

# Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 27th August, 1924.

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

## QUESTION—ROTTNEEST ISLAND PRISONERS.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Is he aware that prisoners are sent out to work under other than officials of the gaol at Rottneest Island, and as a result civilians have been dismissed because of lack of discipline among the prisoners? 2, If so, will he see that the practice is discontinued, and that warders from the gaol are provided to take charge of prisoners working on the island?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE replied: 1 and 2, A small number of prisoners were, while at work, placed under charge of the board's officer at Rottneest, who was made responsible to the gaols authority for guarding the prisoners. The man was found unsuitable for the work. His services were dispensed with by the board, and he was replaced by a warder taken over from the gaols staff to act temporarily as the board's officer. This man, who is experienced and trustworthy, is now in charge of the few prisoners referred to.

## QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAYS.

### *Salaried and Wages Staff.*

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the total number of persons employed on the salaried staff of the Government Railways of this State? 2, What is the total number of persons employed on the wages staff?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, 1,223 on 30th June, 1924. 2, 6,510 on 30th June, 1924.

### *Fremantle Bridge.*

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that double-headed trains are being run across the Fremantle Railway Bridge? 2, In view of the

Commissioner's report regarding the safety of this bridge, will he see that the practice is discontinued?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Certain trains are assisted from the rear, Fremantle to North Fremantle. Two engines do not run together. 2, The bridge is now considered safe for working, and the existing conditions will continue for the present.

## MOTION—PERTH MARKETS.

*To inquire by Select Committee.*

Mr. MANN (Perth) [4.35]: I move—

*That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the establishment of markets for the better sale and distribution of produce, including the conditions governing transport, sale and distribution of meat within the metropolitan area.*

On the 14th September, 1922, I introduced a Bill on behalf of the Perth City Council to give that body power to establish markets, but on account of the measure having contained what were termed some objectionable clauses, it was rejected. The result is to-day there is no central market, but there are eight different markets scattered about the city for the sale of produce. The manner in which those markets are conducted entails great additional cost owing to the unnecessary transport involved. Most of the markets are situated at a considerable distance from the railway yards, and the produce has to be loaded into carts or wagons for conveyance to the various markets, and again carted back to the railway station to be forwarded to its destination. If it is a weak market, and the produce brings only a low price, the percentage for cartage is very much heavier, because it costs as much to cart a case of fruit that realises only 2s. as a case that brings 6s. We have two markets in James-street, two in Roe-street, and one in Stirling-street. Another disadvantage is that the sales are conducted on the one day and at the same time, and consequently there is no centralising of buyers. There may be a dearth of buyers at one market and a fair number at another market, and this makes a considerable difference in the prices realised for the produce. One market may be very much cheaper than another. In addition to the five markets selling fruit and vegetables there are a fish market in another part of the city, a meat market, a produce market in Stirling-street, and the kerbstone markets. The cost of cartage adds at least 12 to 15 per cent. to the cost of the produce.

Mr. Panton: Is that for carting it from one market to another?

Mr. MANN: It has to be carted from the railway station to the wholesale market and after the sale it has to be carted back to the station for forwarding, or to the kerbstone markets for the retailers to sell. If we

had up-to-date markets, the extra cost of cartage would be eliminated, because they would be connected with a suitable siding. If there be a surplus of produce for sale, we have no cold storage accommodation for it, and it has to be sold for what it will bring. The small amount of cold storage space in the Government works and the Western Freezing Works is quite inadequate, the works are obsolete and the charges are heavy. The markets are run by private companies, who have been charging 5 per cent. on vegetables and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on fruit for carrying out the sales. Recently the Producers' Market—the growers' own market—found it necessary to raise the percentage charged from 5 and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  and 10 per cent. When to that is added the cost of cartage, the burden thus imposed upon the grower or the consumer or both amounts to at least 15 to 20 per cent. In addition there are a number of subsidiary charges. I have nothing to say against the management of the markets. They are in the hands of reputable firms, and growers are sure of getting their money, but the conditions under which they are operating are at fault. The ground rent of the buildings wherein the markets are held is too high for the purpose of markets.

Mr. Panton: You should support a Fair Rents Bill.

Mr. MANN: If we had properly constituted markets, as have Adelaide and Melbourne, the front portions would be utilised for shops and the markets would be built at the rear, so that the market rents would be only nominal. As it is, the markets occupy the front space of important streets, thus making the land values too high for the purpose. I have dealt with the five markets that sell fruit and vegetables. The only produce market is in Stirling-street and all the produce that comes by rail has to be carted from Melbourne-road to Stirling-street, and then either to the kerbstone markets or to the place of distribution. When such lines as rabbits, pork, veal, and lamb are offered, they have to be sold for what they will bring because there is no adequate storage accommodation. It was remarked by one member, when I was speaking on the Address-in-reply, that the auctioneers probably received 40 per cent., and the growers got what was left. The auctioneers' charges are now set out, and the growers know what they are. They do not appear excessive if prices are high, but when prices are low both the cartage charges and the commission remain the same, and to the grower it does appear that the charges are excessive.

Mr. Panton: Are the charges on a flat rate, or on a percentage basis?

Mr. MANN: There is a flat rate. The kerbstone market serves a good purpose. It enables the consumer to get into direct touch with the grower. Most of those who sell produce there, however, are dealers, who have previously purchased in the wholesale markets, taken the produce to their own dwellings or stores, and eventually carted it to

the kerbstone market. The produce is thus more or less stale. There are some growers who go direct to the kerbstone market, and get into touch at first hand with the consumer. This market has had the effect of enabling people to get cheaper vegetables and fruit than was the case before. Of course, people who go there have to carry their own produce away. Growers far out of the city cannot avail themselves of the kerbstone market, and must send their goods to the private markets. It is not possible for them to accompany their produce to the city. They, therefore, send it up and sell it for what it will bring. The auctioneer uses his discretion, but he knows that if he holds over the goods for another day they may depreciate in value, and the market may be worse than it was on the first occasion. The auctioneer usually lets produce go for what it will fetch, rather than take the risk of holding it. Last year I visited Melbourne and Adelaide, where I inquired into the market system. In Melbourne the condition of the fruit and vegetable markets was satisfactory both to the grower and to the consumer. The Victoria markets cover an area of seven acres, and there is accommodation for 1,000 growers' carts and 3,000 retailers' carts. With motor wagons the growers travel upwards of 40 miles, and with horse-drawn vehicles they travel 30 miles. The markets open at four o'clock in the morning, and trade goes on till eight o'clock or half-past eight. The nominal charge is 1s. per stall in the morning. The markets are open on three mornings in the week. If the grower decides to hang on and act as a retailer he pays an extra 2s. The retail market opens at about 7.45, and carries on till 12.30 p.m. On three days a week the authorities estimate that between 6,000 and 7,000 tons of produce are disposed of. The growers get there at midnight or early in the morning, and leave early in the afternoon with the proceeds of their products.

