

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until 4-30 on Friday, to sit until 6-30, and if requisite from 7-30 onwards. Members would not object to do this, as their labours were expected to terminate on Saturday.

Question passed.

The House adjourned at four minutes to 9 o'clock, until the next day.

Act Amendment Act, 1902, and the regulation thereunder, to see that the rates are of an equitable nature before giving his approval to them?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No. 2, Yes; the matter is now under consideration.

QUESTION—RAILWAY STATION, FENIAN CROSSING.

MR. H. BROWN asked the Minister for Railways: When is it proposed to erect a station at or near Fenians' Crossing?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The question of a station between East Perth and Maylands is under consideration. It is not yet decided where the position to afford the best facilities is situated, but this will be settled during the coming year.

QUESTION—PAPERS DELAYED.

MR. H. BROWN (without notice) asked the Minister for Works: Why has it taken so long to supply the papers moved for with reference to Mr. J. J. Harwood? The nonproduction of the papers has defeated any object in moving for a select committee to inquire into the treatment of this officer by the late Government. The officer has been unfairly treated.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not make a speech.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The papers are now available, and will be laid on the table.

QUESTION—FEDERAL INFORMATION, IMMIGRANTS.

THE PREMIER: In connection with the questions asked by the hon. member for Kanowna on the 19th inst., I have, in accordance with the promise then made, obtained answers from the Federal Government, which are as under:—1, No. 2, Goldminers, some returning, proceeding to the fields. 3, No test applied. 4, Yes. Two Polish females returning to Australia; two German females, wives of immigrants; two Italians, mother and daughter; two Russians, mother and daughter, the mother being accompanied by her husband. 5, Yes. Three pounds and upwards. In connection with the questions asked by the hon. member for

Legislative Assembly, Thursday, 21st December, 1905.

	PAGE
Questions: Timber Tramline, Lakeside ...	789
Railway Station, Fenian Crossing ...	789
Papers delayed, J. J. Harwood ...	789
Federal Information, Immigrants ...	789
Bills: Third reading (3) ...	790
Aborigines, Amendments considered ...	790
Statutes Compilation, Amendments considered	791
Stamp Act Amendment, Amendments considered	792
Bills of Sale Act Amendment, 2r., etc. ...	793
Bread Act Amendment (holidays), 2r., Com., reported ...	800
Railway Bills (3), Spur Lines debated jointly, adjourned ...	802
Loan Estimates introduced (and deferred a short time) ...	796
Ditto resumed and completed ...	818

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2-30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—TIMBER TRAMLINE, LAKESIDE.

MR. BOLTON (for Mr. Collier) asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the rates charged for carrying goods on the timber tramline south of Lakeside, held under permit by the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company? 2, If not, will he take steps to ascertain the rates charged, and use the power given to him under the Land

Yilgarn on the 19th inst., I have, in accordance with the promise then made, obtained answers to the first three questions, which are as under:—1, Forty-nine Italians landed in Fremantle. 2, Yes; they so described themselves. 3, From questioning, nothing could be learned that these men were under contract. With regard to question 4: Yes; inquiries are being made.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS: Report and correspondence of late Boundary Rider Angel and I. T. Crawford, ordered on motion of Mr. H. Brown.

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS: 1, Papers re retirement of J. J. Harwood, ordered on motion of Mr. H. Brown. 2, By-laws and regulations passed by the Kalgoorlie Electric Tramways Limited.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

Fisheries, returned to the Legislative Council with amendments.

Totalisator Duty, transmitted to the Legislative Council.

Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act Amendment (No. 2), transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—ABORIGINES.

AMENDMENTS CONSIDERED.

The Assembly having amended the Bill, and the Council having disagreed to one amendment and farther amended another, reasons were now considered in Committee; MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair.

No. 3, Clause 10—Strike out the words "not exceeding in any one magisterial district an area of 2,000 acres":

THE PREMIER moved—

That the Assembly's amendment be not insisted on.

The Assembly had decided to leave it open to the Government to declare a reserve of any size in any magisterial district, the idea being not to limit the reserves to 2,000 acres; but the object of the Bill was to provide reserves adjacent to townships where aborigines might be placed, and to which no white man could have access. It was not intended that these reserves should be locations on which aborigines collectively should be placed. The Assembly's amendment would make

it possible to take away a squatter's lease, a possibility which had not been contemplated; therefore the Council had taken a correct view of the situation. An area not exceeding 2,000 acres was quite sufficient for the purpose of the Bill.

MR. BATH: It was difficult to understand the reasons which actuated the Legislative Council in insisting on the clause as sent down. Whatever might be the opinions as to the nature of the reserves required there could be no danger in giving the Government power to proclaim an area of land for a reserve for aborigines without intimating any particular area of land, for the time might arrive when the Government would deem it advisable to constitute a reserve larger than 2,000 acres. If the provision were retained it would make the maximum area 2,000 acres.

MR. WALKER: It did not matter whether the Assembly agreed with the proposal or not for he was firmly of the conviction that the Bill would be unworkable, and that the reserves were an absurdity. It was the opinion of the Assembly when the amendment was accepted that the removal of the limitation would give the Executive Council a chance by-and-by to do something really excellent in the way of providing a reserve, for no real reserve was contemplated by the Bill. The amendment removed the restriction and enabled the Governor to proclaim a reserve when it was found necessary.

THE PREMIER was just as anxious as other members of the Committee to secure to the aborigines the possibility of a reserve for their own use if considered necessary, but if we insisted on the amendment we should do away with the opportunity of the Government at any time setting aside a larger reserve than 2,000 acres for the benefit of the aborigines. He would resist the effort of the Legislative Council if we were dealing with unalienated land. The Crown had the right at any time to set aside any land unalienated for the benefit of aborigines, and in dealing with alienated land in pastoral leases care was taken by the 24th schedule of the Land Act of 1898 to provide that any area of land might be resumed for the benefit of aborigines. This was an important Bill, but in some respects it did not go far

enough. If we insisted on the amendment there was a danger of the Bill being lost.

MR. BUTCHER: It was to be hoped the Committee would accept the amendment, for the Bill was extremely useful and if we insisted on the amendment the measure might be lost. These reserves were really camping grounds for aborigines.

Question passed, the amendment not insisted on.

No. 8, Clause 46.—After the word "same," in line 5, insert "to any other than an aboriginal"; and after the word "person," in line 1 of the last paragraph, insert "not being an aboriginal":

Farther Amendment made by the Legislative Council—After the word "any," in line 1, insert the word "person":

THE PREMIER: It was within the recollection of members that Clause 46 dealt with the disposal of blankets, bedding, etc. by aborigines, and the Council provided by an amendment that an aborigine could not dispose of clothing, bedding, or blankets to any person other than an aborigine. He moved—

That the amendment made by the Council be agreed to.

Question passed, the amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—STATUTES COMPILATION.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

Amendment made by the Legislative Council now considered in Committee; Mr. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair; the PREMIER in charge of the Bill.

THE PREMIER: When the Bill was under consideration in the House, on the motion of the member for Kalgoorlie we inserted a clause to this effect:—

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, in the event of the rights of any parties arising under any Acts repealed hereunder being in question, the Court shall be entitled, notwithstanding the repeal of the said Acts, to refer to the same for the purpose of determining such rights.

At the time the clause was moved, he (the Premier) had considerable doubt as to what the effect would be. The member for Kalgoorlie had the advantage of

being learned in the law, whilst he (the Premier) was only a layman. He could not see what advantage the suggested clause could possibly have, unless it protected the rights that might accrue as to the claims of individuals being infringed by the compilation of different statutes; but the compilation of different statutes would not alter the law. If the member for Kalgoorlie assured him that the amendment was essential in the interest of the public, he would feel inclined to insist on the amendment; but in the absence of any such assurance, he could not see what possible good the clause would have. The rights of the public could be affected only if the law were altered. He would be sorry to move that the amendment should not be insisted upon, if there were substantial reasons why it should be; but at present he could see no such reasons.

MR. KEENAN: The representative of the Government in the Upper House, having had placed before him the reasons for the insertion of this clause, had consented to waive the objection of the Upper House so far as he could do so, and had intended to communicate with the Premier. He (Mr. Keenan) understood that communication was made; therefore he did not think in the first instance it was necessary he should enter into the reasons why this House should insist on the retention of the clause. However, he had been invited to do so. The Council said the amendment was inexpedient, "as the rights of Parliament are sufficiently safeguarded by Clause 4, in case the Attorney General, for the purposes of Clause 2, make such alterations as that clause contemplates." There never was any question of the rights of Parliament, or the protection of the rights of Parliament. Of course we all knew that Parliament could protect itself at any time. What was attempted by the clause was to protect the rights of individuals. If the compilation had been correctly made, and the implied repeals were only such as had been just and equitable, the Court would, on reference to the original statute, see that the Act as compiled was correct, and they would decide the rights of the party and nobody could complain of injustice. But if on referring to the original statutes they found that the compilation was in any

way faulty, or that any change made on the ground of an implied repeal was not justified, they would, in spite of the fact that the Attorney General had made a blunder, see that the rights of the people were properly protected. It was true that under Clause 4 when the Attorney General made these alterations, and such alterations as he deemed necessary in order to give effect to implied repeals, an enacting statute would be passed; but we knew what that meant. It would simply mean that whoever was the representative law officer in this House would move that in line 4 of such-and-such a section of such-and-such an Act, such-and-such a word be struck out. It would be gone through at such a rate that no member of the House would be able to follow the matter. And although theoretically the laying of papers on the table of the House was supposed to give much protection to all parties, members knew that it gave no protection at all, because no one had time to read the papers. If the compilation was done correctly, and the implied repeal was justified, a reference could never upset the new Act, the Act representing the compilation of the old Acts. Therefore it seemed to him there could be no objection to the clause; and in the event of a blunder it would undoubtedly save the rights of individuals. For these reasons he recommended the Committee to insist on the amendment.

THE PREMIER: It was not for him to move that the Assembly should or should not insist upon their amendment without some reasons, nor was it for him as a layman to give those reasons; therefore he had trusted that the hon. member would, as he had done, give reasons for insisting on the amendment. After the explanation given by the hon. member, he now moved that the amendment of the Assembly be insisted on.

Question passed, the amendment insisted on, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

Schedule of four amendments requested by the Legislative Council now considered in Committee.

Nos. 1, 2,—agreed to.

No. 3—Schedule, page 8, after the word "industrial" add the words "and reformatory":

THE TREASURER moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to. The duty on an instrument of apprenticeship was 5s., and the exemption was an instrument relating to any child apprenticed under "The Industrial Schools Act, 1893." The Council suggested that after "Industrial" the words "and Reformatory" should be inserted.

Question passed, the Council's suggestion agreed to.

No. 4—Add the following new clause to stand as Clause 19:—

*"Stamps on Savings Bank cheques.—*The duty of one penny upon cheques or orders payable on demand drawn upon the Post Office Savings Bank shall form part of the revenue of the said Bank, and such duty may be collected in money by any officer of the bank by whom the cheque or order is cashed."

THE PREMIER moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to. He would like to explain the necessity for this new clause in regard to people who were drawing money out of the Savings Bank. The procedure was not the same as was the case in other banks. Cheques drawn on a bank other than the savings bank were, of course, drawn upon forms bearing a penny revenue stamp. Hitherto the orders drawn upon the savings bank for the withdrawal of moneys from the bank had not borne stamp duty. Undoubtedly, they ought to have done so. An order might very well bear an ordinary impressed penny stamp; but if we insisted upon that being done, we should be inflicting a very great hardship upon a very great number of people, because people who had transactions with the savings bank were in the habit, for reasons which he need not explain at length, of spoiling a good number of forms before they got one filled up in a correct manner. If they had to fill in a form bearing an impressed duty stamp, probably in many cases there would be a cost of 5d. or 6d., or even more, before one had filled up a form correctly. If the new clause were allowed to stand, the penny duty would be collected by the officer of the savings bank; and no matter how many forms

were spoiled in filling up, only a penny would be charged.

Question passed, the suggested amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. C. H. Rason): In moving the second reading of this Bill to amend the Bills of Sale Act 1899, I feel that I ought to apologise, and I do apologise to members, for introducing yet another Bill at this very late stage of the session. I should not have brought in this Bill had I not been impressed by its absolute necessity. The Bill is extremely technical, so technical indeed that I have thought it advisable, in order that members may understand its real meaning, to have prepared at some length the reasons for its introduction. They are as follow:—

Prior to the coming into operation of the Bills of Sale Act 1899, which is the statute now regulating the important legal documents dealt with by that Act, it was provided by the old Amendment Act of 1892 that—

“Whenever by a bill of sale executed after the passing of this Act, the grantor thereof shall purport or covenant to grant or assign to the grantee any personal chattels within the meaning of the principal Act, not in existence at the time of the making of such bill of sale, or which the grantor may hereafter acquire, the property and legal interest in such future or after-acquired chattels shall, immediately upon the coming into existence of such chattels or on their being acquired by the grantor, be deemed to pass at law to the grantee of the bill of sale, subject nevertheless to the provisions thereof.” This section enabled after-acquired property to be legally transferred by way of security. By the Bills of Sale Act of 1899, the right to assign this class of property at law has been taken away, and in the case of the stock-in-trade of a trader, which is here to-day and gone to-morrow, the security by way of bill of sale is not now of much value, as at law property acquired either in addition to or in substitution for that contained in the original security cannot be covered to meet all emergencies. With the law in this condition the original security becomes of little value. With the object of enabling these securities to cover after-acquired property, the provision quoted from the 1892 Act was enacted.

The late Attorney General, Mr. Walter James, undoubtedly did very good work

in 1899 by consolidating all the Acts relating to bills of sale; but when he was preparing the consolidation, Section 5 of the amending Act of 1892 escaped his notice; and he provided by Section 7 of the present Bills of Sale Act that the assignment of all after-acquired property shall have the same effect as is provided by the rules of common law or of equity. The general rule or maxim of law is that a man cannot grant that which he does not possess. The effect of the provision in the Act of 1899 is to confer a mere equitable title to after-acquired chattels; and until the mortgagee has taken actual possession or obtained a legal assignment by succeeding in getting the mortgagor to execute a second mortgage, the mortgagee had only an equitable right to the property, the legal right remaining in the mortgagor. I am advised that this position which now obtains should not be allowed to continue. As a layman, the facts seem to be as follow. If you deal with a trader, he may give you a mortgage over his stock-in-trade. If he is a grocer, his shelves are filled with certain tins containing different products; but unless there is a continuing mortgage—unless the mortgage includes property after-acquired—it can be held that once the mortgagor has disposed of the actual tins upon the shelves at the time he executed the mortgage, any tins substituted in the ordinary course of trade will not be included in the mortgage. The necessity for this Bill, from the point of view of the Government, arises from the following circumstances. I mention no names; for to do so would be hardly fair. A previous Government made a very large advance to a firm conducting business in Western Australia, on the security of material then in hand and products afterwards to be furnished by the firm. Without a continuing mortgage there would be absolutely no security to the Government, once the material and products of that material existing at the time the mortgage was given were out of hand. Fresh material and fresh products of that material would not be covered by the mortgage. These illustrations—that of the grocer, showing how the law affects a private mortgagee; and that of the firm mentioned, showing how the State is affected—will surely convince the

House that some alteration is necessary. This Bill provides for a continuity of the mortgage deed; that fresh goods or fresh material, intended when the mortgage was given to be part of the security, shall become part of such security. I have no doubt that the argument I have read will appeal to the member for Kalgoolie (Mr. Keenan). I may say that I, as a layman, cannot put the case more clearly than I have put it. It is absolutely necessary, in the interest of mortgagor and mortgagee alike, that there should be this continuity of mortgage—the only expression that suggests itself to my mind as meeting the case. I can assure hon. members that the Bill, if passed into law, will not inflict hardship on anyone, but will simply protect the interests of the commercial community. I beg leave to move the second reading.

