

cisms of much so-called advanced legislation, his vigilance in financial matters, and his opposition to seeming recklessness in national borrowing and national spending. Justice and prudence were the leading lights of his life. As a speaker his utterances were marked by boldness and force, and he went direct to the heart of his subject, and would not be diverted from the course that conscience directed him to follow. Like most strong men he was sensitive to human suffering, and tender in his sympathies. Independence, honesty, and truth, characterised Robert Sholl's happy life, as in the old lines—

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will,
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!

I would suggest that this motion be passed by hon. members standing.

Question passed, members standing.

House adjourned at 4.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 7th December, 1909.

	PAGE
Papers presented	1871
Obituary—Hon. R. F. Sholl	1871
Questions: Fertiliser deposits	1872
Land settlement, Dylabing	1872
Pastoral lease, Captain Biddles'	1872
Land selection, Yorkrakine	1873
Bills: Loan, £1,342,000, 2s.	1873
Boyup-Kojonup Railway, 2s., Com., 8s.	1873
Loan Estimates, Message, Introduction	1873

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Regulations made by the Bunbury Harbour Board. 2, By-laws passed by the Port Hedland Local Board of Health.

OBITUARY—HON. R. F. SHOLL.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): Before we deal with the questions I desire to move a motion, without notice. Since the House adjourned on Friday night last one of our representative men, in the person of Mr. Robert Sholl, has been removed by death. It is with the deepest possible regret that I move the following motion—

That this House places on record its deep regret at the death of the Honourable R. F. Sholl, and tenders to his family its sincerest sympathy in the loss they have sustained, and desires that the terms of this resolution be communicated to the widow and family of the late gentleman by the Speaker.

The gentleman referred to was, as hon. members know, a native of the State, having been born in 1848 in the town I have the honour to represent. He was intimately associated during the earlier years of his life with the North-West of the State, and spent a considerable amount of his life time in connection with the pearling and pastoral industries. He was, in fact, one of the first to stock up the West Kimberleys. His energies, however, were not restricted to that part of the State, for during the early nineties he invested considerably in connection with our mining industry certain industrial and mercantile institutions in the City. The money he made in the State he freely invested in Western Australia, thereby setting an example of practical patriotism worthy of emulation. It was in 1886 that he was first appointed to represent in the Legislative Council the Gascoyne Division. Later on, when Responsible Government was granted to the State, he was returned as the first representative of the same constituency to this House. For some years he remained a member of this Chamber, and he represented the State at the Federal Convention, Adelaide. He resigned the seat in 1897, and in 1904 was returned to the Legislative Council as a member for the North Province. He was of a singularly independent turn of mind, his wide knowledge of the State, and all its activities, being of the greatest value in

the Chamber in which he sat. He leaves behind him an unblemished reputation; his fearlessness and his integrity earned for him the respect of all members of the community. One by one the settlers of the earlier pioneer days are passing away, and it must not be forgotten that it is very largely due to the determination of men of the type of Robert Sholl that Western Australia has made as much advancement as it has done. We remember the benefits they have conferred upon their successors, we mourn their loss, and I trust that this House through Mr. Speaker will convey to the widow and family the sentiments expressed in the motion I have proposed.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): In seconding the motion, I wish to add on behalf of the members of this side of the House our expression of regret at the loss of one who was a pioneer of this State. Only recently I have had an opportunity of reading an account of his work in the earlier days, when he played a part in exploring the Northern areas of this State. Many of us knew him only as a member of the Legislative Council, but we know him to have been a man of independent proclivities and straightforward character. I desire to add my expressions of regret on behalf of members, and also desire that it should be conveyed to the widow and children of the deceased gentleman.

Question passed, members standing.

QUESTION—FERTILISER DEPOSITS.

Mr. GILL asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is any work at present being done in connection with the fertiliser deposits found on the coast north of Fremantle? 2, Do the Government intend supplying settlers with this fertiliser in time for the next season.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Work is at present postponed, owing to the cost of handling. 2, The matter is now under consideration, and it is hoped that a supply will be available.

QUESTION—LAND SETTLEMENT, DYLIABING.

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Lands: 1, When was the Location Dylia-bing, south-east of Dumbleyung, made available for selection? 2, Was an application for a homestead of 160 acres in the centre of block 9173 granted prior to the land being so made available? 3, Was the homestead granted as an amended application to an officer in the Colonial Secretary's Department, who had previously held a homestead some distance away without effecting the necessary improvements? 4, Have one or more applications been received for block 9173? 5, Is it the purpose of the Department to grant the whole of the block 9173 to the person who has already been granted the homestead? 6, Have the Agricultural Bank refused to grant loans on a number of the blocks in the Dylia-bing location, even although this was surveyed prior to selection and the prices marked thereon?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, On the 30th November, 1909. 2, Yes, but the amendment of the homestead farm to this locality had been approved prior to the location being surveyed, when the land was open for free selection. 3, Yes, but he had carried out improvements on other land in the locality which he held jointly with others. 4, Yes, two applications have been lodged. 5, No, the applications will be dealt with by the land board. 6, Yes, and the fact was notified in the *Government Gazette*.

QUESTION—PASTORAL LEASE, CAPTAIN BIDDLES'.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it true that the Government gave Captain Biddles notice to resume his pastoral lease? 2, Was an area of Crown lands adjacent to this lease reserved from selection? 3, Did a Mr. S. J. McGibbon attempt to secure a portion of this reserve area? 4, Was his application approved? 5, Is this same S. J. McGibbon now endeavouring to secure the rights of Captain Biddles in the pastoral lease proposed to be resumed? 6, Will the Minister explain this matter to the House?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Notice of intention to resume Lease 516/97 was issued in June last year, after which the then holder (A. F. Grossman) transferred his interests to Captain Biddles. 2, Yes; the whole of the Crown lands in the vicinity have been temporarily reserved with a view to subdivision. 3, Yes; Mr. McGibbon, who acquired Captain Biddles' interests before the resumption of the lease was completed, has applied for certain lands around the Cummin homestead within the lease in question. 4, The application has not yet been formally approved, but Mr. McGibbon has been informed that it will be granted subject to departmental valuation of the land which he agrees to accept. 5, The department possess information to show that Mr. McGibbon (with three partners) has acquired all Captain Biddles' interests in the late lease.

QUESTION—LAND . SELECTION, YORKRAKINE.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Was an area known as the Yorkrakine Reserve recently thrown open for selection? 2, How many times did the notice that it was open for selection appear in the *Government Gazette*? 3, How many times do these notices usually appear? 4, Was the description given in the *Gazette* clear and distinct so as to be easily followed by the general public? 5, Did the conditions provide that the applicant was to be approved by the Minister? 6, If so, why was this condition made? 7, Who secured the area, and what position did he hold? 8, At what price? 9, Will he explain this matter to the House?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. Reserve 5235 at Yorkrakine. 2, Once. 3, In the case of land thrown open for the general public, notices usually appear three times, but with regard to land within this special settlement, the notices, being merely formal, have not appeared more than once. 4, Yes; see page 3149 of *Government Gazette*, 1909. 5, Yes. 6, This reserve formed portion of the land set apart for the Yorkrakine settlement, the selectors

within which are receiving special assistance from the Government under the direction of the Minister for Agriculture, and all applicants for land within the area are subject to his approval. 7, W. B. Hooper, late chief clerk of the Agricultural Department. 8, The price 10s. per acre, plus £382 15s. 7d. for improvements, which amount was added to the capital value of the land.

BILL—LOAN, £1,342,000.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. N. J. Moore) in moving the second reading said: I may say that in view of the somewhat exhaustive references I made to the loan policy of the Government when delivering my Budget Speech, and also taking into consideration the information available in the public accounts in regard to this very important matter, I feel there is very little information that I can give the House necessary to an adequate understanding of how the country stands in regard to its present indebtedness—information, I mean, which is necessary to anyone who wishes to judge the expediency or otherwise of further borrowing, or in other words, of the degree of wisdom behind the policy which has placed this Loan Bill on the Table of the House. In coming to the question let me briefly refer to our previous loans. Eliminating £5,253 authorised for the conversion debt increases, our authorisations to date total £22,180,000. (Conversion debt increases means the addition to nominal amount of debt resulting from conversion of old 4½ per cent., 5 per cent., and 6 per cent. debentures into 4 per cent. inscribed stock.) All these loans were floated prior to the 30th June last. The cost of raising them, that is, discounts and flotation expenses, was £947,829, so we have had *ab initio* £21,232,171 cash available for expenditure on loan works and services, while expenditure totalled at the close of last financial year £19,520,488, leaving us, as at that date, an unexpended balance of £1,711,683. This balance, however, was not all held in liquid form. As a matter of fact £330,000 was sunk in stores, and £312,631 took the form of a liability of rev-

venue to loan account, and represented the revenue accounts paid from loan moneys up to that date; paid on account of the deficiency in connection with the Consolidated Revenue Fund. This will be replaced to the credit of loan account gradually, according as the deficit is wiped out. Here therefore is £643,000 of the £1,711,000 loan balance, and taking this into account the balance of net proceeds of the loan and flotation of May last, which have come to hand since the end of June—of loan fund on the 30th June we have in cash £1,068,000. During the five months to the end of November we have expended out of this sum £325,000 on loan works and services, leaving a cash balance of £743,000, as at the 1st of December. In view, however, of the particularly heavy demands that will be made on the loan account during the latter portion of the financial year, and more particularly in regard to payment for rails and fastenings, and other stores in connection with public works, we expect to have to float a loan towards the end of the financial year, about May or June. As a matter of fact the indents up to the 18th October last, rails and fastenings, should, if carried out in time, leave us possibly, as far as London accounts are concerned, with a debit balance of £50,000. This, of course, is a matter which can be easily arranged. The wisdom of a borrowing policy will inevitably be questioned, but as far as the Government is concerned, we pin our faith to this policy wholeheartedly. The words on the lips of every well-informed member of the community at the present time in regard to developmental work is "courage with caution." The policy pursued during the last few years has been responsible for uplifting the country and saving it from paralysis during the financial crisis which has prevailed during the last year or two as far as the State finances are concerned—a crisis brought about largely by reason of the failure of the customs revenue, coupled with industrial stagnation which is the result of intercolonial free trade and a tariff against the outside world, designed not so much in the interests of Western Austra-

lia as in those of her sister States in the East. In looking at the developmental work which has taken place during the last year, it is interesting to note that the wheat harvest of 1910, as now estimated, shows an average increase in acreage over last year of 113,000 acres, and a yield of 5,978,000 bushels, or 13.4 bushels to the acre, an increase in yield upon last year of 3,518,000 bushels. Oats from an increased acreage of 14,000 acres will give 18.4 bushels to the acre or, in aggregate, 542,000 bushels more than last year; and barley, with 2,600 acres more under cultivation will yield 16.8 bushels or 52,000 bushels in excess of last year's returns. All this means wealth, individual and collective wealth; not merely to the farmers but to the community as a whole, while the Treasury must also benefit by the expansion of trade and industry. It goes without saying that an increase of wealth means increased returns under the Taxation Act and increased business outside. If, at the same time, we had stagnation in the Treasury revenue it would indicate that there was something wrong in the body politic. I would like to emphasise a point in regard to the reproductive nature of the works. In my Budget Speech, when referring to the trading departments I said I wanted every adult man and woman in the State to know and realise the fact that while last year interest on our whole public debt amounted to £706,000, the Government trading departments, notably the railways, water supplies, and the Fremantle Harbour Trust, paid into the Treasury £686,000 towards payment of this annual interest bill.

Mr. Angwin: A very good argument in favour of the extension of the trading departments.

The PREMIER: In these circumstances does it not pay to borrow judiciously; and certainly up to date no complaint can be made that careful consideration has not been given to every work carried out from loan funds.

Mr. Jacoby: Do those figures include sinking fund?

The PREMIER: No, interest alone. As far as the indirect return is concerned,

I would like to point out that last year we received in dividend duties, stamp tax and land tax, after paying the expenses of collection, £170,000. How much of this would have been received had we not built railways, water schemes, and harbour works? Practically nothing at all. Because, without these works the country would have been really non-existent, and, without borrowing, the works themselves would have been non-existent. We could never have constructed them from revenue. It has been argued on more than one occasion that the State has been borrowing much too rapidly, but I hardly think the figures I have quoted indicate that that is so. Consider the fact that during the last four years ended 30th June we spent £3,020,000 of loan money. Our population on the 30th June amounted to 276,000 persons. So, as a matter of fact, our loan indebtedness during that time went up by £11 per head, not on the mean population, but on the maximum population at the close of that period and the increased indebtedness per capita was only £1 17s. 10d. This, divided over the four years, represents a per capita annual increase of 9s. 3d. per year. If these facts are not justification of our borrowings, figures can have no significance. I have referred to our sinking funds, and hon. members will see that this Bill, in common with the Loan Bill introduced last year, provides for one-half per cent. sinking fund as against the one per cent. sinking fund provided in the previous Loan Bills. For the information of hon. members I may say the sinking fund comes into operation four years after the loan is raised. The one-half per cent. is the figure accepted by the Federal Ministers as the contribution which the Commonwealth loans will carry in future, and in the present position of our—

Mr. W. Price: It is not the Commonwealth law yet.

The PREMIER: No, but in every scheme brought forward by the Commonwealth one-half per cent. has been the amount fixed as the contribution to the sinking fund. I would like to point out that this sinking fund is invested in the purchase of Western Australian stocks

on the London market. It has been argued that it should be invested in the State, but I think this would be unwise as, although the interest rates would certainly be higher, there would be no guarantee that when the sinking fund was required the money would be available in liquid form to meet the purpose for which it is designed. Again, while the local trustees might succeed generally in investing to satisfaction in local works or properties, there is always the possibility that such investments might turn out to be failures; so that in my opinion the safer investment in our own stock although returning smaller interest, is preferable. Our practice has been to invest these funds in the purchase of our own stocks. While we are paying £3 9s. 4d. on our public debt, the average interest yield on these investments is £3 6s. 1d. per annum nominal, or an annual return of £4 3s. 2d. on our own contributions to the fund. That is to say, supposing we purchase at £90, the return on the face value of £100 is £3 6s. 1d.; so it is questionable whether if the money were brought out to Western Australia a higher rate of interest would give a safe investment. One advantage of this system is that the constant purchasing by the trustees has a tendency to maintain our stock quotations to the advantage of our loan issues. As a matter of fact it prevents the stock from stagnating; it keeps it on the move; and generally speaking, it has proved to be of great advantage on occasions prior to raising loans. It goes without saying that in the event of the sinking fund being invested locally, this advantage would be lost to us. As hon. members know, this is a matter which under the transfer of debts to the Commonwealth will gradually pass out of our hands. As a matter of fact action has been taken in this regard, and a Bill has passed both Houses of the Federal Parliament providing for the transfer being effected. The Loan Bill is self-explanatory. The schedule of works will, no doubt, be debated; but a perusal of the schedule will show it is designed to cover all expenditure to the 30th of March, 1911, and that a large percentage of the

provision made is for the completion of works already authorised.

Mr. Johnson: And for the starting of other works never previously heard of.

The PREMIER: I do not know of the works to which the hon. member refers. Some may not have been authorised by Bills passed by the House, but there are no works on the schedule which have not been alluded to both in public speeches and in the course of discussions in Parliament.

Mr. Johnson: There is the Katanning-Shannan's Soak railway that has not been spoken of.

The PREMIER: The Katanning-Eastward railway? It has been talked of for three years, and a permanent survey has been completed. A railway from Katanning-Eastward has been referred to in previous loan authorisations.

Mr. Bath: Have all these to be authorised by Bills before they are undertaken?

The PREMIER: As a matter of fact, most of these lines are in course of construction. Those in course of construction, and which have been completed during the year, are—Newcastle-Bolgart, 23½ miles, opened yesterday; Pinjarrah-Marrinup, 15 miles, which will be completed next month; Mt. Magnet-Black Range, 93 miles, the rails for which have been laid for 75 miles, and the completion of which is expected in June; Port Hedland-Marble Bar, 114½ miles, for for which a contract has been let, and for which construction of the first six miles is in progress, and the completion of which is expected in 1911; and the Upper Chapman railway, 26 miles. Provision has been made for these works. This loan authorisation will simply carry them to March, 1911.

Mr. Draper: If the works are passed by the House?

The PREMIER: Yes; provision was made on previous Loan Bills for the railways for which we are seeking the approval of the House at the present time. The Loan Bill gives authorisation to raise the necessary funds, but the railways cannot be built until they are passed by the House.

Mr. Draper: Supposing they are not passed by the House, what becomes of the money?

The PREMIER: It can be re-appropriated for another purpose authorised by the House. In addition to these works I have mentioned, there are the Bridge-town-Wilgarrup railway, 22 miles, constructed departmentally, the completion of which is anticipated in November, 1910, and the Nannine-Meekatharra railway, 24 miles, for which a contract has been let, and the construction of which is in progress. It is expected that before the 30th of June, 1910, the following railways will be completed and handed over to the Working Railways; the Coolgardie-Norseman second section, 57 miles; the Newcastle-Bolgart—as a matter of fact it is completed and was opened yesterday; the Pinjarrah-Marrinup, 15 miles; the Upper Chapman, 26 miles; the Nannine-Meekatharra, 24 miles, and the Mount Magnet-Black Range, 93 miles. This means a total of 238½ miles to be handed over to the Working Railways within a year. Last year 101½ miles were handed over. The total mileage of the railways opened to the present date is 2,101½ miles. The new railways Parliament has been asked to authorise during the present session are the Dowerin-Merredin, 92 miles; the Boyup-Kojonup, 52 miles, and the Goomalling-Wongan Hills, 40 miles—a total of 184 miles. The Bills for these railways are already before the House, having been introduced by the Minister for Works, and I do not propose at the present time to deal with them. Other railways proposed, and which have not received the sanction of the House, are the Greenhills-Quairading extension, 50 miles, to join the proposed Merredin-Wickepin line; the Katanning-Shannan's Soak, 20 miles; the Marrinup-Marradong, 12 miles; the Merredin-Wickepin, 110 miles; the Northampton-Murchison River, 40 miles; the Tambellup-Chirrellilup, 32 miles; the Wagin-Darkan, 44 miles; and the Wagin-Dumbleyung extension, 10 miles; a total of 318 miles. In connection with these light railways it is interesting to read the report of the

Commissioner of Railways in connection with the annual report of his department. The Commissioner says—

"Taking the results of the purely agricultural lines as a whole they may be considered satisfactory, and may reasonably be expected to become more so as development progresses."

When we realise that there was only a loss of some £7,000 on the operations of last year, it must be admitted that this is very encouraging indeed. It was not anticipated that these railways would return nearly as good a result as they have; and as time goes on, it necessarily follows that with the increased development on either side of the railways the returns from freight must naturally increase. Owing to the large additional mileage constructed and handed over to the Working Railways a large increase in rolling stock is required. At the present moment there are 500 trucks being constructed, and the Commissioner of Railways states that very shortly 25 locomotives and some thousand trucks will be necessary as the development of the wheat-growing area progresses.