Mr. Panton: Does that include auctioneers' fees?

Mr. MANN: There are no auctioneers. The produce is sold by treaty. The market business has prospered to such an extent that the Melbourne City Council have enlarged the market. They resumed a cemetery of about 10 acres in extent and are extending the markets by that area. The authorities told me that before the markets were built growers and retailers had applied for the whole of the extra space available. The markets are the private concern of the Melbourne City Council. For the year ended 1922-23 the horse and cow markets showed a profit of £3,306, the abattoir and cattle markets £3,566, the fish market £2,948, and the Victoria markets £12,830. The City Council thus showed a handsome profit on all their markets. The officer in charge told me that in addition to the profit of £12,000 the City Council paid interest at five per cent.,

10 per cent. into the sinking fund, and smothered up other moneys in the way of buildings and improvements in order to cloak the fact that the profits were large. Notwithstanding these profits the markets are carried on at the cheap rate of 1s. per stall per day to the growers, and 2s. a stall to the retailers. The Western Markets are in Collins-street and Market-street, and have been opened since 1870. They are operating on a short Act that was passed in that year. I learned that the authorities were afraid to apply for a new Act for fear they would lose the land, which has become valuable. When I was in Melbourne the Victorian Government threatened to resume it, but the City Council still hold it. At that market the produce that comes in by rail from distant country centres is sold by auctioneers, who have a permit from the City Council. The Minister for Works was with me at the time of my visit. We learned that the agents have a monopoly by virtue of their agreement. Agents have offered up to £2,000 and £3,000 for the right to sell there. The men who started in the early days, when things were not very good, now have the benefit of all this extensive trade. These markets showed a profit of £8,000 during the year I am speaking of. Every market conducted by the City Council is showing a handsome profit, and both the grower and the consumer are deriving advantage from them. I learned that people are enabled to live in close proximity to the markets and pay higher rents because they are able to buy the necessities of life in those markets at a lower price than they can do in suburban shops. One stall holder told me he was selling sausages at four pounds for a shilling, whereas in the shop he was selling only three pounds for a shilling. He could do this because of the low rent he paid for the stall and the quick turnover he had.

The Minister for Mines: You mean the council was charging a low rent for the stalls, and the shop owner close by was charging a high rent.

Mr. MANN: Because he was paying a low rent at the markets he was able to sell his sausages a penny a pound cheaper than he could do in the shop. I found everything relatively cheaper in the markets than in the shops. Butter was sold from 1½d. to 2d. a lb. cheaper in the markets, and everything else was on the same scale. In Adelaide the system is somewhat different, but there are also established markets in that city. The wholesale markets are private concerns acting under an Act of Parliament. The City Council has the right to resume the markets at any time after 18 years of their establishment. The retail markets are run by the Adelaide City Council, and are showing a handsome profit. Last year the markets were extended at a cost of about £30,000. Produce and food-stuffs of various descriptions were sold in the markets there at less cost than in the retail shops of the city or suburbs. I am

forced to the conclusion that if we had markets in Perth, with cool chambers attached, and the necessary accommodation for growers and traders, the growers would get more for their produce and the consumers would be able to buy it at a cheaper rate. The cost of handling from the station to the market and back again, as we find it here, of necessity adds to the charges upon the consumer and the producer. I expect every member knows the condition of our meat markets. They are not fit for the sale and conveyance of foodstuffs. They are situated at the corner of William and Wellington-streets, at the place where fish is also auctioned, both wholesale and retail. The conditions are most unhealthy. It is Government property. If it were not, I doubt if the health authorities would allow the markets to continue. They compel every seller of produce elsewhere to cover his windows and doors with wire to keep away the flies and insects. At the meat markets there are millions of flies, because of the presence of the fish markets, and on a windy day dust and horse manure are blown all over the meat.

Mr. Panton: It all goes in with the weight.

Mr. MANN: The consumer certainly gets the benefit of it.

Mr. Panton: That is where he is being exploited.

Mr. MANN: It will thus be seen how necessary it is that some authority should establish metropolitan markets.

In my opinion it is essentially the province of the Perth City Council, but if the City Council do not move in the matter, then the Government have a duty to see that proper facilities are established for the sale of the produce required by the metropolitan area. In transport and distribution of meat we have even a worse problem than that of selling produce. For the last four years the meat supply of the metropolitan area and the southern districts of the State has been precarious. During the whole of that period we have been in trouble regarding supplies of meat. Every year some fresh excuse has been put forward—probably a correct excuse, say of a drought in the lower Murchison, or a drought somewhere else, or had stock routes, or still some other excuse. But every year there has been a shortage of meat here. Our beef supply is drawn from two sources: during the winter months from the Kimberleys, and later from the Murchison and Midland districts. This year there has not been too much beef coming from the Kimberleys, and none has come from the Murchison, the consequence being that we have experienced a shortage of beef for some time. In my opinion conditions are likely to become worse during the next four or five months, because when the steamers cease to run north—and I doubt whether they will run more than three or four additional trips—I fail to see where

our meat supply can come from, that is, locally, except for a few thousand head from the Midland country. We cannot expect to get any fat beef from the Murchison this year, and for the meat supply of the metropolitan area and the southern districts we shall have to rely upon those few thousand head from the Midlands and on frozen meat from Queensland and other Eastern States. At present the great bulk of the beef supplied to the metropolitan area comes from Queensland, frozen. It is not of the best, though not of the worst; and presumably we are fortunate in getting it.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: We have never had better beef in the metropolitan area than the Queensland frozen beef.