MR. T. WALKER (Kanowna): The feature that strikes me as objectionable in the Bill is the fact that the measure is made retrospective. The Premier shakes his head, as if to intimate that my statement is incorrect.

THE PREMIER: No. I say, the Bill has to be retrospective to be of any use.

MR. WALKER: Is it not objectionable to make any legislation retrospective? One clause provides that "this section shall take effect as if it had been a provision of the principal Act from the commencement thereof," thus dating the Bill back to the time of the commencement of the original Act of 1899. There can be no objection, I take it, to securing in the manner suggested both parties to a bill of sale. The occurrences mentioned by the Premier are frequent, not only in grocers' shops, but in respect of all goods covered by bills of sale; and it is wise that a measure of this kind should be enacted. But I think it decidedly objectionable to make the Bill retrospective. That is a bad precedent to set out; and no legislation of that character ought to be passed, unless the circumstances are extremely exceptional. That, I think, is the only objectionable feature; and when the Bill reaches Committee, I shall endeavour to have the retrospective clause struck out.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (West Perth): I quite understand the presentation of this Bill by the Premier; and so far as it relates to stocks-in-trade, there

is no doubt of its necessity. However, I do not perceive how one difficulty is overcome. Bills of sale are very often given over household furniture, the articles mortgaged being defined in the bill of sale. But after a bill of sale is given, other articles—a piano for instance—may, by the united efforts of the grown-up sons and daughters, be added to those articles scheduled in the bill of sale; and if this Bill is passed as provided, it seems to me it will give the mortgagee a right to forfeit the new furniture added to the old. I do not think there is any necessity or any intention to give that right, to grant the mortgagee power over goods not in the house at the time the bill of sale was given, goods which did not form part of the original security. Of course, in the case of a stock-in-trade, where the goods are constantly changed, where one case of kerosene is sold and another takes its place, and difficulty of identification might arise, this Bill is absolutely necessary. But in respect of bills of sale over household furniture and household goods, I do not think it would be safe to give the power herein expressed, unless we protect the extra furniture which may subsequently come into the house. A man may give a bill of sale over his furniture, and his wife and children may, by subscription, buy a piano.

THE PREMIER: If there is no piano mentioned in the bill of sale, there is no security over the piano.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is what I am arguing. This Bill, as I read it, would make that piano part of the mortgagee's security.

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I think so. If the Bill is intended to apply only to stock-in-trade, it is unobjectionable; but if it is to apply to bills of sale over household furniture to which other goods may be added not mentioned in the bill of sale, I fear that great injustice will be done.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): Although the Premier says this is a small Bill, there can be no doubt it is of a highly technical nature. For that reason alone, I do not feel inclined to support the second reading. I have a great disinclination to support any measure which tightens the grip of the

mortgagee; and it appears to me that the Bill will have that effect. I object also, in company with the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker), to the second paragraph of Clause 2, making the measure retrospective. I have pointed out on previous occasions the danger of making such measures retrospective; and on principle I have a strong objection to voting for any clause which has that effect.

MR. N. KEENAN (Kalgoorlie): I think that the House is under some misapprehension as to the scope of this Bill; a misapprehension which is natural, having regard to the technical character of the measure. It deals only with bills of sale, and not with mortgages, as some seem to think who do not distinguish the terms. A bill of sale is only an instrument whereby a creditor takes certain securities over chattels; and it would be almost impossible to carry on trade if the person who gave the bill of sale did not obtain the right to sell the chattels. The trader sells the subject matter that he pledges as security for repayment. The illustration given by the member for West Perth has no foundation, because the bill of sale actually sets out what is the nature of the goods comprised in the inventory, and sets out all the chattels covered by it; and if it is provided in the bill of sale, as it would be, that the party possessing these articles is not able to carry on business without them—for instance, if he owned a piano which his wife or daughter required to earn a living—it would not be covered by this clause at all. The man has actually, in the bill of sale purporting to grant the substituted chattels, to specify the substituted property. This is only a machinery Bill. At present one would require a legal and equitable interest in order to set up a lien under the Bills of Sale Act, and one would have to apply for a receiver, getting the same remedy, but in a more expensive way; and the expense is borne by the man who obtains the loan. If a man obtains a loan to-morrow and gives security for repayment, and if it becomes necessary for the person granting the loan to enforce it, it is done at the expense of the man who receives the loan. Instead of this measure being harsh on the person who obtains the loan and gives the security, it really makes

the cost of recovering the loan more economical, and the property of the poorer man is saved. If one has to apply for a receiver, it means that the person who receives the loan has to bear the expense. This is only a machinery Bill. At present, as the Premier indicated, if an application were made for the appointment of a receiver, and the receiver is appointed, he enters into his duties entirely at the expense of the grantor of the bill of sale. It appears to me advisable always to make these powers of security as cheap as possible, especially when the expense has to be borne by the person least able to bear it, that is to say, the man who grants the bill of sale. The same remark applies to the objection of the member for Kanowna. It simply means that, instead of having to apply for a receiver and to go in for expensive proceedings, which fall on the shoulders of the debtors, the clause in the Bill will really make proceedings simple by putting in a bailiff, taking possession of the property, realising on it to meet the amount due under the security, and handing over the surplus to the debtor. The measure will be more economical to administer than the existing Act, and is it not better to do something in that direction than to leave things as they are? The House would be wise to accept this measure, especially as we are merely following the footsteps of legislation certainly at Home and, I believe, in the other States, though I am not personally prepared to say what is the law in the other States. It was the law in this State to the year 1899 since the first Bills of Sale Act was passed in 1892.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair; the PREMIER in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Legal interest in future and after-acquired chattels to be deemed to pass to grantee of bill of sale:

MR. WALKER moved an amendment:—

That the words "before or," in line 1, be struck out.

It was bad to fall into the habit of passing retrospective legislation.

THE PREMIER: In 99 cases out of 100 he agreed with the attitude assumed by the hon. member. He personally objected to retrospective legislation, but in this case we were doing nothing more than putting back the law to what it was before 1899, and to what it would have been to-day but for a manifest error. Also we were making legal that which in equity people had been bound to do all the time. If a man gave a bill of sale over a security, he specified so many tons of iron, not the actual sheets of iron before his eyes at the time of the signing of the bill of sale. That was all we were providing for.

MR. TAYLOR: Did the Bill seek to restore the law in existence from 1892 to 1899?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

Amendment negatived, and the clause passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time, and *passed*.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1905-6.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Vote—*Departmental*, £51,540:

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. C. H. Rason): In introducing these Loan Estimates for the consideration of members, I desire to say at the outset that I do not intend to ask the House to grant any farther loan authorisation during this session. I want, if I may be allowed to say so, to show that magnanimity does not altogether exist on one side of the House. As I recognise that my friends opposite have been somewhat generous in assisting me to bring the work of the session to a close, so it would be, to my mind, somewhat unfair on my part if I asked them and other members of the House, to consider farther loan proposals so late in the day as this is. That being so, as I have not to submit any farther loan authorisations for the consideration of the Committee, I do not think it necessary for me to deal at any very great length with the Estimates now submitted. Because, with very few exceptions to which I shall allude, the work proposed to be carried out under these Estimates is work that has been

already authorised by Parliament. It is merely a continuance of the work already in hand, merely a continuance of works already in progress, but apart from the question of the form in which loan expenditure for the current year is to take; in other words, on what works we shall expend loan moneys. The question of most importance to us in approaching Loan Estimates is that of our loan authorisation. Our total loan authorisations to the 30th June last amounted to £18,273,000. Of this sum, at the close of the last financial year, there remained unexpended £957,000. In other words, on the 1st July there was an available unexpended balance of loan authorisations of £957,000. Of this £957,000 available for expenditure, we propose, during the present financial year, spending £799,603, leaving an estimated balance of loan money on 30th June, 1906, of £157,400. The estimated expenditure of £799,603 is made up as follows, as appears on page 3 of the Loan Estimates:—*Departmental*, from general loan fund £36,238, from loan suspense account £15,302; Railways, etc., from general loan fund £297,214, from loan suspense account £19,536; harbour and river improvements, from general loan fund £71,085, from loan suspense account £13,443; water supply and sewerage, from general loan fund £51,320, from loan suspense account £2,180; roads and bridges, from loan suspense account £17,000; development of goldfields and mineral resources, from general loan fund £66,140, and from loan suspense account £35,091; development of agriculture, from general loan fund £49,171, from loan suspense account £55,613; public buildings, from loan suspense account £70,000; making a total of £799,603. The item; "*departmental*," of course explains itself. It is the cost of administering the loan expenditure set out on the Estimates. The other items I do not intend to enlarge upon in my remarks, because they will be dealt with by the Minister for Works and the other Ministers in charge of the several departments. Under the heading of railways, I should like to point out to the Committee that in passing, if the Committee do pass, the item set out as estimated expenditure on railways, no new railways can be built without a Railway Bill, so that I hope members will not

confuse the two subjects. In passing this item, if the Committee do pass it, they do not commit themselves to the railways which are the subject of the Bills before the House. They merely pass an item for railways, and then it remains to be seen how Parliament will decide that the money is to be expended. In regard to the railway proposals which will be submitted to the House, I should like to take this opportunity of explaining that the railways provided for in the Bills that will be submitted under these Estimates to the House are those lines upon which, to the mind of myself and my colleagues there is no doubt as to where they should start and where they should terminate. There are other railways possessing equal claims and offering equal advantages, offering an equal security of good results, but at present there is some diversity of opinion as to the route, and until the question of route is settled beyond all question of doubt as to which is the best line to take, we do not feel justified in submitting proposals to build these railways to the House. Those members who think that a railway should have gone from other points to other points, other than those enumerated in the Bills brought down, will realize that it is not a question of altogether throwing out of mind the strong claims of these railways, but delaying the construction until the Government are fully seized of the information that will convince them what is the best course for the railway to take, what is the best route. I think I noticed that when I read the items Roads and Bridges £17,000, and Public Buildings £70,000, there was a lifting of the eyebrows of some members of the Committee. I am very sorry indeed that it will be necessary to include items such as roads and bridges and public buildings upon these Loan Estimates. I regret that exceedingly, but like my predecessor and like his predecessors I have had to include in the Loan Estimates items but for the exigencies of the situation I should not have included.

MR. BATH: We were under the impression that you were a great man and were going to make a great departure.

THE TREASURER: So was the hon. member, but not so much as we thought he was. I want to put the position

fairly, and I do not want to accuse my predecessor of things I do not want to be accused of myself. I merely point out that although it may be wrong to include items such as these on the Estimates, it is not the first time they have been included. If we take the largest item, public buildings £70,000, we have previously spent from loan funds in Western Australia over £300,000 on public buildings; so that if I am a sinner, I am not a very great sinner if I add to that vast amount a mere trifling sum of £70,000. In regard to roads and bridges, the same argument applies. In this State it is true we have not expended very large sums upon roads and bridges out of loan funds. We have expended sums which in comparison with this small item of £17,000 are very large indeed; but the practice in the other Australian States has been to spend out of loan moneys very large sums indeed in the construction of roads and bridges and public buildings. I do not claim for a moment that the practice is right, but the position we have to deal with is the position as we find it. What is the position? That the very necessary works in the way of roads and bridges, school buildings, public buildings of different kinds, either had to be constructed out of loan funds, or not at all. That was the position. There was no getting away from it. I submit it is far better they should be constructed, that the works should be undertaken, highly necessary works should be undertaken out of loan funds rather than not undertaken at all. In admitting as we did years ago that immigration was a proper charge to loan funds, in admitting that the rabbit-proof fence was a proper charge to loan funds—

MR. TAYLOR: Very recently since you admitted that.

THE TREASURER: I am speaking of the House as a whole. I do not quote my own individual opinions as authoritative, I am dealing with what the House has done; and when Parliament admitted the principle of providing the expenditure for the subject of immigration out of loan funds, and when Parliament admitted the principle of charging to loan expenditure rabbit-proof fencing, they admitted the principle of constructing necessary works, that could not be provided for

out of revenue, out of loan funds; and that is the position I found on assuming office. So far as public buildings are concerned, the principle was admitted a very long time ago, and if it be a sin for me to include public buildings upon these Estimates I am not a very old sinner by comparison, because in 1872 on the schedule of our very first Loan Act there appeared provision for public buildings.

MR. TAYLOR: Your revenue was very small then.

THE TREASURER: Yes. It is not exceptionally large now. Up to the 30th June last £332,000 had been expended from loan account on public buildings; so that, as I have previously pointed out, I am not making a very large addition to that amount in asking the Committee to agree to provide £70,000 during this year for the erection of public buildings out of loan funds. I want here to refer to the question of the value of West Australian stocks under this Government, under its immediate predecessor, and under the Government existing before the Labour Government. It seems to me, if I may be allowed to say so without offence, that members in quoting the prices of stocks in London do not approach the subject with that fair spirit that is always desirable.

MR. HOLMAN: We quoted you last session, that is all.

THE TREASURER: I intend to quote the hon. member himself; that is all.

MR. BATH: The hon. gentleman is not permitted to quote from the report of this discussion.

THE TREASURER: I am not going to quote from *Hansard*. If you approach a question such as this with the desire to prove a case against someone else, it is very easy to get figures that will supply your desire; but if you approach it with a desire to be fair to those who are politically opposed to you as well as those who are politically in agreement with you, then you will find there is very little in the argument either one way or the other. The prices of stocks of any State do not depend so much upon the Government that happens to be in power as on the feeling of the capitalists who supply the money; and I submit it was wholly refreshing for the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman), who is sup-

posed to be and to whom I give credit for being the most ardent labour supporter, to attempt to argue that the capitalists—whom I understand it is his mission in life to oppose because of their malpractices—should be so enamoured of his opinions and so satisfied with his ideal that when a Government which is his ideal is in power people are willing to give a higher price for stocks than they would under any other form of Government. It seems to me a peculiar argument for one who is a labour candidate, or the ideal of a Labour Government, to say "The capitalist is my friend, and he has greater faith in me than he has in anyone else." The figures for the purpose of what seems to be a fair comparison in regard to prices of stocks are as follow:—On the 29th July, 1904, the quotations in London of Western Australian stocks were: For 3 per cents. 1915-35, £85 to £87; 1916-36, £85 to £87, business done at £86½; 1927—these are the dates of the maturity of the stock—£86 to £88. Three-and-a-half per cents.: 1915-35, £95 to £97; 1920-35, £95 to £97, business done at £96. Then we got some dates for the purpose of comparison between the previous Government and this. On the 30th November, 1904—3 per cents., 1915-35, £83½ to £84½, and the same quotation applies to the 1916-36 stock; 1927, £87 to £88, business done £87½. Three-and-a-half per cents.: 1915-35, £94½ to £95½. The same quotation applies to 1920-35; business was done at £95½ and £95¼. That is on the 30th November, 1904. Then we come to November, 1905, the month just passed. Stocks that were quoted at £83½ and £84½ are now £85 and £87. The stocks that were quoted at £87 and £88 are now quoted at £87 to £89; business done in November, 1904, at £87½; business done in November, 1905, £88½. The 3½ per cents. quoted at £94½ to £95½ are now quoted at £95 to £97, and business done at £96¼, £96½, and £96½. That, I think, will prove to the member for Murchison that if he goes to any class of stock he can obtain almost any figures he likes.

