

The Hon. R. T. MELROSE—I do not think any railway should be constructed under the day labor system, and I support the amendment.

The Hon. J. H. COOKE—I appreciate the fact that the line is to be relaid with rails removed from the main track. While I desire to see the work done by contract I think it will be advisable, in view of what the Minister has said, to add the words "whole or part of."

The Hon. D. J. GORDON—The substitution of "shall" for "may" does not take the matter out of the hands of the Commissioner, because, in the event of no tender being received, the Commissioner has full power to go on with the work. I have no faith in departmental control of the construction of railways or roads—I am, of course, referring to large undertakings. The Government should always know what the cost of a large work is likely to be. If a course such as I propose had been taken with regard to the Blanchetown lock, what a great saving would have been made. As to the Tod River scheme, it was most fortunate that the House called for tenders, for if the work had not been carried out by a contractor, who lost money over it, the undertaking would have cost £250,000 to £500,000 more than it did.

The Hon. A. A. KIRKPATRICK—I understand the amendment will give the Commissioner an option whether the tender shall be accepted or not, and that, if he does not wish to accept any of them, he can do the work departmentally. There is nothing to be afraid of in a proposition of that sort, because the Railways Standing Committee have reported favorably as to the State doing such work by means of a construction department. In Victoria they would not think of giving a railway to a contractor; they do the work departmentally, and I think also in New South Wales. Hundreds of thousands of pounds would be saved here if we had a proper construction department. The East-West Railway was most advantageously constructed by the Commonwealth with its own departmental staff.

The Hon. D. J. Gordon—They would have saved millions if they had called for tenders.

The Hon. A. A. KIRKPATRICK—Well, I was told by a well-informed person that it proved a great success.

The Hon. T. McCALLUM—I am astonished at the honorable member's statement with regard to the East-West Railway. The original estimate for that line was £4,000,000, which was increased to a certain extent later, but the ulti-

mate cost of the work done by day labor was over £8,000,000. Why, we heard of three plate-layers standing one behind the other, one with a hammer passing it on to the other two men, and having a smoke in the meantime.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed, with a consequential amendment in sub-clause (b).

Remaining clauses, title, and schedule passed; Bill read a third time and passed.

#### TAXATION ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

The Assembly notified by message that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 1, 5, 7, and 8 suggested by the Council, and to the amendments Nos. 6 and 9 with amendments; consideration, November 27.

#### BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. T. Pascoe)—By the retirement of Mr. Williams, late Chief Inspector of Stock, Mr. Loxton has become Chief Inspector of Stock and also Chief Veterinary Surgeon. The chief clerk in the department has practically done all the work of the registration of brands for many years past, but he could not have the title, unless it was given him by Act of Parliament. This Bill is therefore intended to give him the title of Registrar of Brands, a work for which he has long been responsible. I move the second reading.

Bill read a second time and passed.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 21. Page 1555.)

The Hon. D. J. GORDON—I understand that for the purposes of the Public Service it is necessary that this Bill should be passed without any unnecessary delay. I have looked through the various items and I see that the increase from the amount of £5,600,000 set down in the Appropriation Bill last year to £5,939,000, the amount covered by this Bill, is well accounted for by the increases which have been made in the various departments. The Government are to be commended for increasing the education vote from £524,000 last year to £571,000 this year. Increases have also been provided for the Police Department and the Inspector-General of Hospitals. I am surprised to see that no difference has been made as regards interest and exchange, but I understand that this is a matter

which will have a large increase in the amount we expect. The Hon. T. things in connection with serious consideration should be of only £5,000, State is over £ The Chief S are made under The Hon. T. been a large in the period from people, I would amounts to net total amount £704,818, and the first item in our succession duties £326,367, and last That gives point Chamber the other duties are caused avoid the payment them for it. T. in the amount The ACTING (Gordon)—I direct attention to the fact Bill dealing with meets his remarks be in order in de The Hon. T. out to members amounts set out 1921-22 the amount was nearly £1,000 duties increased £346,018 in 1922 not know that the total public revenue and last year it interest on the £1,137,474, and last year the same percentage doubled. In regard with some matters General's report Farms under the which there should be a large increase. I want to mention on those figures from 1915, but small expenditure