Mr. MANN: The Honorary Minister may be a better judge than I am, but it is not first-class beef.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Some of the Wyndham frozen beef was not first class, but the Queensland frozen beef is first class.

Mr. MANN: Even Queensland frozen beef is not first-class beef.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Yes, it is absolutely first class; and I believe the larger portion of it is still being sold as fresh meat. The people do not know it. The people say, "What splendid fresh beef we are getting!"

Mr. Richardson: They ought to know the difference.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I will bet that the hon. member interjecting does not know the difference.

Mr. Richardson: I will bet that I do.

Mr. MANN: The metropolitan area is drawing the great bulk of its mutton from Sydney. The whole of the goldfields supply is coming from South Australia. The goldfields butchers have had to shift their businesses from the goldfields to Port Augusta. Three goldfields firms are killing the whole of their meat at Port Augusta, and three others are killing on the Transcontinental railway, and shipping the meat to the goldfields. That will continue as long as the weather permits, and if the Transcontinental railway authorities will give those butchers cool wagons, probably the practice will continue during the summer months. Unless the Minister for Agriculture deems fit to lift the embargo and permit cattle in for slaughter, I do not know where our future supplies of beef are to come from, except at very high prices.

Mr. Richardson: At election time the present Government said they would lift the embargo.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: They said nothing of the kind. They said they would do just what they are doing now.

Mr. MANN: Frozen meat has just risen one penny per lb. in Queensland. While until recently we were buying there at 2d. and 2½d., we shall now have to pay 3d. and 3½d. By the time shipping and landing charges are added, and the profit as between wholesaler and retailer, the cost of

future shipments of frozen beef will rise materially. The Minister for Agriculture queried my figures regarding last year. Last year the Government brought down a shipment of frozen meat from Wyndham, but could not sell it, and it remained in the Fremantle freezers till this year.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That was because the former Government let the butchers bluff them.

Mr. MANN: The butchers would not sell it.

Mr. Richardson: Members opposite declared that frozen beef was no good.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I did not.

Mr. Richardson: Yes, you did. You kicked up all the row about frozen meat.

Mr. MANN: The Wyndham beef remained at Fremantle until the fleet arrived. Then some butchers thought they saw the prospect of a profit from that beef.

(Several interjections.)

Mr. SPEAKER: This cross-firing from bench to bench is disorderly, and must cease. If hon. members persist in it, steps will have to be taken.

Mr. MANN: A couple of butchers thought they saw a bargain in the Wyndham frozen beef at Fremantle, and they bought it at a cheap rate. They managed to sell only about half of it to the fleet, but they got rid of the remainder when the beef shortage in the metropolitan area came about. The first frozen meat consumed here was meat that had been in the Fremantle freezers for a year, and it was perfectly wholesome, quite all right. To relieve the position, the Government advertised that they would bring meat from Wyndham to the metropolitan area. They had meat there to sell, and the metropolitan area was wanting meat. Moreover the Government had a ship to bring the meat down. But when they moved to get the meat, they found that all the shipping space was being utilised to bring bananas from Java. Thus the Government found themselves unable to transport the Wyndham frozen beef with which they had intended to supply the metropolitan area.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Who was responsible for that?

Mr. MANN: I am not blaming anyone, but am merely pointing out the condition of things that exists. What may happen next year is that the Government will decide to retain shipping space in order to bring meat down from Wyndham. When they have done that, they may find that there is no sale for Wyndham frozen meat, consequent on the south having a good season.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: We will chance that.

Mr. MANN: One cannot do very much by chancing. One wants to know exactly where one stands. A man cannot tell where he is in the meat trade while existing conditions continue.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: One cannot do anything if one waits till next year.

Mr. MANN: That is exactly the reason why frozen space is not obtained by certain growers. The State Shipping Service, just like private shipowners, have to let their space in advance. Accordingly they call for tenders from growers for the coming year. The small man cannot compete with the big grower of the north in tendering for space, and so the space is always secured by two or three large companies controlling the meat of the Kimberleys. Therefore the Minister is right when he says, in effect, that one has to look to the future. The shipping companies do that, and let their space; and then the space is all in the hands of just two or three firms.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It will not be in the hands of two or three firms next year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are going to do wonders next year.

Mr. MANN: The Honorary Minister may have greater foresight than others possess, but the two or three firms who have the space utilise it, quite naturally, as suits them best. When there is a shortage in the metropolitan area, they bring down exactly as much meat as they think fit. If the beef market has been bare, the owners of the beef from the north, knowing at what figure the previous week's market closed, put a reserve on the bullocks they have in the yard, in order to get the advantage of the position. Then they instruct the auctioneer to start with the reserve price. In the result they buy back their own bullocks, for slaughter, at an advance in price of 10s. to 20s. per hundred on the previous week's price. If the price of the bullock on the hoof goes up, the price must rise to the wholesaler, and similarly to the retailer. Thus a market at an advanced price is established for several weeks ahead. That sort of thing will continue until there is better accommodation for stock in the south, until we have pasture attached to abattoirs, as is the case in Adelaide and Melbourne. In both those capitals local pastures are attached to the abattoirs, and the small grower can send in stock for sale, and can compete successfully with the big grower. If small growers send in, small buyers can buy. To-day the small buyer in Western Australia cannot purchase livestock, simply because he lacks cold chambers or freezing space in which to store the bodies after slaughter. Ninety per cent. of our retailers have to buy off the hook, and not on the hoof. If we had proper abattoirs and meat markets established as in Melbourne, with pastures attached, and if certain conditions were imposed to control sale and disposal of meat, we would find ourselves in the same advantageous position as Melbourne and Adelaide. In South Australia a grower can send in any number of stock to the