MR. LYNCH: Will you give us the figures of June this year?

THE TREASURER: I want to prove to this Committee that the figures are not worth much, after all.

MR. LYNCH: You are in a different position now.

THE TREASURER: Much has been sought to be made of them. The member for Murchison sought to make a very great deal of them. I could, if I chose, make a very great deal out of altered circumstances now.

MR. BATH: We are giving you your own argument.

THE TREASURER: I am surprised members have not a greater idea of what is fair argument. The argument was first brought forward by members on the opposite side of the House; they were not on that side then; and I endeavour to refute it. Whilst the advantage is with me I say you cannot place too much reliance on any such figures, because it all depends on what you set out to prove. [Interjection.] If the hon. member does not admit what I say is correct, I will take advantage of the position and demonstrate to the Committee how very much better the stocks are now than they were when he was in power. It seems to me members are not content that I should take this position, to give the actual figures and say you must not place too much reliance on them.

MR. LYNCH: We can also prove that they were very much better when we were in power than when you were in power.

THE TREASURER: If the hon. member throws down that challenge—

MR. LYNCH: The challenge is down now.

THE TREASURER: I do not see it. If I did, I would take it up.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is usual when the Treasurer is dealing with Loan Estimates to receive his speech almost in silence.

MR. BOLTON: The speech is all right, but not challenges like that.

THE TREASURER: I said "if" the hon. member wished to throw me a challenge. I did not throw out any challenge. I regret very much that I should have adopted a tone which is suggestive that I am not in the best possible humour. I thought I was explaining that I had no desire to quote figures which would in any way misrepresent the actual state of the case. In dealing with the quotations of the West Australian stocks, or the stocks of any

other States, you must take into consideration the other surrounding circumstances, and the different months of the year. No matter what stock you are considering, the prices fluctuate. I have no doubt some of my friends opposite would pick a particular month, which, although it would give the desired result, would not give a true reflex of the actual position. However, the prices of stock after all do not affect materially these loan Estimates. I can only say that we have striven to be as fair to the general public and to hon. members opposite as we possibly could be. To have brought down a loan Bill, and asked for a farther loan authorisation, and tried to force that loan Bill, or to have asked members to adopt it within the few remaining hours at our disposal, would have been, to my mind, an unfair thing to do. And although by not asking for a farther loan authorisation, I myself, as any other Treasurer would be, am placed in an awkward position, still I think it is more fair to both sides of the House that we should endeavour to carry on with the loan funds at present available rather than ask members hurriedly to consider proposals for a farther authorisation. The effect of this, however inconvenient it may be to my colleagues and myself, will at all events have this good result—it will demonstrate to people outside Western Australia that there will be no farther effort to borrow money, for one year, at all events. Western Australia will have kept off the money market for twelve months, and that is an experience we have not had for some time past. I have already said in regard to the items themselves, that they will be explained, as is the usual custom, by the Ministers in charge of the different departments. The loan expenditure as set down in these loan Estimates is, as hon. members will I think be bound to admit, but a very moderate sum indeed. We provide for an estimated expenditure of £799,603 as against an estimated expenditure last year of £914,069, and an actual expenditure of £698,019.

MR. BATH: Will the Premier explain with regard to loan suspense account? Is that another form of re-appropriation.

THE TREASURER: No; we can only expend from general loan fund moneys that have already been provided for in

the schedule of the loan Act, and as some of these works we intend to spend money on have not been provided for under the schedule of any loan Act, we must provide for expenditure from loan suspense account, and authorise the expenditure over and above this authorisation in the next loan Bill. I beg to move the first item.

MR. BATH: Would the Treasurer report progress until to-morrow?

THE TREASURER: The Appropriation Bill could not be brought in, nor even printed, until he knew in what condition the Loan Estimates would be passed. Several Railway Bills could not be considered until the Estimates had been either adopted or rejected. He would be glad to meet the hon. member's wishes by postponing the consideration of these Estimates until 7-30 this evening. He moved that progress be reported.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): This Bill was introduced at the request of the bread-carters of the metropolitan area, who, in conjunction with the master bakers, have arrived at an understanding as to what is known as their monthly holiday on the third Wednesday of every month. For some time they have enjoyed this holiday; but latterly, owing to some difficulties that arose, they believed their holiday to be threatened. Hence the bread-carters approached the master bakers. I understand that the member for Balkatta (Mr. Veryard) has acted as intermediary between the two parties, with the result that the master bakers have agreed to assist the carters in securing the enactment of this small amending measure for the purpose of ensuring a monthly holiday to the bread-carters, the latter agreeing to forego certain other holidays to which they laid claim. It will be necessary for me in Committee to move an additional clause to provide that the Act shall apply to the metropolitan area only; that is, to a district comprised in a radius of 14 miles from the General Post Office, Perth; because it is not desired to apply the measure to other parts of the State, where other arrangements are in operation regarding bread-

carters' holidays. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I second the motion.

MR. J. VERYARD (Balkatta): I should like to say a few words in support of the second reading. The principle at stake is not new to Australasia; it has been adopted in New South Wales, and also in Victoria for some time past. Locally it has been adopted for some years by the Fremantle bakers, and is working there satisfactorily; and to a limited extent it is worked in this city and suburbs. But, unfortunately, with two or three exceptions, it has not been fully carried out, in consequence of two or three of the bakers not falling into line. The proposal has my entire sympathy. Hon. members know that I have been for a number of years associated with this trade; and that I have for some days past interested myself in the master bakers and the carters. So I can speak with some confidence; and I say that all the leading bakers are in entire sympathy with the object to be attained. I would impress on the House the fairness and the justice of the application made for the holiday. The bread-carters ask for only one holiday per month; and seeing that they work something like 60 hours per week, instead of the 48 hours recognised as a week's work, it seems fair that they should, after having worked 50 or 60 hours per week for a month, be entitled to one day's holiday. Unfortunately for the men, all the general public holidays are now fixed for Mondays. This really prohibits the bread-carters from having those holidays, as bread must be delivered on that day. The employees are prepared to forfeit such holidays, even that holiday dear to the working man, Eight Hours Day. But they apply for one holiday in a month. I do not think I need be ashamed of an honest occupation it has been my lot to follow. I for some years drove a baker's cart, and know the difficulties under which the bread-carters labour. The bread has to be delivered. No matter what may be the heat, nor how heavy the rain, the men are compelled to deliver bread, because households must be supplied with that article. While other tradesmen employed outside may take shelter from the rain when it is too heavy, the baker's carters must face all

climatic conditions. This proposal has been before the Legislature on former occasions. In 1902, the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) introduced the measure, and it passed this House, but was thrown out in another place. In the present year Mr. Needham again brought up the matter, and his doing so was followed by the resignation of the Daglish Government. Again Mr. Needham moved in the matter, and there followed a dissolution under the present Government. The subject is not new, and I hope the House will, in justice to the bread-carters, endorse the action of these men in applying for a monthly holiday.

THE PREMIER (Hon. C. H. Rason): This at first glance would appear to be a very innocent little Bill, which anyone could with pleasure support; but it seems to me to have had absolutely fatal results. I hope that no such dire consequences as have followed its introduction in the past will follow it in this case. It seems to have been the means of upsetting two previous Ministries, and I hope it will not have that effect on mine. I can understand that it is very desirable for bakers' employees to have one day or one afternoon's holiday in the month. I do not intend to oppose the Bill; but it occurs to me that some great disadvantages may follow. I can hardly see the necessity for making it absolutely unlawful for any person to deliver bread upon the third Wednesday in every calendar month—"unlawful for any person carrying on the business of a baker or seller of bread to sell or deliver, or employ any person to sell or deliver, bread elsewhere than in the shop or premises of such first-mentioned person." It seems to me that hardship may follow the enactment of so stringent a clause; but as we have an assurance from a member previously engaged in the trade that no such hardship as I anticipate will result, I do not intend to offer any opposition to the Bill.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): I have the greatest possible pleasure in supporting this little measure which has become necessary because of a grievous flaw in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The Arbitration Court has frequently ruled that while it has power to enforce an award by which no employee in the baking trade shall be

employed on the third Wednesday in every month, it has not power under that Act to prevent an employer from delivering bread in person.

MEMBER: He is a free agent.

MR. A. J. WILSON: We are all free agents; but our free agency may rightfully be restricted for the general good of the community; and if we find that one employer is taking an unfair advantage of his position to injure other employers who are desirous of treating their employees reasonably and with justice, it is the duty of fair-minded people, at all events, to see that the person taking such unfair advantage is denied the liberty so to do. The same principle applies to the securing of the small privilege of a Sunday's half-holiday to persons delivering milk. The difficulty is that the bulk of the milk-vendors and the principal suppliers of milk were prepared to concede this necessary boon to their employees; but because a few two-penny-halfpenny vendors of milk drove their own carts and worked up customers, the half-holiday could not be secured.

MR. FOULKES: The medical profession reported against the project.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I know they did; but I can assure the hon. member, in spite of all medical dicta, my own personal experience on this question is that I get milk delivered to me only once on each day of the week, and I find so far as my health is concerned that it has not been endangered in the slightest degree. It is manifestly unfair that if a person employing a number of hands is prevented from supplying his customers, someone else running his own cart may go on that round and poach for the custom. That is not advantageous nor tending to the well-being of business people who desire to be fair to their employees. These employees, as the member for Balkatta has pointed out, are compelled to work on every holiday, the only holidays, practically, they will be able to secure being the 12 days in the year mentioned in the Bill. [**MR. BROWN:** What about the Arbitration Court?] The Court cannot compel an employer to stop delivering his bread. In consequence of the inefficiency of the Arbitration Act, this Bill is necessary to do something for a deserving portion of the community.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): I support this Bill. Drivers in bakers' carts have assured me that the master bakers are perfectly satisfied with it; and that statement has been borne out by the member for Balkatta, who has carried on the business of master baker for many years. The assurance of that hon. member should be sufficient for this House to pass the Bill. The Arbitration Court has no control over the employer to prevent him delivering any commodity, and so the man who does this has a decided advantage over the master baker who employs labour. I think that is ample justification for the Bill. I am right in saying that the drivers of bread carts in Perth will, with the exception of Christmas day, be working through all the pending holidays, when other people are enjoying themselves. Such a state of affairs should be prevented if possible, especially when both masters and men are satisfied with the course adopted in this Bill.

MR. H. BROWN: If both are satisfied, why legislate?

MR. TAYLOR: The necessity for this measure has been clearly demonstrated; because of the employer who drives his own cart.

MR. H. BROWN: He is a free agent.

MR. TAYLOR: We have an Act by which the master employing labour can be dealt with, but not the man who does his own driving. That is the reason for this measure. I have no desire to prolong the debate. Members opposite, with the exception of the member for Perth, seem to appreciate the necessity for the Bill.

MR. W. T. EDDY (Coolgardie): I support this Bill. I think it is only a fair proposition that the man who drives a baker's cart should get a holiday. I am speaking as a master baker and as an employer. The drivers of bakers' carts do not get considerations that men engaged in other trades get. Some may say that this is getting in the thin edge of the wedge, and that it is a dangerous step to take. I do not think so. I think it is only a fair proposition. I am quite sure the majority of master bakers favour the Bill, which will bring both masters and men under the pains of the law.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. FOULKES in the chair; MR. BATH in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 to end—agreed to.

New Clause—Limitation of area:

On motion by MR. BATH, the following was added as Clause 3:—

This Act shall only apply to the district comprised within a radius of 14 miles from the General Post Office, Perth.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

RAILWAY BILLS (3), SPUR LINES.

AS TO PROCEDURE.

MR. SPEAKER: I understand it is the wish of the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister introducing the three Railway Bills, that the Minister should make one speech in reference to these three Orders of the Day. It is a somewhat unusual course, but I take it that it will meet the convenience of members; and if members will have no objection, I am willing to concede that the course may be adopted on this occasion.

MR. TAYLOR: Is it the desire of the House that the one speech of an hon. member shall cover the three Bills?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes. We are dealing with three Bills following in order on the Notice Paper. I understand it is the desire of the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister that the Minister should refer to the three Bills in the same speech. Therefore any member will be at liberty to do likewise. It is an unusual course, and if any member objects, it shall not be adopted. If, however, it is the desire of the House, I am willing to concede that the course may be followed on this occasion, though it is not to form a precedent. The decision on the first Bill will not necessarily bind members in respect to the other two Bills.

MR. HOLMAN: I take it we can speak generally on the whole question, and members will practically agree to the three Bills.

MR. SPEAKER: Exactly.

WAGIN-DUMBLEYUNG RAILWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. Frank Wilson), in moving the second reading, said: I suggested this

arrangement to the Leader of the Opposition to economise time, and I am glad Mr. Speaker has fallen in with the suggestion and that members have agreed to it. The lines referred to have all the one end to serve. They are all classed under what may be termed agricultural railways, and it was my intention, had we gone on with the debate on the Loan Estimates, to have raised a general discussion on the item "Agricultural and Other Railways;" but seeing that we have postponed the Loan Estimates until this evening I thought perhaps it would meet with the approval of members if we discussed the three Bills conjointly. Members will recognise that the Government, in bringing down these Bills, are imbued with the one idea, to assist in the settlement of our agricultural areas, and that we are carrying out the policy laid before the country when the Premier made his policy speech. In nearly every instance the railways described by the Bills were mentioned by the Premier on that occasion; and we are just keeping faith with the country and the House in bringing in the Bills at the earliest possible moment, so that there may be no delay in pushing on with the construction of the works. The Leader of the Opposition the other night threw out a hint that some justification was required for the construction of these lines. I agree with him that there should be justification; and even in the short time at my disposal, hard-worked as I have been in common with other members, I shall be glad to give him some justification at any rate which I hope will be satisfactory to members in this House. We desire to settle agricultural areas, as shown on a plan hanging on the wall of this Chamber, because we know from reports that there are large areas of land upon which settlers are making homes every week, and because we know that the Government possess very large areas of land unalienated which these railways will open up and increase in value and cause to be taken up, settled on, and cultivated. It had not been the custom to the present to call for reports as to the advisability of building railways, until I think the Norseman Railway was brought before the House, when a special committee was appointed to consider the advisability of

constructing that line; but railways have come before Parliament by direct pressure from the public outside or from hon. members. Bills have been passed from time to time for the construction of railways owing to an expression of public opinion and owing to the requirements of the district being prominently and incessantly brought under the notice of the Government and of Parliament. Although I cannot say that I have direct reports saying specifically "We recommend that these lines should be constructed," yet I would refer members to the report of the Royal Commission on Immigration appointed in February last. The members of that Commission were Mr. Chas. Harper, chairman, Mr. Rason, who retired shortly after the Commission was appointed, Mr. Scaddan, Mr. Watts and Mr. Villiers. If members refer to the report they will find in clause 4 that the Commission approached the question as to how best to encourage immigration to Western Australia with a view to increasing land settlement, recognising that the lines upon which they should move were as follow:—

(a) Ascertain what area of lands the State had to offer, suitable for settlement. (b) The capacity of such lands. (c) How best to serve those lands with such transport facilities as are requisite for profitable cereal and other production.

