do without. I have no doubt that other hon. members will raise many points in connection with the Bill. I did not start out with any intention of making a speech on the matter; all I want is information, and without expressing any more definite intimation I will say that on the nature of the information furnished will depend the question of whether or not I shall vote in favour of the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (North-East): As in the case of the previous speaker, I would certainly like a great deal more information on this matter before I commit myself to vote for the second reading. As Mr. Colebatch has pointed out, this is only a very small portion of a very big work. This expenditure, we are told, runs into £680,000, say three-quarters of a million, but it involves on Mr. Colebatch's estimate some

three millions of money. It certainly involves $2\frac{1}{4}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions of money for the completion of this work. What are the reasons given why this House would be justified in assenting to this line? One is to give effect to an undertaking given to the Federal Government. I will show presently what this undertaking amounts to, and inquire whether we are justified or bound to complete the line on that undertaking. The next argument put forth by the Colonial Secretary was to facilitate the traffic on the Transcontinental railway and also more particularly the carrying of material for that railway. The question we have to consider, even if those two are answered in the affirmative, is whether it is necessary to proceed with the work for a year or two. Regarding our obligation to the Federal Government to construct the line, I have a copy of the Act referred to by Mr. Colebatch, passed in 1903 by the then Government, giving power to the Federal Government to construct this railway. Section 4 of that Act states—

Not later than the time when the Commonwealth Parliament commences the construction of the first-mentioned railway, the State of Western Australia will commence the construction of a railway from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, on the same conditions as to gauge and rails as those laid down by the Commonwealth Parliament in connection with the work undertaken by it, and shall complete the same by the time the Commonwealth has completed the railway aforesaid.

There is a further provision, which says—

This Act and the authority hereby given to the Commonwealth Parliament shall cease and be void unless the said Parliament shall have agreed to and shall have commenced the actual construction of the said railways within five years from the passing of this Act.

This measure was passed in 1903, so that that contract became void in 1908. That was a definite arrangement entered into with the Federal Government, and they have not given effect to their part of the

contract. Therefore we are under no legal obligation to construct the line. The only reason the Colonial Secretary has given for the construction of this line is that we were bound to it by former Governments, and in answer to an interjection which I made, the Minister said that obligation was contained in the Governor's Speech some two years ago. I have turned up the Governor's Speech of 1910, and this is the reference contained in it—

Feeling that the delay in beginning the construction of the Trans-Australian railway is fraught, not only with grave injury to the interests of Western Australia, but is also a menace to the safety of the Commonwealth as a whole, my advisers are of opinion, that rather than incur a further indefinite postponement, the project should be undertaken by the two States through whose territory the line will pass.

The reference then goes on to mention the water to be found on the track. That is not an undertaking, as the Colonial Secretary stated, through the medium of the Governor's Speech on that occasion, that we should build this railway.

The Colonial Secretary: It is pretty close to it.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: At the same time it is a very long way from it. I say this is an entirely different proposition, and one that I would hardly second. To my mind, the earlier one is an entirely different proposition, and a better proposition for the State. If South Australia had been willing, our Government were to construct the line from Kalgoorlie to the South Australian border. We then would have had the freight and everything else on that line, and, what is better, we would have retained the control of the whole of our railways within the State instead of allowing the Commonwealth to construct a portion of the line within the State, a matter which may give rise to a lot of complications in future. That was the proposition for the State to construct the railway. It would probably have cost very little more to build the railway from Kalgoorlie to the South Australian border at the time than this

work will cost now; but we would have had the entire traffic, and it would not have been a work which would compete with the traffic on one of our existing lines. It was an entirely different proposition and an infinitely better one from the Western Australian point of view. If there is an understanding that we are to build this railway, I am not one to advocate going back on my understanding. It must not be supposed that I am opposed to this line in all circumstances but only in certain circumstances, and it is only under the present circumstances that I oppose it. I do not think the leader of the House should come down with the meagre information he has given on this important work. He practically says:—"I have no need to give the House information. We are committed to it by a former Government." I want to make the position clear. The Government were not unconditionally committed to it by a former Administration beyond the understanding which I have mentioned, and it is the duty of the Colonial Secretary to give the House the information which Mr. Colebatch mentioned. Let me repeat, as that member stated, that this is the biggest undertaking probably, excepting the Goldfields water scheme, which has ever been presented to this House, and probably it will cost as much to-day as the Goldfields water scheme was expected to cost when that measure was introduced. The cost of that scheme now exceeds three millions of money.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: Three millions was the amount of the first loan.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Then this one is almost on a par.