abattoirs for sale. They are branded, and when they are sold a buyer can purchase down to one beast, and his brand is put on it. The bullock goes straight to the abattoirs, and the buyer gives his instructions, "Kill that beast next Tuesday, or next Wednesday, or next Thursday," as the case may be. Meantime the beast is pastured on good pasture at a charge of about 8d. per day. He is killed as directed, and the carcass goes straight from the abattoirs into the cool chamber, from which the buyer can draw as he requires, say a quarter or half a body. But the conditions existing here are utterly different. If a buyer purchases a single beast and slaughters it, there is no accommodation in which he can store the carcass. A Midland Junction or Perth butcher cannot possibly utilise freezing works at Fremantle. Until we have better meat markets, with cool chambers attached and with pastures connected with the abattoirs, the small buyer will not find it possible to buy off the hoof, but must purchase from the wholesaler, who can make his market just what he pleases. Under the excellent conditions existing in the Adelaide abattoirs, the cost of slaughtering there compares more than favourably with the cost here. If the Adelaide butcher desires to keep the offal, he is charged 14s. 1d. per bullock, which charge covers the slaughtering and the storing, and also the delivering of the beef at the buyer's convenience. If he allows the abattoirs to have the offal, it is done for 9s. With that end in view the abattoir authorities have fixed 5s. as the value of the offal from a bullock. In my opinion there is great wastage at our abattoirs respecting the treatment of the offal which is used for by-products. Two private individuals are engaged in treating offal to get the by-products and they are making handsome profits. The State gets no consideration on that account, neither do the growers nor the buyers of the bullocks. If abattoirs were established those profits should be retained.

Mr. Lutey: That difficulty will be largely overcome in the new abattoirs.

Mr. MANN: I do not think there is provision for freezing space there.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, that space is available.

Mr. MANN: In addition to that we should have cool chambers attached to our markets so that unsold meat could be kept in these chambers. That cannot be done to-day because no such space is available. The Western Ice Company at Perth and Fremantle, and the Kalgoorlie Ice Works belong to the one company, and apart from those works there is only another small one in Wellington-street owned by the State.

Mr. Heron: They have space available.

Mr. MANN: But it is not always available. I understand new works are being built so that more space will be available in future. The point I wish to put to the House is that in addition to establishing abattoirs and making the necessary improvements indicated, we should provide pastures. It would not be costly, and if that were done the cattle could be kept there awaiting a suitable opportunity for sale. I was shown an example of what happens recently. A consignment of huddocks from the Kimberleys had experienced a rough trip down the coast. Many were killed and many were badly bruised. I was shown carcasses that the inspector had examined and from which he had instructed large portions of the beef to be cut away because the flesh was so badly bruised. I have been informed that had there been pastures available where the cattle could have been grazed for a while, those bruises would have healed up and the beasts would have been in a better condition for slaughtering. As it was, the cattle were rushed into the abattoirs with the result that much of the beef had to be discarded, thus decreasing the value of the beast. If we are to have a cheap supply of meat we must provide reasonable pastures in conjunction with our abattoirs and controlled by the abattoir officials. If that were done the small grower could send in his cattle, and the small buyer could procure the beef he required. The small buyer, too, could keep his cattle depastured until the time was suitable for selling. We should have better marketing facilities and better accommodation in the markets, together with freezing chambers. We should also provide for reduced costs of handling and of cartage. If we achieve those results, we shall have done something substantial towards assuring a permanent and reasonable supply of cheap beef. As to the high price of mutton, that is due to a large extent to the high price of wool. Here again, the small growers who would have to forward small lots have to consider the depasturing question. They can avail themselves to a certain extent of private pastures at Guildford, but they are not always available. The result is that the small man has to take the market as it is, and the auctioneer has to sell the sheep straight away. If we had pastures there would be a more normal market and there would not be such variations in prices from week to week. In addition to that we would have better supplies. I suggest that there is great scope for inquiry. I am not wedded to the appointment of a select committee. The question is so involved that the Government may see fit to appoint an honorary Royal Commission. If this matter is attended to, we should not have a shortage of meat each year,

together with uncertainty annually as to supplies and prices. If something be done in the direction I suggest, we will assure a safer supply with advantage to the grower and to the consumer as well.

The Minister for Works: Do you intend to confine the inquiry to meat?

Mr. MANN: I refer to meat specifically, but the motion covers all produce sold in markets.

On motion by Minister for Agriculture, debate adjourned.

## MOTION—POLICE DEPARTMENT, ADMINISTRATION.

*To inquire by Select Committee.*

Mr. HUGHES (East Perth) [5.23]: I move—

*That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the administration of the Police Department.*

I do not propose to say very much in support of the motion. It is one concerning which as little as possible need be said until after the select committee has concluded its labours. In every civilised community it is necessary to have a police force to administer the law and preserve peace. We know, too, that if we have a discontented police force our experience is likely to be that of Victoria in recent times. There the responsible authorities goaded the police force into the drastic action of striking. In what they thought was their wisdom but in what transpired to be their folly, the Victorian Government saw fit to replace the trained preservers of the peace with all sorts of amateurs. What has been the result? It is shown in the fact that responsible officials of the Police Department there have advised people to go about armed. The system in operation more or less in Western Australia—it was more in evidence in Victoria—brought about a condition of affairs in Victoria where those charged with the maintenance of peace have had to tell people to go about the city with revolvers in their pockets. When we arrive at such a position showing that the machinery has broken down, it is very serious. Although the Western Australian police force has not reached the stage that the police in Victoria arrived at, there have been a number of strange happenings in connection with the force here, not only regarding the internal administration of the department, but respecting the attitude the police should adopt towards various sections of the community. Generally speaking, rewards should be made for long and efficient service. A system has been in force, however, regarding the allocation of the higher positions in the department, that is bad and unsound. I refer to the board of inspectors who are responsible for recommendations when positions of inspectors become vacant.

It might sound all right in theory that the best persons to say who shall be the next inspector are the inspectors themselves. Whether it is on account of the principle involved or the administration of the board, the fact remains that the system has not given satisfaction. It has caused much discontent in the police force. If we consider the board as it is constituted to-day, we find that only inspectors sit in judgment when an inspectorial vacancy occurs. That means there can be no alteration in the traditions of the police force. Naturally a police officer is well up in years and has a long period of service to his credit before he becomes qualified for appointment as an inspector. Quite naturally the inspectors would look upon that man as most suitable to be an inspector who most conforms to their point of view. We know that age is prone to conservatism.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is not confined to old age.