Mr. George: You have not enough money there.

The PREMIER: How much should there be?

Mr. George: There should be £42,000.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has not the Loan Estimates for the year on which the unexpended balances are shown. No better endorsement to the Government's policy of opening up the country could be expected than is shown by the need for rolling stock for the railways. In connection with the expenditure on harbours and rivers, £42,000 is asked for in connection with the Fremantle dock and slip, which, with the amount in hand, will carry us over the next two years. The progress made is that about one quarter of the excavation has been completed, and inquiries are now being made as to pumping machinery. I am glad to say the Admiralty are apparently taking an interest in the work. They have asked to be supplied with certain information with regard to the capacity of the dock. In regard to water supply for towns generally, Parliament is asked to autho-

rise a loan of £40,000 under this heading for carrying out works in various small towns which by themselves would be unable to do so. Afterwards these districts will be converted into water boards when they will become responsible for the capital cost of the schemes, and for paying interest on the same. In connection with sewerage the progress made has been good so far as Perth and Fremantle are concerned. Practically the whole of the main drains and sewers are completed or in hand, and the reticulation sewers in Perth are well forward. In regard to the development of agriculture, authority is asked to raise £26,000, mainly for drainage works in the South-West and Albany districts. While the money on drainage work is spent by the Government, it is intended that the districts benefiting shall form themselves into drainage boards, taking over the financial responsibilities of the various schemes. The work carried out in the Harvey district has proved very satisfactory, and it is proposed to extend this principle wherever it is warranted, and wherever the local people are prepared to rate themselves in order to provide interest and sinking fund. The schedule to the Loan Estimates gives the various items on which it is proposed to have loan expenditure in connection with public buildings, and the note on the summaries of unexpended balances on previous loan authorisations gives the various works for which the money asked for is required. This schedule will enable hon. members to follow the Estimates very easily, and I think the most opportune time to discuss the various items of the Loan Bill would be when we were discussing the Loan Estimates, because the Loan Estimates are the warp and woof of the Loan Bill. Therefore I propose, if the adjournment of this debate is moved, to move that we go into Committee of Supply in order that the Loan Estimates may be introduced, and the information which is available in connection with the Loan Estimates placed in front of hon. members. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Bath debate adjourned.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1909-10.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation from moneys to credit of General Loan Fund for the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1910; and forwarding Loan Estimates.

In Committee of Supply.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

The PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. N. J. Moore) in introducing the Loan Estimates for the year said: I feel sure that with the full information before them in connection with the several works and services proposed to be carried out, members will require little explanation in regard to the proposals of the Government for the expenditure from Loan funds for the financial year ending 30th June, 1910. On page 3 of the Loan Estimates will be found a summary of the estimated expenditure from General Loan Funds for the year ending 30th June, 1910, showing also the unexpended votes for the year 1908-9. The Estimates for 1909-10, exclusive of the unexpended balances from last year, are as follows:—Departmental, £72,846; Railways, £852,978; Harbours and Rivers, £174,104; Water Supply and Sewerage, £156,329; Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources, £96,000; Development of Agriculture, £202,283; Roads and Bridges, £33,344; and Public Buildings, £99,883; making a total of £1,693,899. There will be a big obligation as to the purchase of rails and fastenings in connection with the new railways being constructed. On pages 4 and 5 details of the expenditure I have referred to are set out. In connection with the vote of £72,846 under the heading of "Departmental," the amount of £40,400 is for salaries in connection with the Works Department, while the incidental expenditure for that same department totals £9,000. Therefore there is a total of £49,000 for the Works Department out of the £72,846 for Departmental generally. The total for the department is approximately 6.2 per cent. of the total expenditure. From pages 8 to 25 further particulars are shown in

detail as to what progress was made during the last financial year in the various loan works, and what is expected to be done this year. In addition to that members will find attached to the Estimates a very comprehensive statement of the unexpended loan balances. Practically all the information which members referred to in connection with the provision of railway stock will be seen. There is shown on this page the unexpended balances of authorisations to the 30th June last, the estimated expenditure to the end of the financial year 1909-10, and provision for the nine months to the 31st March, 1911. The heading as to liabilities under Section 36 of the Audit Act means liabilities outstanding on the 30th June last, while reference to the recoup to Loan Suspense Account means loan expenditure diverted last year but not covered by the Loan Act, which is put down for expenditure this year from General Loan Fund. Passing on to the vote for railways, it will be obvious to the Committee that several new lines are provided for. During this year it is expected that a commencement, provided that approval is given by the House, will be made of the Dowerin-Merriden, Goomalling-Wongan, and Boyup-Kojonup railways, while there is also provision for the Bridgetown-Wilgarup, Katanning-Shannon's Soak, Marrenup-Marradong, and Upper Chapman. Surveys of the Tambellup-Chirrellilup, Wagin-Darkin, Sandstone-Lawlers, Leonora-Lawlers, and Merredin-Wickepin will be in progress during the year. Notwithstanding the passage of these Loan Estimates providing for the construction of new railways, the lines, if authorised, cannot be proceeded with until the Bills authorising them are finally passed by both Houses. The item of £60,000 for additions and improvements to opened railways covers mainly the relaying with 60lb. rails of that portion of the Great Southern Railway between Yornaning and Beverley. It has been found necessary, in view of the additional heavy traffic caused by the increased demand for Collie coal, that this portion of the line should be relaid with 60lb. rails. Those rails which are to be taken out are 46½ lbs. and they

will be made use of for some of the lighter agricultural lines. An additional sum of £10,000 has been provided for the cost of relaying the Northampton line. In regard to the harbours and rivers expenditure, it will be seen that £11,000 is provided for additions and improvements to jetties, tramways, and rolling stock in the North-West, for the Bunbury Harbour Works £20,000, Busselton Jetty Extension £15,000, Fremantle dock £64,000, Improvements to Harbours and Rivers £30,000, and for Lighthouses £24,000, making a total of £174,000. It is expected that the requirements up to the 30th March, 1911, will amount to £115,270. For water supply and sewerage for Perth and Fremantle £123,000 is provided for the financial year ending the 30th June next, and an additional £89,671 it is anticipated will be expended during the subsequent nine months. In connection with the vote, "Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources," the sum of £96,000 is provided for this financial year, and an additional £72,779 is provided for the following nine months. In this £96,000 there is included the sum of £44,000 for development in the Eastern Goldfields, and £20,000 for the erection of State batteries, and provision of treatment plants. For "Advancement of Agriculture" £202,000 is set aside. A large portion of this sum will be spent in connection with surveys before selection and in improvements prior to selection. An amount of £33,000, or £58,000 in all to March, 1911, has been provided in connection with new roads and bridges in the country and goldfields districts, including feeders for the railways. The sum of £99,883 has been provided for public buildings, and an additional £45,000 it is anticipated will be expended during the subsequent nine months. I do not know that I can give a further explanation generally in introducing the Estimates. As the items are considered I hope I will be in a position to give members more detailed information, while the Ministers in charge of the various departments will be in a position to give particulars. I think of the information members require in this connection. I beg to move the first line of the Estimates—

Departmental, £72,846.

Progress reported.

BILL—BOYUP-KOJONUP RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 3rd December.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): In the introduction of the railway measures the greater portion of the Minister's time was devoted to an explanation of the possibilities of this line, therefore I presume he regards this as the most important of the three Bills he submitted. If one looks at the details in the return placed before us it might appear that this line has better prospects than either of the other two, but I would call attention in the first place to the information which was supplied in regard to resident occupiers in connection with the three railways. We find that for the Dowerin-Merredin line there are 85 farms, for the Goomalling-Wongan about 80—but whether that means inhabitants or farms one is left to determine for himself—while in the Boyup-Kojonup we are told there are 600, approximately.

The Minister for Works: Does it not say they are resident occupiers?

Mr. BATH: It is the first time I have heard farms called "resident occupiers." I take it the population is about 600 along the proposed railway, and in that respect the information differs from that given in the same column respecting the two other railways. Does the 600 mean population?

The Minister for Works: No, resident occupiers; there are 600 settlers.

Mr. BATH: I might point out, too, in regard to this proposition that when the Minister introduced it he said that 40 per cent. of the land within the influence of the railway was first-class, and that 40 per cent. was second-class. If we look at the figures given, however, as to the classification of the land, we find the area of first-class is 163,600 acres, which is a long way less than 40 per cent. of a total of 870,000 acres under the influence of the

proposed railway, and the same applies to the second-class land, of which it is said there are 163,600 acres. That is a long way less than 40 per cent. of the area influenced by the proposed railway. It seems to me that the information the Minister for Works had to hand was different from that supplied in the table, supposed to be for the information of members. I am convinced in my own mind that there are a number of districts in Western Australia better entitled, and more in need of railway communication than the one to be served by joining Kojonup and Boyup. If one looks at the Great Southern railway and at the country to the east of it to the rabbit-proof fence, he will note there are settlers who were induced to go there to grow wheat; in order that they might carry out their undertaking successfully it is essential that they should have railway communication. If we look at the distance between the points to be joined by the railway, and take a straight line between the two, it cannot be much more than 40 or 42 miles, which would mean that settlers half-way between the two points are already within 20 miles of a railway either way.

The Premier: The distance is 52 miles.

Mr. BATH: That is the distance of the railway, but when one looks at the convolution that the railway makes in traversing the country from Boyup to Kataning, the actual distance is much less.

The Premier: It is a very simple thing to measure it.

Mr. BATH: I assume, if the settler were half-way between the two points he would then be, at the outside, 22 miles from a railway.

Mr. Johnson: At the most, $23\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

Mr. BATH: There are settlers attempting to grow wheat, or who intend to grow wheat, to the eastward of the Great Southern, who are further away than that. In my opinion they should receive consideration before we should join up these two points. The Minister, in replying to an interjection by the member for Albany, tried to make out that this was not an attempt to concentrate the trade belonging legitimately to other ports, to that of Bunbury, and he said that as long as Al-

bany had railway communication no other port would take from it the trade which belonged to it; but the Minister omitted to mention the point that we are proposing to give certain districts double communication, communication with two ports, while, on the other hand, we are denying other districts communication with any port at all. That is the way the argument appeals to me, and if our policy of railway construction is to go in the right direction, it should be in the direction of giving railway communication to those settlers who are doing their best to develop their lands, and many who are developing their wheat lands, are depending so much upon railway communication for success. I have heard conflicting statements with regard to the quality of the land and capabilities of the districts which will be served by this proposition. Some have declared that there is a large area of very good land, while there are others who say that the land is not of good quality, but that there is a great deal of poison land there which requires a big expenditure before it can be made productive. Hon. members are being asked to vote on this railway proposition without knowledge on these points, or as to which of these conflicting statements is right. I have already said that before railway Bills are submitted to the House hon. members should have information, acquired either by a board of officers or by a committee of this House.

Mr. George: It was advocated some years ago.

Mr. BATH: It was advocated in this House, and the advocacy has been ignored. In New South Wales they have a public works committee, which examines every proposition placed before it, and the advantage of that is that all sides of the House are represented on it, and first hand information is obtained by personal inquiry, and members are able to distinguish between the conflicting claims of the different centres.

Mr. George: Who fixes the railway route.

Mr. BATH: The determining factor, in my opinion, has been the importunate demands of the towns along the existing railways. For instance, we have what

might be termed unseemly conflicts between points on the Great Southern railway as to where spur lines should start from, and the noise has been made, not by the settlers to be served, but rather by those already served by the railway. A committee appointed to inquire into these matters could avoid a mistake being made by the railway starting from the wrong place just because influence might have been used.

The Premier: What could the committee do?

Mr. BATH: They could personally inspect and examine the proposed railway route, go through the country, examine the settlers, get information, and place it at the disposal of members. Then, perhaps, with the information of this committee members would be in a better position to vote on the railway propositions. I am not in a position to speak with regard to the district proposed to be served by this railway. It may be all that is claimed for it.

The Premier: Have we made any mistakes so far in the routes selected?

Mr. Bolton: You are making one now.

Mr. BATH: The information which the Minister has supplied to us may be correct, although it differs from that which is on the printed sheet placed before us. I hope that a motion will be moved for a committee to inquire into this work. I would move at the present time, but I do not wish to restrict the debate on this proposition. I hope, however, that some hon. member will move that a committee to hold an examination into this proposal be appointed. This will not create unnecessary delay, and will dispel the doubt existing in the minds of some hon. members as to the advisability of constructing this railway in preference to others which they think have a prior claim.

Mr. LAYMAN (Nelson): In rising to support the Bill for the authorisation of this line I merely wish to point out a few of the principal reasons why the work should be constructed at an early date. In the first place we have a line already constructed from Donnybrook to Boyup, and I venture to say that this line has proved to be the best paying line in the

State amongst those recently constructed in agricultural centres.

Mr. O'Loghlen: And what has made it pay?

Mr. LAYMAN: A line is already constructed from Katanning to Kojonup, and the proposed railway will cover the intervening space of 52 miles, and when it is built it will complete the connection between the Great Southern and the South-Western railway lines. The line will bring these farmers in the Kojonup district very much nearer to a port, and now that we have to turn our attention to the export of wheat this will be a great consideration. They will then be within something like 110 miles from a port, whereas at the present time they are 270 miles from Fremantle and 140 miles from Albany. It will also bring the settlers in the Katanning-Kojonup area much nearer to our timber forests, which will be a great advantage to them. This will permit of timber being got at reduced rates and it will assist in the development of holdings. Since the line was constructed to Boyup there has been a great deal of settlement in that district. A township has been surveyed, and blocks have been sold by the Lands Department at satisfactory prices. There are two banks there in addition to several businesses. Another reason why this railway should be constructed is that all the people who are on the Dinninup area, selected land there on the understanding that the railway was going to be built in its vicinity. I consider it will be a breach of faith on the part of the Government not to construct this railway line.

Mr. Johnson: What about the promises to people who are 40 miles away from a railway.

Mr. LAYMAN: I know nothing about those promises. I do not think any member in the House can point to any position 40 miles out where people have selected land on the understanding that they were to have a railway line built in the near future.

Mr. Bolton: What about the Arthur River district?

Mr. LAYMAN: I would like to refer to this sheet of information which has

been placed before members with regard to the three proposed lines, Dowerin to Merredin, Goomalling to Wongan Hills, and Boyup to Kojonup. The information given is, 85 farmers will be served by the Dowerin-Merredin line, 80 farmers by the Goomalling to Wongan Hills line, and no fewer than 600 farmers by the line under consideration. A casual glance at the map on the wall of this Chamber will show which line will serve the greatest number of settlers. The land which has been taken up, hon. members will see is marked green on those maps, and it can be seen which map shows the greatest quantity of green. I can, without hesitation say, that this line will serve more farmers than either of the other lines, although I am prepared to support all, because there is justification for the construction of all these lines. Nearly the whole of the land taken up along the route of this railway is held in small holdings. Of the total of 280,000 acres which has been taken up only 70,000 acres is occupied by persons holding more than 4,000 acres each; the remainder is held by people who occupy small selections. Our first duty is to serve those who are already settled on the land, and in this particular instance there is no proposed line, or a line which can be proposed, that can serve more settlers than that to join Boyup and Kojonup. It has been said that a great deal of that land has poison on it. Anyone who knows anything about that land will readily admit that the York road poison grows only on good land, and it is easier to eradicate than timber.

Mr. George: Is there any wire grass there?

Mr. LAYMAN: No, there is not. In the Dinnup area there is as good land as is to be found in any other part of the State, and that will be served by this proposed railway.

Mr. Bolton: Are the Wilkie Brothers in that direction?

Mr. LAYMAN: They are 70 miles away. There are no very large areas down there. If the Wilkie Brothers were about there they would use their influence to get this railway through. As I have

already stated all holdings exceeding 4,000 acres aggregate 70,000 acres. To build these lines from Donnybrook to Boyup and from Katanning to Kojonup would be a great mistake unless it were intended to connect the two, by which connection the line will become of the greatest possible assistance to all those in the district. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray): In connection with this particular railway I must confess that the information placed before the House is not of so comprehensive a character as it should be. We have, of course, a lot of details given on this sheet which are very useful, but I think that in discussing any of these railways we should have before us some information that hon. members can grasp without trouble. We are told here about so many thousand acres belonging to small holders and some few thousand acres belonging to larger owners. I do not know that it matters very much whether the holders are large or small so long as the land is taken up and settled; but I think that if the reports of the inspecting engineers could be laid before hon. members we might be well guided, and, perhaps, better satisfied. For my own part I think this railway should be constructed, if it is only to connect up two short pieces, namely, one from the Western, and the other from the Eastern side. My reason for saying that is in connection with the economical running of the traffic. A line connected up like that will assist materially in keeping down the expenses, and at the same time enabling greater facilities to be given to the public. In respect to the cost of the running of these short spur lines I have never differed in my opinion—they are, absolutely, cash eaters. They trouble the working of the lines, and practically constitute a great source of worry for the traffic manager who has to control that work. The joining up of this line will assist the Railway Department in giving greater facilities for less money. I think myself the House should be entitled to know how the directions in which these railways are to go have been fixed. The leader of the Opposi-

tion made some remarks with regard to the desirability of having a standing committee, such as they have in the other States, to inquire into all public works and railways of a value exceeding £20,000. My Parliamentary experience goes back a great number of years, and I can hardly remember a single session in which the same proposition has not been brought forward; but I have never yet known of a Government desirous that such a committee should be appointed and should do its work. That such a committee is desirable probably no member would dispute. That it would be desirable even from a Government point of view is hardly open to question; because if a committee formed of members of both sides of the House were to inquire into matters of this sort, their report would naturally carry away at once any opportunity of flinging mud at the Government, or saying that the Government had been improperly influenced this way or the other in deciding upon the railway. It would take away those ideas that the Government were desirous of either placating their enemies or pleasing their supporters, which in the course of a debate usually get flung about for anyone to catch hold of. I do not know whether it will be my lot to see such a committee appointed, but I am satisfied that it would be of great use to the State. This particular line started from Katanning, or, rather, one part of it has done so. I do not know any particular reason why it should have been started from Katanning, nor at the same time am I aware of any reason why it should not have been so started. But there must be some good reasons for it, and those reasons should have been placed before the House.

The Minister for Works: They were given at the time.

Mr. GEORGE: My memory is fairly keen, and I do not remember—

The Minister for Works: You were not here at the time.

Mr. GEORGE: No; but my spirit was hovering over the place. My position at that time caused me to watch these railways even more closely than did members of the House. However, members

of the House were satisfied, and they agreed to the route.

Mr. Bolton: The reasons have never been given yet.