These were the lines on which they set to work to solve the question put to them by Parliament; and later on, they took a lot of evidence upon those points. They divided the State into four sections, and they had the total acreage accurately gauged in each section. They found that in section A, in which these spur lines that we suggest will run, the total area was 35,840,000 acres, of which the State held 27,840,000 acres. The report is most encouraging as to the character of the land. It says in regard to section A—

According to the official estimate, about one third of the State lands in this section is suitable for agricultural purposes. Should experience prove, however, that the application of phosphate to the sand-plain and scrub country will have the effect in general that it has had in particular cases, it is probable that another 9,000,000 acres may be considered as capable of satisfactory wheat production.

This goes to show that the area of land available belonging to the Government is something enormous. Then they went

on to report as to what each section was adapted for producing. They did not take any evidence on land farther than 88 miles north of Guildford along the Midland Railway, the State owning very little land north of that point. They found that in the northern stretch of that section, sheep and cattle were the leading products. Towards the central portion, cattle were displaced by cereals for the second place, and when the Avon basin was reached cereals took first place, with sheep, draught horses, pigs, and cattle well maintained. They found that these conditions were fairly well maintained nearly down to the southern limit of the section; sheep coming into prominence more again south of Katauning. So, from some distance north of Guildford to the south of Katauning, we have country specially adapted for wheat growing. That is the conclusion of the Royal Commission that sat on this matter, so far as the land is concerned. I desire to draw attention to the remarks made in the report with regard to railways. The report says:—

There is nothing more self-evident than that if wheat-growing lands are to be turned to the best account, some other means than that of the farm wagon must be furnished outside the 15-mile radius of a farm. . . . If a man living 20 miles from a railway cannot profitably produce wheat he will not attempt its production, but will endeavour to enlarge his estate for grazing purposes.

They evidently looked upon that with disfavour. Then the report proceeds:—

All considerable areas of agricultural land must have a 15-mile rail service. The result of neglecting to adopt a policy of this nature must be the creation of large holdings. . . . The construction, therefore, of railways through land suitable for cultivation must be recognised as the most powerful factor in securing settlement. Impressed with this truth the Commission has taken a considerable amount of evidence on the question of railway construction, maintenance, and working.

The Commissioner went on to deal with the question of spur railways as against loop lines, and, while I am on the subject of the Royal Commission's report, I may as well remind hon. members of their decision in this respect. They said:—

In view of the enhanced value given to land by the railway, and its consequent effect upon settlement, the Commission is of opinion that after all that has been said, or can be said, against a cheaply-constructed spur line as

compared with the standard loop line, the splendid benefit which would accrue to the State by bringing, for the same capital expenditure, about twice the area of land within the 15-mile limit makes the question of cost of running and maintaining a matter of minor importance. Not only is the larger area made available for settlement, but the system of spur lines renders it possible to serve more thoroughly the belts of good land ending at 30 miles or extending indefinitely, as the nature of the land may warrant. Land settlement to be carried out with the best results to the State and settler alike involves the authorisation of railways wherever the character of the land justifies a line, followed by survey of Crown lands into suitable blocks before selection.

MR. SCADDAN: You are not losing sight of that part of the report.

THE MINISTER: No; that is part of our policy. Then there are the recommendations of the Commission. I need only refer to the second paragraph—

Authorisation of pioneer lines of railways when justified by quality of land.

That is pretty well the essence of the finding of that report upon which sat men who, I believe, are experts in agricultural pursuits, at least some of them. I believe the Chairman (Mr. Harper) is one of the best in the State. Mr. Watts, the late member for Northam, no doubt had a pretty lengthy experience in connection with this matter.

MR. SCADDAN: He had a splendid knowledge of the country as a whole.

THE MINISTER: Other members of the Commission, if not experts in agriculture, had a fair amount of business acumen, and knew what they are talking about when they came to the conclusion on the evidence before them. Therefore, it comes to this, that all we have to do is to show that the quality of the land is suitable for settlement, and then, according to this Royal Commission, we are justified in the construction of these spur lines in order to induce that settlement. It is the nature of the land which is our justification to start with. In passing I may be pardoned for briefly mentioning that the Leader of the Opposition the other night wanted to know whether we were satisfied that these were the proper routes for these lines. He suggested one from Dale Valley to Beverley. If he looks at the map he will see that a railway constructed down that valley would be very near to the main Great Southern

Railway. No part would be more than nine or ten miles away from the Great Southern Railway, and it would be absolutely absurd to attempt to construct a line which would be parallel, at a near distance, to the existing main line. The same thing applies to the suggestion of the member for Greenough (Mr. Stone) that a line should be constructed from Northampton to the Murchison Railway. I believe that any part of the land which would be served by that line is already within twelve miles of an existing line. So that if we are to adopt the view of the Royal Commission in connection with this matter—which is also apparently backed up by expert opinion outside—that the 15-mile radius is the limit for carrying stuff, we shall not adopt the suggestions which those two members have so recently thrown out as being schemes worthy of acceptance rather than the scheme contained in these measures. We can prove that all these three railways which we are projecting—the line from Goomalling to Dowerin, the line from Wagin to Dumbleyung, and the line from Katanning to Kojonup—tap excellent land. [MEMBER: Have you ever been through any of it?] I have recently visited Kojonup, and I can say from ocular demonstration that it is as pretty a bit of country as a man would wish to drive through. I am sure that through the construction of that line large areas of land will be put under cultivation by those who hold them now; and, furthermore, the line will be the means of opening up a large area of land held by the Government beyond the proposed terminus of the line, and will also, I believe, be the means of their having some reserve on which to settle immigrants when we get our immigration scheme at work. But to return to the question of the land available by the construction of these lines, we will take the Goomalling-Dowerin railway first. The distance will be 15 miles, the total area of land served, exclusive of 15 miles served by the existing railway, will be 240,000 acres; and the total area of land alienated is 64,000, leaving available for settlement first, second, and third class land which is not yet classified, 176,000 acres.

MR. BATH: Classification is very important.

THE MINISTER: Yes. It has not been classified yet.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Dowerin area is all open to selection.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The average rainfall is 14 inches per annum. The character of the country is undulating, and does not present any engineering difficulties in the way of obtaining easy grades for construction. The timber is York and salmon gum, gimlet and jam; very easily cleared. The limit of deviation is five miles on either side. The general remarks are:—

The country between Goomalling and Dowerin agricultural areas is being rapidly settled. The soil is splendid and the whole district is one of the finest for wheat and other cereals in the State. Over 8,000 bushels of wheat were carted into Goomalling last year. In places as much as 40 bushels per acre have been obtained. The line should in the near future be extended in a north-easterly direction to Cow Cowing to tap the splendid wheat-growing country in that district, and ultimately the line will probably join the Eastern Railway, near Kellerberrin, the intervening country being nearly all taken up and being settled. The average bushels per acre for the Goomalling district last year was 18. There are about 300 settlers and their families in the district. Line opened July, 1902. Since then, within a 15-mile radius of terminus, 57,258 acres taken up by 168 settlers or families, equalling 340 acres each.

I contend, without labouring the question, that is the class of settler we want, a man who with his family will go on the land and cultivate: not take up thousands of acres that he cannot possibly handle, but smaller blocks, anything up to 340 or perhaps a little over it, and who will get to work on that first and make it payable, and then extend his holding later on. I have some information gathered in regard to the Wagin-Dumbleyung Railway. This is a line proposed to carry about 30 miles in an easterly direction from Wagin, and the total area of land served, exclusive of the 15 miles served by the Great Southern line, is 435,000 acres, including 12,000 in Lake Dumbleyung. The area of land alienated is only 104,500 acres. The area of land available for settlement is 167,500 acres not classified, and 65,000 first class, 45,000 second class, and 41,000 third class. The average rainfall in that district is 15 inches. The country is lightly timbered with white and salmon gum,

also jam; and it is easily cleared. The country is undulating, and presents no engineering difficulties. Easy grades will be obtainable. The limit of deviation is 10 miles on either side, to take the best route to serve great settlement, and open up large tracts of Government land in order that we may get settlement. The general remarks are:—

There are 120 settlers, and line will serve a population of 300. There are over 10,600 acres under crop, 8,100 being wheat, 1,900 acres being hay, and 600 acres being oats. There are over 3,000 acres cleared and ready for burning in March. Settlement is proceeding at a very rapid rate. The soil is excellent, the average yield in bushels per acre of wheat being about 15.

That appears to me to be an excellent report in connection with the proposed line from Wagin out east some 30 miles. Then we come to the other spur line, from Katanning to Kojonup, the length of which is some 28 miles. I have had the same particulars worked out. The total area of land exclusive of 15 miles served by the existing railway is 386,000 acres, and the area of land alienated 305,000 acres, giving an area available for settlement of 40,000 acres of first-class land, 32,000 second-class, and 9,000 third-class. The rainfall is 21 inches. The land is well watered with permanent pools. It is lightly timbered with jarrah, blackboy, red and white gum, and is easily cleared. The country is undulating and presents no engineering difficulties to speak of. The limit of deviation of this line has been put down at five miles on either side in order to serve a great number of settlers on the main line to the best of our ability. The general remarks are:—

Country between Katanning and Kojonup settled by a very large number of practical farmers from South Australia. It is well adapted to intense culture, stock raising and mixed farming. In the Carrolup district the population is fairly heavy, and there would be heavy loading of farming produce. A great number of selections have been taken up along the Balganup River in anticipation of railway communication. To south of Kojonup there are thousands of acres of freehold locked up and unimproved. This railway may ultimately be continued to open up that fine belt of country that lies between Kojonup and the Bridgetown railway. 142 settlers, about 100 of whom have families, holding 130,981 acres as freehold and first-class lands, 61,524 acres as second and third-class. 8,792 acres cleared of that area, of which 2,358 acres are under

wheat, 705 acres under oats, 200 acres under barley, this season. 1,130 horses, 614 cattle, 10,495 sheep, 266 pigs are depasturing on this area. 121 acres are cultivated as orchards and 7,030 acres are ringbarked.

That, I venture to say, gives a very glowing account as to the country between Katanning and Kojonup; and in this connection I would like to point out that when Mr. Muir gave his evidence before the Royal Commission he produced a plan showing his proposals to extend the railway system for future development of agricultural districts, and one of the lines put down is that between Katanning and Kojonup. Another is the line from Wagin to Dumbleyung east. And then there are several others—one from Narrogin, one from Pingelly, and one from Beverley. The two southernmost lines I have mentioned are recommended by Mr. Muir, who has gone all over the country.

MR. BATH: He deals with it only from an engineering point of view. He is not an agricultural expert.

THE MINISTER: Mr. Muir says:—

I have been through to the Collie. I know all this country. It is a very fine piece of country—wheat country: yes, between Williams and the Darkan and Kojonup. I would put a spur line, or light line, from Katanning, picking up Kojonup, and join the Darkan-Williams line again.

That is Mr. Muir's evidence before the Royal Commission. I venture to think that although Mr. Muir is an engineer he has, after many years of experience in going through the country and forming an idea of the best routes to be taken, some knowledge of what is good agricultural land.

MR. BATH: He does not attempt to look at it from that standpoint.

THE MINISTER: I do not know. He has done so.

MR. WALKER: Casual observation.

THE MINISTER: It is sworn evidence before the Royal Commission, in which he states this is very good wheat country. And I think that, backed up by other reports I have referred to, ought to cause members to give some credence to Mr. Muir's statement. It is not necessary for me to refer to the large importation of produce still going on in our State. I have figures here which amaze me, and hon. members can get them I presume from the statistical

records which are published monthly. They show that we imported during the ten months ending 31st October: Horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, etc., £133,458; cheese, £28,336; eggs, £61,041; fresh fruits, £23,281; grain, including flour, bran, etc., £191,480; bacon and ham, £89,833; frozen meats, £48,587; preserved in tins, £69,301; onions, £18,734; potatoes, £87,226; total, £751,277. It follows that anything we can do to open up country which will produce these products, which we want so badly, ought to be done, and it would receive no opposition by members in this Chamber. The benefits would be something enormous to the State, and Mr. Thompson, in giving evidence, referred to the indirect benefit that would accrue, were these lines constructed. He pointed out that they would open up immense tracts of country; some 19,200 acres per mile of line constructed. And then he went on to show that these could settle a great number of people, which meant a big revenue to the State; naturally some £14 or £15 per head, or whatever the taxation is. But this is all stale news. I have no doubt members themselves have worked out such calculations; but we must take these things into consideration. We have not only the direct benefit to the State, but indirect benefit to those making their living out of supplying stores, agricultural implements, and articles of diet; also the clothing of settlers. We have the direct benefit of the revenue which these people will bring to our railway system, and we have what is more important still, the direct benefit of avenues of employment afforded by such people to others who cannot settle themselves upon the land but must look to farmers for employment. It stands to reason that all this must work out to the advantage of the State, and if we can bring these large areas under cultivation and provide resources which these spur lines will provide to evolve a proper immigration scheme such as I think has been referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, and also the member for Kanowna—if we can do all this, we are going to enrich, not only the people who settle on the land, but those who have to do business with them in the directions which I have indicated. Let me briefly touch

upon a controversy which has been waging between certain experts in connection with the class of railway to be constructed if these lines are built; that is the loop line *versus* the spur line. I need hardly say that the Royal Commission, as I have mentioned, prefer the spur line. I want to give just a few reasons why spur lines should be adopted in place of loop lines:—

1. Spurs can be located in the best position to tap good land, whereas the long loop from its nature must, owing to good land being in discontinuous areas, pass through stretches of poor and unprofitable country.

I think that will be obvious to members.

2. To open up equal areas of good land spurs are cheaper to build than loop lines, owing to the fact that less length of road need be constructed, and water supplies may be obtained from the main line.

3. Spurs act as feeders to the main trunk lines, and although they may not be directly payable at first, they indirectly add to the traffic on the main line, whereas the tendency of a loop may be to divert some of the traffic from the main road.