Mr. HUGHES: I am sorry to say the hon. member has always been conservative. Naturally the policeman who appeals to the old traditional viewpoint and is able to conform to the point of view of the older sections of the police force is the one likely to become an inspector. There is no suggestion against those inspectors in such a statement; it is simply evidence of the natural outcome of their point of view. If they encounter a man possessed of new ideas who is likely to revolutionise the force, as they would term it, they are not likely to view him with favour.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Anyhow, ours is the best police force in Australia.

Mr. HUGHES: If the hon. member had not lost control of that force, and had it not come under the present Ministerial control, it would not be the best force for long.

Mr. Latham: That is an old gag.

Mr. Taylor: By Jove, you are on good terms with yourself!

Mr. HUGHES: A man who has been years and years in the force without a black mark against him has gone before the inspectorial board and been recommended for the next vacancy. No vacancy occurring, he was again recommended by the board in the following year. Yet in the third year the board recommended a newly successful examinee. For no apparent reason a man twice recommended was suddenly turned down and a junior recommended over his head. That officer was never given a chance to learn why he was so unaccountably turned down. Certain things are said to have been reported and, apparently, the report was the determining factor.

Mr. Sampson: Do you believe in preference to seniority?

Mr. HUGHES: The determining factor should be efficiency, but efficiency being equal, seniority should take preference. A man who has given long and faithful service should not be lightly passed over. Yet

this has been done. No public servant should ever be the subject of a confidential report prejudicial to his interests.

Mr. Mann: An officer can always see his file.

Mr. HUGHES: But he cannot see on his file prejudicial verbal reports conveyed to his superior. The hon. member must know that verbal reports are conveyed to the head. That is one of the things the board has to explain. No person should be allowed to make a report against a public servant if that public servant is to be denied the opportunity to reply.

Mr. Taylor: Should that be confined to public servants alone?

Mr. HUGHES: No, it should be extended to all persons.

Mr. Taylor: Then why didn't you apply it to Haynes?

Mr. HUGHES: I have done so.

Mr. Taylor: Why don't you take up his challenge?

Mr. HUGHES: I have taken it up, and I will give Haynes an opportunity to prove his statement and disprove mine. I am willing to produce to the hon. member the proof of the truth of my statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! It cannot be done on this motion.

Mr. HUGHES: In one instance an officer was turned down after having filled the position in an acting capacity. He had no knowledge of having transgressed in any way. On inquiring the reasons for his repulse, he was told by one of the inspectors that he had been overlooked because it was the wish of the Commissioner of Police that another man should be made an inspector. I cannot vouch for its truth, but that is one of the things I want the select committee to investigate. People who have vested interests are not the people to make the decision. The responsible officers should make the selection for promotion, and every officer should have the right to appeal if he considers he has been unjustly overlooked. If that were brought about we should have some chance to get away from old traditions and introduce new men with new ideas. To simply put up a vested authority that says "Only those we approve can be admitted to the rank of inspectors" is like making it a matter of inheritance. It would be analogous to give Parliament the right to say who should be members of Parliament.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: By heavens! I wish we had that right.

Mr. HUGHES: I will support the hon. member if he brings down a Bill conferring it on us.

Mr. Latham: Be careful.

Mr. HUGHES: However, it is an old institution in the police force, and there may be good reasons for its retention. Nevertheless it blocks progress and makes for stagnation.

Mr. Sampson: Do you suggest a popular vote for promotion?

Mr. HUGHES: I should prefer that to the existing system, under which men nominated for promotion are subsequently turned down. The conduct of the board has savoured very much of favouritism. There is another point: in the force to-day in-door positions are given to recruits who have done no outdoor service.

Mr. Mann: Not always.

Mr. HUGHES: No, but generally. It would be a fitting reward for older men who have done their share of outdoor work if those in-door positions were reserved for them, while the young fellows went out on a beat.

Mr. Mann: A man who has been many years on a beat is not always suitable for in-door work.

Mr. HUGHES: Some of the recruits have not proved suitable. I do not want unsuitable men in any position.

Mr. Taylor: Then I do not know what you are doing here.

Mr. HUGHES: I will make an exception in favour of the hon. member; in fact, I will say he is a most suitable person to be here representing the viewpoint and the interests that he does.

Mr. Mann: He has always represented the right people.

Mr. HUGHES: There may be something in the contention that when a man has been 20 years on out-door work he is not suitable for an in-door job. Yet there are in the force numbers of men who, with years of out-door work to their credit, could well be given these in-door positions as a reward. Then there is the transference of recruits direct from the school to the C.I.D.

Mr. Mann: A proper procedure, too.

Mr. HUGHES: That is open to question. No opportunity is given to determine whether the recruit coming out of the school is likely to prove suitable, whether he can be trusted. Yet he is taken raw from the school and placed in the C.I.D.; and, what is worse, he is not given the 1s. 6d. paid to other members of the C.I.D. as a sort of spending allowance. When certain recruits protested against this they were immediately transferred to uniform.

Mr. Mann: They have to gain experience before they are eligible for that allowance.

Mr. HUGHES: It is not a reward for efficiency; it is a spending allowance.

Mr. Mann: The young man is not called upon to spend, as in the older officer.

Mr. HUGHES: It is an allowance made to detectives. Its refusal to those younger men practically reduced their status. It is taking away a right that has been established. The worst feature of this is that the moment those men complained they were not receiving the 1s. 6d. a day, they were transferred back. That is clear indication that if a member of the force has the manliness to stand up for what he considers his rights, he is immediately put back into uniform. I do not think any hon. member will stand for that.

Mr. George: Surely they are not tyrannised in that way.

The Premier: You have no idea what goes on.

Mr. HUGHES: This is a complaint that I desire to have investigated by the select committee. The information was given to me by a reliable authority. I do not refer to this kind of thing as tyranny. It was left to the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) to use that word.

Mr. George: I call it tyranny.

Mr. Mann: When you were a Government officer they thought you were somewhat tyrannous.