Mr. GEORGE: Still, hon. members passed it and, therefore, they have no justification in grumbling, although I perhaps have, seeing that I was not here to demand the reason. I certainly think that when a new railway is proposed the House is entitled to know exactly what is going to be done. It was never stated when this particular railway started from Katanning that the intention was to join it up.

The Premier: If you turn up *Hansard* you will see it very plainly stated. Turn up *Hansard* for 1906.

Mr. GEORGE: I withdraw my misstatement, and shall turn up *Hansard* for the purpose of thoroughly understanding a subject which I apparently do not understand, although I thought I did. Hon. members should know exactly what is going to be done, and what is the intention with regard to these lines.

Mr. Layman: It was mentioned in the Premier's first policy speech.

Mr. GEORGE: Such a lot of things are mentioned in the policy speeches that one cannot hope to remember half of them. I heard the Premier make a rattling good speech at Bunbury not so long ago, but if he remembers what was in it, it is more than I do.

The Premier: You cannot show me anything stated in any one of my speeches which I have not carried out.

Mr. GEORGE: I did not say I could. What I say is, it is a physical impossibility to remember what the Premier has said in his policy speeches. I only know that he carried his audience with him and that I was one of that audience.

Mr. Bolton: That explains many things.

Mr. GEORGE: I think the opinion of the House as far as the Premier is concerned is quite good enough for him or any other man. The Government have this information in regard to these particular lines; they have the reports of inspecting engineers, and these reports would be of great value to the House if

we had them. I think we should have them laid before us. The information to be given cannot be too full. I intend to support this railway, because, as I say, it will join up two sections. But about the other railways I may have something of quite another nature to say. I could raise the question as to the construction of this line, as to whether it is of a sufficiently permanent character; but as the Government have adopted a policy of building light lines, and as this House and former Houses have supported them in it, I take it they are satisfied, and my individual opinion must remain my own property. The country will have to pay for these light lines, as indeed it is paying to-day. The Minister in introducing this line spoke of certain lines costing more money than the original cost laid down. It will be within the memory of hon. members that a certain itinerant authority on railways, who was once in this State but has since left it, and who, it seems, is coming back, used to talk about building railways at £600 or £1,000 per mile. The Government of the day took him seriously, and the Government of to-day is finding that these £1,000 a mile lines are about the worst investment, as far as anything like substantial capital invested is concerned, which any Government could make, for they have now to spend more money to bring these lines into decent shape. This particular line is to cost £1,558 per mile. There is a considerable difference between this price and the price put forward by that itinerant authority to whom I have referred.

The Minister for Works: We never took him seriously.

Mr. GEORGE: Then the hon. member never took anything seriously in his life; because I notice that in connection with this particular cost he lays down that the extra £500 a mile is rendered essential by the necessary fencing of station yards, by the putting in of loading ramps, and by the erection of small shelter sheds.

The Premier: And the cost of sleepers.

Mr. GEORGE: No; not on this particular line: because if the cost of sleep-

ers was so much more, how was it that the Minister told us we were going to be connected up with the best bit of jarrah country in the State. Whatever the extra cost, therefore, in connection with this particular line it has nothing to do with the cost of necessary conveniences which should be provided with every line. The Government have no right to dump passengers down by the side of a line; there should be a bit of a platform and a loading ramp, and the station yard should be fenced. In respect to the fencing, etcetera, of this particular line the hon. gentleman wants the House to believe that some £15,000 or £20,000 is wanted for that purpose.

The Minister for Works: It is not £100 in excess of the original cost.

Mr. GEORGE: They are going to spend £1,558 a mile.

The Premier: The Donnybrook to Boyup cost £1,430 a mile.

Mr. GEORGE: It may be so. If I had the plans here I might be able to tell the Premier why it cost that amount. But that is not the question. My point is that the Government are going to give to the settlers what they have a right to demand, namely, loading ramps, platforms, and shelter sheds. The Minister has promised that, and I shall endeavour in my small way to see that he carries it out. I have not the slightest doubt that he will carry it out, because I do not think for a moment that he makes a promise without intending to fulfil it. Still, Ministers require to be watched. Another important point is the grades. The ruling grade is one in 40. I have not seen the surveys, but I wish the Government could see their way clear to provide even more money, and cut the grades down to 1 in 50 or even 1 in 60. It is all very well to try and get a cheap capital cost, but we must have some regard to the maintenance, and 1 in 40 is a very expensive grade indeed to work. I think myself, in fact, I am quite sure, that a very little extra expense in the first instance would cut these grades down: and it must be remembered that once the lines are constructed they are there for all time, and the cutting down

of the grades on an established line usually means a deviation, which may cost a lot of money, such as we had to provide on the Eastern Railway.

The Premier: Many of the grades are 1 in 60.

Mr. GEORGE: I have only the information that the ruling grade is one in 40, but I know sufficient about the surveying of lines, perhaps not sufficient as the hon. member who is a surveyor, to know that when instructions are given to seek for a grade of one in 40 the surveyors look for it; but if these grades are sought for the expense is thrown on the Working Railways, and the taxpayers of the country have to pay for the extra expense of working and maintenance. When we are borrowing money we should borrow a little more so as to give a decent grade on which we can do the work. It will be cheaper in the long run; and since we have got over the silly foolishness of attempting to provide decent lines at two-penny-halfpenny figures, why should we not go a little further and make a decent line that will do the work? I can see very clearly that on these lines the Government are building to connect the Great Southern railway with the South-West the traffic will be something very large. I am not speaking from personal knowledge of the country as the Minister for Lands will be able to do, but I know sufficient of Western Australia to know that where these lines run they must carry a lot of traffic provided the land holders go there. We are going to get that traffic, and it is our bounden duty to build lines so that it will not cost the Working Railways too much to carry it, and I would be very glad if it were possible to vote a little more money in order to make the lines of a sufficient grade to work them economically. It is intended to provide 45 pound rails and 8in. by 4in. sleepers. If I had my way I would not put in a single sleeper less than 9in. by 4½in. The 8in. by 4in. sleepers after a little wear will not hold the dogs. That is why we had to throw many of them out. They are more susceptible to have broken backs by heavy locomotives running over them. I really thought Western Australia had

grown out of the position in which I found it 20 years ago, that of using 8in. by 4in. sleepers. I thought we had got into using a decent size of sleeper, and I think the House should have sufficient common sense to devote the money to put down a road that will last. The engine-driver knows the difficulties he has to encounter on light lines. With a good line you have a good road, and you can save money in maintenance and in the cost of running. I would like the Government to consider the question of putting in 9in. by 4½in. sleepers, and of making them 7ft. long instead of 6ft. 6in. long as at present. Those now used are too short. I know it is possible to get the opinion of some engineers to uphold the use of the 6ft. 6in. sleepers, but there is no engineer of any note in Australia who would give his candid opinion that the 6ft. 6in. sleeper is sufficient. We should have 7ft. by 9in. by 4½in. sleepers. The 8in. by 4in. sleepers are too small, and it is only a question of a little time when they will not hold the dogs and must be replaced at the cost of the Working Railways. It is one of the factors that has tended to keep down the votes for wages and salaries. That extra expenditure has been required for the maintenance of lines starved in the first cost of construction.

Mr. Taylor: What would be the additional cost of having 9in. by 4½in. sleepers?

Mr. GEORGE: I do not suppose there would be a difference of more than 2d. or 2½d. per sleeper between the 8in. by 4in. sleeper and the 9in. by 4½in. sleeper; but it might be 3d. Two thousand sleepers to the mile at 3d. a sleeper would be something like £25; but as to the value to the Working Railways, well, ask the Commissioner of Railways and his officers, and they would tell. It does not require much railway experience to know that if you put down a decent foundation you can expect the driver to run safely and quickly. I should like to see that alteration made.

Mr. KEENAN (Kalgoorlie): It is difficult for any private member to express an opinion as to whether this rail-

way should be constructed or not. The most private members can do is to take what the Minister in charge of the Bill lays before them, and to give it that scanty consideration which the limited time at disposal for a debate of this character allows. I do not think anyone is justified in forming an opinion that the Ministry are not honestly assured that this line would be a distinct benefit to the country if it were constructed. Not for one moment would I take up the position of challenging that opinion. That, however, is not the real question according to the view I take of this matter. The real question is somewhat of a different kind altogether, and it is whether, when a Minister brings down a Bill for the construction of a railway and lays before the House reasons for the construction of that line, we fully discharge the proper functions the House should discharge when determining on the building of railways which are meant to develop our agricultural resources if we consider those reasons and those reasons only. The result of the present practice is that we have either to throw out the proposal made—and we are not justified in taking that course except on the facts brought before the House by the Minister—or, if we accept the proposal, to very possibly exclude the construction of other railways, which, had they been before the House, would have received greater support than those brought down by the Ministry. What is the obvious cure for this state of affairs is that instead of these lines being merely laid before the House for assent or dissent and, as it happens in this case and in other cases, with very limited time for considering the granting of that assent or dissent, all the proposals for the construction of railways should be investigated by some standing committee, and, after investigation, should be brought before the House with the reasons and evidence taken submitted at the same time. When the Premier was in Victoria two and a half years ago he will remember that it was then pointed out to him by the Victorian Government that they found this system of working admirable. They found it put out many proposals which

were more or less of a political character, and which had their merits no doubt, but not the merits of other proposals, and it brought to the front the very best proposals the public money could be spent on in achieving the accomplishment of. So far as it became any part of my duty to express an opinion on it, I was very much impressed with and in favour of this system; and I was then of the opinion that it was the attitude taken up by the Premier, my colleague at the time. However, we have still persisted in the old, ancient, and useless and sometimes dangerous habit of having only certain measures brought down, and the House having no choice but to reject these measures without consideration of any alternate scheme, or else swallow the measures presented. Unquestionably there are members who favour the building of other lines that they claim would be of greater advantage. As a member who has no agricultural knowledge, I do not venture to express an opinion; but I should like evidence before me brought forward by both sides, by those who advocate alternate routes and proposals, and by those who advocate the proposals laid before the House, and I should like the opportunity, although I express such ignorance in agricultural matters, to exercise the common sense which we all possess in voting as to which is the better proposal to support. This opportunity is entirely denied by the procedure we adopt, and we are taking the greatest possible risk of carrying out lines that, when we come to a better knowledge of our resources, and of what should be done for the benefit of the country, we may find are grievous blunders. We know that in Victoria very many lines were put down and after remaining down for some years were taken up. I wish distinctly to abstain from challenging the merits of this particular line, or from challenging the accuracy of the case made by the Minister who proposed this Bill for the assent of the House, but I do most forcibly object to having the only alternative left of voting against the measure which may be a good one, or else of blindly swallowing it without knowing whether there may not be very different

proposals for different parts of the State which it might be wiser to construct.

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

Mr. PIESSE (Katanning): I rise to offer my hearty support to this important proposal. I welcome this measure for the reason that, knowing the district as I do and its possibilities, I realise the great advantage that will result to that portion of our State as well as to the agricultural industry generally by its construction. This railway will, to some extent, enable the Government to keep faith with those settlers who have had the courage and enterprise to go into that distant part and develop those areas which some few years ago were practically unknown. This question of railway communication between Kojonup and Boyup is not a new one. The settlers of that district have been encouraged by the construction of the Katanning-Kojonup railway to go further afield, and to take up land along the route of the proposed railway. This district was settled by a few pioneers some 20 or 30 years ago, and those men did a very great deal towards opening up the country and demonstrating what can be done there. I know that the settlement of this locality has been surrounded by many difficulties. One which is known to every member of this House is that throughout the district, as well as in other parts of the State, there is a fair proportion of what has for many years kept back the country, that is the much dreaded poison plant. While that plant, to some extent, has been a great drawback to the settlement of the country, we can say it has been a blessing in disguise, for had it not been for the fact that some of our larger areas were infested with poison, these areas would have been held to-day in very large holdings. I am certain that the only thing that has kept that country back from being taken up for grazing purposes has been the existence of poison there. During the past nine or ten years we have by improved methods been able to arrive at a satisfactory means of eradicating this

particular weed, and to-day on what we looked upon as country unfit for depasturing stock, there are many thousand sheep being depastured, thus showing that so far as the poison plant is concerned, it is only a question of adopting proper methods in order to eradicate it. Therefore I think members need have no anxiety as to this so-called bogey of the poison plant which has so often been put forward as an argument in detriment to the district. Although the poison does exist in the greater portion of the district, still it is often found on the very best of the land. It is on the wheat lands there, and in this respect provides a contrast to other parts of the country infested with the poison, for there it is generally in the poor lands of the State that the plant is found. Members are inclined to form a wrong impression of the area when it is described to them as poison country. By the construction of this railway the Government will be keeping faith with the settlers who have gone out there and taken up the land.

Mr. Angwin: How long ago was that?

Mr. PIESSE: Some of the pioneers went there as long ago as 35 years. They did wonderfully good work in the locality, and were followed some ten years ago by numbers of settlers from the Eastern States—that is, before the construction of the Katanning-Kojonup line—among whom were a number of practical men who had had great experience in the northern areas of South Australia, and preferred to go into a district here where there was an assured rainfall. They took up land at Mooradup about 15 miles from Kojonup, and for several years had to cart their produce to Katanning, a distance of 40 miles. This shows how necessary it was to give those settlers railway communication. The farmers who settled there made but slight progress, owing to the long distance they had to cart their stuff, and it was only by the construction of the Katanning-Kojonup line, which placed them 15 miles nearer, that they were able to make any headway at all. A few weeks ago I visited that area and talking with the farmers there was more than pleased to find what a good feeling exists among the settlers now.

They evidently thoroughly appreciate the assistance given to them by the construction of the Katanning-Kojonup railway. This demonstrates that we must be prepared to go even further with railway communication, and to continue this railway so that it shall connect up with Boyup. In addition to that settlement at Mooradup there is an area of 40,000 or 50,000 acres which was previously a poison lease, but has been surveyed and subdivided. It has been settled, to some extent, by some English immigrants who came out here about three years ago. One of the chief recommendations for the construction of this railway is that we have along the line a number of small selectors. As has been pointed out there are 73,000 acres held in large estates. I believe that one block of 10,000 acres has recently been repurchased by the Government, while of the remaining 63,000 acres the area of the average holding is not more than 6,300 acres. In addition to that we have, as the information supplied to us shows, some 600 land holders. I am given to understand that this number represents the individual residential holders within the limits of 15 miles on either side of the line. I was surprised to find that the number was so great and I took the precaution to inquire at the Lands Office, and I was assured by the officers there that these figures are as near as possible correct. I know there is a great settlement there, and I know from interviews I have had with people there that the settlers are doing good work. They have got to the stage now that a number have fenced in a portion of their holdings and eradicated a certain amount of poison; they have also provided water supplies and are now prepared to enter upon clearing. We can quite understand that the holders of land in this locality are looking forward with great anxiety to the progress of this Bill through the House. It means that unless we are prepared to carry out this railway, and relieve those settlers upon the small areas, that they will not be able to remain there and cart their crops long distances to the nearest railway. It will mean also that these smaller areas will be absorbed by the larger holders, and instead of being care-

fully cultivated they will be reduced probably to sheep walks. Another point that can be urged in favour of the construction of this line is the fact that during the past 2½ years, about the time the immigrants took up their residence in that locality, departmental maps showed the route of the survey of this particular line, and I think that alone should have some bearing with hon. members in the way of assisting them to make up their minds to vote for this measure. Hon. members should be satisfied that every inquiry has been made. Regarding the quality of the land, I happen to know the district about 40 or 45 miles to the west of Kojonup. I have not been to Boyup, but I know the country surrounding it and I am acquainted with the district in the neighbourhood of this proposed line. The soil is as has been stated by the Minister; it contains 40 per cent. of first class land, it is a rich red loam, and the balance can be classed as second and third rate. This country is unlike that part of the State where there are rough hills, which render so much of the land useless for cultivation. The land in the locality in question is not difficult to clear and can be very easily improved, and with the aid of fertilisers I am sure that even the poorest land there can be put to good use. I would again point out that it would be most advantageous to carry out this development in the way of improving the poorer lands, and this can only be done by assisting the settlers in the direction of giving them railway facilities. Unless we take the bull by the horns and build this railway the State will be called upon to embark upon a large expenditure in the way of constructing roads. The railway will, to a great extent, obviate the construction of main roads. The district enjoys a splendid rainfall; it has never been known to fail. The district has an elevation of from 1,000 to 1,200 feet, and it possesses a magnificent climate; water is easily obtained and can also be conserved by the construction or the excavation of tanks. Clearing throughout the district can also be classed as easy, and I think I am right in saying that this can be done from £1 to £2 an acre, or an average of 30s. an acre.

Mr. Hudson: The country does not grow timber?

Mr. PIESSE: It does grow timber—white gum, red gum, blackboy, and other timbers characteristic of that part of the State are to be found there.

Mr. Jacoby: What crops are growing there?

Mr. PIESSE: As far as the district is concerned, while it could not be looked upon as essentially a wheat producing country, it is capable of growing all kinds of cereals. I know in years gone by—I am speaking of 20 years ago—when the early settlers were on the Dininup, they used to cart their wheat to Katanning, and the samples that they produced then were quite equal to anything that can be grown in any part of the State. The people in that locality have to a great extent confined their attention to the growing of oats, because they found oats proved to be a safer crop to grow than wheat; that was because they did not go in for a proper system of fallowing, and they had no markets to cater for, and it was impossible for them to plant larger areas. As far as I can learn wheat can be grown there and produced up to 25 bushels per acre. I do not say that this is the average; this year I understand it will be about 12 bushels, but that can easily be exceeded. In addition to wheat, barley has been successfully grown there. It is one of the healthiest sheep districts in the State, its elevation lends itself to that, and we know of instances where wool grown in that district has commanded top prices in London owing to its special quality and cleanness. All kinds of stock do well there and the district is noted for the horses that it breeds. Hon. members may wonder why the area under cultivation does not appear any larger. As I have pointed out, however, there has been no inducement for the people who settled there in the early days to clear large areas, but the settlers who have gone there later—I am speaking of those who went there two or three years ago—have only had time to fence in their holdings. I have not the least doubt that, if it becomes known that Parliament is going to pass this Bill, much larger areas will be brought under the axe ready for cropping

next year. I know several instances where settlers are only waiting for the decision of Parliament. There will also be a great impetus given to the settlement of the unalienated area. According to the statement presented to the House there are some 400,000 acres of land awaiting selection, and I have no doubt that as soon as this line becomes an accomplished fact, the balance of that land will be eagerly sought. The railway will be used for the carriage of fertilisers, and the timber from the Preston Valley, which in themselves would greatly help the revenue of the railways, and not only that but it will be of assistance to the settlers in the districts adjoining the Great Southern railway.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What revenue will the fertilisers bring?