The Colonial Secretary: Give us an idea of what information you want.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Apparently it is no use my trying to do that, because Mr. Colebatch has asked as plainly as can be asked, and that is the information I want. I will not attempt to repeat it, because I do not think I can put it in any plainer language. Notwithstanding that this is the largest work, or one of the largest works ever proposed in the Parliament of Western

Australia, the information given by the Minister is the least that has been given about any proposed railway. Bills for agricultural railways not ten per cent. of the length of this one have been introduced, and as much information has been given with regard to them as in the case of this Bill. Again, I wish to ask, what is the hurry about this work? We are beginning at the tail end. We are asked to pass the tail end of this line, and we are not told what the main principle consists of. Let the Federal Government make a bona fide start at least with their work before we rush in for an expenditure of 2½ millions on the little information we have before us. We ought to know what land the Federal Government will demand from this State. They have been pretty exorbitant in their demands in the past. We have seen their attitude towards South Australia. We do not know what their demands will be, and we are rushing in, before we have our part of the contract fixed with them at all, to build this railway. Apart from an understanding, if any exists, I would like to ask, what do we gain by the expenditure of this 2½ millions of money? We will convenience a few people who will travel overland from Fremantle to Adelaide, and only a few people. The number who will travel over the line will be very few indeed, and the principal business of the railway will be the carriage of mails. As has been pointed out, we are rushing in to make this break of gauge, and yet the same inconvenience exists in other States. Passengers will have to change trains at Port Augusta. They will have to change trains again at Terowie, and again at Albury on the border of Victoria and New South Wales; and at Wallangarra, on the border of New South Wales and Queensland, there is another break of gauge. As long as I can remember Wallangarra probably for thirty years one big train and sometimes two pass through there between Sydney and Brisbane each day and passengers have to change, and there is no thought of the inconvenience of changing. Five times as many passengers would travel across there as would have to make the

change here. At Albury, 10 or 20 times the number would have to change. Three big trains a day pass through Albury each way and that would mean six trains crossing there every day, and I do not suppose we will have six trains a week crossing at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. B. C. O'Brien: They would like to alter that if they could.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: They could alter it if they liked. It is only a matter of money. Big States like New South Wales and Victoria do not attempt to alter it, but we, in a State of 300,000 people almost with a stroke of the pen propose to spend say three millions of money or £10 per head of the population. What are we going to gain by this? We will lose all our passenger and all our mail traffic from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle.

Hon. J. Cornell: No such thing. The State will control it.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That fact is not disputed. The State will control it, but does the hon. member say that we shall pass an Act to prevent people from travelling by the broad gauge in order to make them travel by the narrow gauge? Otherwise I do not know how the State will control it. People would undoubtedly travel by the broad gauge. We are proposing to build a line side by side with the existing line, and one that will compete with the existing line and take its goods and passenger and mail traffic. The existing line will carry goods and no more. Is that a business proposition? Let me remind hon. members that Kalgoorlie is just a convenient distance from Perth; the journey by train is one which can be undertaken during the night. We leave Perth at 5 o'clock in the evening and arrive at Kalgoorlie at breakfast time next morning, and that would be a very convenient time indeed for changing. If we had to change at midnight there would be some justification for complaint. There is no argument there at all. I have travelled from Sydney to Melbourne and have had to turn out at 6 o'clock in the morning to change at Albury, and it is not a very pleasant experience on a winter morning; yet there is no talk there of altering the gauge.

Hon. B. C. O'Brien: They have been discussing it for years.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Now let us take the second argument: that of facilitating the traffic, and more particularly as the Colonial Secretary said to carry the material for the construction of this railway. This is an empty argument, and I say without fear of contradiction that the goods traffic for the building of the Transcontinental railway can be carried without the building of this line. First of all let me say that we are asked to pass this tail end of the work without any information being given to us about the main body of the work, and the proposal is to construct the railway in the least busy portion of the route. Merredin is the eastern limit of the agricultural land, and therefore there is no return traffic at all, at any rate from Merredin to Coolgardie. We have also been told by the Colonial Secretary that if we do not duplicate this line it will be necessary to put in sidings which will cost as much as the duplication, but we have not been told how many sidings would be required. That is information which should have been given to the House.

