

tion within the income. Having failed through the hardships of the times, and taxation being necessary, we should seek to put a burden where it would not do any cruel wrong. The Government do exactly the reverse. There is not a tax they propose which does not fall most heavily on the poorer section of the community. It is that to which we object—not the principle, but the incidence.

*The Treasurer:* It does not do so with these exemptions.

Mr. WALKER: It does do so with these exemptions. Where is the increasing burden for the man who has wealth in this State? The Labour party do not believe in the exemptions in the sense in which they were introduced in the machinery Bill.

*The Treasurer:* Yet you moved for a £300 exemption.

Mr. WALKER: Because we took the view that the working man, and particularly the man on the goldfields with his £250 or £300 a year, is using all of it for his living, for his mere chance to exist; and in the course of that living is paying more to the State in the shape of taxes proportionately than any of the wealthy people of the State. For that reason we said, start at £300 or make the tax so light below that amount that it will not be felt to be burdensome. That is the reason why I shall vote against the Bill. I am not voting against the principle, but against the incidence. This is so irritating, so unscientific, so devoid of equity and principle that it is not worth a moment's toleration by sensible people who aspire to be legislators.

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

Ayes .. .. 23

Noes .. .. 19

Majority for .. 4

AYES.

Mr. Barnett	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Male
Mr. Carson	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Monger
Mr. Davies	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Price
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Layman
Mr. Jacoby	

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Brown	Mr. Swan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gill	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Holman	Mr. Walker
Mr. Horan	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Johnson	

(Teller).

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

*House adjourned at 11 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Friday, 11th December, 1908.*

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

### QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVICE REPORT.

Mr. HUDSON asked the Premier: 1, What is the cause of delay in presentation to Parliament of the report of the Public Service Commissioner this year? 2, When will such report be laid on the Table of the House?

The PREMIER replied: 1, I understand the report referred to has been to-day handed to His Excellency the Governor. 2, Next week.

### QUESTION—MEDICAL, PRINCIPAL OFFICER'S APPOINTMENT.

Mr. UNDERWOOD asked the Premier: When will the Principal Medical Officer be appointed?

The PREMIER replied: In all probability at the next meeting of the Executive Council.

### QUESTION—PRISON STAFF, FREMANTLE.

Mr. GILL asked the Premier: 1, How many officers have been dispensed with at the Fremantle Prison during the last twelve months? 2, How many have been taken on during the same period? 3, What is the total strength of the Fremantle Prison staff? 4, What are the average hours of duty per week for sentries at the Fremantle Prison?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Eight; six resigned, one transferred, and one dismissed. 2, Eleven (including one sub-matron as a temporary relieving officer). 3, Warders, 46; instructors, 5; schoolmaster, 1; matron, 1; sub-matrons, 3. Total, 52 male and 4 female officers. 4, Nine hours per day for one week and 7½ hours per day for 2 weeks, averaging 8 hours per day per week of seven days.

### QUESTION—STATIONERY SUPPLY, PADS.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that the lowest tenderer for the supply of 100 gross of paper pads has no registered factory in the State? 2, Will the Government, if the tender is accepted, see that the work is not sub-let? 3, Why was the usual clause providing for work to be executed on the registered premises of the contractor not inserted in this contract?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2 and 3, No tender has been accepted. The order for the supply of paper pads has been placed with the Government Printer.

### QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVICE CLASSIFICATION.

Mr. WALKER asked the Premier: Who are the civil servants receiving the maximum salary allowed under the clas-

sification of the Public Service Commissioner?

The PREMIER replied: A considerable number of the 1,200 officers under the Public Service Act are receiving the maximum salary allowed under the classification. Particulars in the form of a return could be prepared, if required.

### MOTION—POINT OF ORDER NOT DEBATABLE.

*To dissent from ruling.*

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna) moved—

*That this House disagrees with Mr Speaker's ruling to the effect that on a point of order only the member who raised the point can speak on it, and that he has no right of reply.*

He said: I do not know whether you, Mr. Speaker, are still of the opinion expressed from the Chair last night, to the effect that only the member who raised the point of order is permitted to speak. If you still maintain that position I shall have to labour the argument more than I intended. If you have had the opportunity of consulting the procedure of other Parliaments in Australia and of this House—because there are numerous instances here—and have come to the conclusion that it was an inadvertent utterance that perhaps was not meant to be understood as it was, it would be well for me not to go on; but otherwise I must show by practical illustrations that you were in error, and to show it too by our own Standing Orders. I had better start with our own Standing Orders, to show that in no way do we differ in that respect from other assemblages. Standing Order 140 says:—

*"Upon a question of order being raised, the member called to order shall resume his seat, and after the question of order has been stated to the Speaker by the member rising to the question of order, the Speaker shall give his opinion thereon; but it shall be competent for any member to take the sense of the House after the Speaker has given his opinion, and in that case any member may address the House upon the question."*

But the point we were discussing last night, which, with all due deference, I

think was decided wrongly, was not one where a member was called to order, but was one involving important matters of procedure, matters of great importance in the regulation of the business of this House. It was of such importance that it would be folly to expect any one member of the House who is seized with all the information that is necessary, you not having been acquainted, not to place the whole facts before you. I am going to lay down this position in support of my points, that when a point of order, especially such a one as that raised last night, is brought before you, you are in the position of a Judge. For the time being this House is a Court, and the point submitted has to be argued as if it were a case at law, and you are in the position of seeking, for your judgment, all the information you can obtain, and it is the duty of hon. members to honestly advise you as far as their knowledge and abilities will permit if the point is dubious or in any way obscure. You, in these circumstances, occupy a judicial position ; your judgment is taken for precedent ; it is recorded and becomes a guidance for the House. It is clear then in these circumstances that no Speaker would be judicious who, either from want of knowledge, or impulse, or any motive, exercised his own judgment. Few Speakers would venture an opinion if they felt they were not fully informed, and repeatedly Speakers have asked the House for information upon subjects submitted to them. In Queensland there was a case of that kind. The Deputy Speaker, who was in the Chair, directly asked the House to give him an opinion upon the subject as the debate was proceeding. He had not fully made up his mind, and, therefore, he appealed to members to assist him. This is what he said :—

"I shall be prepared to hear the opinions of hon. members on the subject before giving my decision. Speaking off-hand it appears to me the amendment is not in order, but I invite hon. members who desire to speak on this question, to address the Chair on the point of order."

I submit that such action was wise. It is a course repeatedly taken either by the

Chairman, if the House is in Committee, or by Mr. Speaker when in the Chair, when his mind is not fully informed as to the point raised or, if on the point arising suddenly, he has not had an opportunity of referring to precedent and to the authorities on the question. In those circumstances, he is glad to obtain the assistance of members who may be able to refer to authorities, or to give him time to consult authorities himself. I do not know a single instance in any Parliament, not even in this Parliament, where it has been held that on a point of order being raised, especially an important point of order, members have not been allowed to participate in the debate and give their views on the question. There may be occasions when the law, or the point of order, is so clear in Mr. Speaker's mind that he requires no assistance from the House. The moment the point is raised he has his decision ready ; he is familiar with the point, has heard all arguments that can be advanced pro and con. I have repeatedly read of Mr. Speaker having said, "My mind is made up on the point," or, "I am prepared to decide the point ; I can give my decision now ; there is no need for anyone to speak." In that event, speaking is absolutely unnecessary, and so it would be indicated from the Chair. The member who raised the point would then immediately resume his seat. Let it be an important point, however, a novel point, or one upon which Mr. Speaker has not made up his mind and requires references to the authorities, then he will listen to whomsoever in the House can throw light on the subject ; he will let everyone who has something to say on the subject attempting to elucidate it, say what he has to say. That is the universal practice, and repeatedly there is a species of altercation between Mr. Speaker and members. Mr. Speaker joining in the debate as it proceeds. He asks, it may be, for enlightenment from someone who is submitting fresh arguments. It is not uncommon for a Speaker and members alternately to address themselves on the subject. In the Federal Parliament, which we should not be too proud to follow as an authority, the Clerks and

officers of the House generally have had large experience, and they are able, on that account, to guide Mr. Speaker, who may be new to office, as to the course he should take. I have taken certain examples almost at random, for the whole series of *Hansards* in every State are so full of cases of this description that it is almost unnecessary to make a selection ; indeed, there has been no need in my case, it has rather been taking the instances as they come. There is a point mentioned in volume 23 of the Commonwealth Reports, pages 6884 and onwards. I will read extracts to show how member after member gets up and speaks. The point had been raised whether the Prime Minister could interrupt business. The report is as follows :—

*“Mr. Speaker :* In the House of Commons it has been many times ruled that the Prime Minister may make a statement to the House. That rule has not been uniformly disregarded in this House ; but it applies more particularly to statements of public policy. Immediately my attention is directed to the fact that there is no question before the House, I am bound to rule according to the Standing Orders, under which the Prime Minister has no rights beyond those enjoyed by every other honorable member.

*Sir John Forrest :* My point is whether the Speaker of the House of Commons has not ruled that, even in a case where a member objects, the Prime Minister should still have the right to make a statement to the House ?

*Mr. Speaker :* I am quite unable to speak of the ruling given in a specific case.

*Mr. Reid :* I desire to ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it is the practice of the *Hansard* staff, in issuing proofs of their speeches to honorable members to include repetitions ?

*Mr. Speaker :* Certainly not. The *Hansard* staff are instructed, in the first place, not to report interjections which are not noticed by the honorable member who is addressing the Chair, nor, in the second place, repetitions.

*Mr. Watson :* The honourable member for Gwydir is relying on the notes of the *Hansard* reporters, and the Prime Minister is guilty of a distinct attempt to mislead the public when he refers to the proofs.

*Mr. Speaker :* Order !”

And so it goes on. The page is filled with an altercation between Mr. Speaker and members. That is in the Federal House. In the Queensland House, as I have quoted, there was a case in which the Chairman himself asked members to give him further enlightenment on the subject. In that case we have Mr. Philp, the Secretary for Public Lands, Mr. Speaker, the Secretary for Public Lands, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Kenna, the Secretary for Public Lands, Mr. Lesina, Mr. Kenna, Mr. Philp, Mr. Lesina, and so on, speaking in the order given. There is no set form of speaking in these matters. Each man as he feels he has something to say, some light to throw on the subject, is not only allowed to express his views, but, in that particular instance, was actually invited to do so. There is another case in Queensland with regard to a point of order raised by Mr. Philp and spoken to by the Secretary for Public Lands, Mr. Speaker, the Secretary for Public Lands, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Philp, and others in the order given. And so on. I do not think I need quote all the instances of this practice, as I would only consume the time of Parliament by doing so. There is one instance from Victoria. A point of order was raised, and we find that the speakers were Mr. Bent, Mr. Watt, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Watt, Mr. Toutcher, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Watt, Mr. Bent, and Mr. Prendergast, in the order given. I think these instances will be sufficient to show what is the rule in the other Parliaments. I do not know of an instance, certainly not since I have been in the House, of the rule being altered here. Speakers have been allowed to inform the Chair, and rightly so, for it is well that our Parliament should be consistent. We must never divest ourselves of this conception, that Parliament is the highest court of the land : it creates all other courts, it is itself the source of

all law, and if we change our rules, our methods of procedure, and sway from one side to the other, do not take a direct course upon which we may rely, we shall soon be at sea, we shall soon be unable to do business at all, we shall have no orders, for we cannot be guided. The only value of rules and orders is to preserve uniformity. If we have a rule to-day, depart from it to-morrow, adopt it again the next day, and have a fresh rule the following day, that is the very source of disorder; we should soon have this Assembly entirely lacking in dignity, lacking in self-respect: Mr. Speaker would be unable to preserve order from the Chair. What is not fixed by rule would be interpreted by every member according to his own standard, and we should have different standards of order prevailing with every member. There is no need to argue the necessity for uniformity, we must be consistent with the powers given to us, and have a uniformity in Parliaments under Responsible Government on the model and pattern of the British Parliament. I feel that I need not urge this matter any further, although there are other arguments that could be used. Sufficient time has been consumed upon the subject, and I regret I have had to bring this point forward. It was only owing to the fact that you Mr. Speaker, somewhat inconsiderately gave an expression of opinion, which, on reflection, I feel sure you will see was not justified, and not in accordance with our rules.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet): I second the motion.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan): I do not think Mr. Speaker will have any reason to alter the ruling he gave last night or to vary it; nor do I think the House, as a whole, would for one moment ask Mr. Speaker to do so, having regard to the very explicit nature of the Standing Orders. Standing Order 140 provides:—

“ Upon a question of order being raised, the member called to order shall resume his seat, and after the question of order has been stated to the Speaker by the member rising to the question of order, the Speaker shall give his

opinion thereon; but it shall be competent for any member to take the sense of the House after the Speaker has given his opinion, and in that case any member may address the House upon the question.”

I understand that Mr. Speaker ruled that the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) had addressed the House on a point of order. All a member is entitled to do when submitting a point of order is to make it clear what the point is. Then Mr. Speaker pronounces his decision. It is competent for a member afterwards, if he is dissatisfied, to take the sense of the House on the ruling Mr. Speaker has delivered. In that case any member may address the House upon the question. I have no particular reason to congratulate myself in joining in the debate upon the point of order raised by the member for Kanowna. Your attention, Mr. Speaker, has been drawn to cases where, if you are yourself in doubt when a point of order has been laid before you, you may consult the House. There is no question of that kind here. It is not what you can do in the Chair or what a member on the floor of the House can do that we are asked to determine by this motion. It is known that the occupant of the Speaker's Chair, if he is doubtful on a point of order, can consult the House. He can ask hon. members to assist him in arriving at a determination, but the debate that then arises is merely a debate invited by Mr. Speaker to assist him. No such circumstances arose in this case. The facts here are few and simple. An hon. member raised the point of order and he was entitled to make that perfectly clear, but I submit he was not entitled to deliver a long and argumentative speech in support of it. Those very extracts he has read to the House from reports of proceedings of other Parliaments illustrate that. A point of order is not always clear, and an hon. member who first gets up and makes it, and fails, to put it to the Chair properly, a second member may interrupt him, and a third may also rise to say that it is not made clear. All that is correct and is in order, but it is not provided that there shall be anything in the nature of the speeches

made by members in support of a point of order, or even the right to apply.

*Mr. Walker:* Is there anything to the contrary? Give us your authority.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: My authority is clear when one reads our Standing Orders. All a member is entitled to do is to make clear to the Speaker the question of order he has raised. That does not give him the right to make a speech in reply.

*Mr. Walker:* Undoubtedly.

*Mr. Bath:* What about any member addressing the House?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is not what we are asked to-day to decide.

*Mr. Walker:* It is precisely. It is against his ruling we are appealing to the House. The Speaker ruled last night that only a member who raised a point of order, could speak on it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Last evening the member for Kanowna took a certain point of order. He spoke on that point of order at considerable length. In that I say he was disorderly. Other members also spoke without being asked, and again, they were disorderly. The hon. member then said in effect, "I have the right to reply" as if it were in the case of a motion; not a reply to some matter arising from a debate on a motion; but on the question of a point of order.

*Mr. Walker:* I replied to your misrepresentations.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is more than regrettable, it is almost disgusting, that we cannot have in this House anything from the hon. member which does not provoke an acrimonious debate. Why cannot he try to behave himself?

*Mr. Walker:* You set us a good example.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I venture to say if the hon. member imitated one-half of the examples I set him, there would be an enormous improvement in him. I am not desirous of wasting the time of the House. This point is a very trivial one. It may only be supported by putting before the House a representation that it was not what it really was—merely a discussion on the point of order which should never have been allowed to take place. Once a point of order is

clearly explained to the Speaker, the Speaker is then called upon to pronounce a decision. If a member is not satisfied with that decision, he can then take steps under the Standing Orders to take the sense of the House upon the Speaker's opinion, and in that case any member may address the House. That is the provision we have made, and I see no reason why we should depart from it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will briefly state the facts. I have no desire, nor is it within my province to enter into a debate. When the hon. member raised the question of the right of reply, I distinctly stated then, that strictly speaking, no member had the right to address the House on a point of order other than the member who rose to submit that point. That is provided in our Standing Orders, and there is no provision for a reply from a member. I must admit at once that I have always accepted the opinions of one or two or perhaps three members on questions of great importance that have been submitted, and I consider the question submitted last evening was the most important that has come under my notice in my position as Speaker, and therefore, following the custom always adopted in this House, not only during the time I have filled the position of Speaker, but also in the time of the late Sir James Lee Steere, members have been allowed to express opinions, and I think as the hon. member for Kanowna has said very properly, it is advisable on a question of such importance to hear some opinions before arriving at a decision. I quite agree with the member for Kanowna on that point, but I expressed the opinion which I cannot vary, strictly speaking—those are the words I used when the member for Dundas rose to speak after the adjournment—I felt then confident of being able to give a ruling, and I thought it would have the effect of shortening the proceedings, being of the opinion that if one or two members were allowed to speak, then the whole 49 should also be allowed to speak. Thus I rule, that strictly speaking, no member had the right to address the House, nor had any hon. member the right to reply. If I felt I could have done

justice to the hon. member, I should have given the ruling straight away, but as I said, I have always adopted the course of asking the opinion of one or two members so as to have a better opportunity of giving a correct judgment. I do not know that I can add any more, but I may go further and say, that perhaps later on when the opportunity arises on a certain measure which may come before the House, I shall have the occasion then—of course I am always prepared to admit that I may make an error—I shall have occasion to refer to a certain ruling given during this session. I have no desire to say anything further now, than that which I have given as the reason for my ruling, which I adhere to.