Mr. PIESSE: I would point out that even if the State carried fertilisers free it would be of great benefit to the country because of the extra production that would follow, which would then mean additional freights for the railways. I am looking forward to the time when this State will be counting its consumption of artificial measures, not by the hundreds of tons, but by the thousands of tons, because we have an enormous area with an assured rainfall, and it is only a question of applying those manures to get the fullest result and the extra freightage for our railways. Then there will be the trade that will spring up between the two great centres which will be connected by this railway. I refer to the South-Western and the Great Southern, both of which are very important centres. Ever since the country in that direction has been settled these localities have been isolated. The distance is as great from Katanning to Bridgetown as it is from Katanning to Kalgoorlie, although, when you come to think of it, only 100 miles separates the two places. It is not good for a State like this to have two such important settlements so isolated. By the construction of this railway line one of these districts will be able to do a trade with the other with its timbers and root crops, while the other district will be able to trade with the products

it grows in its district. I think it will be to the mutual good of these two localities to be connected up by this railway, independently of the great good that is going to be conferred upon the country by the construction of the line. In conclusion I would like to say, that while we realise that we have alienated so much of our land, we should realise also that, following up that alienation, the State must be prepared to embark on a bold policy of railway construction. So far as my own district is concerned, I would have liked to see—and I feel sure that these localities have strong claims—I would have liked to see in addition to the construction of this line, a Bill brought down to construct another railway. However, I will have an opportunity of speaking on this at a later stage, therefore, I do not propose to say anything further in respect to it just now, except to state that the claims of Boyup and of my own district are, perhaps, of equal importance. I am only sorry that the Government have not brought down an extra Bill for the lines referred to, namely the Shannon's Soak-Katanning and the Tambellup-Ngowangerup lines. The leader of the Opposition has stated that a good deal of dissension exists in the towns along the Great Southern concerned in these railways. I would like to point out that so far as I am concerned, I do not place any importance on the advocacy of any individual town. In arriving at a conclusion on these matters I have always felt it is our duty to consider only the wishes and interests of those settlers who are most directly concerned; that is to say, the people located so far back from the railway. If the people of, say, Shannon's Soak wish to have a connection at Katanning they should be the people who decide it. So, too, if the people at Ngowangerup want a connection at Tambellup their wishes should be honoured.

Mr. Bolton: Is that how you would treat the Moodiarrup people?

Mr. PIESSE: I say that if a majority of the people most concerned in a railway meet together and decide by resolution as to the point at which they would like

to be connected with the trunk line, I think their wishes should be carried out. If the people of Moodiarrup and others concerned had so met and decided upon a certain route I should say that their wishes should receive consideration. I have nothing further to add, except to say that I am sorry if I have wandered to some extent from my subject. I hope hon. members will pardon me in that respect. I do earnestly feel that in advocating this railway we are doing a good work, and are keeping our promise to those who went down to the district and settled there and took great risks in so doing. I think if the people of that locality can say, and I know that they can, that they have carried out their part of the implied contract, it is only right and fair that this House and the Government should be prepared to carry out their part.

Mr. DRAPER (West Perth): The excellent speech addressed to this House by the member for Katanning on behalf of his constituents is the strongest argument that could be addressed to us against the present system of bringing down railway Bills without laying sufficient information before the House, upon which members can judge as to whether or not a railway is justified. I take it that what I am saying upon this subject will merely be regarded as general. I do not profess to know anything about agricultural communities. But I can gather from the Press and from everyday life that there are many communities in Western Australia at the present time who are desirous of a railway, and who, possibly, may be more deserving of a railway than these people who live in the Kojonup-Boyup district. This may possibly be so, and I can well imagine that the words we have had addressed to the House by the member for Katanning to-night on behalf of his constituents, could be uttered with equal effect and force by many other members of the House in respect to the particular districts which they represent.

The Minister for Lands: Quite true.

Mr. DRAPER: If the Minister for Lands admits that, then surely the Ministry also, as a body, will admit

that it will be advisable for a committee to be appointed to say which of these deserving localities is to be first entitled to have the railway. We have had a speech from the Minister for Works, who dealt with generalities, who dealt with the advantages of our borrowing policy, and who dealt with the wonderful strides which this State has made in agriculture. But beyond those generalities I do not think we can find any special argument which applies to the justification of this railway. Those generalities could be applied with equal force and effect to, possibly, a dozen other railways in districts which are represented by other hon. members. What I desire to impress upon the House is that we are entirely, I will not say at the mercy of, because that is a wrong term, but we are entirely dependent upon the Ministry for bringing in the railways, which, possibly on insufficient information, they think should be constructed first and foremost. If we had a different system, if we copied what is taking place in New South Wales as regards the standing committee upon public Works, or if we copied what is taking place in Victoria as regards the committee appointed to sit upon the construction of railways—if that were done we should not be dependent upon mere statements made in this House as to whether or not a railway is justified. Members of the Ministry must not for one moment consider that I desire in any way to reflect upon their veracity, but when they come forward and make statements they are telling this House what is really secondhand evidence. They are simply giving us what railways, in their opinion, it is desirable to construct; but if we had a committee which sat upon these questions, and considered all the points that might arise, and if that evidence were taken down and printed, and laid before the members of the House, we should not be judging upon second-hand evidence, but we would be able to judge for ourselves as to whether or not the railway were justified. At this stage, when there are so many works of a public nature demanding to be constructed in the interests

of the State, it is of vital importance to the State that we should have something before us by which we can judge of the respective merits of these particular works. At the present time works, I have no doubt, are introduced into the House, possibly because some constituencies may be more importunate than others, and possibly some members may be more importunate than others. If these constituencies are more importunate they cannot be blamed any more than can members who, in turn, may be importunate. The fault does not lie in the importunity of any particular member in urging a railway for his district, but it lies rather in the system by which we do not obtain sufficient information to lay before the House on which we can judge of the merits of each particular case. Under these circumstances I cannot feel justified in supporting the Bill at the present time; because no case has been made out, either by the general remarks of the Minister, or by the special pleading by the member for Katanning, as to why in preference to others this railway should be constructed at the present time.

Mr. W. PRICE (Albany): The question is as to whether the proposed line is of immediate necessity and, if so, how does its demand compare with the requirements of other districts. It has been admitted by several members on both sides of the House that good claims have been put forward by other districts for railway facilities. I may say at once that I have heard nothing from any hon. member who has risen to support the Bill, to induce me to vote in favour of it—rather the reverse. In regard to the member for Katanning, who is most directly concerned in this Bill, to my mind he made the strongest speech made in the House this evening against this proposal. He tells us that the poison plant extends over the greater portion of the district. I cannot see how the House can be asked to believe that this land is of great value for agricultural and grazing purposes if the statement made by the member for Katanning is a correct one.

Mr. Heitmann: They do not want a line out there for grazing purposes, anyhow.

Mr. W. PRICE: However, before dealing directly with that phase of the question, namely, the desirability or otherwise of this or any alternative railway proposal, let me point out that personally I am opposed to the very extraordinary enthusiasm which seems to have seized upon the members of the Ministry and caused them somehow to be imbued with the idea that the beginning and the end of this State is railway communication with the port of Bunbury. I readily admit that the Government may be actuated by the best of motives in their railway proposals, but there are occasions when the best of us allow our enthusiasm to overcome our better judgment. And I really think that if we carefully study the railway map—and every hon. member has one attached to the railway report—we will note that it is somewhat peculiar that practically every agricultural railway proposal put forward by the Government means leading to that port which has become somewhat historical through having provided the State with certain Premiers. In opposing this line I cannot be accused of doing so because I desire one in the constituency I represent. I think I should meet with very scant consideration if I were to put forward a proposal or a suggestion for a line in my constituency; and I have reasons for making that remark, reasons which are all too apparent and which were made apparent here this evening. However, I do not intend to pursue that phase of the subject at this stage, but I desire to point out that since this extraordinary development of our railway policy in the direction of linking up the port of Bunbury with the agricultural areas of the State has been going on, a very large tract of country has been sadly and woefully neglected by the Government. I refer to the millions of acres of land lying to the East of the Great Southern Railway. That land has been admitted by the Premier to be the finest land in the State. There is no question as to its fertility; and there is no ques-

tion as to its suitability for agricultural purposes. People have gone out on the Eastern side of the Great Southern Railway as much as 40 and 50 miles from railway communication, and have taken up land and developed it, and I propose to give some information relating to one district which I think has equal or even more claims for railway communication than the district now under consideration. One of the arguments used in favour of the construction of the Boyup-Kojonup line is that there is a large number of settlers—the list placed before us places them at 600—who will be served by this railway. My idea in regard to agricultural lines is that they should precede settlement, that they should go out as far as possible into the areas which are still the property of the Crown, and the lines having been pushed out into these areas which have not been taken up, the Crown itself would receive the benefit of the settlement which would come along. In other words, in considering the construction of railways we should, as far as possible, prevent the land-jobber from receiving the benefit of the construction of the lines. If we take the proposal we have before us, we are told by the Minister for Works in introducing the Bill, and by the member for Katanning (Mr. Piesse) that practically the whole of the country along the route is taken up. I think there are 4,000 acres still available away from the line within what might be termed the zone of influence of the proposed railway; but, along the route practically the whole of the land has been taken up. Therefore the construction of this railway simply means that the Government will enhance the value of the property along the line at the expense of the people in other parts of the State, many of whom are languishing and practically being impoverished through the need for railway facilities. The people who are at the greatest distance from railway communication in the district to be served by this railway cannot be more than 23½ miles from a railway. Surely even the Minister for Works will not seriously contend that it is imperative that people who are within 23½ miles of a

railway should be brought into direct touch with a railway, when we have people 30, 40, and 60 miles away from railway lines who are endeavouring to make a living on our lands. As providing an instance where I certainly think a railway should be constructed before we pass the proposal we have now before us, I have only to refer to a somewhat interesting deputation which waited upon the Premier some time ago, and of which deputation the member for Katanning formed a part. That deputation waited on the Premier with a request that he should consider the construction of a railway line Eastward from Tambellup, or some centre in that locality, to Gnowangerup. In reply to that deputation the Premier said, "Having done a lot of survey work in that district years ago he knew of his own observation that there was around Gnowangerup some of the best land in Western Australia." There can be no question in view of that definite and explicit statement as to the value of the land in this district. Now, I shall proceed to give some information as to the settlement that has taken place in this locality—this locality which is not overrun with the poison plant.

Mr. Piesse: There is poison there, and a good deal of it.

The Premier: There is poison all over the Great Southern Railway.

Mr. W. PRICE: In patches, I admit it is in patches, but the question is whether these patches are in the Gnowangerup district, whereas we have it on the statement of the member for Katanning that the poison is spread all over the district from Boyup to Kojonup. Within a radius of 15 miles of Gnowangerup there are 192,931 acres selected. The district is 30 miles from the Great Southern Railway, and is Eastward from Tambellup. Of the area selected, 13,600 acres are cleared and 9,300 acres are cultivated, and the estimate for the present year is that 15,842 acres will be cultivated during the year. I would like hon. members to compare the figures in regard to this proposal with those put forward by the Minister for Works in favour of the Boyup-Kojonup railway.

The number of land-holders there is 102, which we can vouch for. On the other hand, we are told there are 600 land-holders between Boyup and Kojonup. I would like to know exactly within what radius of the proposed railway line these 600 are located, because on all hands we are assured the figures are somewhat surprising, and even the member for the district had to express his surprise at the statement that 600 people were within the zone of the proposed Boyup-Kojonup railway. I do not intend to dilate at any great length on this proposal in view of the fact that so many members have expressed themselves as opposed to it, but I may briefly refer to the fact that it is desired in this instance to link up what is the only payable so-called agricultural railway in the State with one that has proved to be the least payable. It is proposed to run through 52 miles of country, through a district which is already served with railway lines, which has a railway within 20 miles of any portion of it, for no other purpose, however much the matter may be glossed over, than to drag the produce to the port of Bunbury. I say at once I am opposed to the interests of the State as a whole being subordinated to the interests of any small section, and I say unhesitatingly that any person studying the railway proposals of the Government, and not only their proposals but the lines they have brought into existence, cannot help being struck with the fact that every one of them leads to the one centre. Are we to believe that there is no necessity for railway lines except those which are running direct to the port of Bunbury? I do not think even the member for the port of Bunbury would ask the House to believe that such is necessary. If we look through the list of what are termed district railways we find that four out of seven agricultural lines directly serve that port. In other words, if we are to take our railway construction policy as being a true indication of the development of this State then the greater portion of the development is being carried out within a distance of one port, and

one port only. I do not think it would be seriously alleged that such is a fact and members know that such is not the case. They know that on the eastern side of the Great Southern railway there is settlement equally demanding railway facilities, and more justified in the demand than the district this line will serve. I do not intend to take up more time, for I feel that having heard so many diverse opinions expressed upon the proposal and having heard the condemnatory speech made by the member for Katanning—although I admit he did not intend it to be condemnatory, for he meant it to be a speech urging the construction of the line—members will study the interests of the country and refuse to vote for the proposal now before the House.

Mr. BOLTON (North Fremantle): I very seldom offer any remarks to this House on agricultural railway propositions because I recognise that my knowledge of the land to be served is usually somewhat small, and I also recognise that I cannot acquire the necessary information at my own expense so that I have to listen to those who can give information and look to the expert advice this House is entitled to. One thing I am glad to learn is that there is a feeling gradually growing in this House, and one that will soon reach decent proportions, that a board should be appointed to give expert advice to this House concerning new railway proposals, and that all propositions advised to be adopted by them could justly be deemed the most urgent among those suggested. Owing to the linking up of the lines by the Kojonup-Boyup section one district is to be very badly served. I have the advantage in this House of knowing something of the country between the Collie-Narrogin line and the proposed extension. In that area there is excellent land, but the settlers have been carting for the past 30 years there, and have now to cart 46 miles to Wagin and 32 to Darkan, which is I understand the nearest point to either railway they can get, and yet I heard the Premier in certain loan proposals say that the Government

proposed to expend money by completing a survey on that silly business the Wagin-Darkan line. If the Kojonup-Boyup extension is made the result will be that the people at Moodiarrup and Arthur River will never have a chance of being provided with railway communication, for there is already the Collie-Narrogin railway on the one side and whatever chance those people might have will be gone if the Government extend the Wagin line and bring it in to Darkan, where there are two stores and one hotel. I am afraid the Moodiarrup and Arthur River people will never have satisfaction unless the Premier proposes to forego that silly proposition to connect up what is worked out in mileage as 80 miles from Wagin to Darkan, instead of running south thus saving 25 miles, and bringing the people of Moodiarrup within 18 miles of a railway. The time was when the Labour party advocated a board of experts to report on these railway proposals. They received very little support from any members other than those of their own party, but to-night four or five members of the other side of the House have expressed themselves in favourable terms on the proposition and are even prepared to go as far as to have a select committee appointed to report on this scheme. I trust that a select committee will be appointed and that some member will move for one to report on this proposal before it is agreed to, for I am satisfied that outside of the member for Katanning, and possibly the member for Nelson, no member knows anything of the land to be served by this proposal. The Government may have the information, but members have it not, and it is their duty to make inquiries, and the only way to get proper information is through the medium of a select committee. It would be wise for members to demand the information. I believe they could get it if a committee were appointed. If this is not given, the time will come when members who take part in debates on the agricultural railway propositions will regret having allowed them to go through. The member for Murray referred to the fact that cer-

tain other proposals carried here some two or three years ago had proved to be failures, and that because they were passed every member was equally to blame for having caused them to be constructed. Had the hon. member been in the House at the time he would have known that those lines were put through in a day, and that members of the House had only two hours to discuss them. This will happen again unless an inquiry is made and first-hand information obtained. If it is too late for this railway to be dealt with in such a manner a select committee should be appointed to consider all the railway proposals put forward.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): I have listened with considerable interest to the speeches made in connection with this proposition. Very similar arguments have been used on previous occasions to the effect that members have not personal knowledge of the country to be served, and that in consequence it is inadvisable for a railway to be constructed. Now I want to ask all members to be guided by the experience of the past. Have any of the propositions brought forward by the Government proved failures? If so, I want members to indicate what railways they are. It is most gratifying to know what has been the result of the construction of these railways. It was never anticipated for a moment that they would pay from the jump, but in the first section of this railway we are now discussing, that is the length from Donnybrook to Boyup, a very handsome profit has been returned.

Mr. Bath: That is from the timber.

The PREMIER: When introducing the Bill I told members that the greater portion of the traffic for a few years would be timber. As a matter of fact this railway after providing for interest, sinking fund, and working expenses returned a profit of £1,042. That is one of the railways which the member for Albany referred to in a manner which would lead one to imagine that all the Government required was to bring railways into the port of Bunbury irrespective of whether they were payable propositions

or not. The railway that has been the least profitable of any is the one purchased by the Government to assist in developing the trade of the port of Albany. Instead of a profit of £1,042 there was on that railway a loss of £2,877.

Mr. Johnson: That is a very unfair comparison.

The PREMIER: It is a fact, and the hon. member knows the circumstances of the case as well as I do.

Mr. W. Price: The reason is that you would not throw the land open.

The PREMIER: The policy pursued in connection with that line is one well justified, as the result of the sale has shown. If the land had been thrown open without improvements not a soul would have taken it up. I know what I am speaking about, for I am not speaking from hearsay. I believe in the Government taking the responsibility of bringing down these railway proposals. If they want to avoid responsibility, they are not fit for the position they hold. It is their business to investigate these propositions and ascertain whether they are likely to be profitable or not. They have the whole machinery of Government at their disposal and can ascertain from returns and from the professional staff at the disposal of the Government whether the propositions are likely to be profitable or not, and also what is likely to be the general result of carrying out the undertaking. Have not all these propositions worked out in the manner we stated they would? If I were to commence my political career again and had to outline a railway policy, I would not vary one iota from the programme we laid down.

Mr. Hudson: Except as to Kojonup.

The PREMIER: I would not miss that line. Take the particular line that the member for Dundas is interested in, that is the Coolgardie-Norseman line. Had we trusted to the report of a board would that line have been built?

Mr. W. Price: Yes.

The PREMIER: It would not. Read the reports of the committee on the returns provided, and members will find

that there was no justification from them for the building of the line. In view of the fact that I had knowledge of engineering matters in connection with railway construction, and was aware that it would be a profitable proposition from a railway point of view, that line was constructed and returned last year a profit of £2,587 after paying working expenses, interest, and sinking fund.

Mr. W. Price: That is not an agricultural line.

The PREMIER: It is a railway proposition. The member stated that the Government were partisans so far as extending railway communication was concerned. Has there ever been a Government in power that has taken a more broadminded view than the present one so far as railway communication is concerned, irrespective of the political proclivities of the member of the particular district? Take the hon. member sitting opposite, the member for Dundas. Did we not, in his case, open up the Hopton port by constructing the line to Ravensthorpe? Then in the North-West have we not made a start in connection with the construction of the railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar? That district too is represented by a member of the Opposition. We have carried out the policy of giving to these ports that communication which is due to them by virtue of their geographical position.