Mr. HUGHES: I never heard of anyone thinking that I was tyrannous. I was lucky to be able to carry on my work, and further, I was lucky to be able to escape the tyranny of the member for Perth (Mr. Mann). It is a pity he made the mistake he did once, or I might not have been so fortunate. I have no wish to investigate the hon. member's desire of years gone by to bring anti-conscriptionists within the law. That is all done with and past. Another matter to which I wish to refer is that the probationers are given night duty to carry out without the assistance of an experienced officer to parade the streets with them, so as to keep the undesirable element in check. What is the use of putting on raw recruits, who know nothing of the underworld, to march around town looking for members of that community?

Mr. Mann: One of those raw recruits caught a burglar on Saturday night.

Mr. Pantton: He must have been a recruit burglar.

Mr. Mann: He was not.

Mr. HUGHES: Recruits are supposed to know the undesirables, but how can they be expected to know them at first hand in this way?

Mr. Taylor: How did they miss you?

Mr. Lutey: They did not miss you on one occasion.

Mr. Taylor: I did not come under the heading of undesirables.

Mr. HUGHES: That appears to be a sore point with the member for Mt. Margaret, so we will not raise it. Anyhow, he has not forfeited my regard for him, but if he had continued in the way that he started so well, he would have had even more of my respect.

Mr. Taylor: I will give you the reason later on why I did not, and you will not like it either.

Mr. Lutey: Perhaps we will enjoy it.

Mr. HUGHES: Another matter that I wish to have investigated is that policemen are encouraged to get convictions; they are urged to present as many cases as they can before the court, and it seems as if the man who gets a reward is the man who presents the greatest number of cases.

Mr. Pantton: They must be paid by results.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not think that is right. It cannot be said against a single man in the force.

Mr. HUGHES: I hope not; but I want the matter investigated.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am sure it is not so.

Mr. HUGHES: I want a select committee to investigate that aspect of it. I am advised also that a section of the police force was lined up recently and told that a complaint had been made by headquarters that not sufficient cases were being obtained. If that be true, it is a serious matter.

Mr. Mann: Was it that crimes were occurring on the beats and that those crimes were not detected?

Mr. Clydesdale: Was Constable Green amongst them?

Mr. HUGHES: If a section of the force is told that, it will amount to nothing less than asking men to manufacture cases or to take before the court imaginary criminals.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Surely they are not told to make cases?

Mr. HUGHES: That is what I want the select committee to investigate.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It never will.

Mr. HUGHES: I am not putting this forward as something about which I am definitely sure. If I were, there would be no need for a select committee. Surely the leader of the Opposition has no objection to matters of this kind being investigated.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Haven't I?

Mr. George: You want a fishing excursion.

Mr. HUGHES: We want to find out whether that tyranny about which you spoke just now exists.

Mr. George: What bait are you using?

Mr. HUGHES: No bait at all. I simply want an inquiry. Recently a young man was told that it was time he brought forward a case. He had been out a month or so and had not been responsible for a single conviction. That is not the way to expect the police to maintain peace, and it is not the kind of thing we should encourage. It should not be held out that getting cases amounts to meritorious service. Again, recently, a recruit who was doing his term in the school was provided with funds and was instructed to walk about Perth for at least a week with a woman of low repute in order to bring a criminal to book. Just fancy a recruit, a young fellow possessed of self respect, being obliged to parade the town for a week with a woman of ill repute, passing all his friends in the process! Would not a thing like that destroy the self respect of any man? Such a proposal should not be put before any member of the force, let alone a recruit. If the authorities cannot catch criminals in any other way, they should not adopt methods that can only result in destroying the self-respect of an individual. Better would it be to allow the criminal to remain at large.

Mr. George: That is a serious charge.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Was she a good looking woman?

Mr. HUGHES: We may be told that this kind of thing is necessary. In my opinion it

is not necessary, and it should not be necessary to follow such a course.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Anyhow, I will bet you it was not done.

Mr. HUGHES: A select committee will prove whether it was done. Another officer who was sent out to catch a criminal was instructed to perform a duty much of a similar nature. This man, however, resented it. It may be all right for a detective who has the case in hand, and who may look forward to getting a reward or some kudos out of it, but all the same the members of the police force should be permitted to retain their self-respect. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) may think it the proper thing to do, but I ask him what he would say if one of his own sons were told to do such a thing.

Mr. George: I do not think it was ever done.

Mr. HUGHES: I am informed on reliable authority that it was done. We know also that examinations have been prescribed for the determination of a man's efficiency, and we know also that unqualified men have been promoted over the heads of those who have passed their examinations. What inducement is there then to qualify for promotion? Recently there was a scatter from Perth of a number of sergeants who had done their share of duty in the back country, and who were entitled to a period of service in the metropolis. Men from the North-West were sent back to the North-West, while others who had earned a period of service in the city were sent to other places in the country.

Mr. Mann: In some of those instances there was an advance in screw.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not know about that. Anyhow they were transferred without their consent.

Mr. Latham: I suppose no one wants to go out of the city.

Mr. Mann: I investigated one case and found that an officer by going into the country was getting an advance of £150 a year.

Mr. HUGHES: I did not hear of that case, but I do know of instances of men not being inclined to return to the back-blocks.

Mr. Mann: Of course no one can please himself as to where he will go in a service of this kind.

Mr. HUGHES: But there should be some rule of fairness and recognition of services rendered in the back country. This matter warrants investigation. I do not feel disposed at the present juncture to make any further statement that may prejudice the select committee. Members opposite will agree that an investigation is necessary. There are many other aspects that it would be advisable for the select committee to inquire into. I think, however, that I have advanced sufficient reasons and that I have put forward a

strong enough case to justify the appointment of a select committee.

On motion by Minister for Justice debate adjourned.

## MOTION—AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES.

*To inquire by Select Committee.*

Mr. LATHAM (York) [6.0]: I move—

*That in the opinion of this House a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into the best means of providing permanent water in the agricultural areas of the State and for the distribution of any payment for same.*

This matter is of sufficient importance to warrant investigation by an accredited authority. It is a very serious matter for the State. It should not be made a party question because it affects the State as a whole. Years ago Sir John Forrest found it necessary to provide a big water scheme to aid mining development. Everyone will admit that that scheme was justified and that its construction assisted the State to reach its present position. While the mining industry is one that may be with us to-day and gone to-morrow, the agricultural industry is not affected in the same way. It is just as essential to provide water facilities for the agricultural areas as it was necessary to cater for the mining industry years ago. The previous Government did everything possible with the funds at their disposal to meet temporarily the needs as they arose, but the time has arrived when something more must be done.