By making a long loop line, you are, I think, constructing another main line to compete with your main service. The object, I take it, is always to feed the existing main line to its full capacity, by lines serving as feeders, before constructing anything in competition with it:—

4. Spur lines may be constructed with steeper grades, and so more closely follow the contour of the country, as only the spur is thus affected by the bad grade, whereas the loop should have easy grades, as one bad grade spoils a road, and long loops have a tendency to become practically main trunk roads.

5. Spurs are capable of indefinite extension following along a line of good country—shortly put, spurs are more elastic than long loops.

6. Spurs may be constructed when and of such a length as may suit the finances, whereas long loops must be constructed right through, and until they are, they are merely spurs.

7. Spur lines benefit the pioneers of a district, who show the way by taking up country ten or twenty miles from the main line, whereas with the loop these settlers are not better off than they were originally. Spurs benefit the men already settled even within 15 miles of existing line; loops do not.

These are all very sound reasons which I venture to commend to the attention of the House, as to why we should adopt the railway lines we have projected, namely the spur lines. I should like to

go farther and say that, notwithstanding the inclination I have to some extent, and which I have no doubt the Minister for Lands has, to open up new country and to get new settlement, to get rid of more Crown lands, we have a duty to perform to old settlers who have already gone out, irrespective of railway communication, and settled our land. I think it is a bad argument to say that we will not construct a railway because the land is already settled. Where men have had the courage of their convictions, where they have the heart and pluck to go out back away from our railway system and cultivate our lands, thus increasing the profit to the whole community, these men ought to be considered when the time arrives for building spur lines of this description; and I hope the House will agree with me on this point, so that we will not be inclined to refuse the construction of a railway because the land is mainly already settled. With regard to the cost of construction of these lines, if the House passes the Bills, it is proposed that they shall be constructed as cheaply as possible consistent with quality and safety. We do not intend to have any standard railway business about these spur lines. And I may point out at once that when one is constructing lines in relation to the jarrah industry, one generally looks round for something in the shape of cheap second-hand rails, thereby making the cost of production perhaps very much less than it would be under other circumstances. We can construct these spur lines on similar terms and on a somewhat similar specification very much cheaper than ever they have been constructed by a Government before. I have an estimate, and in passing, before I give the figures to the House, I want to point out that the intention is to run the spur lines to follow the contour of the country, to select the country which it will best serve, and not to be too particular about the grades as long as they are workable, or too particular about stations. We do not want any fancy stations, or station-masters, or staff-regulations in connection with these spur lines. [MEMBER: Does not your Railway Act compel them?] No; not as long as the railways are in the hands of anyone but the Commissioner of Railways. I do not think it is necessary for these to be handed

over. The intention is, if I can have my way, that the spur lines shall be run independently of the main railway system; that they shall be run as they are at the present time, one or two of them, in Queensland and elsewhere, and as the timber lines are now run, as feeders to our main lines. I should construct these spurs, if I had good country and good prospects of settlement, as far out as I could reasonably expect a locomotive, with its driver, a fireman, and the guard in charge of the train, to go, making the trip there and back in a day; and I should let that guard be the responsible man, well paid—a man whom you could trust, and who would control the whole of the traffic on the spur line. He would act as general traffic manager, commissioner, and guard all knocked into one. He would occupy the guard's van; he would also issue tickets and pick up the traffic and hand it over, the same as is done in regard to a timber line in this State. If we adopted such a system as that, the work could be carried out for half, if not a third, the cost of running other lines. In regard to the cost, of course engineers must be somewhat conservative in making estimates. They have a reputation at stake. If an engineer once puts an estimate forth, he reckons he is bound by those figures. I would be the last man to press unduly any engineer to go below what he thought a reasonable figure, what he was sure he could do under any given circumstances. But I have asked the Chief Engineer to go into this question on the basis I have just explained to the House, and he gives me an estimate as follows. He says he thinks he can build these light railways for the following: Grading, £160 per mile; fencing he strikes out altogether. I do not mean to say he would not have a fence eventually, but at first there is no necessity. Telephone, £25 per mile; culverts and bridges, £75 per mile; ballast and platelaying, £120 per mile; station buildings, £10 per mile; sleepers, £250 per mile; survey, £25 per mile; land resumption, £10 per mile; rails and fastenings—and in this respect let me remind members that the market has advanced during the last six months—£600 per mile; freights on ditto (185 miles), £1 per ton, £80 per mile. Total for construction, £1,355 per mile. In

addition, there will, of course, be rolling-stock, the locomotive, a guard's van or two, trolleys, to look after the permanent line; and that is put down at a figure which will amply cover it, namely, £300 per mile, making the total cost of equipping these light railways, £1,655 per mile, according to the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief. That seems to be a very cheap proposition in the way of construction. We are not going to be satisfied with this altogether. We know that certain railway contractors have been making big songs about how cheaply they can construct cheap railway lines; and I propose to give them a chance. I am no more wedded to contracts than I am to day labour. I believe in getting the cheapest job for the State as for myself, and if I can get the work done cheaper by day labour, I am not going to give a contract. If I can get the work done cheaper by contract, I would very soon stop day labour. I think that answers the questions put to me by the Leader of the Opposition once or twice to-night. I have outlined the system of control; and I want to say that, in my opinion, these spur lines ought to be run to pay working expenses, interest, and sinking fund; and I think that the people who are living along those lines will be satisfied to pay such reasonable rates as are needed to achieve that desirable end. We will undoubtedly run these lines independently of the main railway system; but whether under some arrangement or under some officer appointed for the purpose need not be discussed at present. They will run independently of the railway system until the traffic is such as to warrant their inclusion in the main system, but I think the settlers ought to be prepared if necessary to pay some slight advance on the present railway rates for the distance hauled. Without going into any very intricate calculation, I have come to the conclusion that it would be a very small advance on the existing rates for the given distance that the settlers would have to pay to return working expenses, interest, and sinking fund. Let me briefly mention a railway run on this principle in Queensland. I have information with regard to the Hughenden-Richmond railway, back from Townsville and Charters Towers. It is 70 miles in length, and was opened

for traffic in June. It was constructed on cheap lines, such as I have indicated. A trial was made of earth packing in lieu of ballast, as I have suggested here. So far, the experiment has been successful. It has been the cheapest line built in Queensland, costing under £1,600 per mile. The result of the experiment will be carefully watched. This coincides with the figures I have given to the House, proving that the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief in connection with the construction of these spur lines can be depended on. The railway is one somewhat on the lines I have indicated, and we find that the expenditure per mile open is £32 as against £227 on the Queensland main line, and £768 on the Western Australian lines. The expenditure per train mile is 2s. 3½d. as against 3s. 6d. on the Queensland main line, and 5s. 1·62d. on the Western Australian lines. The capital expenditure on this line to the 30th June, including rolling stock, was £108,180, and the net revenue has amounted to £3,762. The capital expenditure per train mile to the same date was £1,541, almost identical with the figures I have given before. The percentage of net revenue to capital was £3 9s. 7d., as against £2 7s. 3d. on the Queensland main line, and 4·56 on the Western Australian lines; but the percentage of expenses to earnings was 37·60 as against 62·19 on the Queensland line and 74·28 on the Western Australian lines. That is where the saving comes in, in running such a railway, first constructing it cheaply, and then running it economically, and seeing that those who use the railway pay a reasonable rate which, at any rate, will cover working expenses, interest, and sinking fund. Let me conclude briefly by saying that if the Goomalling Railway were run on the principles I have indicated, I am sure it would pay its way, instead of showing a loss of £3,000 as at present.

MR. HOLMES: Why do you not run it on cheap lines?

THE MINISTER: I cannot very well. It has not been built on cheap lines. Are we to continue marking time and letting the settlers want these railway facilities; or are we to progress? The total cost of these three railways is £136,000, a mere bagatelle. I should think any member would agree that

£136,000 is well spent to open up country such as I have indicated. It will open up 575,000 acres available for land settlement, and in addition it will serve 473,000 acres already taken up. It seems to me that it will take no great effort on the part of members to say, "Yes, we are going to make a start and try to do our best in connection with this land settlement question." We cannot do any great harm, even if the whole thing turns out to be a failure. If we adopt the wrong principle in making spur lines where we ought to make loop lines, it can do no great harm, because spur lines can be turned into loop lines eventually if it is thought desirable. We must open up the country. I have given sufficient reasons why these settlements should be opened up. The Goomalling settlement has proved the necessity for that railway; and surely we have a duty towards these people; and if we need any justification in this connection, I have given it from the report of the Royal Commission, in the quantity and quality of the land to be served, the number of settlers already there to be served, the number of settlers the lines will induce to go on to our land, and in the ultimate direct and indirect benefit they will give to the whole community. I have much pleasure in moving the second reading of this Bill.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): In regard to these three proposals before us, I consider that the circumstances surrounding the introduction of this measure destroy to a large extent the value of the information supplied by the Minister for Works. In the first place, I desire to object most strenuously to the introduction of measures of this kind at this very late stage of the session. We all know the statement made by the Premier in his policy speech, and it was not necessary for the Minister for Works to remind us that it was part of the pronouncement of the policy of the Government on that occasion; but was it part of the pronouncement of the Government policy to say that we are going to introduce these proposals at the tail end of the session, when the languid appearance of members indicates that they are not in a position to give the measures adequate and reasonable consideration? We have heard a great deal about the fact of the present Government having limitations

placed on them owing to the occurrences of the last six months. We make due allowance for the ministerial elections, and the general elections following the dissolution; but the elections took place on the 27th October. I cannot understand the delay, in the first instance, between the elections and the calling together of Parliament; but even if we recognise the necessity for that delay and that the date in November when Parliament was called together was the earliest possible date that could be fixed, still between then and the termination of the session, there was ample time for the introduction of these measures. At the outset we had very little business to go on with; and if the Minister desired these proposals to be discussed on their merits, they should have been amongst the first Bills introduced. The next objection I have to offer is the lack of information with regard to these proposals. I know the Minister for Works has supplied details with regard to the lands selected and the various qualities of these lands, and as to the number of settlers; but the fact remains that if he had taken any other of the proposals submitted to the Minister by various deputations from places along the Great Southern Railway and other parts of the State, they could have supplied him with precisely similar information to give to this House *ad lib*. So far as I am concerned, I am strongly in favour of the construction of light lines of railway. I believe that members of the Opposition if granted a reasonable amount of time for considering the measures, after getting the fullest information in regard to the lines proposed and the claims of the rival routes, would be prepared to give to the Government the necessary support to assist the agricultural industry. At the same time, we would expect that in granting that consideration, the claims of other industries and other parts of the State would be considered. We all recognise that, so far as the future is concerned, agriculture will be the stable industry and the most important one, but we have had the assurance of the Premier in his Budget speech that he regarded the goldmining industry as the most important industry at present. Therefore, I want to know why no provision has been made for

very necessary communication in some of the goldmining districts. In the Governor's Speech during last session we had a proposal for the construction of the Norseman Railway, which was to have been submitted to the House; and if we are to believe the assurances given by members privately, there was a sufficient majority in the Assembly to have carried that proposal. We also found that during the elections capital was made of the question of the construction of the Norseman Railway; and when we claimed credit for our desire to construct that railway, a telegram appeared in some of the goldfields papers that the present Government favoured the construction of the Norseman Railway, and that proposals would be submitted to Parliament for the construction of the line. The information in the first place came from the former member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), who supplied it to a paper in which he is regarded as having an interest or else on which he has a particularly warm journalistic friend; and it was claimed that the Labour party were inimical to the Norseman Railway proposals. Possibly that militated against the candidature of Mr. Hopkins, but there was the assurance that the Government were agreeable to the construction of that railway.

MR. FOULKES: How much would that railway cost?

MR. BATH: The proposals laid on the table provided for three different methods of construction; one on standard gauge, one on a medium between these present proposals and the standard gauge, and one for a light line; and the cost of the last was under £200,000.

MR. FOULKES: More than these three put together.

MR. BATH: I can assure the hon. member that the Norseman district has a bigger claim than these three districts, or a dozen such districts. The success of the efforts of those on the Norseman field has been militated against owing to the fact that, because of its geographical position, it was made the subject of all the hostility of every Government prior to the Labour Government. We have had no reasons advanced why these three districts should have preference over many other districts which have been brought under the attention of Ministers,

and which, I believe, have equal, if not superior, claims to consideration. There are people to the east and south-east of Greenhills. Whatever the Minister may say about the country between Kojonup and Katanning and the country on the eastern side of the Great Southern Railway, there is no better land than that to the east of Greenhills.

THE MINISTER: Have you been over it?

MR. BATH: I had a look over it in company with the late member for York. The land east of Greenhills has been taken up as far as Mount Stirling. Practically the greater portion of it has been selected by the right class of selector. It is one of the best belts of country along the Great Southern Railway; and if any part is entitled to a light railway, that country is. I believe that Dale Valley is one of the best belts of the Great Southern country. It has been selected block to block for a considerable distance, with the exception of a small piece of sandplain; and the men are the right stamp of settlers, and are getting to work on their holdings to the best effect. I had a trip through that country last September, and I must say that it is a shame and a disgrace to see the way in which the district has been treated. Even in the matter of roads, the selectors were handicapped to a considerable degree owing to the fact that it was almost impossible to go anywhere off one or two main roads without bogging or disappearing from sight altogether. The roads have had practically no money spent on them for years past. The Minister has said that if a railway went up that valley, it would be only eight or nine miles from the existing line. That is incorrect. If the Minister will look at the map he will find that when a railway struck this belt of country, it would be considerably over eight and ten miles from the existing line; and the bad nature of the roads makes it imperative that the settlers should have some better provision for transport of their goods, either in the shape of assistance for new roads, or by the construction of light lines of railway. I would like to hear the opinion of the member for Williams, as to the claims of the Wickpin area in his constituency. [HON. F. H. PIESSE: It is not the only area.] I am referring to that fact. These

areas have been left out of consideration altogether. These three proposed lines are not the only necessary lines; and before we enter into any proposals to construct them, the claims of the whole of these districts should be entered into exhaustively, so that members may decide as to the best claims of the respective districts. It seems to me that, so far as these matters are concerned, silence is golden. We seldom hear from the member for Williams; yet among the proposals submitted is the construction of a railway from Wagin to Dumbleyung. [MR. COWCHER: Deeds are better than words.] I have read the reports of the lands officers, and they are not one bit more eulogistic of the one district than of the others. We want to know what justification there can possibly be for the construction of these railways out of loan moneys; because if we look into the experience not only of this State but of other States, we find that spur lines have always been unprofitable and a burden to the people of the State. We lose on the Goomalling Railway £3,000 yearly. I would like to know how much is being lost on the present Greenhills line. The Minister believes that if these railways are constructed on the lines suggested by him, they will pay working expenses, interest and sinking fund. That is a most absurd proposition to place before members of a deliberative Assembly. Can the Minister furnish us with a return to show that the Great Southern Railway pays working expenses, interest and sinking fund? I do not believe it pays interest on the money spent on the line, after allowing for working expenses, let alone making any provision for sinking fund. If this great trunk line is not doing so, how can he possibly expect these spur lines, which are going to be extended into country not developed to the same extent, to pay anything like interest and sinking fund? Some years ago in Victoria, they embarked on a policy of constructing spur lines, with disastrous results to the finances of the State; and during the last year or two they have had to close up some of those railways, owing to their unprofitable nature. If we are to carry out the same experience in Western Australia, it will not only involve the expenditure of money from Loan Funds, but also the payment of a large sum

annually out of revenue to make up the loss sustained.