Mr. Scaddan: What about Esperance?

The PREMIER: Put up a case showing there is something in it and we will be prepared to give it consideration. Hon. members may well laugh, but would they like me to commit myself to any proposition? I may say this though, that if I did commit myself to a work I would carry it through. We have heard a lot about this particular line, but I can speak with regard to it from personal knowledge. I regret that the leader of the Opposition was not able to go through that country with me. I made provision for him, and I would have been only too pleased to arrange for other hon. members to see that district, but I cannot force them to go over the routes

of these lines. If they would only visit these districts and get some practical knowledge, they would soon see whether these lines were justified. The construction of this line has been promised and we must keep faith with the people to whom the promise was made. In this case we need not confine ourselves to the experience gained by local gentlemen who know something of the district. Hon. members might listen to what a visitor to this State, a former Minister for Agriculture in Victoria, said to a newspaper representative about what he saw in that particular district.

Mr. Scaddan: Who was he?

The PREMIER: The Hon. George Swinburne. In an interview which he gave he said—

"There is nearly every variety of country—hills and fine flats, plenty of water and facilities for storing it."

Mr. Scaddan: Like Foster Fraser, who was just long enough in the country to write a book about it.

The PREMIER: Gentlemen like these see and learn a good deal more of the country than some hon. members do. Mr. Swinburne went on—

"A lot of misunderstanding in Victoria regarding Western Australia is due to the fact that so little is known about the South-West portion of the State. If those great areas were properly opened up they should be very attractive to Victorians."

Mr. Collier: But you have not given us time to consider this proposal.

The PREMIER: We have been talking about bridging the gap between Kattanning and Bridgetown for the past three years. In my policy speech three years ago I said that this work would have to be carried out.

Mr. Collier: You have said lots of things in your policy speeches that you have not carried out.

The PREMIER: The hon. member can detail them to me later on. As far as appointing the committee is concerned, I am thoroughly in accord with the remarks of the late Attorney General made some year or two ago in dealing with this question. He pointed out the fal-

lacy of having to trust to second-hand information, and remarked—

"Let me ask hon. members what a board of inquiry could do. Would it not call before it the people who have personal knowledge of the nature of the country, of its capacity for settlement, and of the probability of the line becoming self-supporting within a reasonable period? The board of inquiry, I take it, would call before it the very people who as members of the House give information to the House. It is true that a board might call more witnesses than it is possible for the House to avail itself of here to-day, but the evidence would be of exactly the same character. You could have no inquiry but that. The member for Guildford surely does not suggest that the board should take evidence on oath? (Mr. Johnson: But on a board of inquiry we should have experts.) The Attorney General: There are those who have spoken in this House, taking the responsibility on themselves of assuring the House that they had personally seen this country and personally examined it, and that it is country of the character described, capable of close settlement; and surely hon. members would, if sitting as a jury, either believe or disbelieve that evidence. And a board of inquiry would do exactly the same. So that by appointing a board we should gain only this: instead of witnesses being directly before the House, instead of members themselves having the full opportunity of judging the weight of evidence by the fact that witnesses were actually before them, we should have to deal second-hand with a board of inquiry."

Mr. Collier: These lawyers of yours are a terrible lot.

The PREMIER: That is sound logic. I absolutely agree with the remarks made by the Attorney General of that time. As I have already stated, if you want to avoid responsibility, if you want to do nothing, get a board by all means and let us stand still. Do members wish us to stagnate as we would have done if the

present Government had not taken the bull by the horns when we took office. Let me say we propose to continue the policy that we have been adopting in spite of all opposition. We are not afraid of a little responsibility. We have had the opportunity of judging the resources of this country; we are developing it from Port Hedland in the north to Hopetoun in the south, and to adopt the proposal which has been put forward by hon. members, will mean hanging up these railways for some considerable period. There are many men who have taken up land in this particular part of the State on the best of good faith and on the understanding that the termini at Kojonup and Boyup would be coupled up. Are we going to disappoint them; are we going to make their hearts sick with waiting? With regard to what the member for Albany said about the Tambellup railway, if he will look at the Loan schedule he will notice that provision has been made there for a certain sum for the railway.

Mr. W. Price: Yes, £7,000 and £20,000 for the other one.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows that it is absolutely necessary for a permanent survey to be made there before the railway proposal can be brought down. We must realise too that the Loan Bill will only cover expenditure up to the 7th of March 1911; and it would be absolutely impossible to spend more than the amount which has been put down. The hon. member need not worry even if he does represent Albany about that particular line. We are the judges as to what railway propositions should be placed before Parliament. The hon. member has very little knowledge of the localities to which we have built and are building railways at the present time. With regard to what he says about the poison plant, we know that the York road poison extends from Beverley to Tambellup, and even in the district he represents there is a fair amount of it. If he knew the plant when he saw it he would know that what I am saying is correct. I have listened with a considerable amount of interest to the remarks

of the member for Murray in connection with this railway construction, and I have listened to him because I realise he is a practical man, and one whose opinion is worth having. At the same time I join issue with him and maintain that these various railways must be judged entirely on their merits, and that in a case of loop lines, it is necessary that those lines should be built upon a different basis from that of spur lines. As far as connections are concerned, such as the Collie-Narrogin railway, 60lb. rails were used right through. We are now providing for the pulling up of the 44lb. rails on the Great Southern line in order to substitute 60lb. rails in anticipation of the connection of this railway with the eastern goldfields line. These railways are developmental as far as the opening up of the country is concerned, and if the time arrives when as a result of the opening up, the traffic increases, it should be possible to improve them. They should develop with the country. In most of these lines while we have a ruling grade of one in 40, they have been so constructed that at a small cost the grades can be cut down to one in 60. With regard to the additional cost of these railways, the Minister for Works has referred to the fact that it is largely due to the extra charges for sleepers. As a matter of fact, sleepers are costing £80 per mile more than we paid previously, and it has been found necessary to spend an additional sum in connection with ramps and fencing in station yards and sidings. That accounts for the extra cost which has been provided for in the Loan Bill. In connection with this particular line some of the additional cost is due to the fact that it will have to cross the Blackwood River two or three times, and a fairly large amount will have to be spent in bridging the river in several places, but after having got over the valleys of the Blackwood, it will be fairly level country, and there should not be much further expense. I do not know that the illustration used by the member for West Perth is a particularly happy one as far as Victoria is concerned. Many of the railways which were recommended by the committee

there are now closed, and the rails have been pulled up.

Mr. Collier: The committee was not in existence at the time. It was afterwards as a result of these railways that the committee came into existence.

The PREMIER: I was under the impression that the late Premier was chairman of that committee and that it was during the time of the vigorous railway policy pursued that these railways since pulled up were built. If I am incorrect I accept the hon. member's assurance. I do not wish to go into details with regard to what has been done at each of the ports of the State, so as to bring to those ports the trade which belongs to them by virtue of their geographical positions. At Geraldton we know that provision has been made for the Upper Chapman railway; and I hope it is only a question of time when an extension will be made from Northampton to the Murchison River. Recently investigations have been made by the Surveyor General and another officer with a view to ascertaining whether this extension would be justified. Coming to the South-West I would point out that the port of Busselton has been afforded railway communication in order that the fertile valley of the Lower Blackwood may be opened up. Fremantle will benefit more largely than any other port by the extension of railway communication. The Greenhills-Quairading line will benefit Fremantle; the Goomalling-Wongan Hills line and the Dowerin to Merredin line will also benefit the principal port of the State. I do not desire to detain the House at any greater length except to say that all we ask is to be judged by our performances. Have we made mistakes in connection with the railways we have built? If we have not why then cannot we be trusted to carry out the railway policy which was outlined prior to the general elections. I can only say that if this matter is hung up in order that a select committee may be appointed, it will mean a lot of delay, and the people will be under the impression that the State has not kept faith with them, and will be bitterly disappointed.

I only hope that the railway will be carried out. I feel sure that if hon. members will give the matter consideration they will realise what is being done at the present time and that, having regard to the hardships many of these settlers have to put up with in connection with carting in the boggy season of the year, they are justified in giving this extension. It is one of the most favoured districts of the State as regards rainfall, soil and climate, and I am satisfied that given this extension the profits of the present section already open will continue to increase, and the district generally will develop at a great rate. As a matter of fact a large number of settlers have taken up land there and are doing good work. A large area of land was held under poison lease. Some three years ago that lease was forfeited to the Crown, and the Crown—not private individuals as the hon. member stated, benefited by that forfeiture, inasmuch as the price of land was raised over the forty odd thousand acres, and all went to the Crown. The fact that two banks have been established at Boyup is an indication of the progress of the district, and of the satisfaction felt by these institutions in its future. I hope hon. members will give this proposition the support it deserves.

Mr. JOHNSON (Guildford): After the remarks of the Premier I cannot allow this vote to go without expressing my opinion. The Premier has waxed very eloquent, and tried to ram down hon. members' throats that we must follow the Government blindly in any proposal they submit to the House. He asks the House—"Point out to me," he says, "which are the failures; where we have failed in our railway policy?" It is not for us to point out where he has made any failures. The point I wish to make is that in selecting the lines the Government have not selected the lines that would give the best returns to the State. I am not going to condemn what has been done, but I am of opinion that better results would have accrued had wiser judgment been shown in selecting the different railway propositions. My objection to this particular proposition is that the Government, although ex-

ercising a certain degree of judgment in selecting the line are doing an injustice to other parts of the State which deserve better treatment at their hands. It is all very fine for the Premier to get up and say, "We are going to take the responsibility." Are the Government the sole people who have the responsibility of administering the affairs of the State? Have we, as members of Parliament, to sit down and not criticise, but rather to say, "Because the Hon. N. J. Moore is Premier nothing must be said against his policy. He is the one great man who knows Western Australia, and the one great man who has prepared a railway policy"? I think an hon. member would receive a very bad time at the hands of his constituents if he went back and gave that as an excuse—if he said, "Yes, the railway should not have been built, but the Premier included it in his policy."

The Premier: You have opposed every one.

Mr. JOHNSON: I have not, and I give that directly in the teeth of the Premier. What I have done has been to support the contention raised this evening by the member for West Perth, namely that we want a committee, free from political influence, before we can get sufficient evidence to justify us in voting for or against this railway proposition. Take the position to-night: Can we vote against the railway on the score of insufficient information? We have no more right to vote against it on the score that we have not sufficient information than we have to vote for it. The course I shall adopt will be to support the second reading, but after that stage has been passed I shall endeavour to have the proposition submitted to a committee who will thoroughly go into it and give us a report in the best interests of the State, irrespective of whether it suits the Government in power and their particular supporters. I do not say that in preparing the railway policy the Government are altogether influenced by the fact that certain hon. members sit on their side of the House, or that a proposed railway is to run into country represented by a member sitting in Opposition; but there can be no ques-

tion that, no matter who sits on those Treasury benches, they will give greater consideration to the members sitting behind them, and will view their propositions with a great deal more of favour than propositions submitted by those hon. members who are continually opposing the Administration. It is in a desire to get away from the difficulties that faced Victoria in her railway policy that I have earnestly advocated that these propositions should be submitted to a committee, free from all political consideration, so that Parliament can get a guarantee that the line submitted to the House is the best possible proposition.

Mr. Scaddan: You could not get that through a select committee of the House.

[*Mr. Daglish took the Chair.*]

Mr. JOHNSON: But the proposal is that we have a permanent committee to go into all these questions. The Premier referred to the report of the committee in connection with the Norseman line. There was an illustration! That railway was proposed to be built by the Government then in power, but in order to lay the whole information before Parliament they appointed a board to go into the question. And the Premier contends to-night that the report of that board would not justify Parliament in constructing the railway. But the Government of the time were convinced that the report of the board did justify the building of the railway. There is a difference of opinion about the question, but in my interpretation the report did justify Parliament in constructing that particular railway. Had we had a similar board in connection with these light railway propositions I venture to assert that quite a number constructed to-day would not have been constructed, but other lines in various other portions of the State would have received first consideration. That is the difficulty. We do not get submitted to us those railway propositions which should be submitted for first consideration, but the Government try to cram down our throats that their judgment is the sound judgment, and that their selected line should receive first consideration. The Premier goes on to state that he visited

the district, and that hon. members do not avail themselves of the opportunity to go down to look over this portion and other portions of the State. But are we as members of the House, receiving sufficient compensation for the services we render here, and would we do justice to ourselves if we went to any expense in viewing Western Australia, large as it is, out of the Parliamentary salary we receive? I have earnestly appealed to the House to raise the Parliamentary salary and I have based my argument on the fact that the members of the House do not know Western Australia, and that while it can be urged that the goldfield representatives do not know the agricultural districts to the extent which they should know them, it can be said with equal, or even greater force, that the agricultural members do not know the goldfields, which, indeed, many of them have never seen. Consequently it is true that members are trying to legislate for Western Australia when they do not know Western Australia. There is only one way of overcoming that difficulty, namely by compensating them for their services. Then members will be in a position to visit the various portions of the State and do justice to them. Let us increase the Parliamentary salary to permit of our incurring the expenditure which we would have to incur in going to these various centres, and it shall not again be said that we do not take the trouble to visit the outlying districts. Then the Premier wants to know whether we are going to allow the country to stagnate. He ventured the assertion once more, that if it had not been for the present Government bringing in the proposal for light agricultural railways, Western Australia would not be in the flourishing condition she is to-day. I am not prepared to admit that Western Australia is in that flourishing condition one would like to see her in. But I would like to point out that the present Government did not introduce the policy of constructing light agricultural railways; and I would like, further, to point out that the leader of the Government of which the present Premier was Minister for Lands, opposed, when lead-

of the Opposition, the very policy the present Premier is trying to claim credit for. In July, 1905, in a criticism of railway propositions, as submitted by the then Government, Mr. Rason, the then leader of the Opposition, stated:—"We find light railways referred to in the policy speech, three, or four, or half a dozen, it does not matter; light agricultural railways in all districts." At that time the proposition was before the House; it was contained in the policy speech, and the then Government proposed to construct light railways. But they had adopted the very wise course of submitting to a Royal Commission the duty of going through the State and inquiring as to whether it would be a safe policy, and asking that Commission to get expert advice as to where those agricultural railways should go. Having received that, and being convinced that it was in the best interests of the agricultural community, that Government introduced the policy, and for doing so they were adversely criticised by Mr. Rason, the then leader of the Opposition, who, later on, led these gentlemen who now claim to have been the initiators of these light agricultural railways. But not only did the Government of the day pass the proposition for agricultural railways and were duly criticised for passing it, but they actually borrowed the money for the work and handed it over to the present Government for the building of these railways, and told them where the railways should go. In this way £960,000 was handed over to the present Government. Yet we have the statement repeated that the present Government are the people who initiated the policy of light agricultural railways. I deny it again, and I will continue to deny it until the members of the Ministry become just enough to admit that they took up that policy as outlined by their predecessors. This proposition for the Kojonup-Boyup line does not deserve the consideration due to other lines overlooked by the present Government. There are other railways which should receive prior consideration, but I am not going to the extent of voting against the second reading, merely because I am of that opinion. I am not

here to say that I have sufficient information to justify me in voting against the Bill; but I am here to say that I am going to take the responsibility, or a share of it, for the construction of this line. I am not going to say that the present, or any other Government, take the sole responsibility or that we are called upon as members of the House to accept that as an excuse and vote for any proposition that the Government bring down, afterwards pleading that it was the Government who were responsible and not ourselves. It is our responsibility equally with members sitting on the Treasury Bench. But I am so far convinced that the information submitted to the House, while it does not justify me in voting against the railway, does not justify me in voting against a select committee to make further inquiries into the proposition. Consequently I will vote for the second reading, but I sincerely trust that, instead of going into Committee on the Bill, we will have a majority in the House who, if they want further information on the question, will support the proposal to submit the Bill to a select committee for further inquiry.

Mr. COWCHER (Williams): I think it possible, as the member for Guildford says, there are other railways of as much importance as the railway proposed in the Bill before us.

Mr. Johnson: I said "of more importance."

Mr. COWCHER: Well, I think there are others quite as important, but at the same time, to be consistent I could not vote against the second reading of the Bill. I have travelled over a good deal of the country—certainly not over the whole of it—and I found some of the finest lands in the State in the locality. Certainly there is poor as well as good land, but there is a large percentage of good land, and I think the building of the line is justified, and I intend to vote for the second reading. It has been said by the member for North Fremantle that the people of Moodiarrup have not had consideration. I feel they have been left out of the question to a certain extent. They are a great distance from the proposed line, and I think they will be a good dis-

tance from the proposed Wagin-Darkan line. Certainly they are in an awkward position; but because they are in that position, it is not for us to oppose this railway because there are other people with equal claims we have to consider. We must look at the thing from a broad point of view, and I am satisfied that if we try to please everyone in the construction of a railway we will never have any railway constructed. I think the Government in their wisdom propose these railways only where they are most justified and warranted; they propose them not only in the interests of the State but also in the interests of their reputation; and, after all, they have to answer for this. I feel that the construction of this line will be in the interests of the State. I am satisfied there are other railways with equal claims, but if we oppose this railway because there are other districts with claims equally as important we would simply deprive these people of railway communication. I therefore support the second reading.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): After hearing the willy-willy of the Premier and the eloquence of members who have supported this proposal, one naturally embarks on a discussion of this sort with some reluctance. One feels more like sitting in silence than offering any remarks; but my remarks on the second reading will be very brief owing to want of information on my part. I heard the Minister for Works give us a very long and learned speech as to the progress of the country, not only from the agricultural point of view, but from the pastoral, timber, and mining points of view combined; and he pointed out how the State was flourishing, by that means, of course, trying to lead the House to believe that these railway lines were the cause of it. No doubt railway communication, not only in Western Australia but in other parts of the world, opens up the country and settles it, and gives facilities to the people to reach markets, not only local markets but the world's markets. Though I shall not oppose the second reading, I merely support it with the hope that the Bill will be referred to a select committee, and then the House will have a thorough

investigation made as to the need for this railway against other propositions in the State that have been outlined and have had consideration in the Press and by the people as against this proposition. If the Government are so cocksure as to the justification for this railway they cannot fear further investigation. As has been pointed out by the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Keenan), and by previous speakers, we have no alternative; we must either accept the railway or reject it; that is the way the measure is brought down to us; but if we had an investigation a select committee might be able to submit to the House other proposals of a more deserving character, and which would be of greater benefit to the State and to sections of our settlers, who perhaps have not that activity in politics to press their claims before the Chamber. I would be inconsistent if I said that it was my intention to oppose the second reading and support a select committee. I must of necessity in the first place support the second reading with the object of having the Bill submitted to a select committee. There has been a great deal said in regard to the attitude of this Government in the initiation of the construction of light railway lines. It has been pointed out by the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson), and *Hansard* will prove, that when in opposition the previous leader of the party now in power spoke in most disparaging terms of the light railway system introduced by the Labour Government.