Mr. WALKER (in reply): After hearing your explanation, Mr. Speaker, I regret that this motion appears in the form it is. I regret I had no indication that your ruling was not as I understood it. What you have said is in perfect consonance with what I am advocating. When a member is putting his point of order, the Speaker has the right to interrupt him and say that he is ready to decide the point. If I rise to a point of order, and I am developing it, and the Speaker is prepared to decide it, he can ask the hon. member to resume his seat and declare that he is prepared to give his ruling. The hon. member would sit down and no further speaking would take place. But the motion is this, that the House disagrees with Mr. Speaker's ruling to the effect that on a point of order, only the member who raised the point could speak on it. That was the objection I took. If I misunderstood it, this falls to the ground at once, and I should be glad to know that I misunderstood it. The only justification for arguing a point is when information is required, and whoever can give that information, is at liberty to do so. The only object I had in desiring to reply was to speak again, because the Attorney General had misled me. That is the only word I can use. In his ignorance of the points we were dealing with, he made statements that would not bear examination, and I de-

sire to point out those facts, that he might not be the leader of the Speaker's judgment. It was necessary to do so, because we know that the opinion of the Attorney General by virtue of his position would carry weight. I as a member of the Labour party would not have the same weight, and consequently I referred to the authorities in order to contradict the Attorney General's statements. I am perfectly at one with your ruling, Mr. Speaker: that when the Speaker is ready to give his judgment, it is only by courtesy that he listens to any one else at all. I would be sorry to allow this motion to misrepresent the position if your ruling is as now stated, as I now understand, that it is not by virtue of a right that everyone can speak; but the Speaker desiring information, anyone in the Assembly has the right to give it to him. That is what I understand. The Speaker need not necessarily stop every one from speaking if he desires to get information himself before giving his decision. That is perfectly sound and my duty, now that you Mr. Speaker have made the position clear, will be to withdraw the motion, because I would not like it on record that that was what I understood to be your ruling. It is not your ruling as you have stated now.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have said that I firmly adhere to my ruling, and as the member for Kanowna has remarked, it is by courtesy that the Speaker can listen to members, so that their views may assist him, but I still hold that there is no provision in our Standing Orders, nor in any other authority, to say that the member who raises the point of order in this manner has the right to reply, nor can it be shown that any other member has the right even to speak. A point of order is not in the form of a motion which necessarily needs to be seconded. When a motion is seconded it is out of the Speaker's hands, and is in the hands of members. I intend to follow custom and practice always, by asking the assistance of an hon. member or two, and then I shall be able to arrive at a conclusion which will be strictly impartial.

Mr. WALKER: The position is this : that the ruling does not say no member "shall" or "can" it Mr. Speaker desires. I shall ask for permission to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

# BILL—WINES, BEER, AND SPIRIT SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

## BILL—UPPER CHAPMAN RAIL- WAY.

*Second Reading.*

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) in moving the second reading said: This railway proposal will complete the list of those outlined in May 1906 having been included in the loan schedule which was approved by this House in December of that year. I have had several opportunities to make myself acquainted with the district that will be served by this railway, and I will endeavour to put what information is available before hon. members. The plans in the Chamber will give hon. members a very good idea of the country to be traversed, as well as a knowledge of the land selection which has taken place in that district. I am sure that the claims of this fertile valley to railway facilities will be recognised by hon. members and by those who are desirous that the various districts of the State should have equal opportunities to develop. The primary object of this line is to serve an area of virgin country that lies a little distance beyond the terminal point; and further, to serve those settlers who have been resident in the Upper Chapman district for a considerable period. The farmers in this district are labouring under very great disabilities owing to the lack of railway facilities and by virtue of the fact that the country is very much broken. Hon. members looking at that plan may possibly think that this district might be served from the Northampton railway. This line however was not put down with any idea at all of

serving the country from an agricultural point of view. It is purely a mining line, and the country lying between the existing and the proposed railways is of so broken a nature that it is practically impossible for farmers to cart their produce in to the Northampton line. Notwithstanding the great disabilities under which the settlers labour it is gratifying to notice the development which has taken place during the last few years. No doubt this is due very largely to the fact that there has been an influx of new settlers in the district, caused, to a considerable extent, by the repurchase of the Mt. Erin estate, one of the largest in the district. A large number of settlers took up holdings and they have been able to show some of the older residents that it is possible to clear and prepare their land for the plough at a cost much below what had previously been deemed satisfactory in the district. At the same time they in all probability have been prompted to improve their holdings by the knowledge that railway facilities were likely to be provided in the near future. The climate and the soil are everything that could be desired, and lend themselves to successful stock raising, while the wheat average for the district is very high, having reached 17 bushels at the State farm last year. This year, notwithstanding that the season has been anything but what we would like, the average will be something over 14 bushels per acre. When this farm was first established it was with the idea of demonstrating to the people what could be done in that part of the district. One feature of the land in this locality is that it is decidedly superior to what its appearance would lead one to expect. The returns received from the agricultural farm indicate that this is so. As a matter of fact in cultivating on the State farm the manager has adopted the excellent practice of retaining alongside each field a certain strip of land untouched, leaving the country in a state of nature. This allows one when visiting and inspecting the farm to make interesting comparisons. The farm was inaugurated dur-



ing Dr. Jamieson's term of office as Minister for Lands, and with the assistance of a little phosphatic manure some of the poorest country has yielded very good crops indeed. The establishment of this farm has been responsible for the settlement of thousands of acres in the vicinity. The original intention was that the farm should serve as an object lesson showing what could be done in the district; and it was intended that once it had fully demonstrated the capabilities of the soil it should be disposed of. All the different varieties of land have been cleared and cropped. On the first and second class country returns equal to 18 and 19 bushels per acre have been obtained, while on the third class land crops have been grown yielding as high as 12 and 13 bushels. English and Cape barely, mangolds, turnips, swedes, rape and salt bush—the latter not being indigenous to the district—have been planted with excellent results. Several artificial grasses, notably sheep burnet and trefoil have been sown and have proved highly satisfactory. A large number of experiments have been made in connection with the various fodders, and these have been successfully grown. Although the manager has not gone in for fruit growing at the farm, still we have an opportunity of seeing what can be done in this respect on adjacent private farms. The gardens of Messrs. Jupp and Launder constitute object lessons in this respect. Mr. John Robinson, a recognised authority on agricultural matters in Western Australia, says in regard to this project—

"In dealing with the valley of the Upper Chapman river I must say that it is admirably adapted for fruit growing as well as for cereals. Failure is unknown, because it is so near to the coast, and enjoys the effects of the coastal range. Last year the wheat from the Upper Chapman district without any special treatment obtained one of the gold medals awarded at the Franco-British Exhibition. Mr. Jupp always has good crops and his orange trees bear remarkably well. Mr. Launder (whose property is a thoroughly well-kept and well-regulated one)

has proved that the country is admirably adapted for fruit cultivation. I am of opinion that the construction of a railway into this portion of the State will work a revolution, as hitherto it has meant a struggle for anyone desiring to make the most of a property. A railway would change everything. Second and third-class land in this area will give good crops if properly treated; ploughed, fallowed and fertilised. I have been in consultation with Mr. Baird, formerly in charge of the Chapman Experimental farm and now at the Narrogin farm, and we are agreed that there is no place which will surpass the valley of the Upper Chapman and the district generally for grain and cereals crops, the ears being always well filled and matured. After 25 years' residence in Western Australia I would unhesitatingly say that if there is a place where a railway is wanted it is to the Upper Chapman district—not only for developmental purposes, because it will be of immense value to Geraldton and district."

*Mr. Collier:* Whose is that report?

The PREMIER: Mr. John Robinson, a member of the Land Purchase Board and who has been manager of various experimental farms throughout the State.

*Mr. Collier:* A Government officer?

The PREMIER: Yes. The land to be served was classified by Mr. Inspector Thompson, a gentleman who has wide knowledge of the lands of Western Australia. I have already referred to his report on this particular area, but I feel I may on this occasion repeat for the benefit of hon. members what he had to say in connection with the large area of country which, lying beyond the terminus, will be served by the proposed railway. Mr. Thompson reports:—

"I have inspected the country at the head of the Chapman Valley as instructed and am forwarding a classification sketch herewith. There are 29,000 acres of first-class land some of which is of excellent quality and adapted for growing cereals, etc. The country has chiefly York gum growing thereon and is land that will not wear

out with cultivation, being a rich, red loam with good clay sub-soil. The other portion of the first-class land has tamar scrub and small York gums with occasional mallet timber growing on it. This also is chiefly a red loam but lighter than the York gum country. In classifying the second class land I have kept in view the possibility of an agricultural area being surveyed, so have made a rough classification of the second and third-class lands only, taking into consideration any large patches of second-class. I estimate there are about 6,000 acres of second-class land in the area classified; but if the land is surveyed before selection and portion of the York gum or heavy land is taken with the sand-plain or third-class land it enhances the value of the latter considerably, as in my opinion the two are inseparable for grazing purposes, in this district at least. The remaining portion of the area classified is a sand-plain country, the greater portion of which is poor grazing land. The nearest available country suitable for wheat growing or mixed farming is about 10 miles North-East of this area, where there is a fine belt of country timbered with morrell, York gum, sheoaks, etc."

He goes on to state that the country is well adapted for holdings and, generally, he favours comments on the whole area. Since that classification was made by Mr. Thompson the whole area has been subdivided under the name of the Yuna subdivision, and practically the whole of the land has been selected. I would like to say with reference to the country that is to be served, that within the last twelve months 37,902 acres have been taken up within a radius of 12 miles of this line. An area of 26,112 acres has been subdivided into blocks of from 500 to 1,000 acres, and have been thrown open and applied for. But practically the whole of these blocks have been applied for, and in some cases there is more than one applicant for the one block. This point will be decided by the simultaneous application board, which will meet in order to arrive at a decision as to which of the applicants will make

the most suitable settlers. There are 32 different blocks on this area, and on receipt of the surveyor's valuation I arranged for an inspector of the Agricultural Bank to consult with the valuer appointed by the Lands Department, with a view to coming to a conclusion as to the actual value of the land, so that in the event of any person securing approval of a block he would be in the position that he would know exactly the value the Agricultural Bank put on the land. Consequently in any applications made from that district for advances from the Agricultural Bank decision can be arrived at without delay by the trustees, inasmuch as the value which has been arrived at by the two officers representing the Lands Department and the Agricultural Bank, has been accepted as final. Referring to this country Mr. Inspector Hewby of the Agricultural Bank, the officer I referred to, says that the land is well suited for wheat growing, and quite up to the standard of the bulk of our wheat land in the Eastern and Great Southern districts, while the scrub and sandplain are, generally speaking, very fair grazing land. The clearing of the York gum and thicket land is, he considers, worth from 20s. to 30s. per acre, but there does not appear to have been a fire for some time, and he estimates that after a judicious burn 20s. an acre should clear any of it. He says that extensive patches of mallee and ti-tree exist, which can be cleared at a cost of 10s. to 15s. per acre. He also states that so far as water is concerned he does not anticipate there will be any very great difficulty: he says there are splendid tank sites with good holding ground on the majority of the blocks, and that there is no reason to anticipate that any more trouble should be experienced here than in the bulk of the country being settled in other parts of the State. A splendid supply of water has been struck on location 3607, and I have given instructions for a well to be sunk there immediately. A good supply has also been obtained on a privately-owned location some few miles to the West of Yuna, near Wag-

gine Spring, and the owner is in treaty with us to sell the land. Though the funds at our disposal at present are limited, still where a water supply in any district is concerned we do not hesitate to take immediate action to supply that very necessary aid to settlement. I have another report, which I will lay on the Table, from the Surveyor General, dealing with this country. It is couched in very similar terms to those used by the other officers, so that I do not propose to weary the House by reiterating arguments already used by other officers. I would like to say in connection with the proposal to extend this railway that many proposals have been brought under the notice of the Government. No less than four separate routes have been advocated and inspected, and a trial survey has been made in connection with more than one proposal. However, with a view to giving finality in regard to the route of the proposed railway, we decided to appoint a board consisting of the Engineer-in-Chief, the Surveyor General, and the Chief Traffic Manager, Mr. Douglas, with the request that they should go into the question and make a recommendation to Cabinet as to the best route of the four they thought should be adopted. Their report is as follows:—

"Complying with the instructions contained in yours of the 1st inst., we journeyed to Geraldton and traversed the various routes proposed for a railway to the Upper Chapman, and now attach plan showing thereon the routes suggested. No. 1 route, distance 26 miles, at an approximate cost of £36,400 is, we consider, the most suitable under the circumstances, and we therefore recommend its adoption. It starts at a point one and three-quarter miles on the Geraldton side of the present White Peak station, on the Northampton line, or eight miles from Geraldton. Good grades can be obtained for the whole of the distance, and taking into consideration that it will cost approximately £13,000 less than No. 2 route, we do not consider there is any doubt as to which one

should be adopted. No. 2 route, starting from Crowther on the Cue line, would mean the construction of 35 miles of line at an approximate cost of £49,000 as against No. 1 route of 26 miles at an approximate cost of £36,400. No. 2 route also, for at least 9 or 10 miles from starting point, travels through country that is already served by stations on the Cue railway, such stations being no greater distance from any of the present settlers than six miles. No. 3 route certainly opens more country than either Nos. 1 or 2, but it is impossible to construct a cheap railway through the range from Narrattarra to East Chapman, the grades and cuttings being against such a proposition; and such route cannot therefore be considered. We regret that we were unable to get the Engineer-in-Chief to sign this report; he left, as you are aware, by the "Charon" from Geraldton, but agreed with us, as a decision was arrived at prior to his departure. The time did not permit, as we only returned to Geraldton an hour or two before the steamer left, otherwise the report would have been prepared and his signature obtained. With a view, however, of expediting matters we are sending a report on as he will not return for two or three weeks. If necessary, his signature can then be obtained. Signed, Harry F. Johnston, Surveyor General. N. Douglas, Chief Traffic Manager."

The various routes referred to are on the plan and hon. members will have an opportunity of inspecting them. They will see that the recommendation of the inspecting surveyor is the route which is practically adopted, and means a saving of some £13,000 on any other proposed route, and at the same time it will extend the line into virgin country. As is stated in the report of the board, the line is about 26 miles in length; the rails will be 45lb. rails, and the sleepers are the same as are used on other agricultural railways that have been constructed. The ruling gradient is 1 in 60, and the sharpest curve will have a 10-chain radius. It is estimated—and it seems to me a very liberal estimate indeed—that the cost of

construction work will be £19,500, and the cost of rails and fastenings will be £16,900, or a total cost of £36,400, approximately £1,400 per mile. The population that will be served, as members will see from the slips in front of them, will be 350, the resident occupiers numbering 50. The acreage held by these is: land already under cultivation this year, 8,000 acres; land in course of preparation for cultivation last year, 2,000 acres. The estimated yield of grain per acre this season is: wheat, 13 bushels; oats, 18 bushels; while the land open for selection within influence of the line, varying from five to 15 miles, is 1,500 acres of first-class land, 7,500 acres of second-class land, and the same area of third-class land.

*Mr. Bath:* Is any first-class land available?

The PREMIER: That will be seen on the plan. A good deal of it is sandplain and some is mallee thickets.

*Mr. Bath:* How many large holdings are there?

The PREMIER: I think there are about three. The total area of land within the influence of the railway is: first-class, 104,000 acres; second-class, 50,000 acres; third-class, 41,000 acres; pastoral leases, 20,000; pastoral land, 170,000 acres; or a total of 385,000 acres. From the various reports referred to and the plans now available, members will have a good idea of the country to be served, and an opportunity of seeing the land taken up and the amount now being selected. I have the plan of the Yuna area, giving full information in regard to the prices and description of the land.

*Mr. Bath:* Has that been made available for selection yet?

The PREMIER: Yes; 16 blocks have been applied for.

*Mr. Troy:* I thought all the blocks had been taken up at Yuna.

The PREMIER: No; 11 have not been applied for.

*Mr. Troy:* I thought some of them were applied for four or five times over.