MR. EWING: They will open up the country.

MR. BATH: Before we can hope to spend money with any justification on lines of this description, our efforts should be devoted to open up the country we have already on our existing lines. Time and again it has been urged that efforts should be made to open up for cultivation the areas alongside existing lines, and we have only to refer to the statement of the Minister for Lands that out of 11 million acres of land alienated, only 3 per cent. is under cultivation. I believe we should approach this question with greater security and justification for the future if we devoted our energy and attention to devising some means to bring under cultivation the lands along the existing lines of railway and already served by unprofitable railways which we could hope to make profitable, rather than spending money on railways to open up new areas of country. The Minister states that he is not going to make the spur lines on standard methods, and that he is going to run them on a very economical basis. We like to hear the Minister's intentions in this regard, to know he is going to run them on such an economical basis, and that he is going to have a gentleman who will be a commissioner, traffic manager, district superintendent, guard, porter, and everything else; that he is going to have no elaborate provision, that the trains will only run when necessary, and in every direction the greatest economy is going to be exercised. But does that hon. gentleman think he will ever be able to resist the influence brought to bear by the members of the district, the local authorities, and the persons along that line to have more and more facilities granted? That is just the position pointed out, I think, by the Commissioner of Railways in dealing with the standard cost of our existing railway system. And I presume that, although he does not deign to oblige us with his reasons, that is one of the reasons actuating him in his preference for loop lines over spur lines. And that is another question which I think should be settled, and settled definitely, before this House consents to devote any money or consents to a Bill which provides for

the construction of any one of these railways. We should have the matter definitely settled. We should have the report of the Commissioner of Railways; not only a bald statement appearing in his annual report, but his reasons and the opinions of officers under him as to the arguments which guided them in saying that a loop line is preferable to spur railways. On the other hand we have the reports given by the various engineers and the owners of private railways and tramways who have declared they were in favour of spur lines and in favour of low cost of construction. The question should be threshed out, and threshed out satisfactorily, before we are asked to embark upon a policy which will commit us to the construction of spur railways to the exclusion of the loop lines. Then again the Minister assured us that in his attempt to make these lines profitable, in his attempt to make them pay working expenses and some provision for sinking fund, he will expect the settlers along the railway to pay a little more for the carriage of their goods, and that he will insist on higher rates on those spur lines than are charged on existing lines of railway. We all know the influences brought to bear with regard to the periodical revision of the rate book. We all know that when an attempt was made to carry out the Federal compact and abolish preferential railway rates in Western Australia deputation after deputation waited on the Minister to try and have some of those retained, and we know the influence that will be brought to bear by members of local bodies in those districts, if higher rates are charged, to have those rates reduced. We all know what the result of that influence will be. We know that first in regard to the conveniences of this railway and afterwards on the question of rates it will be the Minister who will give away, and it will be the people who will win all along the line, irrespective of whether the interests of the State are considered or the lines pay. We always have statistics trotted out on occasions of this kind, when propositions for railway construction are put before us or when it is a question of expending money in our agricultural industry, as to the amount of food-stuffs which we import. We are told of thousands of dozens of eggs; we are told

of bacon, flour and other commodities; but I ask members if half or a quarter of the land along our existing lines of railway were placed under cultivation, would we not be able to meet the local demands of our present population? I say that we would have produce to export; therefore, so far as any justification for these spur lines is concerned, that argument has absolutely no weight whatever. When the hon. gentleman found it difficult to advance any sound arguments in favour of these proposals he had to fall back on the good old cry of indirect benefit. We are always treated with that same old argument. Whenever it comes to a question of a sound financial policy we must console ourselves, if we are not making adequate provision, by looking to the indirect benefit. So in regard to lines which must be unprofitable for many years to come, we are assured we must console ourselves with indirect benefits that are to accrue. I like to see those propositions put down in cold print. I like to see some definite statement on the indirect benefits, and some financial computation as to the amount those indirect benefits would bring to the State, if calculated in pounds, shillings and pence. I think that in future when we are treated to this sort of thing, when this attitude is trotted out as it has been in this House, we should have more definite information, and be treated to some information in regard to pounds, shillings and pence rather than a mere mass of verbiage and optimism as to the future prospects of these proposals. There is another question. We have been told of the low cost of private lines of railway and wood tramways in this State; but I want to know whether the Minister for Works will be able to get away from the liability which rests upon him in the case of accidents on the lines. That is a question which has to be taken into consideration. The people who build these tramways have not this liability facing them. The result is that their construction can be carried out at much less cost, because they have not the same responsibility. I presume passengers will be carried along this line, and that if the line be not fenced there will be liability of injury to stock which stray on the line. These are

matters which must be borne in mind when the capital cost of the line is being considered. We have at least to embark on an initial cost of the railway which will make it a safe proposition, and not involve us in accidents. That consideration has to be entered into in any comparison between our proposals for light railways and the information supplied to us by those who own those private tramways in Western Australia and elsewhere. Then we are told by the Minister for Works in regard to this that he is going to settle the controversy between the gentlemen who have been writing about the question in the papers, and who have given evidence before the Royal Commission on Immigration, by giving them an opportunity of constructing these propositions by contract. I have pointed out already that the figures they advance and the figures proposed by the Minister cannot be taken as a basis of comparison unless we have like circumstances entering into such consideration, and unless we allow for the liability for accidents which the Government would be under. In regard to day labour and contract, we have challenged the Minister for Works to bring forward any definite facts and figures to prove that construction by day labour in this State has been more expensive than construction by contract. I have seen it stated in the Press and have heard it said that the construction of the Jandakot Railway has been expensive under day labour. But I want to point out that the nature of that construction has made it expensive. I understand that before the matter was embarked upon an estimate was obtained from a private contractor as to what would be the tender for the railway, and that it was above the actual cost of the railway by day labour. Then we have the superiority of day labour over contract, and in that direction we can point to the erection of the hospital for the insane at Claremont and other works by day labour for the twelve months ending June, 1905. I challenge the Minister for Works to produce any figures to show that day labour has been more expensive. On the other hand I am confident that the cost of construction of that hospital for the insane has been less under day labour, and they have infinitely a better

job. I believe that whatever may be the proposals in regard to these light lines of railway, if they were constructed under proper and adequate supervision they could be constructed cheaper under day labour than contract. I am not one who will support any proposal that, just for the sake of enabling certain people to try to prove the views they expressed before the Immigration Commission are correct, those gentlemen should be allowed to undertake the construction of these railways by contract. We are told that the total cost of the construction of these three lines will be only £136,000. We are asked to regard that as a very small sum. If we had a few more millions of revenue yearly with the same annual expenditure as at present, one might be disposed to regard that as a small amount; but when we know there is a deficit of £132,000, or a possible deficit of that amount at the least facing us, when we know that our revenue is not increasing, when we recognise above all things that the Treasurer has made absolutely no provision for an increase of revenue by means of taxation, and when we also recognise and remember that during the forthcoming year our interest and sinking fund bill will increase and will eat up a greater percentage of revenue than previously, we must consider this £136,000 as a very large amount to add to our indebtedness. I believe that these lines must be unprofitable for many years to come, and that there are other propositions which have not received adequate consideration and which have a prior claim. I most unhesitatingly and emphatically declare my opposition to the proposals which have been submitted to us. I can quite understand that if the Minister for Works had come before us and said, "We are desirous of making an experiment in this direction; hon. members on both sides of the House have declared time and time again in favour of light lines of railway; it has been generally accepted that this is an acceptable proposal, and one which would assist materially in our agricultural development without making the capital cost of these railways very expensive," if he had submitted a proposal for one of these railways, the one he considered most advantageous, then members on this

(Opposition) side of the House would have been prepared to give the proposal reasonable and adequate consideration; but I consider that in view of the lateness of the session, and as we propose to finish on Saturday and these proposals were only introduced to us on Thursday, it is absurd and unreasonable for members on either side of the House to give their concurrence to these proposals. I believe that of the three proposals, the one for a line from Katanning to Kojoonup is the one most entitled to consideration, because it is not a spur line starting anywhere and ending nowhere, but it must go through a magnificent belt of country towards Bridgetown, and would ultimately resolve itself into a loop line. It would go through a belt of country which would lend itself to intense culture, and it would mean a considerable amount of traffic all the year round instead of just during the wheat season and little traffic at other times. That proposition would have received reasonable consideration from the House; but as we have three proposals submitted to us, it is absolutely unreasonable to ask the House to give consent to them, and I shall give my most uncompromising opposition to the proposal.

MR. J. J. HOLMES (East Fremantle): At this stage, if I knew which of the proposed lines was the most worthy of support, I would be prepared, on the limited data supplied, to support one of them. The difficulty which presents itself to me at the present time is that we have a proposal for the consideration of three agricultural lines and practically no data have been supplied. It is too much, I think, to ask members at this late stage—only about 48 hours before the session closes—to pass three Railway Bills as suggested by the Minister this afternoon. I would be quite prepared at the present stage to support one as an experiment if the proper data were available; and would be prepared to go even farther than that. The first difficulty that presents itself is whether these lines are being proposed in the most suitable localities and the most profitable to the State. Another question that presents itself to me is as to whether a spur line or a loop line is desirable. Again and again we have the Public Works Department recommending the spur line, and

the Railway Department, which ought to know, recommending a loop line. I was not here when the Minister opened his address, but my friend took some notes for me. Perhaps the Minister has found that he did not supply the data I required. First of all I want to know the quantity of land alienated. It is, I believe, 64,000 acres. Then I am told by the Minister for Lands that only 3 per cent. of the land alienated has been under cultivation. If 64,000 acres have been alienated, I presume on those figures that 1,920 acres have been brought under cultivation. That is the only data I have upon which to go; it is the only data upon which to decide whether these lines are desirable or not—the statement by the Minister for Works that 64,000 acres of land have been alienated, and the statement by the Minister for Lands that only 3 per cent. of the land has been under cultivation. [THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I said throughout the State.] It is only reasonable to assume that where the railways have been constructed most of the cultivation has taken place, [THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It does not necessarily follow.] This railway is proposed to be sent into an area which is not served by the present railway and cannot be brought into cultivation profitably by the present railway. We are safe in assuming that no cultivation has taken place in that locality. Assuming the land has not been cultivated, the question arises as to who owns it. Has it been bought or held for speculative purposes, or is it held by legitimate people who will settle on the land when the railway comes? Do they propose to make the provision which we insisted on three years ago? Members will remember that when it was proposed to construct the Collie-Narrogin Railway and the Fremantle-Jandakot Railway provision was made that the Government should resume land at its cost before the railway was constructed, but not afterwards. [MR. BATH: They have not carried out their promise.] They have not carried out their promise. [THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The land is reserved there now at the present time.] Usually when we have dealt with railway construction we have dealt with it under a Bill. Has a Bill been brought down giving the Government the right to

purchase at the value of the land before the construction of the lines? [MR. BATH: Yes; that is right.] Then I am satisfied on that point. The length of these railways is to be 30 miles, approximately. [MR. TAYLOR: Seventy in all.] An average of about 23. The railways would go over 15 miles where country is already served. [MR. SCADDAN: But there will be 15 miles at the other end, so that there will be 30 miles served all the same.] But if you had a loop line going thirty miles, and continued fifty, sixty, or a hundred miles, and junctioning again, it would open up fresh land altogether. [MR. SCADDAN: It would not open up anything like the same area per mile of railway.] We can have different opinions. [MR. SCADDAN: That is the engineer's report.] My experience of some engineers is that they can report as instructed. If they are instructed that the policy of the Government lies in a certain direction, in nine cases out of ten the report can be brought into line. The quality of the land to be served by these lines is worthy of consideration. It is the duty of members of this House to inspect personally a proposal of this kind. Some of us have a fair knowledge of what good land is, and of how agricultural settlement should be proceeded with. We are given free passes over the railway in order that we may travel all over the country and see its requirements, and the localities where proposals are to be given effect to. When a proposal is introduced into Parliament one day and becomes law the next, we have very little opportunity of inspection. The item of construction is a small one at present; £1,600 a mile or something of that kind; but we have been left in a fool's paradise in connection with the railways from the very start. When railways were built 10 or 15 years ago, the capital cost was very little. It was a mere cypher compared with the capital cost in the Eastern States. What do we find now? We find year after year improvements for opened railways, and so the capital cost is increasing, and so the capital cost of these railways will increase. Then we are told the railway will be controlled by some one; I do not know whom. We cannot find a gentleman at the present time to control the railways on similar

lines. [MR. BOLTON: The Minister is very careful not to discuss that point.] If we can run these railways on economical lines as suggested by the Minister, I suggest we set about running existing lines on a somewhat more economical basis than we have at the present time.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is a difference between spur lines and main lines.

MR. HOLMES: To my mind a proper proposal would be, instead of sending out spur lines to the stump of a gum tree, to connect say the South-Western Railway with the Great Southern line, and bring in that enormous agricultural area lying between the South-Western Railway and the Great Southern Railway. [MR. EWING: That is the idea with regard to one of these lines.] The idea of one of these lines, beginning at the wrong end. When settlement takes place and these people improve their holdings they have to connect with their port of export or centre of population—Perth, Fremantle, or the goldfields. The centre of population is the centre of consumption. Fremantle is the port of export. Traffic is hauled back to the Great Southern Railway, and from the Great Southern Railway to Beverley, and from Beverley to Perth and back to Fremantle. We have already one spur line from Fremantle, but it is not much good. I contended that such would be the case. At the time the agitation commenced I quarrelled with the settlers in Jandakot. In fact there were times when I was afraid to visit the locality, because I told them there was no need for the railway. I am more convinced to-day of the correctness of my argument. Do something with that line, and do not leave it unfinished and a white elephant as it is to-day. The only justification for the construction of the Jandakot Railway was to bring the long-distance traffic to the port of export or the centre of consumption by the shortest route; and the difference in the route from Mundijong to Fremantle direct as against Mundijong via Perth to Fremantle is 21 miles. [MR. TAYLOR: In what distance?] About 42 miles. The railway was constructed for the first eight miles, and we left the balance of 10 miles to Armadale and 14 miles to Mundijong. Because there is a difference of opinion as to which is the right

route to take, the matter has been quietly dropped. [MR. BOLTON: Is there not a difference of opinion with regard to these routes?] I presume there is; but there will not be very much time for discussion. The only justification for the connection between Fremantle and the South-Western Railway was a saving of 21 miles. If we junction at Armadale instead of Mundijong we only save 14 miles. [MR. WALKER: And go through better country.] We do away with one-third of the advantage to be derived from connection, the distance saved being 21 miles in the case of junction at Mundijong, and 14 miles in the case of junction at Armadale.