The Honorary Minister: Which railway did he oppose?

Mr. TAYLOR: He opposed certain light railways to serve settlers. That was the gentleman, the member for the dock, I mean for Fremantle, was pleased to follow, and with whom he was in accord as to the condemnation of the Government of the day in desiring to give to settlers of the country cheap railway facilities.

The Honorary Minister: Who was that?

Mr. TAYLOR: Mr. Rason, whom the hon. member who has just spoken was pleased to accept as the authority as to whether the railway lines should be built or not. The member for Williams (Mr.

Cowcher) said that the Government should accept the responsibility and that they would build railways in the interests of their reputation. But I would like to ask how much this gentleman in London is taking of the responsibility of opposing the light railway introduced by the Labour Government in 1905, the railway which those hon. members who now grace the Treasury Bench opposed, and in doing so followed their leader so blindly, as they have done ever since he has left.

The Honorary Minister: What light railway?

Mr. TAYLOR: I can read where the leader of the Opposition at that time described what was a "reckless gallop." He described the policy of going into these light railway lines as a "reckless gallop" as compared with the policy of the previous year of "mark time." I have read in the Press of all these banquets in the agricultural areas, and especially at the opening of shows and the opening of railway lines, where the Government inflated their chests and eulogised themselves in taking credit for these lines. The late Minister for Works, the present Honorary Minister, would pat on the back the member for Northam, the Honorary Minister of his time, and say what a good fellow he was and how he helped the Government to stimulate the policy of railway development; and the present Minister for Works, who was then Treasurer, we would find doing the same thing, and there would be a general smile all round. At the same time we would find the member for Greenough criticising that eulogy.

The Attorney General: Oh, no!

Mr. TAYLOR: The member for Greenough, now the Attorney General, would be found criticising the accuracy of these statements.

The Attorney General: That is not so. The hon. member is not justified in saying that. I have always supported the policy of building agricultural railways.

Mr. TAYLOR: Before the last junketing, before the hon. member joined the Ministry, we saw where he had to resort to the Press to protect himself, where he had to say that his support of the Government was with certain reserva-

tions, or words to that effect. It is idle for the hon. member to say he has wholly supported them. He is wholly supporting them now, but his whole support is of recent date.

The Attorney General: Give instances.

Mr. TAYLOR: They are too numerous to mention. All one would have to do would be to resort to *Hansard*, to just take a few moments in the afternoon and read the speeches of the hon. member recorded in *Hansard*, and he would not want any further evidence.

The Attorney General: I ask you to do so; I know you cannot.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was sufficient for me to sit and listen to the hon. member or to watch those acrobatic feats without having to peruse them again in print. There are certain things I object to doing, and that is one of them. The hon. member desires to inflict a task on me that I am not prepared to accept.

The Attorney General: No; you cannot.

Mr. TAYLOR: In following up my remarks I would like to remind the hon. gentlemen who grace the Treasury Bench that so much was their then leader, Mr. Rason, in opposition to the policy of the Labour Government in constructing light railway lines, that he moved a vote of censure, and in *Hansard* we will find the wording of it. The whole tenor of the speech delivered in opposition to the Labour Government was on account of the recklessness of its leader as to his policy in this regard. There is no desire, so far as I am concerned, to oppose the second reading of this Bill, but I merely support it because it is absolutely necessary that we should have some further evidence as to the justification for this proposal as against others. Then the House will be in a position to say, "We will not accept this line, but we will accept a more deserving line." If we do not have a select committee we have either to accept the line or reject it, and some section of the people will be without railway communication. If we have the alternative proposals we will be able to give the most deserving people of the State that facility which I am sure the House is at all times anxious and willing

to give; and the Government can have nothing to fear. One naturally fears investigation when one is frightened of his ground. The Premier waxed eloquent to-night. Once I was rather frightened he was coming across to bulldoze us and make us accept the conditions which were presented to us by the Minister for Works; but fortunately he cooled down somewhat, and we settled into a calmer atmosphere. All that bluster, bluff, and bounce will not justify the railway, nor will it frighten members into supporting a proposition to carry the line through Committee without a select committee first being appointed to go into the question. We know of other railways which should be constructed. There are two other propositions before us, and all the evidence put forward is that furnished by the Government with the object of justifying the construction of the works they have mentioned. The Government rightly do that. I do not say they do it with an ulterior motive, but they are anxious to carry the work through, and they put forward their best arguments to support that line. That is what the evidence is collected for. The member for Murray, who has had experience of railway construction, and considerable knowledge of railway work, owing to the position he held as Commissioner for Railways, put forward to my mind a fair, a business-like proposition. He objected to the grade of 1 in 40 and said that 1 in 60 would be better, and that the expense would not be any greater. Also he referred to the absolute necessity of having a broader type of sleeper. I think his idea was to have a sleeper 9 by 4½ instead of one 8 by 4. He indicated that the sleepers should be bigger and longer so that they would be able to carry the weight if heavy loads were required. The Premier said the sleepers could be replaced if the traffic warranted it. All members know the expense of re-sleeping a railway line. The reply made by the Premier to the member for Murray shows that when a man of experience dares to venture a suggestion the Premier gets excited and I am sure the member for Murray, had he been in his place, would

have turned to the Chair for protection. At the same time I know that the Premier intends to try and carry out the policy of the Government in spite of the House, in spite of everything. This is all very fine, and is successful while the Premier has support behind him to do it with, but he must remember that his support is not so strong now as it was three years ago; it is weakening.

Mr. Monger: No, it is not.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Minister for Works smiles, but it is a smile more of fear than of pleasure. The member for York denies the imputation, but he is safe for he will come back every time. York only wants one representative, and they have him. Elections do not make any difference so far as York is concerned, and while they have the member for anti-Federation that satisfies them.

Mr. Underwood: The member for Dalgety.

Mr. TAYLOR: Reference is being made to Dalgety.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member is wandering somewhat from the question.

Mr. TAYLOR: I hope members will pass the second reading of the Bill with the object of getting into Committee on it. If there is no chance of a select committee being appointed to consider the Bill further there is I believe a possible chance of much explanation being required from the Minister in the Committee stage of the Bill. I do not think members will accept the off-hand general statements made by the Premier and the Minister for Works. The Premier said a few words in favour of the Bill, made a few observations as to what the country is like, and as to the value of the country generally, but they were no more than general statements that could be made about any part of Western Australia. The same statements have been made about every other line. The route has not been discussed, the Premier has not placed any deserving line side by side with the present proposal in order to let the House say which would be the more suitable to the State and in the best interests of the country.

[*Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.*]

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): There are only a few remarks made by speakers in connection with the second reading of this measure to which I wish to reply, and it will not take many minutes to do so. In the first place I find that the most opposition to the measure is on the part of those who claim that such works should be the subject of inquiry either by a public works board or by a select committee. In the present instance a select committee is suggested. I want to point out that the work of a select committee is not always an advantage when considering public works of this description. If members are genuine in their expressions of opinion that this railway should be submitted to a select committee for inquiry then to carry out the principle those members must support select committees being appointed to consider the other two lines as well.

Mr. Taylor: There is nothing wrong in that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If that is the desire of members then there is no chance of any railway construction as far as this session is concerned. No select committee could inquire into proposals and bring a report down within the time the House is sitting, even if we sit after the new year. In that short time they could not possibly give us information that would be of any value. Members say that this committee should travel through the country and examine all the residents and selectors. Well, as they will have to examine some 600 selectors along this line alone, and take expert evidence as well what is going to be the position?

Mr. O'Loghlen: That is misrepresentation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I resent that. The members know very well it is not misrepresentation. There would be no report and the committee would have to become a Royal Commission, and no report from that Commission would be received for 12 months at the very least. I am happy in the thought gathered from the speech of the member for Mount Margaret that all members of the House are in accord in regard to this

principle of agricultural railways. It appears that the member and his colleagues who preceded this and the previous Government had agricultural development in their minds. From what that member has said it appears that the scheme was included in the four corners of the policy speech, or the Governor's speech, or some speech dictated by the then Premier on behalf of his Government. That being so the member cannot find fault with those who have carried out the policy of which he was so much in favour. We are surely justified in asking for some credit for not only having spoken about agricultural railways, but for having actually constructed them so that we might have the great development that has arisen in consequence of carrying out the work.

Mr. Taylor: You opposed the principle then.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All members are now in accord with the policy which we have carried out, no matter what individual members said five years ago. I do not know what I said then, but I think it must have been all right or the hon. member would have quoted me.

Mr. Collier: You are very careful, and you are the only Minister they do not quote *Hansard* against.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I thank the member for drawing attention to it, for it shows my consistency.

Mr. Scaddan: You have gone up sixpence a day in the last five years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well that is more than the hon. member has done. The only question we have to consider is whether this railway proposition is justified or not. Notwithstanding the complaints that have been made by different speakers as to lack of information, which I may remark in passing is always one of the complaints of those who do not wish to be convinced or those who do not wish to understand—

Mr. O'Loghlen: That is not fair.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Anyone who is opposed to a scheme will refuse to be convinced by arguments put forward by a Minister, and anyone who makes up his mind that a work is not

warranted says there is not sufficient information given by the member of the Government, or at all events not sufficient information to satisfy him to support the Bill. I gave all the information, both printed and oral, that has ever been given in introducing measures of this description. If members who did not hear my speech read the *Hansard* report, they will be convinced that all the information they could ask for was supplied. Members have not said where that information is lacking. There has been a general complaint, but members do not say "You have not told us about this portion of the district; what the district will do in this direction so far as the crops are concerned; you have not given us information as to the possibilities in certain agricultural directions or the number of acres that will be available for selection." There is not one definite complaint. Members talk about generalising, but every member who has opposed the construction of the line has generalised in his criticism and attack. I am glad to admit at once that there may be other railway lines equally as important as this proposition. I do not know of them at the present time, but is it any reason why we should delay the construction of this railway that there are others which may prove equally as important or more important than this one in the future? I hope there will be scores of railways equally as important. We have had some notified already by the Premier in introducing the Loan Estimates. We think those lines are justified in receiving almost immediate attention so soon as there is sufficient information to enable them to be brought forward. We cannot, however, construct all of them together. We must single some out, and to the best of our judgment we have done so. We must take the responsibility of putting before Parliament those works which we consider should receive the earliest consideration. Surely as the Government take the responsibility for legislation as to the finances of the State they should take the responsibility with regard to the public works policy.

Mr. Bath: The Government do not take the responsibility.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They take the responsibility of introducing the public works policy.

Mr. Bath: Parliament and the taxpayers take the responsibility.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is quibbling with terms. The taxpayer has to pay, but he does not take the direct responsibility. This House or a majority which carries the measures submitted takes the responsibility. The Government must take the responsibility of initiating the policy, otherwise we would soon have members finding fault on that score, and saying that we are not fit to occupy our positions.

Mr. George: How much does the responsibility amount to?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A huge responsibility. It amounts to a removal and substitution of some other form of Government. That is what the responsibility can amount to. We are standing here in the same position as is every Government in any other part of the British Empire to answer for our policy of administration, and as soon as this House is convinced that they have not further confidence in our administrative policy, they will say that some other people should be put into our position to carry on the affairs of the State. I would like to say a few words in reply to the remarks of the leader of the Opposition. I do not take any particular exception to his remarks, but I want to point out that he misread the figures given to me by the Lands Department. The acreage of classified land, I understand by consultation with my colleague the Minister for Lands, refers to the land classified at the present time. It is not all classified, and therefore, has not a proportionate resemblance to the total amount of pastoral and agricultural lands available in the district. What I mean to say is that only a portion of the land is classified, and you cannot make the figures appear proportionate with the total amount available in the area. On the other hand, the question of the quality of the land generally as mentioned by me is quite accurate as far as the information of the Lands Department can go.

There is 40 per cent. of the land which may be considered first-class; 40 per cent. second-class, as we understand it; and 20 per cent., which may be considered third-class. That being so, I do not think that if we travel over the length and breadth of this country in any direction, we will find any district which will give a better percentage of good land, and land which will prove profitable for settlement. I am glad indeed that the member for Kalgoorlie has been good enough to say that he was afraid to challenge the quality of the land or any of my statements. He said that he had not sufficient knowledge on the matter to do so, but he argued that he wanted this Committee. Of course every hon. member is entitled to his opinion in that direction. The member for West Perth also thinks the Committee is a proper thing. I do not think these committees have been the success elsewhere that some hon. members seem to think. We are all apt to adopt something because it has been inaugurated in some other country, without inquiry as to whether the results have been equally beneficial. I am not sufficiently *au fait* with what has occurred elsewhere to say definitely why these public works committees have not been as successful as they ought to have been. I have heard on more than one occasion in conversation with gentlemen who are acquainted with New South Wales that the Public Works Committee in that State was not considered as satisfactory as hon. members in the House appear to think.

Mr. Bath: They still stick to it.

Mr. Walker: But there is a great difference between a standing public works committee and a select committee.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I quite admit that the member for Kanowna is perfectly correct. I am simply stating what I heard and I am not quite sure whether the leader of the Opposition did not also hear something in that direction when we were at the Melbourne conference together. We had conversations with some gentlemen from New South Wales, and the impression I got was that in that State they were not satisfied with the work of the Committee; but the hon. member for Kanowna has hit the nail on

the head by stating that even if it were satisfactory, there is a vast difference between a select committee of the House and a standing public works committee. I have already pointed out to-night that the appointment of the committee can only mean hanging up the construction of the railway for twelve months. We cannot get the report in the necessary time, and we certainly cannot get any further information than that which has been placed before the House on this occasion.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

To refer to Select Committee.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill) in moving that the Bill be referred to a select committee said: I wish to take emphatic exception to the remarks of the Premier when he indulged in heroics a few minutes ago, and declared that the Government had to take the responsibility and were prepared to take all responsibility. What is Parliament for? If the view of the Premier is correct we might as well have a bureaucracy running the State, and Parliament dispensed with altogether. The Government to a large extent take a responsibility when at some banquet or function they promise these railways, but Parliament has to take the responsibility afterwards, and so has the taxpayer, and at present the taxpayers have to take the responsibility to the extent of £7,000 which represents the loss on these railways which have already been constructed. The Premier said, "Can hon. members point to one railway which they can say has been a failure?" We cannot say that they have been a failure, but can the Government point to more than two which they can say have been successes. The Premier quoted two railways upon which a profit has been made during the past twelve months, the mining railway from Coolgardie to Widgiemooltha and the timber railway from Donnybrook to Boyup. We have to remember that the railway from Donnybrook to Boyup is a timber railway, or, at least, the bulk of the traffic at the present time, which makes it a remunerative proposition, is timber traffic; and on the authority of the

Minister for Works himself they have not timber available for the sleepers required for the extension from Boyup to Kojonup.

The Minister for Works: What is the Widgiemooltha line?

Mr. BATH: There is a little firewood on the Norseman to Widgiemooltha line, but it is not the firewood traffic which is making it pay.

The Minister for Works: There is a lot of firewood there.

Mr. BATH: But it is not the firewood traffic that makes that line profitable. The Premier has recommended this as an agricultural line, and in trying to point out that they have been successful he quotes two out of the nine which are paying. On the other hand, there is a loss on all these and no member can say they are either a failure or a success. We have to wait for the future to determine whether these railways will be successful.

The Attorney General: You surely are not afraid about the future of these railways; have you no confidence in the State?

Mr. BATH: I am not saying whether I have confidence in the future or not. The hon. gentleman is very anxious to put words into my mouth which I have not said. It is a pity that the hon. gentleman was not so particular about what he said in the past, and what he says at the present time. I am not saying what the railways will prove to be in the future, I am saying that the Premier was absolutely wrong, and went to the extent of misleading the Opposition when he said that these railways had been a success. At the present time they are not a success; we must wait for the future for that. So long as the taxpayer is called upon to pay for the loss on these railways they cannot be regarded as a success. They will be successful from the moment that they relieve the taxpayer of any burden in contributing what is not provided by the traffic. The Minister for Works said that a select committee could not report upon these railways, because they would not be able to examine the 600 residents along the line. I say it is absolutely distorting what was said by

hon. members when the Minister makes it appear that the select committee would have to examine all these residents. No one would make such an absurd proposal. The select committee could examine some of those settlers who have been there a considerable time, and who have a knowledge of the district, and what is more, members of the Committee from the very fact of going over the route, would have an opportunity of seeing the country for themselves. The Minister himself has only made general statements as to the quality of the land, and in view of the conflicting statements made with regard to this area hon. members if they had the report of a committee appointed by this House, would have the opportunity of securing first-hand evidence, and the evidence of men which members of this House could trust.

The Minister for Works: How long would it take the Committee to go over this line?

Mr. BATH: Not a very great while.

The Minister for Works: How many are competent to form a better conclusion than the officers of the Lands Department?

Mr. BATH: There are as many competent to arrive at a conclusion as the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: I said officers of the Lands Department.

Mr. BATH: The officers of the Lands Department have made some fatal mistakes in the past.

The Minister for Works: Can you name them? ?

Mr. BATH: Yes; heaps of them, and they have formed the subject of criticism and comment in this House, and even formed the subject of inquiry by specially appointed officers. Under the circumstances I have described I beg to move—

That the Bill be referred to a select committee.

Mr. KEENAN (Kalgoorlie): In the course of my remarks earlier in the evening I stated that it was expedient in connection with measures of this character and public works of a large magnitude, particularly railways, they should be re-

ferred to some committee before they are dealt with by the House. I would not have again said anything had it not been for the reference which was made by the Premier to a speech delivered by myself in this House some three years ago on the question of the Donnybrook to Preston railway. If any other member had referred to that speech he might have been justified in pointing out that on that occasion I had opposed an amendment to refer that Bill to a committee of experts, not a select committee. He might have been justified because he would have been ignorant of the fact that when one is a member of a Ministry and holds certain opinions, those opinions are not threshed out on the floor of the House but are threshed out in Cabinet. And when one comes to the House one comes as a part of the Government as a whole, and has to defend, in many instances, that which one has differed from in the strongest possible terms in another place. If there is any member of the House who ought to know that thoroughly it is the Premier; and if he does know that, the only question he had the right to ask himself was whether, when we were in Melbourne together, it was not then discussed as being a most advisable change from the system hitherto carried out in the State that we should have a public works committee, and that all public works should be referred to the committee, and whether he was not then, as I was, most favourably impressed with the proposal which had been found advantageous in the Eastern States. If he was aware of that fact, as he must have been, he must have made himself deliberately blind to that knowledge when he referred to that speech, a speech I was forced to make to defend the Government's position, and such as any hon. member who becomes a member of a Ministry will find himself forced to make, perhaps, on frequent occasions. He should not have referred to that speech with the particular knowledge in his possession. It is, to say the least of it, a matter which cannot be characterised as anything but distinctly ungenerous.