The Colonial Secretary: Ten.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I would like to know what the cost of each siding would be, but probably the Colonial Secretary has not that information just now. I have had some experience in connection with the construction of sidings, and I paid the Railway Department £250 or £300 for a loop, and on another occasion the Railway Department constructed half a mile of railway for me and I paid them £1,000 for it. There were points at each end and they were the costly part. If, therefore, we can reckon each siding to cost £1,000 we shall be estimating on the liberal side. This will be a very small portion of the quarter of a million which this part of the work is estimated to cost. In looking at the time table I find that there are no fewer than 34 stations between Merredin and Coolgardie, including very big station yards such as Southern Cross and others like that. That is an average of $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Why then do we want ten more sidings in order to bring up to the total to 44?

The Colonial Secretary: These are for ordinary traffic. We would require the others for the separate traffic.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Does the hon. member seriously say that a siding is wanted at intervals of $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, which would be the case if ten more were constructed. Is it not possible to carry the traffic on those existing at the present time?

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Before the Coolgardie water scheme was started these sidings carried the then traffic together with the water traffic.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am glad that Mr. Kingsmill has reminded me of that. I have a lively recollection of living in Kalgoorlie before the water supply reached there, and when the traffic was three times greater than it is to-day and then the water traffic was a very considerable item. The traffic in those days was so much greater than it is to-day, for the reason that Laverton, Mount Malcolm, Leonora, and other northern Goldfields were busy places in those days, and a number of these 34 sidings to which I have referred were put in to cope with the heavy traffic that existed then. There is no justification for building the line in order that the traffic may pass uninterruptedly over this section of the line. I have ascertained that the length of the line from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta is 1,060 miles, and the length from Kalgoorlie to the South Australian border is 460 miles. Assuming you are going to carry sleepers and rails for the 460 miles from Kalgoorlie to the border, it works out this way: that for the building of these 183 miles now proposed the sleepers and rails will amount to 60,000 tons, while the sleepers and rails for the 460 miles will amount to 150,000 tons. You are adding 40 per cent. to the volume of traffic by the material that will have to be carried over this line now before the House, or, if you take it further and go 100 miles into the South Australian territory, then you are adding at least 33 per cent. to the present traffic. So that 500 miles of broad gauge would take 180,000 tons, while the 183 miles will take 60,000 tons. I do not think that the argument will stand at all that it

is necessary to build the line to carry the material for the Trans-Australian railway. I have shown that there are sidings enough to deal with it, and we are adding 40 per cent. to the amount of material to be carried by the building of this line alone.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What is the matter with landing the stuff at Eucla?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am only just dealing with it as the position presents itself at the present time. It will be said later that a congestion might occur between Perth and Merredin or Northam and Merredin. But it might be pointed out that the line is duplicated practically between Perth and Spencer's Brook now. Hon. members will see the ridiculous position we are placed in by being asked to discuss this matter without having the whole scheme before us. Let us suppose that will be the argument put forward. We have at Northam goods traffic which can be deviated around by Goomalling to Merredin, then there is the Wickepin-Merredin railway, the York-Quairading railway, and also the Brookton-Kunjin-Merredin railway when completed.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: When?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am not in a position to answer that. If these railways can be built at once we will have three different ways of getting the sleepers and rails up from Northam to Merredin. True, it will take a little longer, but what does that matter in the case of goods traffic? The argument that was used by the Colonial Secretary that this railway is necessary to carry the material for the Transcontinental railway will not hold water. The greater number of sleepers which will be required will come from the South-West, and they can be carried along the Wickepin-Merredin line, and if the rails are landed at Bunbury they also can be taken along that way, while, if they are landed at Albany, they can be railed to Narrogin and then over the Wickepin-Merredin line and there will be no congestion between Perth and Merredin. That will practically dispose of the argument advanced by the Colonial Secretary that it is necessary in