The PREMIER: The difficulty is that in some cases there are four or five appli-

cants for one block; no doubt when they find they cannot take up the particular blocks applied for they will take up some of the other blocks. It is only during the last few years that any attention has been given to the country north of Geraldton, that is from an agricultural point of view, and the success which is attending those who are now cultivating the land in that district prompts one to the conclusion that there must be a fine future ahead of this particular district. I hope that the investigations that are now being made in connection with the large area of good country, which has been reported on by Mr. Crawford and others competent to judge to the North of Northampton and between Northampton and the Murchison, will be of such a satisfactory nature that it will be only a question of a very short time before some facilities can be given to open up that particular district. As to the prosperity that must result owing to the intelligent expenditure of public funds in connection with the opening up of this particular district, I feel satisfied that there is a big future in store for both Geraldton and the district, and I have every confidence in asking the House to give their careful consideration to the proposal submitted. It is not a new proposition, it is one that has been talked of during the last two or three years. As I have already stated, we discussed the question in December, 1906, when the Loan Schedule was brought down, including this line in the proposals then outlined by the Government. If approval is given to this railway I am sure it will mean that a larger area of land will be cultivated. I have already explained the difficulties under which the settlers there labour now, and the fact that there are practically no good roads in the district, and that it is impossible in view of the broken character of the country to cart their produce to the Northampton line. If this proposal is approved of I feel sure that this railway will be in the best interests of the country, and will do a great deal to develop the fertile valley of the Upper Chapman. I move—

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

Mr. TROY (Mount Magnet): I have some knowledge of this country, and I am one of those who for some years past have advocated the construction of a line in that area. Possibly not the line which has been surveyed, but a line for opening up the country with the view of enabling the settlers there now to get their produce to market. I know there have been extreme difficulties for settlers as there have been no roads, in some respects the country is rocky owing to its hilly nature, and in other parts there is a considerable quantity of sandplain, with the result that the settlers have not been able to secure the advantages from the land to which they are entitled. I wish to support the construction of the line, because I believe it will not only serve a large area now occupied, but will also give facilities to the area mentioned by the Premier—the Yuna district—and give people there an early opportunity of obtaining a return from their land. The railway is one of those which might have been built years ago as it is very urgently required. I believe it will give that portion of the country the advantages which it requires and deserves.

Mr. BUTCHER (Gascoyne): In connection with the construction of this line I am in a fortunate position, because I am in possession of a very considerable amount of knowledge of the country. I lived in that district a great many years ago, and have travelled over all of it. I am one of those who always take the opportunity of advocating economies, and I find my position on this question somewhat difficult, because if I kept to that principle, I would be bound to support the construction of the line as indicated. It is all very well to economise in some cases, but in connection with the construction of railways, the first thing, to my mind, to be considered is the extent of country that the railway will serve. A railway is built to remain for all time, and, consequently, great care should be exercised in fixing the route. I sincerely regret that on the present occasion the Government, when sending out men to report upon the route, impressed upon them the necessity for considering the

question of economy. Had those men gone out to inspect the country with an absolutely free hand, I feel certain they would not, with the knowledge they possessed, have advocated a route starting from the Northampton line. I have a sketch here drawn from my own knowledge of the country, and I find that the distance saved by the line going from Northampton is about ten miles. As the Premier has shown us by his figures, the saving by the No. 1 route against the No. 2 route amounts to £13,000. While we are saving this sum, the interest of which, without the cost of maintenance, would only amount to £500 or £600 a year, it is going to deprive of a railway for all time a strip of country which, to my mind, is justly entitled to the benefits of a railway. I am alluding now to that large strip of country between a point known as Nabawah and Mullewa Junction. As to the No. 1 route determined upon there is a strip of eight or nine miles of country, most of which is absolutely useless for agricultural purposes. I admit the land might be described as second or third-class, and I daresay it would be very useful for depasturing stock. It is not wise, however, when we are considering the construction of railways, to pay special attention to the benefit which will result to pastoral lands. The question of the holders of the land does not come into consideration in a matter of this kind. I take it that this Bill will have attached to it a clause, such as appears in all the other railway Bills brought down to us, giving power to the Government to resume all land within a certain radius of the railway at a price based upon its value, without taking into consideration the additional value it gains through the construction of the line. There is a large area between Crowther and the Eastern Chapman which is entitled to railway communication, and I regret the Government have not recommended the adoption of the No. 2 instead of the No. 1 route, although the cost would be £13,000 more to the country.

*The Premier:* There was no stipulation placed upon the officers who went out there; they were given a free hand.

Mr. BUTCHER: I think they were told to consider the question of cost. I do not mean to say that they had direct instructions to take the cheapest route, but the necessity for considering cost was impressed upon them. By adopting the route proposed, there will have to be traversed a distance of eight miles of useless country. There is a quantity of fairly good land immediately east of the Northampton line, but that is already within a mile or two of the White Peak station; but immediately beyond that there is wretched sand plain and poison country, which extends for eight miles. If, instead of the line running through that land it were to be taken eight miles southerly down the Chapman Valley, that, with an additional 10 miles, would bring the starting point to Crowther. If this House knew half as much about the country as I do, they would have no hesitation in supporting the No. 2 route against the No. 1 route.

Mr. Troy: Who owns the land?

Mr. BUTCHER: Several people.

Mr. Troy: About two persons.

Mr. BUTCHER: Mr. Burges and Mr. McKenzie Grant own land there, but it must not be forgotten that there will be a resumption clause in the Bill.

Mr. NANSON (Greenough: The member for a district in which it is proposed to build a railway is expected to say something in favour of the line; but, in the present case, the Premier, in moving the second reading of the Bill, has put such an unanswerable case before the House that it is almost a work of supererogation on my part to add anything to what he has said. However, without going over entirely the same ground he has covered, I may be able to add a few facts that, if any further recommendation be needed, may strengthen the claims I am sure the line has on the support of members. Dealing first with the question of route, to which the member for Gaseoyne (Mr. Butcher) has referred, it is impossible when a railway is proposed to find as a general rule one route, particularly in an agricultural district, which will satisfy all the settlers in that district, and I admit un-

hesitatingly that there is a great deal to be said for the route mentioned by the hon. member. I do not agree that when the Government sent up gentlemen, who were absolutely unbiassed on this question, to report upon what was the best route, those gentlemen went there in any way under instructions as to the decision they should arrive at. I have the best of reasons for knowing that they had an absolutely free hand to choose the route they considered the best. They had no axe of their own to grind, no personal interest in the district, and therefore, I think, whether we look at the matter from the point of view of the railway traffic, land settlement, or engineering—the three gentlemen represented these three branches—we must admit that their report is one that must carry a very great deal of weight in this Chamber. Then let us take the public opinion of the district. I do not contend for one moment that the route pleases everyone. It always happens in these cases that there are conflicting parties, but I think I am justified in saying that the route on the whole pleases the greater number of people. At any rate, if that be going too far, I am justified in saying that the people of the district acquiesce in the decision arrived at by the gentlemen entrusted with the task of reporting on the route, and would sooner see the railway built where it is proposed than have the project delayed indefinitely. As to the special claim this route has upon the consideration of the House, within a radius on an average of something like two miles of the line, we have now a number of small farmers engaged in cultivating the soil. There are practically no persons holding large estates, all are bona fide holders and occupiers.

Mr. Underwood: This report says there are only 50.

Mr. NANSON: According to the published returns the number is only 50, but according to figures in my own possession, and according to the map I have showing each individual holder, I find that instead of there being 50 holders, there are in round numbers 100—or, to be exact, 91. I do not intend to weary

members by reading the names of all the holders, but I have the names with me here, and if any member is curious on the point, I shall be able to give him the names and show him a map with the holders names marked thereon, and the position of their holdings. In 1907 those 91 settlers had under crop an area of 5,343 acres, which, in round numbers, is about 50 acres under crop to each settler. That is not a large amount, in fact, a small one if it is compared with what is done in the more favoured places in the Eastern districts, and along the Great Southern railway—more favoured, not in regard to natural capabilities, but in regard to railway facilities. In 1907 there were about 100 settlers with an average under crop of 50 acres, and most of these men were farmers in a small way, indeed men who had never availed themselves, or very few of them at any rate, of the facilities offered by the Agricultural Bank; and they still have not the inducement to cultivate largely, because of the distance which separates them from railway communication. I do not doubt when this railway is built, it will be found that the area under crop will be largely increased, and instead of these settlers putting the best of their land under crop, they will do as has been done at the Chapman experimental farm, put under crop land hitherto regarded as inferior, but which as a matter of fact has been found to be good wheat growing land. If one looks at the effect of the construction of a railway, the mere prospect of construction and the hope it gives to the settlers, we can find that hope expressed in figures far more eloquently than in any words of mine. In 1908, stimulated by the prospect of the railway, the area brought under crop by these settlers increased from 5,343 acres, to 7,543 acres. If you express that acreage in the average quantity under crop per settler, you will find it has increased from 50 acres, to 75 acres per settler, a very large increase as hon. members will recognise, within that short period; an increase no doubt directly traceable to the prospect of this railway being built. If we go away

from that aspect of the question and deal with the wheat growing capabilities of that country, we find that from 5,000 odd acres cultivated in 1907, the actual yield of wheat was 21,372 bags, or four bags to the acre, equal to 16 bushels to the acre. For the current year, the estimated yield for the district given by the settlers—I do not pretend it is an official estimate, I believe the official estimate may be somewhat lower—but the estimated yield of the settlers capable of judging is not much below that of the previous year. What is the reputation of this portion of the State as a wheat growing district as compared with other portions of the State? The official statistics show that in this particular country, we have the highest wheat average in any part of Western Australia. Taking the figures supplied by the Statistical Register for 1906, the latest figures for the whole State available, we find that the yield of the Northampton magisterial district in which is included the Upper Chapman country traversed by this railway, that the average yield per acre was 12.8, as against 12.4 at Northam, 12.5 at York, 9.7 at Murray, 9 at Williams, and 7.9 at Katanning.

*Mr. Bath?* What about Beverley?

*Mr. NANSON:* I fancy Beverley is included in the York magisterial district. The figures I have quoted are taken from the Statistical Register of 1906.

*Mr. Bath:* Beverley holds a record for a number of years.

*Mr. NANSON:* If the hon. member refers to the Statistical Register for 1906 and that is the latest available, he will find that the district I have the honour to represent, holds the pride of place. I do not wish hon. members to suppose that when the Chapman and Northampton districts receive that railway development, that is their due, that they will be able to maintain this high average, for the simple reason that with the stimulus of railway communication, settlers will proceed to put under cultivation ground of a poorer quality and the general effect will be, that although the area under cultivation will be largely

increased, there will be a slight decrease in the average yield per acre. So far as they have gone, the better land has been cultivated, and they hold the pride of place as far as Western Australia is concerned; and as the Premier has pointed out, they are in the proud position of knowing that one of the settlers from that part has won in competition with the entire world, a gold medal at the Franco-British Exhibition. Hon. members may ask themselves why it is that a district with all this potential wheat wealth should in the past have made comparatively slow progress. My own intimate recollection of that part of the State goes back some eight years, when I first was a candidate for a seat in this House, and when I went up there, I found very few farmers in the district. Practically the whole of the land, with the exception of a few isolated patches, was held under pastoral lease, and the first thing that had to be done to make that district available for settlement was to secure a considerable resumption of the good agricultural land held under pastoral lease. Older members of the House will remember the struggle we had to obtain that resumption, but it was obtained, and as a consequence the value to the State of the Northampton railway very largely increased through the land being thrown open to settlement. There is now to be seen there a thriving agricultural community. Development is noticeable in the Chapman Valley, but not perhaps quite to the same extent because up to the present that valley does not enjoy railway facilities. Then there is the further difficulty not wholly overcome in this district, but in process of being overcome, the difficulty of large estates. It is true, as the Premier has pointed out, that in the immediate vicinity of this line, there are few, if any, in fact there is only one large estate as we regard estates in that part of the country. But had this line been introduced a few years ago, it would have been more difficult to get hon. members to agree to it, because then it would have gone through the Mount Erin Estate, which was in the hands of one holder, but

which four or five years ago fortunately was placed under offer to the Government, and despite considerable opposition, was repurchased. Now as illustrating the difficulty that existed in the past of awakening the people to a sense of the value of this land, and the land in the Victoria and Chapman districts, I may refer to the difficulties that had to be encountered in securing the repurchase of the Mount Erin Estate. When the Land Purchase Board went there, they condemned that estate, and said it was not suitable for agricultural settlement. The present member for Beverley was Minister for Lands at the time, and in consequence of representations made to him, he asked the board to go up and make a further and a more detailed examination of the land. As a result of that more detailed examination, and of the evidence brought to bear by residents of the district, with some difficulty we succeeded in getting the board to recommend the Government to purchase the land. Even at that stage there were pessimists who said that the land was not good and would never be taken up, that the Government were making a great mistake in purchasing it, and that it would be on their hands for an indefinite period. I lay emphasis on this repurchase, because I wish members to understand that the railway goes through this estate which is now in the hands of a number of small holders.

*Mr. Butcher:* And not one acre is in the hands of the Government.

*Mr. NANSON:* As the member for Gaseoyne points out, anticipating what I was going to say, not one acre of that land with the exception of necessary reserves is in the hands of the Government. That estate, covering an area of 60,500 acres, was bought by the Government for in round figures £20,000. The whole of it has been sold, and when payment of the blocks has been completed, the Government will realise for it a sum exceeding £28,000.

*The Premier:* That is allowing for interest.

*Mr. NANSON:* Yes. Members can see that it has not been a bad deal, looked



at from a financial aspect, and from the point of view of settling the country, it has been an admirable deal indeed, because where there was formerly one large settler with a few thousand sheep, now we have some dozens of smaller settlers, every one fully satisfied with the country taken up, whether in its wheat growing, stock raising, or fruit growing capacities, but all hampered seriously by lack of railway facilities. While I pay a tribute to all that those new settlers have done, I must also pay a tribute to the tenacity of the older settlers in hanging on to their holdings under what were adverse circumstances, not on account of the poorness of the land, but because of the lack of railway communication. The Premier made some references to the Chapman Experimental Farm, and the wonderful result achieved from land locally known as sandplain, a reddish sandy loam which under the ordinary allowance of fertiliser had yielded something like 14 bushels to the acre. Provided fertilisers can be put on the ground cheaply as will be possible with the aid of a railway, there are many thousands of acres of land of this description throughout the district, all of which I do not doubt will be brought under cultivation as soon as the inducement which this railway will afford is offered. Then in addition there is the fact that this country is essentially a country for a man who goes in for mixed farming. With the exception of a certain amount of poison the natural bushes are almost without exception edible. Within my own knowledge I have known the time when settlers found it difficult to obtain any second or third class land out of a pastoral lease which did not contain a large proportion of poison. But that land having been taken up, cleared and fenced and the poison got out, it is to-day carrying great numbers of stock. If I were to mention the exact figures, some hon. members who know that country like the member for Gascoyne, I really believe would have some difficulty in crediting what I say, because if you take the amount of stock that the country will carry when held as a large holding, and take it when fenced in as a smaller holding, there is an enormous difference in the carrying capacity.