The Premier: It is no more urgent now than it was before.

Mr. LATHAM: That is so, but unless something be done soon the industry will experience a great setback.

The Premier: The difficulty of lack of funds is with us still.

Mr. LATHAM: Perhaps so, but if we obtained the advice of a competent Commission, a scheme might be suggested that could be given effect to gradually as funds became available. South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, and New South Wales were all affected in the same way, and in each instance a Royal Commission was necessary to advise the Government on the best way to tackle the problem.

The Premier: You are more friendly disposed towards Royal Commissions now.

Mr. LATHAM: No, but a Commission would be one means of obtaining expert advice on this question. I know that Commissions have been appointed and that the results from them were not what we expected. A lot of time was wasted. But I do not think we have in the State to-day a man qualified of his own knowledge

to advise the Government on a permanent scheme of agricultural water supply. If a local man be selected, he should be sent to the other States to learn what has been done there and whether their experience can be applied here.

The Premier: There are no professional or engineering difficulties, are there?

Mr. LATHAM: I believe there are.

The Premier: It is largely a matter of rainfall and money.

Mr. LATHAM: It may be a matter of money, but when rainfall is considered, the question arises how we can best provide water supplies for agricultural development. It is repeatedly said that farmers should provide their own water supplies. There are various parts of the State with valuable land where it is impossible for the farmers to do so.

The Premier: The State has never taken that attitude, but has generally adopted a system of assistance for providing water supplies.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes, but there are big tracts of valuable agricultural land on which it is impossible at present to run one hoof of stock, and there is a great economic waste because of the inability to make use of the natural feed that grows there year after year. The Minister for Railways visited my district on one occasion and we showed him what we did with the feed growing there. The stubble is rolled down behind the harvester and burnt, because we have no stock to eat it. Other parts of the State having water supplies are able to utilise every bit of feed. We cannot use it because we have not the means to water our stock. It is a serious matter and justifies the appointment of a Commission to ascertain how we can best prevent the present economic waste. Last year the Government of the day placed on the Estimates a considerable sum of money to provide a water supply for Perth, and their action has been endorsed by the present Government. We are informed that the scheme will cost six or seven millions. I do not know that there are any complaints about that, but the agricultural areas are equally entitled to consideration. The cost of carting water over the railways has been tremendous. I tabled a motion for a return, but the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) intervened, and so I am not able to show what amount has been provided by the Government to subsidise the carting of water in agricultural areas. The carting of water has been only a temporary remedy, so much so that farmers have lost a lot of stock through the insufficiency of water, and have been unable to put stock on their holdings as they otherwise would have done.

The Premier: The cost last year was £294 and in the previous year £1,037.

Mr. LATHAM: The amount is much less than I thought it was. In addition to that

cost, however, the people using the water have to pay 2s. 6d. per hundred gallons at the siding. Two and sixpence was the minimum charge; at some places it cost as much as 4s. 2d. per hundred gallons at the siding. In many instances it had to be carted 12 or 15 miles from the siding to the farms, so members can realise what it means to the farmers.

The Premier: That was scheme water.

Mr. LATHAM: Scheme water has been carted, but I am referring to water carted from railway dams.

Mr. Panton: You mean the cost was so much per thousand gallons.

Mr. LATHAM: I mean that 100 gallons have cost up to 4s. 2d. at the siding. I understand the price is 6d. per 100 gallons at the standpipe, and that the balance represents freight. Under such conditions it is impossible for farmers to stock their holdings and utilise the land as fully as they might. If some scheme could be devised whereby large quantities of water could be conserved, we should then have to consider the question of reticulation.

Hon. J. Cunningham: We could do it if we had the funds.

Mr. LATHAM: I have some doubt on that score. It may not be such an easy matter as the Honorary Minister seems to think. Considerable sums have been expended on the examination of granite outcrops, which provide a natural catchment, but it has been impossible to find holding ground to conserve the water after catching it. This is one of the questions that should receive the attention of the Government. If a Royal Commission be not appointed, the Government should lay down a policy for the agricultural areas. In our flats where the best land is found, one can sink to a depth of 8 or 10 feet and always strike salt water. Whether it is possible to get fresh water beneath it, I do not know. I am not aware whether any investigations along those lines have been made in this State.

The Minister for Lands: It is a very serious statement to say that you always strike salt water.

Mr. LATHAM: I did not say that; I said where the gimlet flats are.

The Minister for Lands: You said on the flats where the best land is found.

Mr. LATHAM: That is so, the best flats for wheat growing. In no instance have I known of fresh water being obtained at depths of 10 to 18 feet. If one sank through the first salt patch, however, I believe fresh water would be obtained.

Mr. Clydesdale: That was the experience in Victoria.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes, and in New South Wales it has been found possible to bore through the salt patch, get fresh water underneath and keep the salt water from

mixing with the fresh. As the Government contemplate spending between six and seven millions on the metropolitan water supply in the near future, it would be only fair to investigate the question of agricultural supplies and lay down a policy whereby some satisfactory scheme might be provided. I agree that where a farmer can provide his own supply, he should be compelled to do it. He should be required to utilise every bit of catchment available on his farm for his own supplies, but we have districts such as on the north side of the Eastern goldfields railway and some parts on the south side containing wonderfully good country where it is impossible to get a catchment, because the surface ground is too porous. Even after dams have been put down, it has been impossible to make them hold. Mr. O'Brien, the engineer in charge of agricultural water supplies, has a scheme of his own to line the dams with concrete and lay down rather big areas with some kind of asphalt. I am not at all satisfied that the concreting of dams is a satisfactory method to make them hold. There is a dam at Narembreen siding that has been concreted, and last year it leaked dry on two occasions. On the surface it seemed to be all right. I discussed the matter with the engineer and he said that the concrete might be porous for a year or two. If that is so, the dam might hold better later on. That dam has been most unsatisfactory. It was put down by an engineer of the Works Department and evidently he was not satisfied with it. It filled three or four times, but it was then found necessary to give it further attention. The dam was then cemented, but even now it leaks.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. LATHAM: The great difficulty is to get the dams to hold water. If a farmer is put to the expense of sinking a dam and lining it, and then finds it impossible to get it to hold water, he must of necessity resort to using his land to half its carrying capacity. If he had a permanent water supply, he could put it to full use. In the agricultural areas there are many large granite rocks, which are frequently used in connection with water conservation. I know it is the desire of the engineering staff to use these rock formations to the fullest extent for water conservation, but only for a radius of some two or three miles. It might be a big undertaking to reticulate from such supplies over a large area, but it ought to be possible to do so with a large dam over a radius of nine or ten miles. This question would have to be investigated by the commission or experts. It is just as much a national matter as was the goldfields water scheme, or as is the metropolitan water scheme, and should be tackled from that point of view. It is the function of the Government to