At 6-30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.
At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. HOLMES (continuing): When we adjourned, the member for Kanowna interjected that the land between Forrest Hall and Armadale was superior to the land between Forrest Hall and Mundijong. I do not admit that for one moment; but I desire to point out to the hon. member that the distance between Forrest Hall and Armadale is only 10 miles.

MR. DIAMOND: On a point of order, we are not discussing the Jandakot Railway extension, and we are not discussing spur lines, but we are discussing the three agricultural railway lines before the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine himself to these three railways. By way of comparison he may refer to other railways.

MR. HOLMES: We are discussing spur lines. I maintain that the Jandakot Railway is a spur line. It is only about 10 miles from Forrest Hall to Armadale, so that a man at any point between the two places cannot be more than five miles from a railway; and if we are to bring a railway within five miles of every settler we are doing well; but I maintain the Jandakot settler is not to be taken into consideration in this question at all. It is the duty of the Government to connect the channels of consumption with the port direct by means of a railway from Fremantle to the South-Western Railway, and then again from the South-Western Railway to the Great

Southern Railway. Now, instead of a permanent scheme, we have off-shoots from present railways, which amount to nothing more than bush tracks upon which our annual expenditure will be continually increasing. The member for Collie interjected that the Katanning-Kojonup line would ultimately be a connection between the South-Western and Great Southern Railways. I deny that. A railway connecting the two trunk lines must be put down on standardised conditions. I think it is the duty of the Government to find out what land is available for agricultural purposes along any proposed connecting line from the Great Southern to the South-Western Railway, and to cease to alienate it until a definite route is decided on. Also we might adopt a similar system to that followed in Argentina. There, I believe, they reserve a large area; and then the Government construct a railway through it and alienate alternate blocks. Next they give the opportunity to those who take up the land to work on the adjoining reserved blocks and improve them, after which the settlers return to their own homesteads and work. By this system the whole country is improved and the money paid by the Government to improve the alternate reserves is added to the capital cost of the land; but settlers are able to go straight on to it and commence agricultural development immediately. If a railway were to be put through from the South-Western Railway to the Great Southern Railway, a somewhat similar scheme should be decided on. In this way we could give those looking for employment an opportunity to take up holdings and earn cash on the reserved blocks, and we would also provide farms ready for tilling for people coming here to settle. But before we adopt any scheme such as that, something should be done towards the compulsory improvement of lands along existing railways. The Minister for Lands is credited with the statement that only 3 per cent. of our alienated land is under cultivation. When we travel over our railways and see the huge areas lying idle, we must come to the conclusion that something should be done. There are no greater sinners in this respect than the residents in the Sussex electorate. I paid a visit to that district a few weeks ago—it was my first visit to the famous

locality; and I saw large areas of land there which I did not think we owned in this State, capable of producing anything, and land which had been cleared and fenced 50 years ago, now with its fences down and practically gone back to its former condition. This land is now over-run with scrub, and the present occupants sit down doing nothing. There we have land capable of yielding anything, alongside a railway built for 15 years, and we could easily compel some of these people to cultivate it and in this way increase settlement without having to go in for a scheme of spur lines as suggested. In connection with the Railway Department's report, there is a grave omission. Hitherto the Commissioner has shown the actual results of the working of each line. To my surprise now I find that the whole of the railway service has been lumped in the report, so that it is impossible to get at the actual figures. I hope the Minister will see the necessity of keeping the lines separate, especially these new lines which are to be run on different conditions and to be an example to existing lines as to how railways should be run—at least I can come to no other conclusion from the remarks of the Minister to-day. I realise that upon the settlement of the land depends the welfare and success of this State, but I am afraid that at this stage I cannot see my way to support any of these three Bills.

On motion by MR. FOULKES, debate adjourned.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1905-6.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

General discussion resumed (after the short suspension); MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair.

MR. BATH was pleased that the Treasurer had no idea of bringing down a Loan Bill for fresh authorisation at this stage of the session. He believed the Treasurer was wise, because the balance of loan money for expenditure was considerable, and because it was not advisable that our loan authorisation for one year should be much over £500,000. The Treasurer in the course of his remarks had made a reference to some criticisms from the Opposition side of the House in regard to the relative standing of our stocks in London under

this Administration and under the preceding Government. He (Mr. Bath) had been under the impression that it was the member for Guildford, when Leader of the Opposition, who had made comparisons last session between the relative position of our stocks in the London market under the James Government and under the Labour Government, and it was only reasonable that the present Opposition should have the opportunity to produce figures which showed the position of affairs. Other causes beside the fact of such and such a party being in power operated in determining the price of our stocks, such a cause, for instance, as the Russian-Japanese war; and if in the course of his remarks he had made reference to the fact that when the Labour Government were defeated and the present Administration succeeded there was a slight reduction, and that when the result of the elections, confirming the member for Guildford in his position, became known there was then another reduction in the price of stocks, he (Mr. Bath) was merely using an argument that was often used in this Chamber, the *tu quoque* argument in which the Treasurer was such an expert when the occasion demanded. We proposed to expend out of Loan Funds a sum of £17,000 upon roads and bridges. If he were so inclined he would have no difficulty in referring to speeches of the Treasurer in which the Treasurer had repeatedly urged that our sound financial position was due to the fact that we had avoided the pitfalls of many Treasurers in the Eastern States by not spending money out of Loan Funds on roads and bridges and on the erection of public buildings, which could not be regarded as reproductive works. During the debate on the Revenue Estimates, he (Mr. Bath) had pointed out there was a good deal of vagueness about what we considered reproductive works, and he had quoted Mr. Gardiner's remarks in which that gentleman had plainly indicated that works were reproductive only when they would provide working expenses and interest and some contribution to sinking fund. We could not hope that any expenditure on roads and bridges would have that effect; and whatever might be the condition of the finances and the demand for expenditure

in this direction, the right course to be taken by one desirous of maintaining our prestige on the loan market was that, rather than carry out these works from loan, we should look to fresh taxation to provide the necessary funds. The hon. gentleman would have earned a far greater reputation in financial circles if that had been the remedy suggested.

THE TREASURER: That could not be done in five minutes.

MR. BATH: At least the hon. member could have given an idea of his intention to adopt that course. It was not so much the fact that it was not done at once, as the fact that some honest intention should be expressed on the desirability of this step and of an intention to do it in the future, that was appreciated. With regard to railways and the vote from loan for additions and improvements, reference to the report of the Commissioner showed that many of these items were not provided out of loan moneys. It was difficult to know how the Commissioner discriminated in the two items of "additions and improvements from loan moneys" and "additions and improvements from revenue." They were of a similar nature. The items were almost identical. We should have some definite pronouncement in this direction before we handed over the money to the Commissioner to spend. The better way would be to have the work carried out by the Public Works Department, over which the Minister was responsible, and so allow the vote to be controlled by Parliament through the Minister after some definite pronouncement had been made as to how it was to be spent. We were all inclined to exaggerate the powers enjoyed by the Commissioner of Railways; but there were opportunities for the Minister to exercise control even over these moneys and in the matter of having some definite understanding. With regard to the expenditure, he (Mr. Bath) regretted that the report of the Auditor General was not available to members. When an officer was appointed under this House to control the finances of the State and to exercise professional control over the financial position and operations of the different departments, we should at least have his annual report before we went into recess. The absence of the report

prevented members from dealing with the departments as they would like to do. When Parliament met earlier, the necessity of having this report laid before members earlier should be impressed on the Auditor General. In addition to the items "Roads and Bridges" and "Public Buildings," we found an item for "Agricultural Immigration." This item had been placed on the Loan Estimates last year, but it was not for him to justify that step. It was essentially a vote that should come from revenue; and the only argument that could be adduced as to its reproductive nature was that it had an indirect benefit on the development of the State; but that could not be so completely expressed as to justify the insertion of the item on Loan Estimates, when the rules for the guidance of our Treasurers prescribed that before loan expenditure was embarked on the work should be of a reproductive nature. We could well afford to find the necessary sum from revenue. In fact we should endeavour to do so, and we would be protecting the interests of the community in so doing.

MR. KEENAN: It was not sufficient excuse for one to advance, that a similar step had been taken by other parties. Instead of finding some justifiable reason for charging to loan, expenditure in connection with roads and bridges and public buildings, and the rabbit-proof fence, the only argument put forward was that preceding Governments had done it. If it was wrong before, it was not less wrong because others had done it. Surely a Minister who wished to gain a position of greater respect than his predecessors would take the opportunity to correct a mistake made by others. It was lamentable that the House and country should be asked to be patient in a course of conduct admitted to be wrong, merely because it was in accordance with precedence. He hoped that there would be some man strong enough to resist the example of an evil precedent. At the last election it was made a distinct charge against the Labour Government that they constructed rabbit-proof fencing out of loan moneys. He (Mr. Keenan) had legitimately used it as an argument. He looked upon it as absolutely unwarrantable, and he was able to point out that the James Government had always in-

sisted on the expenditure for the rabbit-proof fence being made out of revenue. [MR. SCADDAN: And they had to build two fences in consequence.] If we had to build half a-dozen fences it did not justify charging the expenditure to Loan Funds. The charge had very properly been brought against the Daglish Government that, having come into office to find that their predecessors had done the work out of revenue, for the purpose of making the ledger balance they then turned to loan moneys to carry out the work; but it scarcely lay in the mouth of any man who had condemned that attitude to now defend the expenditure of loan moneys on the work. For that reason he dissented from the use of loan moneys for the rabbit-proof fence. If the revenue was unable to provide funds for this work, it seemed to him that we should have a very legitimate claim on those who derived advantage from the construction of the fence to make some contribution towards the work. If such a proposal had been made, not on drastic lines but on sensible lines, we might not be called upon to pay for the construction of the fence out of Loan Funds. Irrelevant matter had been introduced in this discussion in regard to the price of our stocks. Apart from the effect on the money market of complications among the great Powers, and apart from the fact that gold was at a high price when Mr. Daglish was in power, we all knew that Western Australian stocks were held by a certain crowd of jobbers who unloaded when the opportunity offered, and who were sometimes obliged to unload for reasons entirely foreign to what was transpiring in Western Australia in order to replenish their purses from whatever was saleable. For the same reason we found drops in the prices of almost all the stocks of the Australian States. The Treasurer was correct in saying it was utterly useless to draw any deductions from the fluctuations in regard to stock, and that they were wholly apart from the change of Government in this State. There was one matter in the Loan Estimates he felt bound to refer to, and of course there would be the usual gibe that it was only because he happened to represent a goldfields constituency. That was the provision made for sewerage for

Perth and Fremantle. He would like to know whether any definite scheme for carrying out this work had been formed, and if it included any repayment to the State of the moneys advanced by the State for the purpose. It was a matter of common knowledge that the sewerage of towns in every part of the British Empire, with the exception of some few favoured localities in Australia, was carried out by the municipalities or local bodies themselves. If the State carried out this work, it should certainly have a provision made and entered into before the work was carried out that there should be some form of repayment. [Interjection.] His friend reminded him that they had water on the goldfields; but there had been a water supply here in Perth; and he thought the Coolgardie Water Scheme was earning more than interest, and a fair amount towards the reduction of capital. He understood that no such compact as he referred to existed. Approximately £142,000 was shown to have been made available, of which a certain sum had been spent, and the House would be entitled to ask for the conditions under which that sum had been made available; also whether it had been made available in the form of a loan or advance or gift. [MR. H. BROWN: The greater portion was appropriated to the Fremantle Harbour Works.] Money spent by the State should be used to the best advantage, and in a way best calculated for it to come back to the pockets of the State. He regretted extremely that part of the funds was spent in a direction admitted not to be proper and just; but there was a desire that it should be looked upon with a certain amount of toleration because others had acted in this way in past years.

MR. LYNCH: In relation to public buildings that had been erected in this State from loan moneys, according to the statement of the Colonial Treasurer, a sum of £300,000 odd had been spent, but according to the *Statistical Register* for October £63,000 had been spent since the time when white men first set foot on these shores. [THE TREASURER: That was wrong.] He supposed the Treasurer would have an ample explanation; but the statement was made that the amount was £63,000, yet now we had a proposal to spend £70,000 from loan funds for

one purpose alone. He had no desire to intensify that agony of feeling which must exist on the Treasury benches when Ministers heard of their inconsistency, and compared their attitude now with their attitude last year. One would naturally have expected some indications of a justifiable willingness to resort to the exploitation of resource of revenue which was resorted to in other States, in order that the deficit of £132,000 might be wiped out within 12 months. Whilst he did not justify the methods of the last Administration in setting certain works on loan expenditure, he wished it to be understood that it was the only possible course under the circumstances, and that the present occupants of the Ministerial benches should at least have the common generosity to acknowledge they were wrong on that occasion. In regard to the money-lenders, the angle of declension towards them was so obtuse that the Government were almost falling over them to sustain themselves this time 12 months. It was time this young country learned to lean upon itself. If we were to lean upon the foreign money-lenders to get funds for building our roads, hospitals, and other public buildings, and to make our roads and bridges, was it not a fair proposition to let them have some share in the franchise? He would not go so far as to say some share of representation in the Cabinet, because he thought they had a large share of representation there already. He hoped that the interjection by the Premier, that he could not do everything in five minutes, was a happyomen that in recess he would recognise the wisdom and necessity of resorting to and tax and income tax, which would enable the national balance-sheet to be squared, as well as bring into legitimate use those large areas of land which were at present being shepherd.

MR. COLLIER strongly protested against the vicious proposition to spend £70,000 out of loan money. This was nothing short of placing posterity in pawn. We had been told during the course of the Budget Speech that the State was in a very prosperous condition, that it had produced gold to the value of 1 millions, that it was paying dividends to the value of two millions annually; and yet in the face of this prosperity we found this miserable pettifogging system

of erecting bridges and public buildings out of loan money. He regarded it as an utter disgrace. This Napoleon of Guildford, who told the State he was going to restore stable Government and who was held up as the strong man who was going to relieve the country of its difficulty, had turned out to be a lath painted to look like iron. In regard to the sewerage system, every town of which he had knowledge had been prepared to do its own work in this direction. In Melbourne people were paying a 9d. rate.

MR. H. BROWN: Perth was prepared to be rated higher than that.

MR. DIAMOND: The whole of the works in Melbourne were paid for by borrowed money.

MR. COLLIER: But paid for by the people who had the privileges.

MR. PRICE: Such would be the case here.

MR. COLLIER also protested against the expenditure on the rabbit-proof fence out of Loan Funds. In the Eastern States this method had been an absolute failure. [MR. HORAN: Experts differed.] The majority of opinion was that the system had been a failure. In New South Wales rabbits were on both sides of the fence. He had been through New South Wales, and knew the rabbit-proof fence. The money spent on it had been literally thrown away. [MR. HOLMES: New South Wales had the rabbits first and the fence afterwards.] Even if rabbit-proof fencing were a successful method of preventing the incursion of rabbits, the charge would be a legitimate one to come out of revenue and not out of loan.