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

Mr. NANSON: I was referring to the stock raising possibilities of this district. It will be within the knowledge of those hon. members whose recollection carries them back to the early days of Western Australia, that this locality is one of our oldest pastoral districts; and it certainly has had for many years properties which have brought in a handsome revenue to their possessors. I suppose there are many thousands of acres in other parts of the State now carrying a thriving agricultural population which did not contain a single hoof of stock at the time when this Victoria district first became a well-developed pastoral locality. But those of us who are interested in that portion of the State contend that that era in its history is passing away, and that the day of the large pastoralists in the district is now being succeeded by that of the farmer and the stock raiser on a small scale. I do not propose to weary the House by quoting a long string of statistics as to live stock actually in the district. In the first place those statistics might to some extent be misleading, because we have to remember that as a stock-raising district it has been divided into small holdings, and that in its new character it is as yet but little developed. Therefore we have not reached anything like our full capacity. But as indicating what the district is capable of, I would like to tell hon. members that so recently as last September, when I happened to be in that part of the country, I saw a small block of land only 10 acres in extent—consisting of the sandy loam which is one of the characteristic soils of the district—which had been planted with rape, but not in any specially careful manner. That small block of 10 acres had carried for six weeks previous to my visit no less than 200 sheep; and I was told, and can well believe from the appearance of the block, that it would carry those 200 sheep for another six weeks. I think hon. members who are conversant with the subject will admit that it is a very good record indeed when on a small area of 10 acres

one can feed, and not only feed but for three months fatten a flock of 200 sheep. That was not a picked block; nor was it a block on the Chapman experimental farm, cultivated by skilled persons under the direction of experts of the department. And it is only reasonable to say that what can be done in that instance can be done and will be done on thousands of acres of land as this district is developed and brought increasingly within the hands of the small owner. In this district we have a country not only rich in agricultural and stock-raising potentialities, but eminently suited for one branch of fruit growing in particular. There are in the district two orange plantations—those of Messrs. Jupp and Lauder respectively—that have something more than a local fame; that are known to fruit-growers throughout the length and breadth of the State. We find that the oranges grown there—I am not going to say they are better than those grown in any other part of the State, but I do say unhesitatingly that no part of Western Australia is better situated for orange growing. I do not contend for a moment that every acre of the land is suitable for that kind of culture; but there is a very great portion of it available, and any hon. member who has seen the orchard belonging to Mr. Jupp will bear me out in saying it is planted on soil that, although good is not of a kind of which there is only a small quantity in the district. This country is merely good wheat-growing country to all appearance, and the success that has attended Mr. Jupp's endeavours in respect to that plantation is proof positive of the extension of which this district is capable. And we find that there are persons to whom the district was known only by repute, but who, anxious to embark on the orange growing industry, and having visited every other portion of the State where oranges are grown, including the Harvey area and Gingin, have finally decided that the district to be served by this railway is the one climatically best suited to the growth of the orange. In support of that contention I need only refer to what has been done and is being done by a well-

known resident of the South-West—Dr. Hungerford, formerly of Busselton—who long before he had any knowledge that he was likely to be stationed at Geraldton took up land in the Chapman Valley for the purpose of orange growing and has now a very fine plantation just coming into bearing. At the Chapman experimental farm I understand experiments have been made, and so far successfully, in regard to the growing of sisal hemp; and I am told that this is a plant of great commercial value which can be grown on soil of a very poor description. You have therefore the position that not only is it the good land which in this portion of the State can be availed of, but even the poor sandplain which has been proved by the experiments of the Agricultural Department to be adapted to growing this valuable fibre plant, sisal hemp. Among the potentialities of this part of the country we must number those of a mineral country. The Northampton field has, it is true, fallen on somewhat evil days of late years; but it is by no means an impossibility that as its capabilities become better known, and as cheap transport is provided and capital attracted, the Northampton mineral district—a district which at one time occupied in Western Australia the place that Kalgoorlies occupies to-day—will be again exploited, and we will have in that portion of the State one which will give to the farmer that best of all markets, a market very close to his own door, in addition to which he will have the option of embarking upon that larger export trade which lies immediately ahead of Western Australia. Along the line of this railway is the old Narrattarra mine, a mine from which many thousands of tons of ore were raised in earlier days, and which I believe was worked, if only to a small extent, so recently as within the last 12 months. Many persons having a longer and more familiar acquaintance with the district than I profess to have are sanguine that when this railway is provided an impetus will also be given to the mining development, and that some of those mining properties which perhaps do not

pay for working at the present time because of the expense of transport—there is I understand a very strong probability that this railway will assist in their development. I do not know that there is much need for me to say more in regard to this line. Speaking generally of the district I may say that this line will mark a new era in its progress. We knew it first as a pastoralists' country. Then we saw initiated an era of closer settlement; but that closer settlement has laboured under a disadvantage in not being assisted by railway communication. For the first time in the history of Western Australia we have now a prospect of seeing an agricultural railway built through the district. In other parts of the State numbers of these lines have been built. We do not complain of that; in fact in a sense the people in the Chapman district rather welcome it; because what has been done further South in regard to the agricultural railway policy shows in the most satisfactory manner possible that that policy is a good one. And we believe that when it is applied to the Northern part of the South-Western division, the results will be just as encouraging and satisfactory as have been the results achieved further South. I feel sure that when this railway is passed by this House those hon. members who will have assisted by their votes in sanctioning this line and thus adding to the wealth of that portion of the State, will always look back with pride and pleasure upon the good services they did in playing their part in developing what is fast being a new agricultural province to Western Australia. And they will have the further satisfaction of conveying a message of encouragement and of recognition to the settlers in that part of the State who, despite the lack of transport and despite other discouragements, have never faltered in their belief as to what it was possible for them to do if they got the facilities given to other districts; and it will be a further inducement offered to them to redouble their efforts, which in the past, if we take into account the obstacles that had to be encountered, show, as any reasonable and impartial

man will admit, how thoroughly and abundantly was this railway justified.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I oppose this Bill partly for the reasons given in the discussion on the last agricultural railway Bill, because I object to constructing any more agricultural railways until the land alongside the present railways is brought under cultivation. Another reason is that I am opposed to the alienation of Crown lands.

Mr. Monger: What about your own proposition?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I shall tell you all about my own proposition when we are discussing the Lands Estimates. This railway is being built for the specific purpose of getting rid of some more of this beautiful land the member for the district assured us was something extraordinary. I want to say that there are some things that scarcely work out according to my calculations, though they may work out for others. Of course there is the usual clause in this Bill for the resumption of large estates, but I suppose under this Bill it will work as it has worked under other Bills; that is it has not worked at all. I think the clause should be dropped out, as it is very misleading to the House and to the people; because I am sure that after the Government allowed the land along the Bolgart railway to be sold by auction by the company owning the land, they have no intention of bringing this clause into operation in any part of the State.

Hon. F. H. Piessé: They cannot do it until the railway is constructed.

Mr. Hudson: But they could give notice.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We are told by the member for Greenough that the Government did purchase in this district an estate of 60,000 acres, and that the whole of the land has been sold to small owners. Looking through the sheet of information concerning this railway, we find that the total land alienated is 165,000 acres, and the large holders in that district amount to 80,000 acres, leaving only 25,000 acres outside that estate which has been sold to small holders. Notwithstanding the splendid effort of the member

for the district. I think we must conclude that this district is not all the hon. member made it out to be. He differs to a certain extent from the member for Mt. Magnet, who assured us that he was supporting this railway because he wished to help the people on that land to develop it and produce crops from it. Yet the member for Greenough tells us that there were 200 sheep depastured on 10 acres of land, which means 20 sheep to the acre, and he says there are thousands of acres of that class of land.

*Mr. Butcher:* For three months of the year.

*Mr. UNDERWOOD:* Well, that is near enough. If there is land on which they can depasture 20 sheep to the acre the district does not need a railway.

*The Premier:* Did not the hon. member say that area was planted with rape?

*Mr. UNDERWOOD:* Cannot he plant the other country with rape?

*The Premier:* If he had enough money.

*Mr. UNDERWOOD:* The impression given by the member for the district is not in accordance with the opinions of the member for Mt. Magnet. The hon. member assured us that this is some of the best fruit-growing country in Western Australia, and if the country is as good as he tells us surely the people can develop it without a railway. With such land as that there I am sure the want of a railway would not retard settlement. Again the hon. member says that they can produce hemp there of very great commercial value. Still they want a railway of 26 miles and cannot develop the land without it. I have no reason to doubt the hon. member, but I certainly say that if this is correct the residents in that district have not too much energy considering the salubrious climate in which they live. Again the hon. member stated that there is a great belt of mineral country there, and he said that if these minerals were opened up the settlers in this part of the country would have the very best of markets, namely, a market at their own doors. Well, if they get it, there will be nothing for the railway to carry. The hon. member tells us that most of the land is sandplain instead of second and third-class land, and he as-

suress us, and I believe with some truth, that this sandplain country can be made to grow wheat.

*Mr. Troy:* So it does.

*Mr. UNDERWOOD:* I am convinced it can and will grow wheat, and I am convinced that there are millions of acres of sandplain alongside our present railways that will grow wheat, and until we open up those sandplains alongside our existing railways I say we are not doing justice to the country, especially in the present state of the finances, by building railways to other sandplains we know not of. I intend to oppose the railway for the reasons I have given, but more particularly for the reasons given by the member for the district. It is such a rich, prolific country, and it is quite possible to develop it without a railway. The settler who gets hold of land that will feed 20 sheep to the acre for three months is certainly a very fortunate person indeed; but considering the stringency of the finances, and the need for economy, I think that gentleman could do without a railway for two or three months longer.

*Mr. Swan:* He could drive his sheep to the market.

*Mr. UNDERWOOD:* But he would want to cart his wool. The hon. member makes a difference of nearly 100 per cent. in the number of resident occupiers. I believe that there was a board appointed to make inquiries into this country, and to advise us as to the best route for the construction of the line, and all I can say is if they are not more correct in their other observations than they are in regard to the number of settlers, it is easy to see that the report is a very poor report indeed. I intend to oppose the Bill.

*Mr. CARSON (Geraldton):* I do not think it necessary for me to speak at any great length on this Bill, because the Premier and the member for the district have made out a very good case for its construction. Seeing that I represent the port of the district this railway will serve, and being a resident of over 25 years, and knowing the difficulties that the present selectors have to contend with in getting their produce to market, and also

knowing that the land will open up a considerable quantity of fine grazing land, I strongly urge the House to vote for this Bill. I think every member of this House recognises the need for opening up our country with railway communication, because it is impossible to develop the out-back country unless we have cheap means of transport. Without a doubt we have in the Mt. Erin district and also in the Yuna country some of the finest wheat-producing land of the State, but it is impossible to utilise the land and develop it, as it should be developed, unless we have railway communication. It has been pointed out by the member representing the district (Mr. Nanson) that it has the best average for wheat in the State, something like 13 bushels to the acre. Then, again, I think we should keep faith with these people who are selecting this country out back: because they would not have selected but for the assurance that the Government would construct this railway.

*Mr. Swan:* What about the Wanneroo selectors?

*Mr. CARSON:* I think it is not only our duty to place the people on the land, but it is also our duty, as far as we reasonably can, to see that they become contented and thriving settlers. It would be a very bad advertisement indeed for us to make failures of these selectors who go on the land. The reason the country through which this railway is to run is not developed is because of the difficulty they have of getting their produce to the market. As the Premier points out, it is proposed that the line shall go through virgin country. He has also pointed out that it is very difficult to get through some of the ranges in order to cart produce to market. Therefore, the settlers find it more profitable at present to put their land to pastoral purposes. We have had evidence given us to-night as to the fertility of the soil in the district. Before I came down from Geraldton last week I was shown a sample of wheat that came from the experimental farm from a plot of six to ten acres, which averaged 26 bushels to the acre. This will give an idea of the fertility of the soil of these parts. The Yuna country has just been

opened up and a number of blocks have been applied for. The reason why the whole of the blocks have not been applied for is that the selector wants to know first, before he selects, whether he can get water in this area; and as the Premier has pointed out, good water has been struck in the Yuna country. Then there is a much larger extent of country than that already surveyed, which when the line is constructed the Government can have surveyed and thrown open for selection. This railway will also serve, as has been pointed out, the Mt. Erin estate, the whole of which has been selected, and on which the State made a profit of something like £8,000.

*Mr. Bath:* How many settlers are there on that estate?

*Mr. CARSON:* There are 50.

*Mr. Bath:* That is all the occupiers along this route.

*Mr. CARSON:* We are looking out in the near future for the exportation of wheat, and I think if this railway is constructed that date will be hastened, because we have some of the finest wheat-growing land in that part of the State. I hope no opposition will be shown to the construction of this railway, more especially as it is the first agricultural line in the Northern portion of the State. Seeing that the more Southern portions of the State have been catered for with many of these railways, I think it is only just to give the Northern portion of the State one such agricultural railway. As has been pointed out by the member for the district, I believe if this railway is constructed it will be the means of having the Narratarra lead mines opened up again. Recently a certain amount of lead ore was sent from that part, but the people ran out of their small capital owing to the great difficulties they had with regard to water. The member for Gascoyne has pointed out that he did not think this is the correct route. There are of course differences of opinion with regard to the route, and although the one the hon. member advocates would serve electors of my constituency, still, I cannot help thinking it is a mistake for a member to pit his opinion against that of the expert officers. It would be a

mistake to oppose the route selected by those officials. I will not delay the House longer, and will conclude by expressing the hope that members will give their vote for the passing of the measure.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE (Katanning): I did not intend rising to speak with regard to the railway had it not been for the remarks of the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood). That hon. member has fallen into the same error so many members do by speaking in exaggerated terms as to the land which is within a working radius of railways, but which is not being made use of. However, he errs in good company, if we may so term the members of the Commonwealth Parliament representing Western Australia, for no later than this morning there is a report in the Press of a discussion on the Commonwealth Estimates in which Senator Needham said there were millions of acres held by persons in Western Australia to the detriment of the other occupants of the State, as they were not made use of.

Mr. Scaddan: That is according to a Press report.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: According to the report, Senator Needham said:—

"It would be advisable, before inviting people, to have land available on which they might settle. At the present time, he ventured to say, there was not land available for the immigrants."

Senator Dobson interjected "A nice thing to publish abroad" and Senator Millen said "The Western Australian Government offer free grants of land." And then Senator Needham continuing said:—

"He meant land worth settling on, and all such land was held up in his own State as well as in other States by those who owned millions of acres which they did not use."

The alienated lands of this State total 14 million acres, of which 2¾ millions are alienated on behalf of the Midland Railway Company, and much of this is being settled. Deduct that quantity from the acreage alienated, and in process of alienation, and the result would be a total of a little over 11 million acres. If we take the Great Southern Railway land from Beverley to Albany, a distance of

243 miles, and take 15 miles on each side of it—which is considered the distance that can be made use of for farming on safe and economical lines—even double that distance and give 30 miles as the width of the country adjacent to the railway, and it will be found that the whole area is 4,600,000 acres. Therefore, when we talk in millions of acres we forget that a million acres of country is a very large area. I want to say this in justice to those who have taken up land, that the development going on in this country is greater proportionately per acre held, than in any part of Australia. Development is going on rapidly at the present time. I refer to the remarks of the member for Pilbara for I look upon him as a practical man who when making a statement recognises the responsibility of doing so. It was certainly a mistake for Senator Needham to refer as he did to "millions of acres," for the truth is, that the area which possibly is not used in the way it should be totals only about 100,000 acres. I am satisfied that if we wait for a few years, two or three years, we will find that the development along the railway lines will satisfy the most severe critic. One cannot develop these lands as rapidly as members seem to think. I can refer to the Leader of the Opposition on this point, and, by the way, I should like to say I am glad to see he is taking a practical interest in land settlement and is entering into the industry himself. Other members are doing the same, and all honour to them, for I want to see as many settlers on the land as possible. I will ask members who have been watching the settlement, progress and development of the land carefully, whether they can point to many instances where the ordinary settler is not turning his attention energetically to the development of his holding. The work is being done as rapidly as possible. I can refer to the member for Beverley (Mr. Hopkins) who until recently occupied a position on the Agricultural Bank Board. He knows of the many applications for assistance that have been received and what is being done through the instrumentality of that admirable institution. Those who talk of undeveloped millions of acres are mis-

leading the people who are led to think there are these vast areas of land locked up, and that nothing is being done on them. As one who has travelled all over the railway system, more especially over the Great Southern railway, it has been a great pleasure and surprise to me to see the vast amount of work going on from Beverley right down to Katanning on both sides of the line and, with the exception of a few sandplains for a distance of about seven miles, the whole of the land is taken up and being utilized. Reference has been made to the possible development of these sandplains, and I agree that a great deal will be done in the future to turn this land to profitable account. A few days ago when passing those sandplains to which I refer, I saw a short distance from the railway, one of the finest crops I have seen this year. It was grown on land which a little while ago would not have been looked at. I do not for one moment wish to say that all settlers do what they should in the way of improving their property. Some have to be urged on. I have often alluded to them, and have said they should be forced to do what is necessary to develop their holdings. It is, however, an unfair accusation to say there are people holding millions of acres of land without developing them, and such a statement should never be used as a reason against the construction of a work such as that provided for in this Bill.

*Mr. Bath:* What is the percentage of cultivable land along the Great Southern?

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: I cannot say off-hand.

*Mr. Bath:* Would there be 5 per cent. of first or second-class land?