And it was the more so, considering the speech I delivered on the second reading of this Bill; because in that speech I did nothing but deal with principles at stake, and did nothing I might well have done had I chosen to exhibit any bitterness, to have criticised a proposal which presents many features open to criticism, features which do not commend themselves to me. There is only one other word more which I will add of a personal character, and it is this: When I have left politics, and when one comes to sum up all that may be stated to my discredit, at least it cannot ever be said that I have not been more than generous to those who were my colleagues and whom I was obliged for certain reasons to leave; and to none have I been more generous than to the Premier. I will now deal very shortly with the motion moved by the leader of the Opposition. Personally, I would far more favour a public works committee than a select committee. I admit there are obvious reasons why a select committee would be deficient in the means and time at their disposal to carry out their duties to a proper and full extent. But I am prepared to support this motion, not because I think this form is the best form, but, because, if a motion of this character is carried it will mean that all public works of the future will have to be referred to a committee before any Government could bring them down to the House with any hope of their acceptance. It will mean that we put our foot down and say that a change must be made and I am prepared to support this motion for a change that should be made. If it could for a moment be said that the prorogation of Parliament must be reached before Christmas, and that there is no possible chance of Parliament sitting after Christmas, there might be some argument for rushing these measures through. In the first Parliament of which Mr. Rason was Premier, many measures were rushed through on that ground alone. This very Bill for the Katanning-Kojonup line was passed under conditions of that character. But surely we are not asked to repeat an experiment only justified

by peculiar circumstances of the time. If time be necessary for the consideration of these measures there can be no valid reason why this Parliament should not come back to do this work properly after Christmas. And if it were to come back after Christmas, there can be no valid reason why a select committee should not, to some limited extent, carry out the proper duty of investigation of proposals of this character, and lay before the House some reasoning by which we can reconcile the proposal with our own conscience, and not merely be content to swallow it as part of the Public Works policy.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): I have listened to the member for Kalgoorlie, and I would like to take this opportunity of saying that my remarks were not intended to be ungenerous in any way. I was simply quoting an extract which I considered a logical argument against the appointment of a committee, and I was in no way endeavouring to show that the hon. member is inconsistent. I wish to disabuse his mind of that at any rate. It was with no idea of being ungenerous in any way, but I thought the facts quoted constituted a sufficiently sound argument against the appointment of the select committee. I do not wish to repeat myself in connection with this matter, but it stands to reason that it would be absolutely impossible for a select committee to deal with these various matters and report to the House—that is, if their investigation is to be worthy of the name. I do not know whether hon. members who might be appointed to the Committee would be prepared to spend a few weeks in making the inquiries necessary before their report could be of any value to the House; that is the point to which hon. members should give consideration. If it is felt desirable to have a select committee in connection with these railway proposals, it is to be regretted that some motion was not brought forward earlier in the session, so that the various proposals might have been made the subject of inquiry by the select committee.

Mr. Taylor: We acted as soon as we could once the Bills were brought down.

The PREMIER: There was nothing to stop an earlier motion. As a matter of fact these very three railway Bills were outlined in the Governor's Speech as measures to be dealt with.

Mr. Bath: That shows there is no reason why the Bills should not have been here in the early part of the session.

The PREMIER: It was necessary that information should be obtained in connection with this matter, and that information has been obtained and put concisely into reports, which the Minister for Works has placed before the House. This information is the result of inspections made by officers of the department.

Mr. Taylor: Then you must have decided upon the railways in your policy speech without any information.

The PREMIER: I decided upon them from the information I possessed. Further information has been obtained by the officers with a view to supporting the case before the House. Somebody must make a start and decide where it is desirable that a railway should be constructed, otherwise there would be nothing to report upon. The policy of Government railway construction as outlined before the last general elections included the Goomalling-Wongan line, the Boyup-Kojonup line, the Wagin-Darkan line, the Dowerin extension, the Narrogin-Wickepin line to the Eastern railway, and various other railways. So members of the House were perfectly aware of what the Government proposed in regard to these railways. As I say, the Government certainly decided that it was in the best interests of the State these railways should be brought down, and any information since obtained has been obtained with a view of supporting the proposals of the Government.

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): Since I have had the honour of sitting in this House I have advocated on every possible occasion the establishment of a standing public works committee, sitting constantly for the purpose of investigating all public works of importance, and making their recommendations upon

them to the Government. But that is a very different proposal from the one made to-night. One is a part of the constitutional machinery of the Government itself, and the other is a direct vote of censure upon the Ministry.

Mr. Scaddan : They would not accept it as such.

Mr. WALKER : If that be so, public life is getting into a lamentable state. If it be not taking government out of the hands of the representatives, what is it ? If it is not an assertion that they are not able to declare their policy, what is it ? That this House cannot trust them to recommend a railway.

Mr. Scaddan : You ought to vote for it.

Mr. WALKER : Because it is a no-confidence motion ?—No, not necessarily. I ought to vote for it if I do not believe in the justice of the line; but I cannot vote for this means of satisfying the House as to the value, or otherwise, of that line. I cannot vote for the method of investigating these great public undertakings. Is there one member in this House who believes that a select committee, on the spur of the moment, appointed by possibly the passions of the hour, can be trusted to do work of responsible Government ? Is that the way in which the Government of the country is to be conducted in the future ? Are we setting the precedent now ? If this is submitted, what other item of the Government's policy should not be equally submitted to a select committee ; what proposal brought forward by a Government of any importance at all but should be at once taken out of the hands of the Government and relegated to a select committee ?

Mr. Holman : Why not, if the House thinks so ?

Mr. WALKER : Undoubtedly, if the House thinks so, but what of responsible Government then ?

Mr. Holman : Do not worry about them.

Mr. WALKER : I am not worrying about them, but I want to know if this kind of Government is to be submitted instead of Responsible Government. Is this the change we are to start to-night—to relegate everything to a select committee before it is decided upon, before

action is taken ? What is the fuss about ? Fifty miles of railway ! Here is a railway going in this direction and a railway in that direction. There is a gap between them ; it is desired to fill it up, and all this is over that space.

Mr. Holman : There is a gap on the Caves-road ; why not fill that up ?

Mr. WALKER : I do not see the application of the hon. member's interjection. If the hon. member can produce arguments against this railway, if he can show that the railway is a corrupt railway, if he can show that it is an unwise railway, if he can show that it is an unjustifiable railway ; then, in the name of common sense bring forward the facts, and let us know ; but this vague suspicion this vague statement that it is not the best railway that could be constructed, and to block it on that ground, is not the conduct of sensible or business men. That is what the hon. member is doing. What is the argument presented to-night ? " We believe in spur lines ; we believe in light railway lines ; that is our policy ; here is a railway line ; it is our policy ; we will vote for the second reading of it ; but because somewhere in the State there might be a better line, we will not have it."

Mr. Taylor : That is not the argument.

Mr. WALKER : That is the argument. I am putting the argument as it has been presented.

Mr. Taylor : No fear !

Mr. WALKER : Undoubtedly. What argument has the hon. member adduced against this line ? Can he show it is not justified, can he bring one fact forward that it is a line that should not be built ? If it is a corrupt railway, then in the name of common sense let him bring forward his charge and his challenge.

Mr. Taylor : There is no necessity.

Mr. WALKER : Are we children ?

Mr. George : It is not alleged it is corrupt ; it is simply that there is not sufficient information on which members can form a judgment.

Mr. WALKER : Because members are ignorant the country must stand still ? Is that the argument now ? Is that the argument, that because men are ignorant

of the nature of the country no further steps should be taken.

Mr. George: No.

Mr. WALKER: Then what is the argument? I would be pleased to listen to the argument. What is the object?

Mr. Underwood: We know exactly the object, do not worry.

Mr. WALKER: Then, let the hon. member take the house into his confidence. I am anxious to know; because if I believed this railway was a corrupt railway, or a wrong railway, or a railway that was going to do injustice to any part of the State, or wrong to anybody, I would have voted against the second reading and would have fought it tooth and nail at every stage and step and argued against it.

Mr. Scaddan: How can you decide that without further evidence?

Mr. WALKER: What evidence does the hon. member mean? If the select committee does not get enough evidence to satisfy me, am I to come forward and say I want a Royal Commission, or another committee?

Mr. Angwin: That was done on one end of the line, and then they wanted a Royal Commission.

Mr. WALKER: I admit Royal Commissions may be valuable and necessary at times, and select committees at times, but we should know where to stop. Select committees do not always obtain the information necessary. Select committees, by virtue of the fact that they are voluntary, do not always give the best services in ascertaining the facts or in the presentation of the facts they ascertain. I am in favour of a standing works committee, because on that the men are paid, and it is their duty to attend, and they are under the obligation of returning services for the fees credited to them. I am only opposing this way of dealing with important public works at the end of the session.

Mr. George: Why are they not introduced earlier?

Mr. WALKER: I am not the Government in that respect, but I will say this, that these measures have been known all the time, and I think there is a little bit of

obligation placed upon members as well as upon the Government.

Mr. George: What could have been done?

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member could have made some inquiries if he desired.

Mr. George: But we could not do anything until the Bill was introduced.

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member could have come forward with some facts, some knowledge or some substance. It is no good now to oppose a public measure on the ground that there are other public measures demanding attention. That is not a solid reason. We want to know what there is against this railway that we are not to proceed with it at once.

Mr. George: I want 9in. x 4½in. sleepers, and a one in 60 grade.

Mr. WALKER: That is a matter that can be dealt with in Committee. There have been facts voiced in favour of the matter; undoubtedly there have been. A very essential one to my mind is the fact that men have settled in this district on an understanding, on a sort of faith presented through the speeches of the Government as part of the Government policy—they have settled there and improved the land with the expectation of a railway ultimately reaching them.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That applies to nearly all the State.

Mr. WALKER: Not to all the State. There have not been definite proposals.

Mr. Taylor: Every settler hopes for it.

Mr. WALKER: Let us hope so, because if so, it would stimulate the continuation of this policy of which this tonight is only a fraction. I am such an ardent believer in the benefits that would accrue from railway construction that I admit it would take little to convince me of the value of this line in connecting two spur lines and making them a loop line, in joining two great trunks; because what rivers and canals are to other countries of the world, so roads and railways will be to this great State of Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: Hear, hear!

Mr. WALKER: We need these highroads; and our country will be a desert, so to speak, until we get these railways.

If we cannot build them all at once, if we cannot at once undertake the construction of all that are necessary and that must in due course come, are we to stop and say that we will do none, we will accomplish nothing? Here is a chance of saying that we believe in our policy. It is the opportunity now, and now to-night I intend to take it; and if I believed that any possible good could come by this method, this new method of governing, of taking the acts for which the Government are responsible out of their hands and relegating them to select committees, I would vote for it; but I believe in making the Government take their full share of responsibility. If this railway is right they deserve the credit of it; if it is wrong, it is the duty of the Opposition, and all who disagree with the Government, to show them the wrong and to challenge them and to put them out of office in a straightforward manner. Give the Government a direct challenge! If the railway is wrong to the country, if the Government are failing in the discharge of their duty by proposing it, as men let us face the Government and vote against them on the direct issue.

Mr GEORGE (Murray): The speech of the hon. member is certainly one that no doubt has excited a considerable amount of interest in all parts of the House. I can forgive his fervour and what I believe is his sincerity. He says if this motion for a select committee is passed, practically everything the Government may do cannot escape a select committee. The hon. member seems to forget—if he will allow me to put it in that way—that there does come a time in the history of Parliament, as it comes in the history of us all, when there is what is called a parting of the ways; and it seems to me, with a memory of something like the last 15 years in Parliamentary matters, even with an interregnum, that there has come a time when the old policy and principle of the Government introducing a Bill dealing with loan moneys at the fag end of the session has got to end. The Premier told us that in his policy speech he indicated certain railways that were going to be made. That argues that

the hon. gentleman was possessed of certain information to enable him to arrive at the conclusion as to what his policy should be. If that was so, then, where is the reason why these Bills were not introduced in the early part of the session? Why should they be brought in at the fag end of the session when practically hon. members are told that unless they accept these propositions they are passing a vote of no-confidence in the Government, that it means choosing between hon. members' loyalty to the Government or their duty to the country? Now, I am loyal to the Government because I believe the Government of the State are honestly trying to do their duty. I have no benefits for which to thank them. It is simply a matter of ranging one's self upon the side to which one's feelings more particularly lie. But because I sit on the Government side of the House and give to the Government what I told my electors I would give, a generous support, it is no reason why I should be blinded to any faults the Government may possess, or that I should for a single moment forget what I think is my duty to the State. I admit that if a select committee is appointed we relieve the Government from any action taken, we relieve them of any responsibility they may have; but, after all, as I interjected—what is the responsibility of the Government, what can we do with them? We can simply turn them out of office, and that ends it. Have we not in our experience known matters that have taken place in connection with Governments of this State, for which if the men were here to-day we would pillory them, or perhaps more than that, make them responsible in a stronger way? But we know in the experience of life what follows after all is that as a rule it takes four or five years for matters of this sort to come thoroughly forward, and after they do where are the men to hold them to their responsibility and to pin them down to the positions they took up? We have only to go into the refreshment room and cast our eyes on the photographs of members who have graced this Chamber during the last 20 years, and to take the

number of members in the House to-day, and how many will we find who were here five or six years ago to call some of the older members to account? It is all nonsense to talk of the responsibility of the Government as if we could deal with them as if they had committed any malversation of funds. I do not know if there is a member of the House who desires to retard the progress of the State. I will not yield to any member on the Treasury Bench in my belief as to the State's possibilities. I have put my money into it. I could have left the State two years ago; but I have faith in Western Australia, it is good enough for me and my children; and I will not have anyone accusing me of being disloyal to it because I choose to differ from the Government. The member for Kanoona has asked can we show anything corrupt. There has been no intention of suggesting that the Government or any member of it has been corrupt in this matter, or is likely to be corrupt in it. I have not heard any members suggest that Ministers or any friends of theirs are interested in an acre of ground, or that sort of thing. What I gather from the tone of the debate is the feeling that, having gone on with this railway policy, we would like to go further, but we feel we have reached a stage when we should stop to consider whether we should go blindly in connection with the matter any further. Although I have not been along this route, I told the House earlier to-day that as a railway man with some experience of managing railways, and with a fairly large experience of constructing them, seeing that I have been at it nearly all my life, I believed the joining of these two lines should be done, and that I was prepared to vote for a Bill for the connecting of these two lines. Had it been placed before me prior to the building of the two sections, one from the Kataning end and the other from the opposite end, I should have required to give it more consideration, but as we have gone so far I am prepared to support the continuation of the line as that is the correct thing; but I find myself in this position with regard to the three rail-

ways before us: I have not a single acre of land there, nor have any of my friends so far as I know, but I am told that, in connection with one of the other two lines suggested, if it follows the route proposed it will serve three or four people, whereas 50 or 60 persons who have been induced to take up land on the other side of the range will be left out in the cold. I voted for this railway, and I want to see it go through, but I am compelled to vote for the select committee on this line otherwise I would not be able to get a select committee for a line which, if I am correctly informed, will be a public wrong if built. Surely the Premier, a man we all like and respect, and whom every man would defend strongly if anything wrong or despicable were suggested against him, should see the matter in a different light from that indicated by his speech. If there is a difficulty against any Minister and the Premier comes in and gives his word, the House takes it. We like and respect, and I may say, love the man, but even so one must not be blind when judgment says there is something suggested which needs further information. I was grieved that the Premier should have taken the matter in the way he did. If I had the respect of the House such as the Premier has, I would be proud of it, and however high his position is, and even may be higher, and no one would deny it him, he might accept criticism from members when their duty to the country compels them to make it. The Premier said he had indicated earlier in the session where the railways were to go and one member asked why the question of a select committee was not raised earlier. My reply to that is that we could not raise the question until the Bills were down. We have to wait here until the Government bring down their Bills and place information before us, and then on that information, if it is not satisfactory, we can take a stand. The mere mention in the Governor's Speech of a railway passing from point to point does not indicate anything upon which a man can form his judgment. The line is not always as straight as it appears to be on a plan, and it is often found that

instead of going straight it goes a good way round. Take for instance the Dowerin-Merredin railway. The mere fact that the line is to go between these two points does not show the route it has to follow, but simply indicates that the line will run east. Let the Premier consider for a moment and he will see he is not reasonable in expecting members to discuss a railway simply because he says it is going from A to Z. Members are supposed to occupy this Chamber for the purpose of giving the State the best of their experience and judgment, and it is rather hard that because we do that, or try to do it, we should be charged even by implication with disloyalty to one side or the other. The member for Kanowna is not entirely in accord with members of his side, and will he be considered disloyal to the Labour party because he used sentiments not acceptable to some members of that party? If that were so it would be just as wrong if members here were taken to task for opposing proposals of the Minister for Works. We are men of experience, and surely it cannot for one moment be said that we are disloyal to our side because we consider that the views of the Government are wrong in a certain direction. I am satisfied the Premier will not ask us to accept that position.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I wish to reply to a few remarks made by the speakers with regard to this Bill. I am supporting the motion for a select committee, as I am convinced that we have not had sufficient information placed before us, and in order to emphasise the fact that these Bills should be brought down earlier in the session. Ever since I have been a member of Parliament complaints have been made each session that the railway Bills have been brought down without members having an opportunity to discuss them. It has been suggested by one member that the Bills have been purposely held back. I do not agree with that, although there might be some truth in it. Take one portion of the information supplied to us by the Minister for Works on printed sheets. We are informed therein that there are

600 resident holders along this proposed line, and when the Minister for Works was questioned on the matter he said distinctly that they were holders of land and not merely residents.

The Minister for Works: I said they were resident occupiers.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Minister said they were resident holders. Anyhow, there are 280,000 acres of land alienated, or in process of alienation there. Of this quantity, 77,380 acres are held by holders with average holdings of over 4,000 acres. If we analyse these figures we will find that we might well take 5,000 acres as the average holding in the 77,000 acres; therefore the result is that we find 15 people holding 77,000 acres of land. Dividing the remainder of the land by 585 we find that the settlers along this line have only about 350 acres each. We have been told again and again in this Chamber that a settler cannot make a success without holding 1,000 acres.

The Minister for Works: That is in very different country.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Minister has said that 40 per cent. of the land is first-class, 40 per cent. second class, and 20 per cent. third-class. According to the way we are selling our lands, only men who hold 1,000 acres of first-class land, 2,500 acres of second-class, and 5,000 acres of third-class land are able to make a living, and yet we find, according to the information provided for us, that the settlers on this land only hold 350 acres each.