MR. HORAN protested against the introduction of Estimates at so late a period of the year. Members were obliged to pass Estimates of this character without having sufficient time to consider them. Of course from a cursory glance one saw that many things were debited against Loan Funds which certainly should come out of revenue. He hoped the Premier would look into the business and reorganise the system of working, and not charge to loan things that should come out of revenue.

MR. HOLMAN: The Premier had remarked that he (Mr. Holman) was always strong on the point that labour

was opposed to capital. That idea was altogether wrong. On no occasion had he opposed capital coming to Western Australia, but what he did strongly object to was that although capital at the present time was not coming here, a considerable amount was going out by way of dividends and other things, including interest on borrowed money. When these Loan Estimates came down, we were asked, in spite of the fact that millions of money were going out of Western Australia, to construct roads, bridges and public buildings out of loan funds. If the present Government were prepared to carry out the policy of the previous Government, why did they not support the previous Government? As to Western Australian stocks, he had quoted the Premier's own remarks when on this (Opposition) side of the House, in his speech against the Budget Statement of the then Treasurer, Mr. Daglish. The hon. member said :—

The Treasurer, amongst other things, was good enough to say, in regard to the price of Western Australian stocks, and I am very much surprised indeed that he had the courage to make the statement he did :—

"Changes of Government seem not to operate, although interested persons sometimes seek political capital by a contrary assertion. I was careful to watch the market operations in Western Australian stocks in August last for the purpose of settling that question, and the result of my observations was to show that no variation occurred."

I say with all respect, I am afraid the Treasurer's powers of observation are somewhat limited; for I find in dealing with a reference to colonial stocks, dated London, August 5 . . .

The hon. member went on to quote various prices to show that the mere fact of a Labour Government taking office caused prices to fall. He (Mr. Holman) strongly objected to the construction of roads, bridges, and public buildings out of loan, and also to a largely increased expenditure from loan funds for constructing works which last year were done out of revenue.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Whilst the country had been led to believe that the present occupants of the Treasury benches were such great friends of the agricultural community, and had now brought down three Bills to construct light agricultural lines, they placed on the Estimates the paltry sum of £5,000 for these proposed agricultural and other railways. It was

proposed that the Goomalling-Dowerin, Katanning-Kojonup, and Wagin-Dumpleyung lines should be commenced during the 12 months ending 30th June, 1906. The Government would be extraordinarily clever and ingenious if they did any more than work of a temporary nature with that amount. They would not be able to put down rails or sleepers or anything like that for such a sum. When we found them pushing forward work with such earnestness as being of great necessity, and then providing such an enormous sum, perhaps it would be just as well if the whole thing were left over until Parliament had an opportunity of looking into the merits of the various railway projects. What amount of work did the Government propose to do in connection with the agricultural and other railways for £5,000?

Items agreed to, and the vote for Departmental passed.

Vote—*Railways, etc.*, £316,750 :

Item — Agricultural and other Railways, £5,000 :

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the House passed the Railway Bills submitted to it, he proposed to commit the country to the construction of the railways before the expiration of the financial year. It was true he would not have to expend much money, but the survey would be completed and all the rail would be purchased. They would not be in the country until about the end of the present financial year. Surveys were in progress at Kojonup, and material would be ordered. If contract work was found to be the cheapest, a contract would be let and the country would be committed to the construction of the railway. It was not necessary to have the whole sum of money voted this session to complete when we could not complete until after the conclusion of the financial year. The statement bound the country to completion, and if the Bills were passed the country would be bound to complete as quickly as possible.

MR. SCADDAN: The Minister in constructing these lines, whether by contract or departmental labour, might take into consideration the question whether material on the Narrogin-Williams line which belonged to the Government could not be utilised. The mer

statement that if the contract price was less than the departmental price a contract would be let was an evasive sort of assertion, for we were not in a position to know what the departmental estimate of construction was going to be. We knew that the Minister was very favourable to the contract system as against day labour. There were people interested in the construction of spur lines, and possibly they would bring some pressure to bear on the Minister with the hope of getting the work of constructing these lines.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS represented the language of the member for Ivanhoe. No contractor could force him, and he had not spoken to a single contractor with regard to these railways. He believed in contract work. He believed it was the cheapest work for the country, and that it gave the best results; but if he found he was wrong, he was perfectly willing to build the railways by day labour. In regard to the Government railway plant, it was now being used in the construction of the railway to Darkan. If we let a contract, we could compare the work done on the Darkan Railway with the work done by contract.

MR. TAYLOR: There would be no engineering difficulties in these railways.

THE MINISTER: There were some on the Darkan line.

MR. BATH: They would be surmounted cheaper by day labour than by contract.

THE MINISTER: Members could be assured that he would do his utmost in the interests of the State to get the work done as cheaply as possible.

MR. SCADDAN: But the Minister was out of sympathy with the system.

MR. TAYLOR: Works in connection with the Fremantle Harbour, carried out last year under the direction of the Minister for Works (Mr. Johnson), had been carried out cheaper, quicker, and better than could be done by contract. The same thing applied to the Jandakot Railway, where limestone hills had been pierced and the work performed satisfactorily by day labour. The late Minister had been somewhat sympathetic to day labour, but the present Minister was absolutely prejudiced against it. In former Parliaments the Minister had opposed the system tooth and nail, and had been challenged as a holder of briefs for

the contractors. He (Mr. Taylor) was opposed to the contract system on sound grounds, but was not prejudiced. He had worked under both systems. He urged the Minister to adopt the system carried out last year with such benefit to the State, not only in cheapness but in quality of work. At Fremantle the department had saved £15,000 on the contract price.

MR. PRICE: Were the specifications the same?

MR. TAYLOR did not know, but the work had been done better and the people of Fremantle had been converted to be believers in the departmental system.

MR. HOKAN, while a supporter of the day labour system, urged the Minister to be careful in the choice of officers superintending the work of building these railways. He had a photograph showing three Government busses watching the work of a couple of men at "eight bob" a day.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—Harbour and River Improvements, £84,528:

Item—Additions and Improvements to jetties, tramways, and rolling-stock in the North-West, £5,000:

MR. HOLMAN asked for information.

THE MINISTER: It was necessary to have the tramlines at the North-West ports widened to a 3ft. 6in. gauge. This was the recommendation of the officers of the department, but he hoped to have the opportunity, before Parliament met next session, of visiting these ports himself to see whether the work was necessary before authorising it.

MR. TAYLOR: There was a tramline between Cossack and Roebourne, and last year £1,475 was lost on its operations. In the face of this loss, were we justified in asking for a vote such as this under review?

THE MINISTER: It had nothing to do with that tramway.

MR. TAYLOR: At the time of the last general elections, a survey party had gone out to survey a railway from Point Sampson to connect with this tramline. It was idle for the Government to ask for farther expenditure on a tramline run at such a loss. The officer in charge

received £250 a year, and probably two or three fethlers could keep the line in repair. The haulage would probably not be very great, so there seemed to be no great necessity to increase the gauge. It was unfortunate members could not discuss these items with any knowledge of the locality; but where any loss was showing, we were entitled to get the fullest information possible.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member could rest assured that no money would be expended unless it was with a view to economising and turning the loss into a profit.

MR. HOLMAN asked for farther information. The Ministers did not seem very well acquainted with the items. There had been charges last year concerning Ministers' acquaintance with the Estimates, but on that occasion the fullest explanation had been given on every item.

MR. MALE: The Roebourne-Cossack Tramway was under the Railway Department. This item was under the Harbours and Rivers Improvements vote, which did not deal with the Roebourne-Cossack Tramway, but dealt with other tramways.

MR. TAYLOR: There was need for caution. The Minister had led him to believe this was a matter dealing with the Roebourne-Cossack Tramway.

Item — Fremantle Dock and Slip, £5,000 :

THE MINISTER moved an amendment—

That the words "commencement of dredging site, contract let for floating dock" be struck out of the statement of works intended.

This was an error. It had not been decided to let a contract for a floating dock.

Amendment passed.

MR. BATH: The Treasurer, during the Financial Statement and dealing with returns from the harbour works, had said the result showed some contribution to sinking fund from the works taken over by the Harbour Trust. We did not want the percentage on the amount taken over by the Harbour Trust, but on the total cost of the work.

THE TREASURER: The figures given were the figures concerned with the total expenditure. It was explained that it

was unjust to the Fremantle Harbour Trust, that on the works taken over by them there had been interest paid and a small contribution to sinking fund, and that it would not be the case if we dealt with the harbour works as a whole. The figures supplied were in regard to the whole of the Fremantle Harbour Works.

Other items agreed to, and the vote (as verbally amended) passed.

Vote—*Water Supply and Sewerage*, £53,500 :

Item—Sewerage for Perth and Fremantle, £20,000 :

MR. COLLIER moved that the item be struck out.

Amendment negatived.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—*Roads and Bridges*, £17,000 :

MR. LYNCH: Why was not the same method adopted in regard to these Estimates as in the case of the Revenue Estimates?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member would find a statement in the schedule.

Item—Main Roads and Roads and Bridges in agricultural districts, £15,000 :

MR. HOLMAN: Had portion of this vote been expended on the Busselton-Yallingup road?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The contract was let before he took office, by the member for Leonora, the amount being £1,700 and odd pounds. The last time he (the Minister) was down there the contractor was at work.

MR. SCADDAN: How much would be devoted to the Kalgoorlie-Boulder road? It was rather a peculiar proceeding to complete this road out of loan money when something like £2,500 had been spent on it from revenue. Surely the Minister could have found sufficient to complete it out of revenue.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This was in keeping with an understanding arrived at with the members of the different electorates and the late Minister for Works, Mr. Johnson. The late Minister agreed to give them £2,500 last year, and promised to provide £2,500 this year. There might be some argument that it was better to construct works out

of revenue if we had sufficient money; but we were not going to strike an item out because it happened to be put on the Loan Estimates. This country was in a better position than any other in the Commonwealth. We were paying sinking fund on all our loans, and so long as we did that we could not go far wrong. It would be unfair to ask people at present to pay out of their own pockets for the construction of works which would last 20 or 30 years.

Item—Beaufort Street Bridge, £2,000:

MR. HOLMAN wished to have some idea in regard to this matter. We all knew that this work was necessary, and it should be carried out as speedily as possible. It was marvellous that a serious accident had not happened there.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The proposal was to widen the bridge on the west side, and bring it more into line with Beaufort Street. [MR. FOULKES: Where would the outlet in Wellington Street be?] Just where it was now.

MR. TAYLOR: One could see that it was impossible out of £2,000 to alter the grading. It was simply to widen the bridge?

THE MINISTER: Yes.

MR. HOLMAN: It was desirable to make a good job of this at once. It would be necessary to make better provision for the railway traffic going under the bridge.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS did not know whether it would be possible to provide for more lines to go under the bridge. As to the grade, he had no definite information on the point.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources, £101,501:

Item—Development of Mining, £15,000:

MR. TAYLOR: On what form of development work would the vote be expended?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Probably in some instances assistance to individual prospectors; probably assistance individually for the purchase of machinery, or matters of that sort, by way of advance or loan; and in any way in which the department thought the industry could be best developed. A small portion

of it might be granted towards subsidising batteries. There were many ways in which the money might be utilised. He thought it wiser to have the item put in this way. We had £7,000 in the Revenue Estimates for the purpose of assisting the industry, and that £7,000 would be expended in cases where there was no idea of having a recoup for it. This £15,000 would be used more in cases where it was supposed there would be a recoup.

MR. TAYLOR: An application had been made to the Minister for £150 by Roberts and party, who desired that amount to put a pump on the main shaft, to sink down to a given depth. He had been informed that the Minister could not see his way to accede to it. He knew the Minister had in most instances done what he thought to be the very best on his departmental advice. He hoped the Minister would give these people an opportunity of participating in the benefits of the vote. He knew of other cases at Burtville where men were down to water level, and it was hard for them to proceed farther. It was a splendid locality, which had the record in this State for the quantity of gold won from the amount of stone crushed.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES did not know the particulars of the case referred to. The papers had not been brought before him, and no decision had been given. He preferred to spend money on machinery rather than in development. Let the leaseholder do some developmental work; and then the State might assist with machinery.

Item—Erection of State Batteries, £1:

MR. LYNCH: Where was the battery to be erected for £1?

THE MINISTER: Last year £10,000 was voted, of which £9,999 had been expended. This item was simply a balance.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—Development of Agriculture—agreed to.

Vote—Public Buildings, £70,000:

MR. BATH would not repeat his arguments against constructing these out of loan, but moved—

That the vote be struck out.

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

Ayes	13
Noes	28

Majority against ... 15

AYES.
Mr. Bath
Mr. Bolton
Mr. Collier
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Holman
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Lynch
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Troy
Mr. Walker
Mr. Ware
Mr. Horan (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Brebber
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Carson
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Diamond
Mr. Eddy
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Gull
Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Hicks
Mr. Isdell
Mr. Layman
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Male
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Price
Mr. Rason
Mr. Smith
Mr. A. J. Wilson
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

MR. BATH (in explanation): During the discussion on these as well as on the Revenue Estimates, the Premier had intimated that the Estimates were being unduly delayed by the Opposition; and this statement was re-echoed in alleged Press interviews with Ministers and with Government supporters. For the discussion of the Estimates a reasonable time had not been allowed; and the records of previous Parliaments would show that in this year the consideration of the Estimates had occupied less time than at any other period in our Parliamentary history. The Opposition had not been actuated by any desire to delay the passing of the Estimates.

This concluded the Loan Estimates; grand total (£799,603) put and passed.

Resolutions reported, and the report adopted.

APPROPRIATION BILL.

THE PREMIER, in accordance with the foregoing resolutions in Committee, now obtained leave and introduced the Appropriation Bill, which passed through all stages without debate, and was transmitted to the Legislative Council

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:30 o'clock, until the next afternoon.

Legislative Council,

Friday, 22nd December, 1905.

	PAGE
Papers: Police Commissioner's Suspension and Reinstatement	826
Bills: Wines, Beer, etc., 3a.	827
Stamp Act Amendment, Com. resumed, 3a.	827
Appropriation, 1a., 2a., Com., progress	827
Land Act Amendment, Council's Amendment	838
Bread Act Amendment (holidays for carters), 1a., 2a. negatived	839

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, State-mens under Section 60 of "The Life Assurance Companies Act, 1889." 2, Report of the Governors of the High School for the year ended 30th June, 1905. 3, Report on the working of the Government Railways and the Roebourne-Cossack Tramway for the year ended 30th June, 1905.

PAPERS—POLICE COMMISSIONER'S SUSPENSION AND REINSTATEMENT.

HON. E. M. CLARKE (South-West) moved—

That all papers in connection with the recent suspension and reinstatement of Captain Hare, the Commissioner of Police, be laid upon the table.

In justice to the Commissioner of Police, it was only right that the public should know what had transpired in his case. Captain Hare had been in the Government service a great many years, and was a most efficient and zealous officer. The papers would show the public exactly how the case stood.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill): There was no