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: I cannot say without making a calculation. I believe this, that of the holdings applied for on the Great Southern railway within a 15 miles radius of the line, 25 per cent. are cultivable, and should be made use of. The hon. member must not forget that a great impetus was not given until the Government took over the railway in 1897, and four or five years elapsed before people were able to get a proper start. To come back to the proposed new railway. I have before me the plan which

was made use of by the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson). I am struck with the evidence placed before us with regard to the prospects of the district, for the returns show that the arguments of the member for Pilbara do not apply at all events in this case. He asks that the line should not be built because there is so much undeveloped land in the different parts of the State along the present railway system. He cannot make that excuse on this line, for it has to pass through a settled country, and I am surprised to see that so many settlers there are within reasonable distance of the railway. Therefore immediate advantage will be taken of the railway, and considerable traffic must result from the work of those people. It is very pleasurable to see what a large number of settlers are established in the district proposed to be served. We need to be cautious in carrying out many of our public works, and especially these projected railways; but if we were to adopt the practice which exists in America and other places of running out the railways even in advance of the settlement, we would be doing a good work for Western Australia and for the Commonwealth generally. We must not forget, however, that in order to construct these railways we want money. If funds are not forthcoming, the work cannot be carried out; but it behoves us to continue it so long as we can, as it is most necessary for the opening up of the country that railways should be built. I mention this question of the millions of acres, because too many people are inclined to exaggerate with regard to figures, and to talk lightly of the area not worked. I agree that some of the charges are true, and that a considerable quantity of land is not worked as it should be; but I would never say there are millions of acres coming under this category, for we know from our statistical information how we develop the country. I have very much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. JOHNSON (Guildford): I desire to support the second reading of this Bill, because I have long felt that sufficient attention has not been devoted to this

portion of the State. I would like to see the Government cast their eyes still farther north, and develop the country there. We have, however, to realise that the arguments of the member for Pilbara are absolutely sound, but I am inclined to think it would be very wrong for us to stop agricultural railways, or agricultural development in order that agricultural lands already in proximity to the railways should be worked. The only method by which that result can be accomplished is in my opinion by the operation of the land tax. The member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) in speaking of the Great Southern railway took the country between Beverley and Albany. He must know better than anyone else that, so far as the country between Spencer's Brook and Beverley is concerned, it is scandalous that so much land within a radius of 10 or 12 miles of the line, so many thousands and thousands of acres, are not used. It is illustrations of this description that make one feel the land tax is not the land tax we want in order to bring this land under cultivation. The member for Beverley (Mr. Hopkins) knows well that the land tax has not had the effect on agricultural development one would have expected. I am sorry that hon. member was absent last night when we were discussing the important land tax measure. I will give one illustration, striking enough to make one feel we should do more in connection with land values taxation than we have done, before it can have any effect upon our unimproved lands. In travelling from Spencer's Brook to Beverley, one passes through an estate of 5,000 acres which I have been informed, belongs to Lady Forrest. I understand it was taken up for between 5s. and 10s. per acre, and yet Lady Forrest now asks between £3 and £5 per acre for the land. Notwithstanding this, the land is now exactly the same as nature left it, in the same condition as when it was acquired. What is the use of a land tax if it will not have the effect of bringing this land into use. I would also like to point out, while I agree with the member for Pilbara that it is essential something should be done to get the land already served by railways brought under cultivation, I am

afraid we will not gain that object by blocking the construction of additional lines. While there are railways that I am opposed to, I believe that this one is entitled to fair consideration at the hands of members. After all, we know this portion of the State has not received great encouragement from any Government, and it is a portion of the country which is cursed by large estates. I trust the Government will continue to acquire these large estates, break them up, and increase the population in those parts. With these few remarks I desire to support the second reading, and sincerely trust that the member for Katanning will eventually see that something must be done to bring the land, especially along the Great Southern railway line, unused land to-day, under cultivation.

Mr. HOPKINS (Beverley) : As briefly as may be, I would like to add my measure of support to the Bill. I do not know any tract of country within the limits of the South-Western division which to me appears to be more deserving of a railway than this country commonly known as the Victoria district. At one time, when controlling the Lands Department, I took some interest in this part of the State, and endeavoured to lend a hand to bring about its development. I must take the opportunity of saying that this part of the State deserved better of the Government than the treatment it has received, and, in fact, it deserved better of the various Governments that have been in power. The Mount Erin estate, if my memory serves me correctly, was placed under offer to the Government in my time. The Land Purchase Board, in the exercise of their discretion, valued that estate at a lesser sum than that for which it had been offered to the Government, but ultimately a compromise was effected, and the purchase was made for about £9,000. I was astonished to see in answer to a question that in the subdivision of that estate, a profit was shown of over £8,000. When the Crown acquires properties of that class for closer settlement, it is not, or it should not be the desire of the department, or at any



rate until such time as Parliament has expressed an opinion upon it, to earn anything like such a profit on an estate that originally cost £9,000. That is quite unnecessary, and after all, in extracting these prices under the existing forms of tenure that the people are compelled to select under, it often creates a difficulty for the early settlers to become successfully established, unless at the time of starting they are in possession of a considerable amount of capital. One has to travel through the back portions of the country to realise the difficulties many of the settlers have to struggle under. I had occasion to visit the country lying East of Beverley during the present week, and in conversation with a gentleman settled on the land, he informed me that only in that week he had been East for the purpose of removing stock, and he struck a homestead where there were five children, and there was nothing in that homestead but a bit of rice. It shows a wonderful fund of self-reliance, it shows a spirit which the people of Australia might well be proud of; when we find men battling under those disabilities, and still are loth to lay their claims before the Government for some further assistance and consideration. I only mention this as evidencing the point I have endeavoured to make clear on a previous occasion, that we do not give in our present tenure sufficient encouragement to the man with limited means to become established on any one of those properties. In New Zealand it has been found to work admirably that a settler may acquire a leasehold title, when he can secure a little means to purchase stock and plant to work his holding.

*The Honorary Minister* : The rental is the same in New Zealand as it is here.

Mr. HOPKINS: The Honorary Minister tells us that the rental is the same in New Zealand as it is in Western Australia. Well, any person who has knowledge of the two countries, who seeks to make a comparison between the productiveness of one acre in New Zealand, and the productiveness of one acre in Western Australia—

*The Honorary Minister* : Ours is as good.

Mr. HOPKINS: My friend is essentially loyal to the State of his nativity, and all credit to him for it. But, after all, is it wise to allow our loyalty to outrun our judgment? The South-Western division is essentially, and will always be a cereal growing country, the yield from which will never stand comparison with the agricultural lands of either New Zealand or Victoria. I might claim to have given some consideration to this matter, having travelled through some of the other States, and I have not the slightest doubt of this, those who have seen the land in New Zealand which has been sold in the past for 6d. know that it was cheaper than the land that is being selected in the South-Western division of Western Australia.

*Mr. Bath* : We have a bigger average wheat yield here than in Victoria.

Mr. HOPKINS: This is essentially a cereal growing country, and there are various other side lines in agriculture which are followed by the farmers of Victoria and New Zealand, and those side lines have in the past proved to be a profitable portion of the industry. We have some very excellent wheat land, and as we go further North of the country that will be served by this proposed railway, it will be found that there is some most attractive country, which although sparsely populated at the present time, is destined in the near future to carry a huge population, which will make this and other railways which must follow, highly productive and interest-earning concerns. During the time I had at my disposal when in the district, I formed the one conclusion that the further North you go the sweeter the country becomes, and the virgin country there is preferable to that found in the South. Stock do better, and since having been brought into contact with the livestock industry down here, I can say that the best horses coming to the market in Perth are the horses that are brought down from the North.

*Hon. F. H. Piessé* : Excepting the Kojonup horses.

Mr. HOPIKINS: From where some useful little horses come. But, in order that we may establish the industry on a proper basis, we cannot have them all on the small side. After all, the bigger and the better boned stock do not come from the Southern portion of the South-Western division. I do not wish to debate this point at any great length, I only wish to express my commendation towards the railway proposal which is now before the House. I feel confident it is only one of many that this House will ultimately carry out, and I expressed the opinion previously, as I do now, this House will be wise next session to give the Government authority to raise three millions sterling, which might be utilised in immediately building necessary agricultural railways where required, and mopping up with all the expedition possible the surplus population over in the Eastern States; and when we carry that policy to a vigorous conclusion, we will have a policy which will be of some benefit to the country, and which will be a contrast to that introduced by my friends opposite.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): At the outset the Premier submitted this measure embodying this railway proposal to the House, and I was certainly predisposed in its favour, in the first place, because I have had the opportunity, certainly a limited one, of seeing the land both in its virgin state and also after cultivation, and, undoubtedly, it gives evidence that it will assist to make the railway profitable, as profitable as any railway proposal presented in connection with other parts of the State. I want to say, and to put it in its mildest possible form that the disparity of the information supplied by members who have volunteered their support to this Bill, and especially those who represent districts more immediately concerned, although it may give evidence of the zeal of those members, has certainly awakened suspicion in the minds of other members not acquainted with the district. We have heard of the battle of routes in regard to the railway, that there were

four rival propositions, and that a special board had to be appointed in order to put an end to the feuds which were going on in the Geraldton district while this proposition was being considered by the Government, and to-night we have a battle of information supplied by hon. members. I have often wondered how such a little insect as a spider could spin such a big web, and I was astonished to-night when the member for Greenough presented such a magnificent picture on the slight information that he had at his disposal, and presented information, which, to a large extent, differed from that supplied on this sheet submitted by the Premier for the guidance of members, and differed also from the information supplied by the Premier and other members who have supported this proposal. In the first place, we were told what a magnificent thing had been done by repurchasing the Mount Erin estate and making it available for closer settlement, and as an exemplification of the wisdom in doing this. We were informed that not one block remained on the hands of the Government, but they had realised £8,000, in the money they had secured by reselling it, over and above the purchase price they paid. We were told by the member for Geraldton that there are 50 settlers on the Mount Erin estate, and the information supplied by the Premier is that there are only 50 resident occupiers on the whole of the area which is to be served by this railway.

Mr. Nanson: You can have my map showing it in detail.

Mr. BATH: I only wish to point this out that when we are asked to deal with a railway proposition it is only fair to members that they should be placed in the position of knowing whose information is sound and correct. If the member for Greenough considers his facts are most reliable we will accept them, but we do not want to have information supplied by an official head or Minister introducing the Bill, other information supplied by the member for the district, and still further information of a different character supplied by some mem-

bers. We want to have some regard for the fitness of things so that we may give an unbiased judgment on the issue.

*Mr. Nanson*: It is merely an underestimate.

*Mr. BATH*: Then again, in regard to this Mt. Erin estate. It consists of some 65,000 acres, or, rather, 65,000 acres have been made available for settlement. It has been a big estate and is now broken up; and we may presume that those who have gone on it have a desire to cultivate the soil. Yet under cultivation there are only some 8,000 acres, and I presume this 2,000 acres of cleared land is over and above the 8,000; making a total of 10,000 acres, or less than one-sixth of the total area of the Mt. Erin estate. And within the influence of the line is a considerable area of land for selection. So I am of the opinion that there is something going on in connection with this repurchased estate which is going on elsewhere in connection with estates repurchased for the purpose of closer settlement. That is to say, the Government have seen the evil of allowing these large estates to exist, and have taken advantage of the Act to repurchase and sell again through the land board at a price fixed under the Act. They have resold these estates, and we are again building up this very class of estate we wish to destroy.

*The Premier*: In these repurchased estates a settler cannot take more than 1,000 acres of first class land.

*Mr. Underwood*: Here is one of 16,000 acres.

*Mr. BATH*: They get behind it in some way or other.

*The Premier*: The fact that they only paid £9,000 for that lot is pretty good evidence that it is not all first class land.

*Mr. BATH*: I remember that Mr. Throssell when a member of this House complained of the results of this policy. And it was one of his reasons for advocating the leasehold, that by our policy of repurchasing and selling again we were building up large estates. I believe that to the westward of the Great Southern railway, where this policy of closer settlement is supposed to have been carried on, estates have

grown up bigger than ever existed before in this State.

*Mr. Butcher*: On the same land?

*Mr. BATH*: Some of it is the same. I cannot say whether it is all the same; but we find estates amounting to over 60,000 acres.

*Hon. F. H. Piesse*: Where is that?

*Mr. BATH*: To the westward of the Great Southern.

*Hon. F. H. Piesse*: No estates have been resumed west of the Great Southern.

*Mr. BATH*: Well, while on the one hand we are advocating a policy of railway construction and repurchase, and other means for encouraging closer settlement; and are inserting clauses in our land legislation for the purpose of preventing the building up of big estates, the process still goes on.

*Hon. F. H. Piesse*: It is a misconception arising from want of knowledge of the western country. No estates have been resumed down there, although one of 4,000 acres was sold some years ago to the Government.

*Mr. BATH*: Still, even if not repurchased they have been allowed to grow up. I am thinking of that of Messrs. Wilkie Brothers.

*The Premier*: Why that is a poison lease.

*Mr. Hopkins*: And they have spent a mint of money trying to clear it.

*Mr. BATH*: How much do they hold?

*Mr. Hopkins*: They hold 90,000 acres.

*The Premier*: We ought to be thankful they took it; it was a menace to stock.

*Mr. Hopkins*: Of course it was.

*Mr. BATH*: Another matter to which the member for Katanning referred shows, in my opinion, that his zeal has somewhat outrun his discretion in the use of figures. Accepting his own figures—and I do this with a certain amount of deference, because I know it is not exactly germane to the railway—on his own calculations of four million acres along the Great Southern railway within a radius of 15 miles on either side, and allowing for the poorer land, 20 per cent. would give an area of 960,000 acres, while as a matter of fact the land under cultivation in the

whole of the State is 460,000 acres. The hon. member must admit that there is a big element of truth in what has been said as to the areas held along existing railways and not put to productive use. It is not necessary to go to our Statistical Abstract for this. One has only to travel along the line and use his eyes, to be convinced. But I want to make this point clear for the benefit of the member for Pilbara. It may be a sound argument to use, that we should not build a new railway line to open up a virgin area of country for the purpose of making land available for settlement while we have this land lying idle along our existing railway system. But I do not think it is right to deny to people settled in an area such as this under discussion all hope of railway communication merely because we have lands not used along our existing railways. If we adopt that idea in dealing with these railway systems it would be penalising settlers, not for any fault of their own, but for what is manifestly the fault of Parliament. Therefore I take up the attitude in connection with this and other similar propositions, that after all we must judge them on their merits. But I think it would be wise if in the future the Minister introducing the Bill, and those members representing the districts interested, should have some prior consultation before they come to Parliament so that uniform information would be available for hon. members on which to judge the merits of the project. Because this remarkable disparity in available information gives rise to suspicion in the minds of hon. members who are not acquainted at first hand with the resources of the district.

Mr. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): On this matter I am compelled to be led by statements made by hon. members who have some interest in the district. Personally I have not visited the district to be served by this line. Consequently I am prepared to accept the statements made by hon. members who represent that district. What I do not know I am prepared to be told. I have listened here for some considerable time in an endeavour to make up my mind as to whether this district

requires a railway. If I were to follow the statement of the member for Geraldton I could come to only one conclusion and that is that the line is absolutely essential; that, in fact it is a serious charge against the Government that they did not bring down this proposal long ago. The member for Greenough tells the same story. During my term in this House I have heard the Premier move the second reading of several agricultural railway Bills, and on every occasion I have heard from him the same statement. During this discussion I have taken the trouble to turn up last session's *Hansard* and glance at the remarks made by the Premier when introducing railway Bills. First he tells us that the best agricultural district in the State was that to be served by the Wagin to Dumbleyung railway, where they boasted an average yield of 15 bushels of wheat to the acre. He discovered later that the district to be served by the Goomalling-Dowerin line was the very best, with an average of 18 bushels to the acre. This was equalled by another district which also was the very best, namely the district to be served by the Bridgetown-Wilgarrup railway, and which also boasted 18 bushels to the acre. But the very best, I find from the Premier's remarks, is the district served by the line from Greenhills to Quairading, where the average yield is 19 bushels. So when I take the returns presented to hon. members for their consideration while discussing this Bill, I find that instead of the district to be served being the best in the State up to date it is positively the worst, for it shows only an average of 13 bushels. In view of this fact, how hon. members with no personal knowledge of the district are going to record their votes with any show of having come to their decision honestly, is entirely beyond my comprehension. I am prepared to accept the statements of agricultural members when they inform me on these matters; but how is one going to discriminate between the best, the very best, and the very, very best? Before coming into the Chamber the members interested in these Bills ought really to have a caucus meeting: ought to have a conference with

the Premier and get him to look up the figures he has previously given to Parliament so that he will not keep on saying that this latest is the best district in the State. The Honorary Minister being as optimistic as he is will presently be telling us that the best agricultural land lies along the route of the Transcontinental railway. However, I am going to support this Bill because I believe there are really good lands in the district. I do not know whether this is the best route; I have to take the report of the departmental officers. One reason why members should support this railway is, because it appears the first one yet proposed in this House which will not serve Bunbury.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

*Mr. Darglish* in the Chair; *the Premier* in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

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

*Mr. BATH*: When we were discussing the Bridgetown-Wilgarrup railway, the Treasurer was asked whether he could give us any assurance that the power taken under this clause was to be used for the resumption of any land along the proposed railway, but the Treasurer had not vouchsafed any reply. One noticed that along the route accepted on the recommendation of the board, the name of Burges occurred very frequently on the blocks immediately adjacent to this line, almost from beginning to end, so that if this line was to be utilised for the purpose of closer settlement, and in order to encourage small holdings, in order to provide traffic for the railway, with a view to ultimately making it a payable proposition. We should have some assurance that before the power given under this clause expired the Government would avail themselves of it; otherwise the clause was a delusion and a snare. In previous Bills the insertion of a similar provision had been held out as an in-

ducement for members to vote for the railways, but what guarantee was there that it would be utilised by the Government? As a matter of policy we should have an assurance that wherever possible the Government would avail themselves of the power to have the land opened up in small areas and so encourage settlement which would lead to the railway being a payable proposition in a few years.