order to carry the rails and sleepers that this line should be built. Let me now come to the last argument as to whether it is necessary to build the line at once. I say it is not necessary; there is no necessity on account of the understanding to build it at once, for the reason that I have shown that it is not required for the traffic. It will be at least five years before the railway is built and it will be time enough to build our broad gauge when they have their line practically completed to Kalgoorlie, and then we shall be able to see how the thing works. We are at present passing through a period of financial stress. I suppose that money has never been dearer than it is at present in Australia. Therefore, the construction of the line should be delayed at least for a year or two. This work will not have the earning capacity for the payment of interest on a loan of 2½ millions. The State should only borrow under good conditions, and when it has something to offer, and when its borrowing powers have not exceeded those of the sister States. In one fell swoop we are going to add £8 or £10 per head to the loan indebtedness of the State. This is a very big amount, and I think we should pause before we leap into a matter of this kind. We have great necessity, as Mr. Colebatch has said, for the building of many agricultural railway lines, and we must have in hand at the present time at least 500 or 600 miles of agricultural railway lines which were passed by Parliament, some two years ago, others 12 months ago, that a start has not been made with so far. We have been told by the Minister for Works in a recent speech that he can only build these railways at the rate of 200 miles a year; then what is the good of passing this railway Bill, for if we pass it we shall not get the line built for at least two or three years to come. It took the Federal Government, in spite of the honourable understanding, eleven years before passing the Transcontinental railway, and there is no need for us to build this line if only for the reason that money is very dear. There is some important information which we ought to have before committing ourselves to this

line, and may I remind hon. members again that we are committing ourselves to the whole scheme of the line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie if we pass this Bill. First of all, is the line coming from Fremantle through Perth, or are we going to have, as there is some suggestion, the line coming to Perth and branching off to Cockburn Sound, in which case it will be a line for mails and military purposes only? We have a right to know what route the line is to take when it leaves Fremantle and until it reaches Merredin. There is no need to hurry with this Bill. It is not going to be a re-productive work; all the traffic which will go on this line can be carried on the present railway. We know that the Government are committed to hundreds of miles of agricultural railways, and we know that there are hundreds of light agricultural and mining railways required all over the State. In addition, the Government are committed to State sawmills, which will cost several hundred thousand pounds. There are State steamers and State brickworks, and we see with regret that the deficit is growing month after month. I think when the revenue is falling in the State and the deficit is mounting up month after month, we should pause before we hurriedly pass this line, especially when we have no guarantee that it will produce either the interest or sufficient for the sinking fund. It is a line which we should not pass at the present juncture. Put it back for a year, no possible harm can be done by not building it at once, and, consequently, if the House is not disposed to do that I should counsel them to have fuller information placed before them and accept the suggestion which has been thrown out to have a select committee and get the fullest information possible on the subject. In years to come I think the House will regret having passed this Bill, if they do pass it on the meagre information submitted. I do not intend to vote for the second reading until better reasons and much more information is given to members than has been laid before the House by the representative of the Government; and nothing but good will be done by

delaying the construction of the line for a few years.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): I have no intention, although the information referred to by the last speaker is supplied, of voting for the measure. The amount of money it will take at least will be two million pounds, which probably would represent 1,000 miles of agricultural railways, and when we think what 1,000 miles of agricultural lines would do for this country we should pause before passing this Bill. It is not the section of the railway which is now under review but if we pass this Bill it means the whole railway. To begin with, as has been stated, it will disorganise the labour market, as there is only a limited labour market available, and a big work such as this would take precedence of all other work. Therefore, it would take all the available labour, while the construction of many other lines would stand still. The construction of this railway would disorganise the money market, for the time is not opportune for floating a loan for this purpose. At the present time money matters are disorganised in the old country, and there are rumours of war. It is undesirable in the extreme to enter on the work. If the line is to be made eventually let us make it when we are satisfied that the traffic on the Transcontinental line will justify the expenditure, for the only inconvenience that will be occasioned at the present time when the railway arrives at Kalgoorlie is that the mails and the passengers will have to be transhipped and that is not so great an inconvenience. As it has already been said the line will neither pay interest nor sinking fund, and probably not working expenses. It is too great a tax on the community at this time. We should be well advised to wait until we see what traffic there will be along the line before we are justified in the expenditure of this amount of money. If the Bill is introduced five years hence that will be ample time to deal with it.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: No.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Yes. It will be at least five years before we know what the traffic is worth to us, and it will be

many years before we find that the line is necessary. There is no anxiety, with the number of stations which already exist, in regard to taking the material to Kalgoorlie, and if there are 34 stations or sidings between the two points it is not a big matter to reconstruct these stations or sidings, to put in the trains necessary to carry the traffic. I looked up what was said in 1903 when the Trans-Australian Railway Bill was under consideration and it is interesting to note what Mr. Drew's opinions then were. He said—