Mr. Layman: Many of them only hold 100 acres.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The conclusion I am forced to is that the information is wrong. I do not mind staking what little reputation I have that if the committee is appointed it will demonstrate that the information I have just referred to is absolutely incorrect. We are told that the select committee could not examine the whole of these selectors in this country, but the select committee could, at least, examine into the truth or otherwise of the statements made on these printed sheets, and I think the Committee for a start would find out

that this sheet is not what it is made out to be. We have heard many reasons given why this line should be built. The member for the district has told us that people are out many miles from the railway, and unless it is built, they cannot bring their produce to market. After all, the line is 52 miles long, or in other words, there are 52 miles between the points of the two spur railways, and the furthest that a man could be from either end would be if he were in the centre, and then the distance would not be more than 26 miles.

Mr. Layman : They are not all on the route of the railway.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : To show the paucity of the arguments in favour of this line, we have the member for the district saying that the Government were going to derive some revenue by the carriage of fertilisers, and in the next breath he advocates that we should carry these fertilisers free of cost. There cannot be much logical argument when an hon. member has to use such inferior stuff as that. The Premier says that it will be impossible for this committee to report. I entirely disagree with that, because it is not impossible to keep this House sitting for two or three months longer, and judging by the Notice Paper there is ample work there for three or four months to come. If there is no time to report, I contend that it is for this House to say emphatically that they are not going to have these Bills forced upon them when there is not the time to give them consideration. If there is not time to report on this line, it is the fault of the Government for not having brought down the Bill much earlier. When the leader of the Opposition was speaking the Attorney General asked him whether he had any confidence in the country. The leader of the Opposition replied that he had and so have I. I have absolute and perfect confidence in the agricultural prospects of this country, but I have no confidence in it as it is administered at the present time. While we allow the big landlord to accumulate large estates, our agricultural country is going to be of no more use to us than the agricultural country of Victoria is of use to that State.

I say emphatically, it is not the country, but it is the system under which it is being governed that I object to, and that is the reason why I have objected to these agricultural lines right through. The member for Kanowna put forward the extraordinary reason for opposing this motion that it would be a no-confidence motion. If that had come from another part of the House, I would have understood it, but coming from a member on this side of the House the matter is inconceivable. I would like to ask the hon. member whether he has confidence in the Government. If he has, then his place is over there. If I had confidence in the Government I would sit behind them. To put forward a proposition from this side of the House that the motion cannot be supported because it is a no-confidence motion—

Mr. Walker : I did not say that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : That has been the trouble with me ever since I have been here—I have no confidence in the Government. It is the last reason that I could possibly imagine as coming from a member on this side of the House. If there is one thing I would like to do above all others it is to put the Government out of office.

Mr. Walker : Do it in a proper manner ; challenge them.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : I will do it in any manner I possibly can, proper or improper, it is all the same to me. I am always in opposition.

Mr. Walker : I am not in opposition to a good and right thing.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : Exactly ; the hon. member is not in opposition to the Government.

Mr. Walker : That is not right.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : We have heard the hon. member speaking most eloquently here, and on one night with regard to the case of Mrs. Rendall his action was distinctly one of want of confidence in the Government.

Members : No.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : We have heard him speaking again and again on things which showed that he had no confidence in the Government, and, in fact, the only time he can make a speech at all is when

it is in opposition to the Government. If the hon. member has confidence in the Government, well, then, he is out of agreement with me.

Mr. Walker: I think you should honourably accept my denial. I said no such thing.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I will accept nothing from the hon. member after the statement he made to-night. I have no wish to delay this matter, but I would say in conclusion, I am convinced it is advisable that some inquiry should be made. There is no possible doubt that there is more than the suggestion that this line is being constructed to draw trade out of its proper course.

Mr. Layman: Absolute nonsense!

Mr. W. Price: Absolute fact!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Absolute fact, so the member for Albany says; and being on this side of the House I am prepared to take his word. There are many other reasons, but there is one in particular, and that is the attempt to draw trade out of its proper channel so as to provide for Bunbury that which should go to Albany. There is a distinct difference of opinion in this House on the question, and a select committee should make inquiries and bring down the proper information bearing upon it. Again, I would say I would like an inquiry into this line because I am convinced that there is no possibility of any person being more than 25 miles from a railway, and it is quite possible, and I am absolutely certain in my mind, that there are other lines required in this State more urgently than the one under consideration. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion before the Chair.

Mr. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I intend to offer very few observations on this motion. I would offer none at all, but for the fact that the House seems to be largely under a misapprehension in regard to the exact effect of the motion. I have had the duty many times of voting against the second reading of railway Bills because of the fact that a sufficient inquiry had not been made. I have urged in this House time after time when I was in office, and since I have been out of office, that no railway proposition should come before the House unless it

had been reported upon by a competent board, and I still hold the opinion that the adoption of such a procedure would immensely facilitate the work of hon. members, and would enable them to arrive at a more accurate decision than they can possibly hope to do under existing conditions; but the board I would propose would be entirely opposed, first of all to a Parliamentary board, the members of which would all have constituents, and any one of the members of which would have his constituents seeking to influence his decision and, perhaps, in some cases seeking with effect to influence it. And then, again, the inquiry, if an inquiry should be made, even by a Parliamentary board might be a better inquiry than an inquiry by a select committee; because there is not a member of this House who does know how a select committee is very often appointed. He knows that frequently, as appointed, a select committee does not represent the greatest capacity of the House to inquire into and deal with questions they are appointed to consider. Further than that, hon. members are aware that the invariable practice, a practice embodied in our Standing Orders, is that the hon. member who proposes a select committee is necessarily a member of it. In this instance the leader of the Opposition has proposed a select committee. According to his speech and the speech of hon. members on both sides of the House who have supported the proposition, it must be imagined that this committee, presided over by the Leader of the Opposition and composed of two members from each side of the House, shall sit on a matter of Government policy. Now, the first duty of a chairman is usually supposed to be to sit as an impartial person. I am prepared to ask the leader of the Opposition himself if he can be absolutely impartial, no matter what his desire, on any question of Government policy; and I think the hon. member will admit that in entering on an inquiry of any matter, the effect of the policy of the Government which he is sitting there to oppose, he must have a certain amount of prejudice. Surely, the hon. member

in moving this motion is placing himself in a somewhat invidious position. He is under a misapprehension if he imagines the committee has power to seek any information in regard to this Bill. The House has affirmed the principle of that Bill, has carried the second reading, and any hon. member who knows anything of Parliamentary practice is aware that when the second reading of a Bill is carried, the principle embodied in that Bill has been affirmed by the House.

Mr. Holman: We could throw it out on the third reading.

Mr. DAGLISH: It would be quite possible to throw it out on the third reading, because members may have affirmed the principle and differed from some of the details. The House has affirmed the principle that there shall be a railway constructed between Boyup and Kojonup.

Mr. Johnson: It was necessary to do so before we could move for a select committee.

Mr. DAGLISH: No; it was quite possible for the hon. member or any other hon. member to have moved an amendment to the motion that the Bill be now read a second time—an amendment to strike out the word "now" and insert words which would provide that before the Bill be read a second time the House obtain such further information as might be necessary to enable it to arrive at a decision. But the House has said there shall be a railway constructed between Boyup and Kojonup, and all the members of the Committee can do is to deal with the various clauses of the Bill and, perhaps, recommend an alteration of the route; they cannot report adversely on a proposal agreed to by the House, namely, that a railway shall be constructed between Boyup and Kojonup.

Mr. Bath: The committee could report adversely.

Mr. DAGLISH: Then the hon. member knows perfectly well that he has asked the House to appoint five of its members to decide that the House, as a whole, was wrong. When the House agrees to the second reading it adopts the principle embodied in the

Bill, but it does not necessarily affirm that all the details of the Bill are right.

Mr. Collier: The whole Bill could be thrown out on the third reading.

Mr. DAGLISH: But only for the reason that some of the details were not in accordance with the views of hon. members.

Mr. Collier: Without giving any reason at all.

Mr. DAGLISH: Of course without giving any reason at all, but the reason would be there just the same. What I am urging is that the House should take a proper course. To appoint five of its members to sit in judgment upon a decision which the House, as a whole, has arrived at, would be to adopt a most undignified course. I am merely drawing attention to the fact that the committee appointed to consider this Bill will have no right to report against the Bill as a whole, but will have the right only to report in regard to the details contained in the various clauses. And if the committee does more than that then that Committee of five members will be sitting in judgment, not on the Government policy, but on the proposition affirmed by the House as a whole. I am not more wedded to the passage of the Bill without the report that certainly ought to be brought down with all railway Bills than I have been wedded to the passage of other Bills in the past. I still hold the views I expressed five years ago in the House, namely, that hon. members do not get from the Government of the day as much information in regard to proposed railways as they ought to receive. At the same time, I am not going to support a proposition that five hon. members shall sit in judgment upon opinions expressed by the other 45, by virtue of a motion which has been affirmed this evening.

Mr. DRAPER (West Perth): I certainly did not intend again to speak upon the subject matter of this motion, because I have already said at an earlier stage in the evening that there was not sufficient information before the House to decide upon the merits of the Bill. At that time I also made inquiries

as to the proper course to take to get information, and I was referred to the Standing Orders. If hon. members will look at Standing Orders 267 and 271 I think they will come to the conclusion that the proper course was to move, as the leader of the Opposition did, immediately after the second reading, for a select committee. What are select committees for? Surely we can exercise our commonsense; and if the object of a select committee is to get information, and that information shows that a second reading of a Bill has been passed, and improperly passed, by reason of deficient information given to the House, surely commonsense shows to hon. members that they have not only a full right, but that it would be their duty to reverse the previous decision given in this Chamber. In speaking upon this matter I confess I have some diffidence in answering the remarks made by the member for Subiaco; because I recognise that from the political position he has held in the State, and because of his long experience in the Chair, he has a thorough knowledge of the subject. But, notwithstanding his speech, a perusal of the Standing Orders does not convince me that he has correctly explained the position to the House, and when the whole object of this select committee will be to get further information, and decide upon the Bill, I can really see no reason why the committee should not sit and obtain all the information it can. And if it comes to a conclusion contrary to that expressed here on the second reading, it is open to all of us to reconsider the question.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	26

Majority against .. 7

AYES.

Mr. Bath	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Bolton	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Draper	Mr. W. Price
Mr. George	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Swan
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Holman	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnson	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Monger
Mr. Butcher	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Carson	Mr. F. F. Moore
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Davies	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. J. Price
Mr. Gill	Mr. Walker
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Jacoby	(Teller).
Mr. Layman	

Question thus negatived.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Deviation:

Mr. TAYLOR: Was it necessary to have this deviation of five miles on either side where settlement was supposed to be so close? It was a big stretch of country.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The distance was much less than was usual. In some measures the deviation allowed was 10 miles and in others 15. The survey was not quite completed so it was necessary to arrange for a fair amount of deviation. The engineers considered this distance would be required.

Mr. GEORGE: There was no reason why we should not give the Government power to deviate, if necessary, 10 miles on either side. The Premier said that the surveyors had power to look out for a one in 60 route so that when funds warranted it the line could be changed. It was necessary to have a considerable range for deviation. In that part of the country it might be necessary to make a complete deviation, and the Government should be empowered to do it.

Clause passed.

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

Mr. HOLMAN: This power was given in previous Bills, but had it ever been taken advantage of, and had any inquiry ever been made as to whither it was necessary to purchase land, or was the

clause merely a dead letter? Was it put in the Bill merely to get it passed quickly or as a sort of excuse? If so it might be wiped out altogether. Was it the intention of the Government to enforce the clause? In a large number of railway Bills passed of late years the clause was inserted, and the Government could very wisely under it have purchased compulsorily land which would have paid them well to cut up.

Mr. GEORGE: Would the Minister tell the Committee the use of this particular clause? With regard to the line under discussion the land within 15 miles of the line available for settlement totalled 401,000 acres. The classification of that land set out that there was 40 per cent. of good land, most of which would be suitable for orchards, 40 per cent. of second-class land, and only 20 per cent. of third-class land. What did the Government want power to purchase blocks of over 1,000 acres for in connection with a line of this sort? Such a purchase could only be justified providing there was no land open for selection or available for persons desiring to get it in the ordinary way. It was balderdash to give power to the Government to purchase blocks of 1,000 acres and upwards when, on the Government's own statement, there were 401,000 acres of land available 40 per cent. of which was first-class. The clause was highly objectionable.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The clause was reasonable, and useful, and should remain in the Bill. The power given to the Government was that in the event of holders of large areas adjacent to new railway lines not improving their blocks, the Government were able to step in and repurchase at the price existing before the railway was built. In connection with various railway Bills that had gone through with this clause attached, inquiries had always been made with the result that it was found that the large areas had been certainly improved. The power given by the clause was to enable the Government to compel the owners of land adjacent to railway lines to effect improvements if they desired to hold the land. All these lines were talked

about a year or two before they were built, and improvements were in consequence pushed on with by the owners at a great rate. As to the line between Goomalling and Wongan it would be shown that improvements there had been very great during the last couple of years. Lands adjacent to railways should be utilised, and members could rest assured that if these large areas close to railways were not improved they would be repurchased. Any member who travelled along the Bunbury line knew that a great deal of the land there was still in its natural state. If this clause had been in force when the line was built a good deal more land would be under cultivation to-day.

Mr. GEORGE: There was no particular reasoning in what the Minister had said. It was all very well to tell members that the object of the clause was to make people use their land, but it might well happen that some holders of large areas would be only too glad to leave their land unimproved so that the Government should come in and repurchase it.

Mr. JACOBY: It was surprising to hear the member for Murray expressing the opinion he had considering the fact that when the Jandakot line was before the House he was a most enthusiastic supporter of the insertion of a similar clause.

Mr. George: I was not in the House at the time.

Mr. JACOBY: At the time that particular Bill was before members, of whom he had thought the present member for Murray was one, it was pointed out that there was a very large estate along the route, the whole of which would be greatly increased by the construction of the line, and it was in order to prevent the owners from getting the benefit of the unearned increment that the clause was inserted. It was to be hoped the clause would remain in the Bill for it gave the Government power to repurchase large estates at the price they were worth before the building of the line. The power was there, and the fact that it was not put into operation, was no reason why the clause should not be inserted again in this measure.

Mr. BATH : The power was a wise one, but it was not desired to place such a clause in a Bill of this kind unless an attempt was made to enforce it. Undoubtedly there had been opportunities in connection with the Collie-Narrogin railway for using the power. After railways were constructed very frequently the areas were sold at greatly increased prices, and in many cases the Government could have stepped in and forced the repurchase clause.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : Inquiries had been made in connection with every railway which had been constructed but it was not found in any case desirable to exercise the power given by the clause, because nearly always it was found that the owners were making satisfactory efforts to improve their lands.

Mr. HOLMAN took exception to the broad statements made by the Minister that inquiries had been made. Some specific cases should be placed before the Committee. Personally speaking, he was of opinion that no inquiries had been made.

The Minister for Works : I have said inquiries have been made. The hon. member should accept my statement.

Mr. HOLMAN : The Minister should be in a position to say on what line these inquiries had been made. The broad statement was not sufficient.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member should accept the assurance of the Minister.

Mr. HOLMAN : It was a difficult matter to do that, but if it was necessary he would have to accept the statement.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member must accept the statement.

Mr. HOLMAN : The Minister should have presented some specific instance. Unfortunately he was a little deaf that evening, and did not catch all that the Minister had said, but he was not going to be spoken to in the manner that the Minister had addressed him.

The Minister for Works : What have I said ? I have said nothing to offend the hon. member.

Mr. HOLMAN : The Minister made some remark, the exact purport of which he (Mr. Holman) did not catch, but if it

was repeated he would deal with the Minister across the floor of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : What is the matter with the hon. member Mr. Chairman ? What is he driving at ; I have not said anything, and I object to being threatened by him.

The CHAIRMAN : There was no insinuation or statement whatever made against the hon. member. The hon. member must have misheard what the Minister said.

Mr. HOLMAN : The remark that he thought he heard the Minister make was that it was characteristic of the hon. member.

The CHAIRMAN : There was no such remark made by the Minister.

Mr. HOLMAN : At any rate, it had to be regretted that the Minister should only be able to make a general statement to the Committee that inquiries had been made. He (Mr. Holman) was not satisfied with that. The clause should be in every Bill, but there were Ministers who did not consider it of sufficient importance to make use of it.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Purchase money to be determined under Public Works Act, 1902 :

Mr. W. PRICE moved an amendment—

That in line 2 of the second paragraph all the words after "at" be struck out and the following be inserted in lieu :—
"Not more than 10 per cent. increase on the value placed on the land for taxation purposes under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907, immediately prior to the decision of Parliament to construct the railway."

There was a desire on the part of large owners to use the construction of these railways for land jobbing purposes. If the amendment were carried the owners of the land would place the previous year's value upon it for income tax purposes, and the return having been made out for that purpose, if the value was not a fair one, he should pay a penalty by having the increase of 10 per cent. imposed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : Apparently the hon. member had not given sufficient consideration to the matter. If the amendment were to be adopted it

would mean that improvements would be left out of the question altogether. Did the hon. member intend that improvements should go by default, and that the owner should only get the unimproved value, plus 10 per cent.? That was what it would mean if the valuation for taxation purposes were to be taken. Moreover, it would be putting a dangerous weapon in the hands of land owners, because they could easily protect their properties by putting a high value on them.

Mr. W. Price : But this is "immediately prior to the decision of Parliament."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : At the best, that would mean a year before. If the clause were to be adopted in respect to this Bill, it would have to go into all similar Bills, and the land owner would be able to anticipate it. The amendment could not be accepted. The intention of the Government was to take the whole of the estate if they took anything at all, including improvements.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment ; the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

House adjourned at 11-35 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 8th December, 1909.

	PAGE
Papers presented	1922
Electoral, North Province Vacancy	1922
Assent to Bills	1922
Urgency motion, Fruit importation North-West	1923
Bills : Legitimation, &c.	1924
Landlord and Tenant, &c.	1924
Transfer of Land Act, Recommendation	1924
Electoral Act Amendment, Report stage	1925
Land Act Amendment, &c.	1925
Koyup-Kojonup Railway, &c.	1941
Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and	
Drainage, Com.	1941
Fisheries Act Amendment, Assembly's in-	
sistence	1943
Agricultural Bank Act Amendment, Com.	1944

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary : 1, Report of Woods and Forests Department, for the year ending 30th June, 1909 ; 2, Report of Surveyor General for the year ending 30th June, 1909 ; 3, By-laws under the Health Act of Port Hedland local board of health ; 4, Bunbury Harbour Board Regulations.

ELECTORAL—NORTH PROVINCE VACANCY.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary, resolved : "That owing to the death of the Hon. R. F. Sholl, a member for the North Province, the seat be declared vacant, and that the President be authorised to issue a warrant to the Clerk of the Writs for the election of a new member to supply the vacancy."

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills :—

Abattoirs.

Public Education Endowment.

Redemption of Annuities.

Land Act Special Lease.

URGENCY MOTION—FRUIT IMPORTATION, NORTH-WEST.

The PRESIDENT : I have received a written statement from the Hon. R. W. Pennefather that he wishes to