*The PREMIER*: On more than one occasion the Government had instructed the land board to report as to the advisability or otherwise of resuming land within 12 months of the opening up of a railway for traffic. The board examined certain lands on the Collic-Narrogin railway, and after giving the matter further consideration it was found that the lands were so improved that it would entail very heavy expenditure to repurchase them. The board were now reporting as to the advisability of exercising this power on the Greenhills-Quairading line in regard to two blocks; but where a property was improved to the extent of £4 or £5 an acre, and there was every likelihood of its being improved to its utmost capacity, it had not been considered wise to repurchase. The board were now reporting on one or two other railways, and if it was found there was any block of land not improved the board had power to recommend its resumption under this provision, and the Government would be only too glad to take advantage of the power conferred.

*Mr. UNDERWOOD*: The Premier's explanation showed the uselessness of the clause if the Government would not buy improved land. If the land was any good the owner would improve it on the advent of the railway; so there was no chance of getting any good land and the clause might as well be struck out.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6, 7—agreed to.

Schedule. Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment; the report adopted.

## BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

*Committee stage.*

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson): I move—

*That Mr. Speaker do leave the Chair for the purpose of going into Committee on this Bill.*

*Point of Order.*

Mr. Bath: I desire to rise to a point of order in connection with this Bill, and it is practically the same point that was raised by the member for Kanowna last night, but which in the light of further information, practically destroys one of the reasons upon which the ruling you gave last night was given. I might point out that in the drafting of our Standing Orders it was pointed out by the then Speaker, when submitting them to the House for approval in 1890, that—

“They were almost word for word the same rules and orders as were in force in South Australia, and which he believed had been found to be so well adapted and so efficacious in regulating the proceedings of Parliament there that they had scarcely ever been amended. Here there had been some few amendments made in them, in accordance with some recommendation of his own and other members, by Mr. Blackmore, the Clerk of Parliaments in South Australia.”

Mr. Blackmore's volume is accepted as the first authority here on disputed points in regard to procedure in colonial Parliaments; and I may add that in South Australia in all taxation measures the course which the member for Kanowna submitted should be taken on these Bills is taken; because in the session of 1905, when proposals for land and income taxation were submitted, the Treasurer moved the House into Committee of Ways and Means to consider the resolution, and at a later date, after the resolution had been adopted, the Bill was submitted to its first, second, and third readings and carried. One of the reasons advanced by you, Mr. Speaker, last night was that while there may have been a considerable amount of weight

in the argument of the member for Kanowna the practice adopted had not been adopted in this State. As a matter of fact the practice was adopted—

*The Premier:* And was not.

Mr. Bath: And probably, through some unaccountable lapse or looseness we cannot explain at the present time, the practice has been dropped. Anyhow, the practice adopted in South Australia on precisely the same Standing Orders as we have, was adopted by Sir John Forrest in submitting Bills.

*The Attorney General:* Which Bills?

Mr. Bath: The first illustration I have is in 1891, where the Treasurer was submitting a Bill, called the Tobacco (Unmanufactured) Duty Bill, and the first procedure was that Sir John Forrest moved—

“That the Speaker do leave the Chair and that the House resolve itself into Committee of Ways and Means to consider His Excellency's Message.”

Then they went into Committee, and after the Committee stage the Treasurer obtained leave to introduce a Bill, which was read a first time, and on the following day the other stages were taken. Later on, in connection with imposition of a stock tax, the same procedure was adopted: the House went into Committee, the matter was considered and a resolution was adopted; and later on the Premier (Sir John Forrest), in accordance with the resolution adopted in Committee, obtained leave to introduce the Stock Tax Bill. The question was put and passed, the Bill was ordered to be printed, and the second reading was fixed for a later stage. In 1898 the same procedure was adopted in regard to customs taxation. The Premier has the *Votes and Proceedings* showing the procedure, when the House went into Committee of Ways and Means.

*The Treasurer:* What about the year 1899?

Mr. Bath: Well, after 1898 it was not done; but whatever reason they had it is immaterial to the question, because these illustrations I have quoted show that the course is absolutely necessary.

In South Australia the Standing Order dealing with this question is precisely the same as our own. It says that matters affecting finance can only be discussed in Committee of the whole House; and this is what Mr. Blackmore says about Committees of the whole House—

“The Committee of the whole House is not an independent body. It is created by the House to consider such matters as the House commits to it.” Then he goes on to quote questions remitted to a Committee of the whole House and the nature of them. He says—

“The House remits to Committees of the whole all matters of finance, trade, grants of public money, and whatever else is deemed to require more ample discussion, and the interposition of more deliberation and delay than the House itself allows or provides. To the special Committees of Supply, and Ways and Means, are committed the Annual Estimates to the former, and all matters of taxation and raising revenue, and making good the Supplies granted, to the latter.”

Further on it says—

“It will be sufficient to quote a few instances of the class of questions referred to what may be termed an ordinary Committee of the whole.”

Though it deals with a number of questions I have no desire to read them, but I will submit the book to you. I may read a few, namely: silver coin as a legal tender; defence of the colony; management of the waterworks; waste lands, system of sale and disposal, and resumption of female immigration. In view of the procedure in our own Parliament, and in view of the practice laid down by *Blackmore*, which has always been accepted as an authority in this House, and in view of the fact that our Standing Order is copied from the South Australian Standing Order, and adopted on the advice of Mr. Blackmore, I submit that the course submitted by the member for Kanowna, which is always followed in South Australia in regard to their taxation proposals, and which is essential in Western Australia if we

wish to avoid litigation and trouble in regard to legislation passed by us, should be adopted in regard to this Bill. I had no knowledge whatever of the error in our procedure until the point was submitted by the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker), but the matter having once been brought before the House, it is our duty to conform strictly to the regulations prescribed, especially on such a question as one of taxation.

Mr. SPEAKER: I find that in 1903 and 1899 the Administration and Dividend Duty Bills had the same procedure applied to them as has been adopted in the present case. This precedent we have been following since then. I gave my ruling last evening, and I admit that in doing so I was in error in so far as I said the practice had been in existence since Responsible Government. It is due from me to the member for Kanowna to say that. I am of opinion that I cannot alter my ruling at this stage. I have ruled, but I think it is advisable that in the future we should adopt the procedure of every other Parliament. It would be out of place for me, having given my ruling last evening, to give another this evening. I have already intimated to Ministers that the procedure adopted in other Parliaments should, in the future, be adopted here.

Question put and passed.

#### *In Committee.*

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

#### BILL—METROPOLITAN SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE (TEMPORARY).

##### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 1st December.

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): It is not my intention to speak at any great length upon this measure, but I wish to enter my protest against what I believe to be a somewhat dangerous principle contained in this Bill. In the first place, I want to say that this is one of those many Bills of a makeshift character

this Government are getting into the habit of introducing. We have scarcely one large measure standing by itself, which we can feel is a landmark of utility, which will endure after our work as legislators here has been concluded. This is, admittedly, only a makeshift measure. There is the extraordinary feature about this question that there is already upon the statute books a Sewerage Act which is absolutely useless. For some reason or other, I believe during the time of the James Administration, the Bill was passed, it received the Royal assent, and was to be proclaimed. A proclamation was necessary in order to bring it into operation.

*Mr. Angwin* : It was promised that the proclamation should not be made.

*Mr. WALKER* : By law a proclamation has to be made, and I want to know why it has not been made. The promise of a Premier to keep the law suspended is unjustifiable. It renders requisite the present Bill, which is only a temporary thing, and we are prevented from getting ahead with any great comprehensive or valuable scheme under the Public Works Act. I make that protest first of all. I notice there has been an alteration in the Bill, which, to my mind, is very much the worse for it. This clause practically vests all the powers in relation to the amendment and administration of the scheme or schemes to be effected under it in the Minister for Works himself.

*Mr. Scaddan* : That means the Under Secretary.

*Mr. WALKER* : Of course it does. In every department there should be a Ministerial head, in the strict sense of the word; but there is a great difference between a Ministerial centre, a point of responsibility so to speak, and, perhaps, of initiation, and the passing of all power, origination, and whatever is to be done under a measure of this kind, into the hands of the Minister himself. It gives to him a new world, where he is practically an autocrat, and can be, if he likes, a despot, perhaps working the scheme in favour of some particular section that will be affected by it as

against others which may be also affected by it. In a great matter of this kind, which so intimately affects the rate-payers, it is not well to give one man all the power of fixing rates, of making by-laws, of instituting all the regulations, by means of which not only the work is carried out but the people have to pay. As has been suggested by the member for Ivanhoe (*Mr. Scaddan*) that it does not mean that the Minister himself will devise some scheme, but that the officers in his department will be called upon to devise a particular scheme. The worst possible form of administration is always that of a bureau, that of the underlings of the officers. I am not for a moment saying a word about the qualifications of those who may be brought into officialdom, so to speak, in this matter; they may be very able men, but there grows up in certain sections of the civil service a cliqueism, a circumscription that confines them to a narrow groove, and a callous method of fixing burdens on the people. After all, the measure means fixing burdens on the people. While there can be no appeal from whatever the officers of the Public Works Department do, except to the Minister himself, any appeal means after all an appeal to those officers again. I enter my protest against this system of having all the administration, as it were, centred and vested in the Minister for Works himself. I go further and ask why are we giving to the Minister the full power to make rates, and particularly, why are we giving him the power to make differential rates, when he does it all from his central office in Perth. We are told that a sort of basis for the rating would be in the capitalisation of each particular district; that is to say, each district will have to pay, so to speak, for the cost of its own work. It must occur to everyone, it must occur to the Minister himself, that there is a certain amount of expense that must be debited to the whole scheme and that cannot be divided among the districts. There are the septic tanks for instance.

*The Minister for Works* : Each district is a separate scheme in itself.



Mr. WALKER: There may be districts under separate schemes, but there must be certain costs and certain capital expenditure that is general to all the districts.

*The Minister for Works:* There are administrative costs, but no capital cost. East district is to be self-contained.

Mr. WALKER: Assuredly there must be administrative costs. Will there not be capital expenditure general to all the districts? What about the septic tanks?

*Mr. Bath:* What about the works at Lake Monger?

*The Minister for Works:* They are in the Perth district. There will be no capital cost debited.

Mr. WALKER: I am pleased to have the Minister's assurance that there will be nothing of that kind. But even in administration; how is that going to be distributed? Are there not likely to be inequalities by this very scheme? I do not like to suggest it, because I might offend my friends the representatives for Fremantle, but still, the thought may occur to some that this distribution into districts and this separate system of rating may enable a place like Fremantle to get its water and sewerage at a much lower rate than Perth.

*The Minister for Works:* This does not apply to water.

Mr. WALKER: I know, and I know that it is a temporary measure. But in the sewerage: is it not possible that some particularly favoured town will get some slight consideration? Is it not possible also that there may be districts where the population is sparse; where the cost to the ratepayers may become too large. The sparsely populated districts will have to keep up the cost of the scheme or pay the expense of the scheme while Fremantle or some other favoured district will get their scheme at a comparatively low cost. We should have some assurance that in a scheme of this kind we will not give an advantage to some particular spot at the expense of the others. I want to know what method of making by-laws the Minister proposes: whether he is going to copy any of the existing by-laws or take them *holusbolus* from similar institutions in

other parts of the world, or whether he will start to work to draw up new by-laws?

*The Minister for Works:* We propose to use the existing by-laws of Adelaide, which are regarded as model by-laws; and the officers of the Public Works Department in conjunction with the engineers of the different local authorities will finally decide upon them.

Mr. WALKER: Then this is the position: the Eastern States have in the opinion of the Minister for Works, model by-laws? They may have. They may be model for the cities where they exist. These model by-laws are to be brought here, submitted to the officers of the department, and then the engineers are to be brought in and consulted. That may be all very well. We can get a splendid red-tape system of by-laws by that means which will be the very essence of officialdom and red-tapeism from beginning to end. It is to this class of by-laws that I object. These by-laws are the curse of the Coolgardie Water Scheme; the hard and fast unshrinking and unyielding system of by-laws and regulations that makes it impossible to work that scheme in a practicable way so that the greatest possible benefit can be obtained for the consumers. We have the assurance now from the Minister that we shall have a borrowed set of by-laws fixed up by the departmental officers; those whose whole habit of life is based upon red-tape and official methods. If there is anything cold and mechanical and unfit for a growing country it is this system of mechanically borrowed and tinkering with by-laws.

*Mr. Bath:* And if you move to strike them out or alter them the Ministry will consider that you are moving a motion of no-confidence.

Mr. WALKER: That is so. They consider that you are attacking their dignity and that you are bringing ruin on the country. I protest strongly against this. In the Act not proclaimed we have provision for a board, and although a board is not all that is desirable, yet a board that enables ratepayers to have some say as to how they are to be taxed and how they are to be

made to yield their property or be connected with the scheme; a board of that kind that gives the ratepayers who have to be rated under these Bills some say in the matter, would be infinitely better. This board would know the conditions of the district where the scheme is to be carried; they know where the shoe pinches, and they can speak with out being unreasonable and they can realise there will be local and special circumstances which will require to be taken into consideration. I do not care whether we are carrying out a small or a national scheme; whether it is in a little district or a whole city, or a whole country; we must attend to the local conditions, to the change of circumstances. In other words, a scheme must have some adaptability about it, and the curse of all our schemes run by the Public Works Department at the present time is that they have no adaptability; that they can meet no extraordinary circumstances. That is the main difference between Government and simple officialdom. A Government is appointed by the people for the purpose of adaptability; of applying the remedy to the disease, even in the lowest and most insipid circumstances.

*The Minister for Works:* Do you not support Ministerial control of the railways?

**Mr. WALKER:** Yes. But cannot the hon. Minister see the difference between Ministerial control and official despotism and red-tapeism. Ministerial control is the very antithesis of the form of Government we have. The Minister to-day is only the tool and mouth-piece of the officers under him. He cannot himself change one iota any mechanical form that is used. He sits there to do what the officers tell him.

*Mr. Bath:* The department is a machine.

**Mr. WALKER:** Exactly, and the Minister is the figure-head; and he dare not go against his officers. He comes here and speaks what they tell him. If a deputation waits upon him his officers are consulted and he meets that deputation with a list of figures or something else which says, "I am instructed by my

officers that that change cannot be made"; and all he can do is to pronounce sentence of his official court. There is nothing there in the shape of Ministerial control. There is the Minister absolutely fettered and controlled; he is the machine; they move him; he has nothing whatever in the shape of power. That is an evil that is growing in our country. This side has always advocated Ministerial control because there is no outside power to direct or suggest or to move a Minister. If the Minister looks at it calmly; if he goes over his own experience; realises how he has to be in servitude to the red-tapeism of his own staffs, he will see that his very officers are in control. The one curse of Western Australia is that we have no Ministerial control. We have only Ministerial echoes of the officialdom that governs the country by the hard and fast line of red-tape. I suggest that the old Bill that has not been proclaimed is infinitely better than this, inasmuch as it does provide for a board. There the ratepayers have a chance of letting the Minister know what special circumstances require the application of a little difference of principle; whether a little give and take can be exercised; where ordinary human judgment and human feelings can come into the administration of the ordinary affairs of the State. I would like to say here, and remind the Minister for Works, and all others, that we must never forget that we are governing human beings. If we govern by mechanical rule, hard and fast with iron stringency, we are bound to do evil. If we cannot have a little play where human feeling and human leniency can be displayed we are not governing. And all through our departments now-a-days we have that absolute lack of human feeling. In the water department we have the one fixed rule which cannot be altered or modified in the slightest. That is the position in the various departments, and even those who officer them do not care who may be perishing for want of some slight consideration or help. There is no possibility of applying human Government to our State because we have the block machines and red-tape in evidence, while humanity

is out of everything; and so it will be with this Bill, the people will not be able to apply for any alteration. If any ratepayer should get into a difficulty he should have consideration given to him. He asks for the application of justice; but who is he to apply to? He goes to the office, is kept outside the counter; he talks to a boy, or a young man, or an old man perhaps; at any rate to someone behind a counter, and asks for what he wants. He is told that nothing can be done; the rules are there and he will have to obey them. He asks to see someone superior, and if he is persistent, then by that superior he is shown the door; and if he is in such circumstances that he cannot possibly comply with some demands that the officers are making, the bailiff comes in and sells this creature out of house and home. Not one possible element of mercy to the ratepayer can exist under this cold, starving, and merciless system of officialdom. I am protesting against the introduction of this, which is becoming very common in our modern form of Government; and I suggest that instead of this we return to the old one. I want to know why that old Act cannot be proclaimed. There is no good feature in the present Bill.

*Mr. Angwin:* There were few in the old one.

*Mr. WALKER:* This officialdom cannot be commended to anybody. This giving the whole power to the Minister might please some favoured ones.

*Mr. Angwin:* You are advocating for the favoured ones under the old Act.