I shall be much surprised if a measure of this nature and of such importance is allowed to pass through this Chamber with lightning speed, as the Colonial Secretary contemplates. If there is one justification for the perpetuation of the Legislative Council, it is that the Council exists to check hasty legislation. I have carefully considered the Bill, and come to the conclusion, after looking through other sources of information, that one of its effects is to pledge the credit of this State to the extent of two millions. I ask why should this State undertake such an obligation? The Trans-Australian line is purely a federal matter; it is a matter of federal concern, and it can be constructed by the Federal Government. It was one of the fair promises made to this State previous to our entering Federation that this line should be constructed by the Federal Government. We had a promise from the South Australian Premier that, if we entered Federation, he would allow the line to be constructed through South Australian territory; but this promise, like many more I dare say, remains unfulfilled, and I think this Bill has been brought forward by the leaders of the Federal Government, or probably it has been accepted by the leaders of the federal movement, in order to cover up the base perjuries perpetrated during the federal debate. It is Clause 4 which I object to. I consider that clause is foolish and ill-advised. Why should the Government of this State at the present period

make any guarantee in this direction? Another thing is that the Colonial Treasurer has not informed us how he is going to finance this scheme. Where is he going to get the money? I think it is the duty of the Government, the duty of the leader of this House, to give information on a matter of this kind before introducing legislation which involves the country in such a heavy liability. It has been stated that this railway is needed for the defence of the Commonwealth. That is a national matter, and if it is needed for the defence of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Parliament should construct the line from end to end. There are many other necessary works which should be undertaken by the Government of this State before they shoulder such a heavy burden as the construction of a broad-gauge railway from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. There are, for instance, the Port Hedland to Marble Bar railway, the Mount Magnet to Lawlers railway, the Leonora extension, the purchase of the Midland concession, the Collie to Pingelly railway, and the dock at Fremantle. All these are matters of far more importance than the one under review, especially when we have the right to demand from the Federal Government the construction of this line solely at their own expense. As regards the alteration of the present gauge, this will be a very serious matter to the people of the country. What will it mean? It will mean that the people of the South and the people of the North who wish to send produce to the Kalgoorlie gold-fields will be severely penalised. The stuff will have to come to Perth or Midland Junction, and be put on the Kalgoorlie train. This means a heavy charge on the producer, and I think the people of the country districts will protest against an alteration of the gauge on those grounds. It will entirely dislocate our railway system, and I think the Minister's arguments have not been of such a nature as to justify it. I do not think this Bill, if passed in its present form, even with a guarantee for the construction of the line

from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, will affect the position of the South Australian Parliament. How can our passing this measure and our guaranteeing the construction of a broad-gauge line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle influence them? That argument will not weigh with them. They will consider the matter from the point of view of their own interests. We are offering a consideration to the Federal Government for granting us this Commonwealth line; but I maintain that this consideration was given by the people of Western Australia when they agreed to join the Federation, and that should be quite sufficient for the Federal Government.

That is about the effect of the honourable member's criticism, and what he said then is just as true to-day, only, unfortunately, the money market is tighter. He anticipated that there would be some difficulty in raising two millions of money, and if there was a difficulty then there is more difficulty now. There is no justification for the House to hurry on the construction of the line, seeing that so many railway lines have already been promised, and, owing to the lack of money, labour and material they are hung up. All the inconvenience at Kalgoorlie will consist of passengers having to tranship. I like the idea of a through line but I do not think it is justified just now. To construct this railway at the cost of two and a half millions, so that passengers and mails may be expedited, is not a sufficient reason for undertaking the work, therefore I shall vote against the Bill. I shall be glad to hear what the leader of the House and others have to say in support of the measure and, although I supported the proposal in the past, and thought it a good thing; seeing that we are under no legal obligation I do not think we are justified at the present time in constructing the line. I would like to see the railway built right through when the traffic warrants it and when the money market and the labour market are more favourable, and the line can be constructed with undue expense to the people of the State.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): I can understand the attitude of Mr. Colebatch, and I think he has advanced a great deal of valuable criticism, but I cannot understand the attitude of the last two speakers. If their speeches meant anything they meant that this State can go back to the position of 10 or 12 years ago and disregard the obligations that were solemnly entered into by Act of Parliament.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: But the Act was for only five years.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I will come to that point in a minute. Before passing away from Mr. Colebatch's speech, I venture to hope that the leader of the House will give as fully as he can the information which the hon. member referred to. I certainly think the House and the country are entitled to that information. It is an unfortunate thing that measures of this kind can be passed so rapidly through their earlier stages, and brought to this House with so little effective challenge. It would be very much better if such a measure were to be thoroughly threshed out, and, if need be, referred to a select committee and completely ventilated; but this House is at a disadvantage when a Bill of this kind, which should be threshed out before reaching here, comes before us unthreshed, unventilated, and practically undebated. For that reason, I hope the Minister will give us a good deal more information than he has yet given in this debate. With regard to the attitude of Mr. Connolly and Mr. Sommers, it is true that the Act passed in 1903 was limited by a five-years' condition.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: The obligation is there all the same.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The Act pledged this State to build the line simultaneously with the action of the Federal Government in completing the Transcontinental line, provided that work was done in five years. It is impossible to blame the Federal Administration—which is now at its earliest opportunity carrying out the Transcontinental line—for the failure of a previous Administration to fulfil the conditions laid