*Mr. WALKER:* I am not saying the old Act is perfect. I am saying it is better than the present one. I want to know from the Minister what will be the immediate advantage of this Bill. Is he going to impose these rates as soon as the Bill is through Parliament? How many are getting any advantage from the scheme at present? I want to know if it is necessary at once, and at this stage, now, to bring in this Bill when we are not ready to connect the people. Is it another attempt to raise money before the work done entitling the money to be raised is completed? If the work has proceeded so far as to justify the im-

posing of rates why cannot we wait for the comprehensive measure? What I am opposing is the fact that we are temporising and constantly temporising. We bring down these slips of paper and call them Acts, while all the time we are promised the comprehensive measure. Why not bring down the comprehensive measure? If the time is not ripe why dabble in this now? That is the view I take, and it is a view that on reflection will commend itself to the House. These are the main features that to me are objectionable: the determination not to give the ratepayers any hearing in the matter; the fact that we are to be capable of differentiating perhaps unfairly under this proposed scheme; and that although we are to have complete districts, each district is to be hopelessly centred in one department, in one officer who will supervise the scheme. It contains great possibilities of wrong and injustice, even though unconsciously exercised by the officer who will administer this Bill until we get the comprehensive Act.

*Mr. BOLTON (North Fremantle):* It was somewhat refreshing to hear the member for Kanowna suggest that this is rather a favourable Bill for that favoured little spot, Fremantle. I differ entirely from him in that direction. And again I differ from him when he considers that the old Act should be proclaimed and become law. It would be pretty hard for people in one place and pretty good for people in another place which is now a separate district under the Act. The old Act might suit Perth and Perth alone, but not any of the other districts. It will be remembered in fact it has been admitted, that a very much over-capitalised scheme has been running for many years in connection with Perth. Now would it be fair, had the three districts not been provided for under this Act, for the Fremantle rate to be struck on the capitalised combination of the three districts as provided for in this temporary measure? The hon. member presumed that there would be differential rates for the different districts. But when he comes to consider the matter and finds out that the actual

capital cost in each district will be taken separately and rated to the ratepayers accordingly, he will admit that a Bill providing for three districts is more suitable than the existing Act which provides for only one district. Then again the argument applies that the amount of capital cost for the Perth district is five or six times as great as the capital cost in the Fremantle district. Would it be fair for the same rate to be struck in the Fremantle district as in the Perth district where five or six times the amount of money has been spent? Again, the fact that this temporary measure will be in force only until next year shows that the time will surely come when the comprehensive measure will have to be proclaimed. There is another district making it awkward to proclaim that measure at the present time; that is the Claremont district, where very little money has yet been spent. There are features in this Bill which do not commend themselves to me. The measure provides that the Minister shall call upon any ratepayer or property-owner to connect with the main sewer; and, peculiarly enough, it may be only necessary for the Minister to call upon the occupier or owner of that property to have the connections provided in his house. So although the sewers may not be laid anywhere near the premises the Minister will have the power to call upon the owner for the rates in connection with the expenditure incurred.

*Mr. Bath:* Not under the Bill.

*Mr. BOLTON:* It may not be so. I raise the point in order to impose upon the Minister the duty, it may be a pleasure, of explaining it. The explanation will stand on record, and will serve to be explanatory not only to me, but to many others.

*The Minister for Works:* Look at Clause 45.

*Mr. BOLTON:* Clause 45 reads:

"The Minister may from time to time make a levy on sewerage rates in respect of all rateable land within any district in which a sewer or any part thereof is completed, and ready for use."

There is no occasion to read further from that section for the moment. The Fremantle district covers an area comprising South Fremantle and North Fremantle up to the Buckland Hill boundary. These two districts are part of the greater district and no sewers are likely to be constructed in them for years to come. Yet, these smaller districts are in the greater district in which part of a sewer is laid. Is it not then competent for the Minister to call on residents of North Fremantle, if the sewerage arrangements are connected, to pay rates? It appears so in this clause. It may be clear enough to the Minister, but if I am wrong I have at least done this amount of good that the Minister in his reply will clear up the point raised. If the Minister can tell us that unless the sewer is in working form no rates will be charged, it will relieve the minds of many.

*Mr. Foulkes:* Unfortunately the Minister's explanation will not be binding in a Court of law.

*Mr. BOLTON:* That may be so. I will read the balance of the clause:

"Provided that no land shall be rateable under this section, unless such land is capable in the opinion of the Minister of being connected with such sewer, and unless notice thereof has been given by or on behalf of the Minister to the owner or occupier."

The dwelling is capable of being served by the sewer when the sewer is laid; and if it be the intention of the Government to spend a sum of money at a given time, and notice is served upon the owners but it is subsequently found that the department cannot proceed with the work, I am of opinion that the Minister can call upon the owners to complete the work. I do suggest that it is possible to have these buildings connected and charged rates twelve months before they can make any use of the sewers. That is as it appears to me. If they are connected the Minister can call upon them for rates, although perhaps the work will not be completed for twelve months. A property may even be connected with a main sewer that is not connected with any other part of the system. Yet the

owner or occupier would be called upon to pay rates because he was connected with part of the sewerage scheme. Again an owner or occupier would be called upon to pay rates for sanitary services under the old system. So he would be paying double rates. If the Minister has the power to rate for the new system then the Government should take over the ratepayers' liability for sanitary services under the old system. It would be most unfair to ask an owner or occupier to subscribe to both systems when one is not to be used for a long time afterwards. There is another provision that I think is rather an absurd one. That is, to call upon the tenant to pay half the cost of installation of this sewerage system, and to make him liable for half of it, although within a fortnight of the completion of that system, he may remove from his premises and go and live in another part of the town where he may be called upon to pay his half once more. It is a common practice among Australians to move from time to time to different dwellings. Where then is to be the end? It might be possible for a tenant to be called upon to pay the half cost four or five times over. I am not speaking from a selfish point of view, because I have not much chance of moving, and I do not suppose anybody would pay half for me. But I maintain that it is unfair to ask the tenant to pay half-cost if he has no security of tenure. He can be removed from the house within a month of the completion of the work, and the landlord can re-let the place at an increased rental owing to the system having been paid for, and if it be necessary for the outgoing tenant to live in the same town he has to find another house. Now this might not yet be connected with the sewerage scheme, so that he may again have to pay half the cost of an installation. I hope the Minister will make it much easier and more satisfactory to the tenant.

*The Minister for Works:* It is the same as Section 18 of the Act of 1904.

Mr. BOLTON: As it was known that Act was not to be proclaimed, it probably delayed some criticism. At any

rate attention was not then called to one or two clauses to which attention should have been called most forcibly. Though the clause was overlooked in 1904 I do not think members will overlook it now. Otherwise it will compel the tenant to make long binding agreements with his landlord, or to leave the place altogether owing to the rent being increased.

*Mr. Draper:* What would you suggest?

Mr. BOLTON: The owner should pay. It does not show that the house will be worth more to the landlord in the matter of rent, but that will be the case; and as it is more than probable the landlord will secure an increased asset, he should certainly pay for it, especially as he has the chance to get more rent. There is one other matter on which I do not intend to touch at any great length, as the member for Kanowna has already done so on a broad scale. The Minister is empowered to make regulations covering everything. Members will find that the Minister has power to make by-laws and regulations governing everything in connection with the Sewerage Bill. In one particular instance he has the power to license plumbers. I want to draw special attention to this, particularly as the Minister has given us to understand that the regulations will be largely on the same lines as those in force in Victoria.

*The Minister for Works:* No; that is wrong: I said the Eastern States—Adelaide, Sydney, and Melbourne, but not Victoria alone.

Mr. BOLTON: In the Eastern States the difficulty has arisen the same as it will arise in this State on this question, and I can illustrate it very briefly. In the Eastern States when any plumbing work had to be undertaken, it could not be undertaken except by a licensed plumber; and very rightly so, as it is a very serious matter to have incompetent men putting sewerage work connections into a house. But all that was necessary in some places was for the master to hold a license as a master plumber, and then he could employ as many incompetent men as he desired to

do the work under his supervision, and he took all the responsibility.

*Mr. Scaddan:* They do that here now.

*Mr. BOLTON:* Let them discontinue it. This work will be of sufficient magnitude to at least give the Minister some food for thought, and if it be of that magnitude which must mean connecting all the dwelling houses in these districts, it will require a large body of licensed plumbers, not merely a few licensed master plumbers. I speak with no feeling in the matter, except that I know the absolute necessity for this; and I hope that the Minister will make provision for the individual operative plumbers to be licensed after examination. I do not believe that a man has only to present himself to be called a plumber; a man showing efficiency in one branch of the work should not get a license for ever and ever. I say, let them pass an examination; and the only persons who should be employed on this very important work should be those who pass an examination. Of course the masters must necessarily be licensed. If the Minister thinks this out he will find, more especially if he gets the regulations from the Eastern States, that it is a very necessary regulation. I support the second reading of this Bill, but in Committee I shall have the greatest possible pleasure in attempting, should the Minister fail to do so, to make some alteration in this regard.

*Mr. DRAPER (West Perth):* I did not intend to speak on the second reading because I understood that the differences between those who represent the municipalities and the Minister for Works had been adjusted, and that the amendments, of which notice has been given on the Paper before the House, would be sufficient to remove these difficulties. However, looking at these amendments on the face of them, I do not quite see that they will do away with some of the objections that exist to this Bill; and while I recognise that it is necessary for some power to be obtained in order to carry out the projected sewerage works, yet I think it will be an advantage to this House if we could obtain

some information from the Minister when he is replying. It might clear away the objections which I, in conjunction with other members, have to some of the clauses in this Bill. Now, I do not think it is a desirable measure that the control of this scheme should be vested permanently in a Minister. In the Act of 1904, provision was made for a nominee board to consist of three. I do not think a nominee board is satisfactory either. I think the only satisfactory solution of the difficulty would be if we had a board which would be chosen, in some respect, according to the wants of the various municipalities and local authorities concerned. It is true this is only a temporary measure, but temporary measures unfortunately sometimes become permanent. It is a very easy thing to pass a short Bill through the House, to extend the operation of an Act which has been introduced to the House in the first place as a temporary measure. I would like to have some assurance from those in charge of the Bill that Ministerial control, to which I have objection, will be removed in the immediate future. Besides that, there is one objection I have to the Bill that I do not think anyone else has touched on, and that is the question of rating. The Act of 1904 made provision to impose a rate of 1s. in the pound for water, and 1s. in the pound for sewerage. This Bill, however, provides for the imposition of another rate of 1s. in the pound for stormwater. The ultimate effect, however, of this Bill, in comparison with the principal Act, will be that we are liable to have rates imposed on us to the extent of 3s. in the pound. In addition to that, when the first Act was passed, I think it was contemplated that the sewerage rating would also include the stormwater rating, and that the rate of 1s. in the pound was to cover both stormwater and sewerage. There would be no objection to that, but there is no need whatever to charge 1s. in the pound for each purpose. The figures I have here are only approximate, but it would appear that at a rate of 6d. in the pound in Perth would be equivalent to a sum of about £10,000 a year. Now, the capital cost of the

sewerage scheme can be roughly estimated at £140,000 and I think the capital cost of the stormwater drainage scheme can also be estimated at a similar sum. In order to meet interest and sinking fund on a capital of £140,000 we would need to produce about £6,000 per annum; and in Perth, according to the figures we have to-day, a rate a little over  $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound is equal to that sum. So it would be quite sufficient to provide at present for a rate of say  $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound to meet the interest and sinking fund on the capital cost of the sewerage works; and likewise a rate of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. to meet the interest and sinking fund on the capital cost of the stormwater drainage. Now, making an additional allowance for expenses, it is quite certain that a rate of 8d. in the pound would be quite sufficient to meet interest and sinking fund for both purposes, the stormwater drainage and the sewerage works. Therefore the original measure fixing a rate of 1s. in the pound for both was quite sufficient, and there is no need in this Bill, so far as I can see, for power to strike an additional rate of 1s. in the pound for stormwater alone.

*Mr. Angwin:* That is the maximum.

*Mr. DRAPER:* I think it is the experience of a good many people that the maximum rate is very soon reached by most local authorities.

*Mr. Angwin:* Not on loan moneys.

*Mr. DRAPER:* However, I simply wished to indicate one of the objections I have to the Bill, and which I will at a later date have an opportunity of discussing. Another thing I would like to ask the House to consider is the clause the member for North Fremantle dealt with, namely Clause 18, which imposes on the tenant the cost of the fittings if his lease has five years or more to run. That seems to me unfair to the tenant, because ultimately the landlord gets the cost of the fittings in connection with this scheme free, and it might easily be provided that in order that the tenant shall pay his fair share of the work his rent could be increased by the interest on the capital cost to which the landlord would be put to make these connections.

These are some of the objections I have to the Bill, and I hope that the Minister in charge, when replying, will give us some explanation. If so, it might save time during the next stage.

*Mr. FOULKES (Claremont):* The last speaker said that he hoped the Minister would give some explanation in regard to the various clauses in this Bill. It is hardly necessary to remind the House that any explanation given by the Minister with regard to the various clauses will not be binding in a Court of law. The Minister may, in all sincerity, give us some explanation which he honestly believes to be correct, still we do not know how far-reaching some of these clauses may be.

*Mr. Scaddan:* We have had the Attorney General's opinion of it.

*Mr. FOULKES:* The same thing applies to the information given by that hon. gentleman. The member for North Fremantle called attention to the fact that in many cases it would happen that the tenants or landowners would have to pay rates in any district in which a sewer or any part of a sewer is completed and ready for use, provided that no land shall be rateable unless such land is capable of being connected with such sewer; and they will have to pay rates under Clause 45, while at the same time they will be liable to pay rates to the local authority. The Minister in reply to an interjection said provision was made by an amendment he had tabled, and which members will find on page 90 of the *Votes and Proceedings*, that the local authority in their discretion may repay or allow a rebate of a proportionate part, or any less amount off the sanitary rate.

*The Minister for Works:* Look at Clause 45 and you will find particulars as to the sewerage rates.

*Mr. FOULKES:* In that clause there is a proviso that no land shall be rateable unless it is capable of being connected with the sewer. In the amending clause it is provided that the local authority has power to repay or allow a rebate off the sanitary rate. What I want to call the attention of the House to is this, that it is

a matter of discretion for the local authorities to say whether they will allow a rebate or not. It might be that the landowner or tenant will have to pay rates under the Bill and also to the local authorities, for if the local authorities decide to refuse to allow a rebate they will be well within their powers. Members have only to look at the amending clause to find it clearly stated that the local authorities may refuse any rebate. It may happen that many local authorities will not be in a position financially to allow any such rebate. Some have entered into contracts providing for sanitary work, extending for two or three years and money will have to be found for this work. I have no doubt that members will, as a matter of form, pass the second reading; but assuredly many clauses of the Bill will have to be withdrawn or entirely remodelled when the Committee stage is reached. Some of the districts, for instance Claremont, will find themselves in the position that they will not know what their liabilities are. I mention Claremont, because there has been very little work done there as yet. If all the clauses of the Bill pass, the people there will be liable for a certain amount of the cost of the main scheme. A similar experience to that has already been gained by the people of the district, for they are liable to pay water rates, notwithstanding the fact that the water supply, as the Minister himself knows, is unfit for household or drinking purposes, and is hardly availed of by residents of the district. They are liable to pay water rates just the same: and what I fear is that they will run the same risk in connection with the sewerage works. I hope the Bill will be thrown out, for it can easily wait another 12 months, or until the scheme is further advanced and people know what their liabilities are. The main objection to the Bill is that we may have all kinds of assurances given to us in all good faith by the Minister: but all the same, unfortunately, no one knows what the liabilities of the districts affected will be. We are asked to give a good deal on trust in conveying the serious powers provided by the Bill, whereas we do not know our obligations.

Mr. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I do not view with any distrust any assurance given by the Minister for Works in the passage of this Bill, neither do I doubt his power to fulfil that assurance. My main objection to the measure is the great power, the unlimited power, proposed to be placed in the hands of the Minister. There may be, and probably is, a great deal to be said in favour of departmental control of any large undertaking like this, and I should certainly prefer control by the Minister to control by a nominee board as was provided under the 1904 Act. At the same time, seeing that practically the whole of the area covered by the operation of this Bill has committed itself, by its representatives, to a demand for an elective board, and as the Minister has, I think, expressed concurrence with that principle, it seems to me that the time to hand over the control of the scheme is at the outset, and to give the board responsibility as well as control at the most important stage: at the stage when by-laws are to be made, regulations to be framed, and rates for the first time to be struck. There are, however, large powers given to the Minister under this Bill. It begins by destroying entirely what the 1904 Act proposed to accomplish. That Act was introduced for the purpose of establishing one metropolitan waterworks and sewerage area for the purpose of consolidating the administration of the various systems prevailing within that small area. The present Bill proposes to divide this area into three districts, and gives the Minister power to make two differential rates in each district.