down by the Parliament of Western Australia. How idle it would be for this Parliament to take up any such attitude—that because the Administration now in office in the Commonwealth did not begin this work before it became an Administration, therefore this Parliament will cry off the honourable understanding which certainly existed because of a definite Act of Parliament passed in 1903. Surely no members of this House would adopt such an attitude; yet, if hon. members are not prepared to take that position what is the use of arguing now as if the whole question was open before the House? In 1903 the Parliament of Western Australia conditionally pledged itself to build a line on the 4ft. 8½in. gauge from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. The term which was made a condition expired, but the whole attitude of the Parliament of Western Australia ever since has been in harmony with that Act. The Commonwealth Parliament and Government would be perfectly justified in assuming that this Parliament considered itself bound by that Act of 1903, and I cannot see how any honourable man can come to any other conclusion. Now, the real question for the House to-night is—have we sufficient facts to justify us in authorising the carrying out of part of this work at the present moment, or would it be wiser for the Parliament of Western Australia to defer the work for some time? I am hoping that the Minister will give a good deal of the information very properly asked for by Mr. Colebatch, but I think it is only fair to admit that the Minister has already given certain reasons that will carry considerable weight in my mind. If it is a fact that engineers' reports and the advice of experts are to the effect that it would be more economical to build this piece of line from Merredin to Coolgardie now than to defer it, that fact is a very great consideration. The Minister has given us a statement, but I could have wished that he had given us the reports of the expert advisers on which Ministers have based their action. It is on that advice the House must decide whether it is right to build this line now or whether the building may be deferred

for some time. The position has not been overstated by Mr. Colebatch. A lot of important works have been authorised by Parliament, and the people in whose interests they have been authorised were led to expect that they would be completed in a short time. All their financial calculations are based on that assurance, and there comes a point in the settler's existence when the fulfilment of those promises means life or death to his financial position. Without a doubt there are many settlers scattered over the country waiting for railway communication, whose very existence depends on their expectations being realised. All their financial obligations are conditioned upon it, and if a year goes by beyond the term they have calculated, it perhaps means ruin to them. Now, that is a very serious position. Any Administration, as well as the present one, would say, "We can do a certain amount profitably and economically each year: if we go beyond that it means an undue expenditure for the results to be obtained, and it is not wise to do it." I want to advise that all the bases on which such arrangements have been made should be very carefully looked into. Why should any Administration say, "We can build so much per annum, and we are not going to make arrangements for railway construction beyond our plant." With the information the House already has my advice would be to pass this Bill, but to throw to the winds those old limits with regard to railway building. I would say to the Labour Ministry, "I am not going to make war on your policy of day labour, but can you not ride any policy to death? When you say you have a certain organisation for railway building, and you do not care to go beyond that, why should you not submit other railway propositions to free competition in the market of the country." Before this Government came into office there were in the State a number of railway contractors doing good service. Naturally they first worked for their own profit. Would not any contractor be a fool if he did not put that consideration first? But in working for their own profit they served the country admir-

ably. Even admitting that the Government fully believe, and have, of course, their reasons for believing, in their own policy of day labour construction, is it not open to them to consider that they might go further, and without violence to that policy say, "Here is the position. The settlers are waiting for railways. The country's Parliament has voted those railways. What we cannot undertake now we will submit to open contract in the markets of the State and build these other lines by contract. The contractors will find the labour and the plant, and the Government will not be doing any violence to their own principle of day labour construction because they will be carrying it out to the utmost of their ability." I feel inclined to vote for this Bill, but I would urge the Government to get beyond their self-made limits, and let to open contract all those railways which they are not at the moment prepared to carry out departmentally.

On motion by Hon. M. L. Moss debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.