*The Minister for Works:* Based on what?

Mr. DAGLISH: It gives power therefore to make six different rates. I am now pointing to the power of the Minister in making rates. It is a very great power, and it may lead the Minister into very serious trouble. If he were interested in a district that had a small rate as against another district within the metropolitan area upon which a large rate was imposed, one can understand there would be a large amount of public criticism and political capital



made against the Minister as to his action in fixing the rates. That is a power this House would be wise in taking from the Minister. The principle, however, that the Minister contends for but which I am sorry to say he did not explain more fully, is that there should be a power to rate differentially, because of the difference in the cost of the work. These particular districts should be charged with the sinking fund and interest on their own particular work. If it be right to divide this area into three districts for the purposes of apportioning the charge, the division may fairly and logically be required to go much further. Where there is a difference in the proportionate charge on the property rated, the districts should be able to be again divided and subdivided. If we admit this principle there is no justification for limiting the ultimate creation of districts, and it should be continued until we have carried it even to a greater degree than the municipal divisions in the metropolitan area.

*The Minister for Works:* Here you have three actual, separate schemes.

*Mr. DAGLISH:* I now come to the point that answers the Minister's interjection. At a time like this when the Bill creates new powers and gives this wide authority to the Minister, members are entitled to expect from him a complete summary of the work, so far as it has been carried out, and what is projected for the future. We should have heard details of the expenditure which has already taken place in each district, the annual values; so that, having been favoured with that information, we might express an opinion as to the propriety of the Minister being able to rate up to 1s. in the pound.

*Mr. Collier:* There should also be an estimate given as to the time when the work will be finished.

*Mr. DAGLISH:* That is important also. We should have an opinion as to the works to be carried out in the immediate future. I speak without feeling as to my own district because there has been no work in connection with the sewerage scheme carried out either at Leederville or Subiaco. So far as I know

there is no work of the sort in immediate contemplation; but it is proposed that there shall be power in that district to create a drainage area, because there is a certain portion of a main drain being constructed, and the result of the construction of that main drain has been to transfer the location of the storm-waters of the district from one part of it to another: in other words, to concentrate all the storm-waters of the district on the University endowment land in the immediate vicinity of the State school at Jolimont. I do not know whether there is any justification to tax the ratepayers of Subiaco and Leederville because of the circumstance that storm-water, which has run off the roads, has been transferred to a spot just outside the Subiaco municipal boundary and close to the State school, where it is liable to create a serious menace to the health of the children. In parts of the district it is impossible to carry on a drainage scheme. There are parts where, perhaps not in consequence of the operations of these drainage works, but where at all events contemporaneously with the construction of the works, there has been a rise of water, either storm-water or other water, in the low-lying parts, above the soil, and a miniature lake has been created. I find on inquiry that this area cannot be drained except by a costly pumping process by which the water can be carried to the outlet of the present storm-water drain. But it is unreasonable to expect this work will be carried out. In the meantime the unfortunate ratepayers there see their homes absolutely flooded out and impossible of occupancy, and they have no remedy. The land in the immediate vicinity must necessarily depreciate considerably in value. The residences near must also to some extent become unhealthy. In addition to all these ills the people may be asked to pay a rate because of the fact that this inefficient drainage scheme is being carried out. I was under the impression that this drainage work was incomplete, and that the drainage which I spoke of was to be carried as far as Matilda Bay in the Swan. That is part of the large scheme,

but I find that the scheme is so large and costly that it will be years, 10 years, perhaps 20 years before it will be possible for the department to carry out that work with any hope of being recouped.

*Mr. Bath:* Who is to carry Matilda in the meantime?

*Mr. DAGLISH:* That is the point I want to know. The storm-water drain merely transfers the storm-water from a certain part and concentrates it close to the State school, and, on behalf of those I represent, I object to being rated for the creation of a nuisance in close proximity to the State school. I do not think I should assist in the passage of a Bill which will give the Minister power to rate for storm-water purposes until in that district there is an offer made to complete the work—to carry the storm-water drain to the point of its original destination. That is another reason why I consider that the Minister, introducing a Bill like this should have introduced with it a complete statement of the work that has been done, the work contemplated in the immediate future, the money required to pay sinking fund and interest on the expenditure already incurred, the localities which are to be connected within the time this Bill is supposed to be in operation, and the amount required in order to recoup the State. We are entitled to have all that information before we agree to this Bill, and I am surprised it has not been forthcoming, and surprised that we should be asked to pass this Bill without it. I contend the time has arrived when Parliament should cease tinkering with this water supply and sewerage question. In 1904 we only pretended to settle it; we did not settle it. The 1904 Act was quoted by the member for North Fremantle in regard to one provision as if it were an authoritative provision, but there is not one clause that has ever been discussed by Parliament. Parliament assented to the principle that there should be one metropolitan district, and a common water supply and sewerage scheme should be adopted for the whole of the district. That is all Parliament did. The Bill was passed through Committee pro

forma, on the understanding that it would not be brought into operation until the matter was dealt with fully and finally by the House. From that day to this the matter has never been dealt with, and there has never been an attempt made to deal with it fully. The various clauses of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Act 1904 are so much waste paper, and can only be quoted with authority as being the proposition submitted by the Ministry of the day, the James Ministry, to deal with this question, but they did commit this House to the principle that is being now abrogated, and that will be abrogated if this Bill is passed, of having one district. And on that question there was a great fight, and there was also a great fight on the question of capitalisation in regard to the water supply. The Fremantle members were strongly opposed to being brought in with Perth, because Fremantle did not want to pay any more than they were paying for water. I believe that the member for Claremont was anxious to avoid Claremont being brought in to bear the over-capitalisation of the Perth water supply. I myself raised an objection to dragging my district in to pay any share of the over-capitalisation. I contend now, if we adopt this district provision we are allowing the over-capitalisation of the Perth water supply to remain, and it seems to me we are dividing it between Perth and certain outside municipalities that have no responsibility for it, and no more direct connection with it than have Claremont and Fremantle municipalities. If that be the stumbling block to creating and maintaining this one metropolitan area, the best thing the Government can do is to write off the over-capitalisation of that scheme, and if it be not a stumbling block the Minister has not indicated what the stumbling block is. Again, in the 1904 Act, it was proposed to make one administration for the water supply and sewerage, to keep one set of rate books, and to have one staff. The present Bill proposes to depart from that principle and to create another set of books and certainly another staff. We are just going to build up an expensive administration: we are going away from

the wise principle of concentration of administration adopted in the Act of 1904; we are going to establish really two new sets of rate books: we will have to establish one set of rate books in connection with the storm-water drainage and another set of books in connection with our sewerage, and we still enormously increase the work that is to be done in the Minister's department, because we must bear in mind already he has one set of books in his department. Why should not those books be utilised by the Minister?

*The Minister for Works*: How do you know we are not?

Mr. DAGLISH: I only know that we are giving the Minister power to do something else, and if the Minister does not propose to do that, then I complain again that the Minister should have told us when delivering his second reading speech what it was he really intended to do. The House is entitled to have information on a point like that, and where the information is not forthcoming, the only fair assumption is that the Minister does not propose to take the step I am speaking of. The provision, I have no doubt, would have been set out in the Bill had it been contemplated. We propose not only to create additional work for a new staff, but we propose also additional work for the Minister, as, first of all, he has to strike a rate and after that he has to give notice. I do not know whether that will mean the serving of notices at the houses of persons rated, but, apparently, it will only mean advertisements in the newspapers to the effect that he has made a rate. That is not sufficient notice at all events. It is necessary that notice shall be given to the person rated. Passing that by, the Minister has struck a rate, and has given whatever notice is requisite: then he begins to receive appeals against the valuations that have been put on the property of the persons rated, and he then sits as a court of appeal against his own valuation, a work that will involve a considerable amount of labour to the Minister if it is to be done properly. I notice also that the Minister seeks to limit his work by providing that an appeal can only lie where the annual

value is stated at a higher amount than that of the local authority. But the Minister must know that a very large number of annual values are much lower than they should be, and if he is going to do the work of valuation thoroughly then he will have a large amount of time taken up in hearing appeals and dealing with them, a large amount of time that he will not be able to spare, and he will not be able to delegate under this Bill any of his work as an appeal court to any other individual. That is as far as I am able to discover, although it may be possible to find, even among those departmental officers spoken slightly about earlier in the evening by the member for Kanowna one who would be competent to deal with these appeals. I contend the Minister has not time to do the work of an appeal court, and further, this Bill furnishes unlimited opportunities for litigation. The appellant goes to the Minister, and then, if he is dissatisfied with the Minister's decision, he can go to the local court. Why not give him the opportunity of going to the local court direct, and why refuse him the opportunity of going to any other tribunal? The Minister first of all makes a valuation, and then sits in judgment on that valuation which he has made. The principle is wrong, and it is absolutely impossible for any Minister for Works, no matter how lightly his other duties may sit upon him, to find the time to do this extra work. I urge, in passing, that there should be rate notices given by delivery, on the holder, the same as is required by the local authority. I may say from my own experience in connection with the payment of rates, I have found that the personal delivery of notices is essential, in order that the liability may be properly brought under the eyes of the person rated. I do not intend to go into the details of the Bill. The principle I object to is the principle that a Bill which is to be administered and controlled by a board, should, in its most important organising stages, in the stages of making regulations and making by-laws, the general establishment of the organisation on a business footing, be undertaken and be carried out by the Minister. On that

principle alone I contend, apart from any other objection, the Bill should be condemned, but if there be any further objection necessary, I contend that in the power it gives the Minister to show favouritism—and I do not accuse this Minister of the likelihood of doing so—that it can put in the hands of the Minister the power to show favouritism to one district as against another. In that alone I contend it is entirely unjustifiable, and, therefore, should be condemned and rejected by this House.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): I regret that the member for Kanowna has insinuated that this Bill is brought in for the express purpose of satisfying Fremantle. I regret that if he had any complaint to make against the administration of the Public Works Department he should have associated Fremantle with it. There is not the least doubt an assurance was given that no action would be taken in regard to the administration of the 1904 Act without Parliament again having an opportunity of considering that measure. When the Bill was before the House it was pointed out that the time was not sufficient to permit of members thoroughly discussing the Bill. Various districts concerned had had no opportunity whatever of going into the question of submitting amendments, and for that reason the promise was given that the Bill would be again submitted to hon. members in the next session. But the electors in the meantime decided against the Ministry controlling the affairs of this State and the Bill was not brought forward in the new Parliament in accordance with the promise given. It surprised me that we should have had advocated here to-night the merits of a board of management, seeing that in 1903 when the present Act was being discussed the tone of the debate was in an extreme degree condemnatory of the board that had been controlling the water supply of the City. It was almost made a request that the Government should take control of these works and that the board controlling the water supply of

Perth should be removed from office. It was declared that they had been dealing unfairly with the people and had refused to rate them equitably, while in many instances they had extracted an extortionate amount from the ratepayers. Seeing that that board proved unfit for carrying out the work of administration of the department, it does seem surprising that again to-night we should hear almost a plea from the member for Subiaco that the metropolitan district should be again given over to a board of management notwithstanding the bitter experience of the past. I am pleased to see that the Minister intends to take control of the metropolitan sewerage. I feel confident it will be carried out with greater satisfaction under the department than it would be under a board. No doubt certain gentlemen are very anxious to get on the board, and are much annoyed that a board has not been nominated before now. The advocacy made for a board is merely in order that a certain gentleman may get into control. I believe with the member for Subiaco when he declares we should have some information regarding the amount of expenditure, regarding the quantity of work already carried out, and the possibility of rates being demanded before service is given. When we look at the Notice Paper we can come to no other conclusion than that the Minister has not given the Bill proper consideration. When we find a small Bill of this description with from 14 to 15 amendments placed by the Minister for Works on the Notice Paper before the Bill has passed the second reading it shows clearly that the Minister has not considered the effect the Bill will have. In the circumstances it is no wonder that members are condemning the measure as soon as it is brought forward. Seeing that this Bill is only a temporary measure for twelve months the rating clauses could very well have been left out. The interest for the next twelve months could easily be charged to capital account. There are very few buildings which will be connected with sewers during the next twelve months, and if the Minister had brought down a Bill similar to that which he brought

down twelve months ago, asking merely for powers to go on private lands, there could have been no objection to the Bill. But as it stands the Minister will have the power to rate an area two or three years before the houses in that area will be connected with the sewers.

*The Minister for Works:* He will not have anything of the sort. Read Clause 45. It says the place must be capable of being connected with the sewer, and that the sewer must be completed.

*Mr. ANGWIN:* The Minister has the power "if in his opinion"—

*The Minister for Works:* Well I am quite willing to insert "within 20 yards."

*Mr. ANGWIN:* Septic tanks have been constructed at Fremantle. This is a portion of the scheme which will be required for the whole area; therefore it seems to me that having regard to the powers given to the Minister in this Bill we can only come to the conclusion that as the expenditure in connection with such a work as this is required for the whole area, the Minister will declare that the whole area should pay rates to cover interest and sinking fund.

*The Minister for Works:* Nonsense.

*Mr. ANGWIN:* But it is there. When a Minister gets rating powers without limitation, I think we can only conclude that there is a possibility of those having to pay rates who for many years will have no practical results from the work being carried out. When I saw the Notice Paper dealing with this question I expected that a large part of the opposition raised to this Bill in some districts would have been removed. It is a well known fact that several loans have been granted for the express purpose of constructing stormwater drainage. Notice of an amendment has been given to exempt from rating any works carried out previous to 1904. Therefore it will be seen that in certain areas a large amount of loan money has been expended on stormwater drainage, in the shape of loans granted, and interest and sinking fund on these works will have to be provided for, consequently I consider that even in that instance it is only fair that those districts benefiting

by having had a large expenditure prior to 1904, should also be taxed, and that steps should be taken to see that works carried out prior to 1904 will be charged with interest and sinking fund as well as those carried out after 1904. A great deal has been said with regard to objections of various districts to the water supply. When the member for Subiaco was speaking I was noting his remarks made on this question in 1903. So the complaints were not confined to Fremantle only—I want members to realise that—that is when the ratepayers object to the possibility, through an Act of Parliament, of being forced to pay a considerably higher rate than they have been paying, and what they are paying to-day in connection with their water supply. I do not know that any member, personally or on behalf of his district, would advocate that his ratepayers should pay a 1s. rate when a rate of 6d. has given splendid profits to the revenue in connection with the water supply in the district he represents. The same thing applies to various districts. They say that by the proclamation of the Act of 1904 these districts would be served unfairly; and they ask that, before the measure is approved of, fair play should be given to them the same as I think fair play should be given in every instance throughout the metropolitan area. I shall vote for the second reading, and try, if possible, to knock out the rating clauses in Committee.

On motion by *Mr. Brown* debate adjourned.

## BILL — NANNINE-MEEKATHARRA RAILWAY.

*In Committee.*

*Mr. Daglish* in the Chair; the *Premier* in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

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

*Mr. SCADDAN:* How much land was held along this proposed line for agricultural purposes?

The PREMIER: The hon. member was again showing lamentable ignorance of the resources of Western Australia. There was, in close proximity to Nannine, one of the best orange orchards in the State.

Clause passed.

Clauses 5, 6, 7—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment; the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 10.48 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 15th December, 1908.*

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

### ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read, notifying assent to Supply Bill, £365,579.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

*By the Colonial Secretary:* 1, Annual Report of the Woods and Forests Department for year ended 30th June, 1908. 2, By-laws of the municipalities of Boulder and Subiaco.

### URGENCY MOTION—LAND SETTLEMENT. SENATOR NEEDHAM'S STATEMENT.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): I wish to move the adjournment of the House on a matter of urgency.

The PRESIDENT: I have a statement of the matter the hon. member wishes to bring forward which is as follows:—"To draw the attention of the House and country to the unwarrantable statements of Senator Needham while speaking on the Appropriation Bill in the Senate during the present session of the Commonwealth Parliament." In my opinion the motion is in order and it deals with a definite matter of urgent public importance. If it is supported by four members, according to Standing Order 58, the hon. member may proceed.

Four members having risen in their places,

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan) said: I desire to draw the attention of this House and the country to the unwarrantable statements of Senator Needham when speaking on the Appropriation Bill in the Senate during the present session of the Commonwealth Parliament. I bring this matter forward with very great regret—regret to think that one, who should at all times truthfully uphold what we know to be right, and for the good of this State, so as to help the State as far as possible to attract people to its shores, has not only failed to do so, but has made incorrect remarks as to the land available for settlement. Press reports of the proceedings, which doubtless members noticed, appeared in the *West Australian* on the 10th instant, but to make quite sure the report was absolutely correct I telegraphed for and received a corroboration from Parliament House, Melbourne. The following is the message:—

"Speaking on Appropriation Bill he says, 'I admit that there is any amount of room for population, but my desire is to have a judicious scheme of immigration. It would be wise before we invite people to come to our shores to have land available