provide utilities that cannot be provided by the individual. The Government should always consider carrying out such works as will enable us to put our lands to their best use. The agricultural industry warrants attention of that kind a hundredfold more than it did in the days when the goldfields were given their water supply. In other parts of the country there are lakes, some of which are salt and some fresh. I believe it would pay to put down big dams where the fresh water lakes are, and that it would be possible to reticulate from those sources. All these questions, however, can be inquired into by the experts. The economic value of a good water supply is possibly beyond the estimation of members. It permits settlers that are to-day holding large tracts of land to fully stock them. This would bring to the revenue of the State something like an additional £1,000,000 a year to start with. Those tracts of country could also be made to carry two or three million sheep, whereas to-day there is not a head of stock upon them. Stock losses are to-day very great in cases where water has to be carried over the railways. If we could ascertain the actual losses of horses each year through impaction, I think it would represent a sum of about a quarter of a million. The disease known as "dry bible," which is caused through a lack of water, also accounts for a great deal of mortality amongst stock. For a considerable period of the year many farmers have to cart water, during which time they cannot carry out their ordinary farming duties. If we could get over that difficulty no doubt a larger area of land would be brought under cultivation, and this should run into not less than an additional million acres. I admit that Governments have done something towards assisting the pioneer settler by providing temporary water supplies. There are dams all through the agricultural areas, and many wells, but what we require is a permanent water supply. I admit that if permanent supplies are established we must go into the question of getting revenue from them to meet the expenditure. It is not the function of government to provide utilities for the individual and make them a charge against the taxpayers as a whole. If a service is rendered to one section of the community, that section should be called upon to pay at least a proportion of the cost. Some farmers have their own water supply, and would certainly object to being called upon to pay for a Government water scheme that might pass by their holdings. There might be some argument against paying, on the part of those people, but a difficulty of that sort could readily be overcome. Farmers on light land will say they cannot afford to pay for a water supply. Many of our farmers are on the bread line, and some of them are below it.

Mr. Sampson: The boiled wheat line.

Mr. LATHAM: It would be a serious inconvenience to them if they were called

upon to meet the charges that are made in some parts of the wheat belt. If the commission is appointed I hope it will ascertain to what extent we can still further tap the goldfields water supply scheme, so that we may get more out of it than is the case to-day. It passes through some of the richest land we have, and is the natural source of supply for the areas adjacent to it. The sooner the scheme is extended into those areas, the quicker will be the reproduction, the easier shall we settle that part of the State, and the more contented will the farmers be. I hope there will be no opposition to the motion, but if it is opposed I trust the Government will provide some means of investigating the question and reporting to the House, so that we may know to what extent it is possible to provide water facilities for the development of our agricultural land.

On motion by Hon. J. Cunningham, debate adjourned.

#### RETURN—COMPANIES OPERATING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford [7.40]): I move—

*That a return be laid upon the Table of the House giving a list of the commercial and mining companies or firms operating in Western Australia, but whose head office or principal registered office, or main business premises, are situated in the Eastern States, and giving the names of such States.*

I desire at a later period to deal with the difficulties of this State from a revenue point of view. In order that I may be able to give the House the information necessary, it is essential that this return should be prepared. I understand there is no objection to the motion. The Premier thinks there may be some difficulty in getting the figures, but, be that as it may, I hardly think there will be great expense in the matter. If any grave difficulty is experienced in getting this information, I shall, of course, have to do without it, but I understand it can be obtained with very little labour, and at little or no cost.

Question put and passed.

Resolved: That motions be continued.

#### RETURN—WATER SUPPLY AND RAILWAY TRANSPORT.

On motion by Mr. Latham ordered: That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing the amounts paid to the Railway Department, as a subsidy, by the Treasury, for water carried over the railways for the use of settlers in the agricultural area for the years 1921-22, 1922-23, 1923-24.

# MOTION—WATER CONSERVATION, AVON RIVER.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [7.47]: I move—

*That in view of the influx of large numbers of immigrants in the near future and their part absorption on closer settlement lines, the time has arrived when a thorough investigation should be made of the Avon Valley and Avon River, to determine whether the fine fruit-growing lands along this valley can be utilised for intensive culture.*

This motion is another relic of the past. I secured the passage of a somewhat similar motion in 1920. When I made inquiries of the Minister responsible for the department concerned, I learnt that nothing had been done. If one were going to propose a scheme for the utilisation of the Avon River in its entirety, there would perhaps be some reason for the Government objecting to the carrying out of the investigation involved. However, what I am now bringing before the House involves little expenditure, and will go a long way towards proving whether the water of the Avon River can or cannot be utilised. I must apologise to the six members through whose electorates the Avon runs for, so to speak, intruding upon their territory; but when I brought the matter forward originally I was member for York, and was greatly concerned about the utilisation of the river. Seeing that the former Minister for Water Supply has entirely disregarded the instruction of the House, I now submit the matter again. Really I am asking but a small thing—that some finality should be reached as to this request. I do not wish to enter into, or provoke, an academic discussion, but simply to lay a few facts and figures before the Chamber, so that members will see that this is not a wild scheme, but one that has a utilitarian and practical value and is based on common sense. The Avon rises in the neighbourhood of Wickipin, and runs a course of 115 miles. During this course it passes a series of salt lakes near County Peak, and the investigation I wish to have carried out is in connection with that chain of salt lakes. The Avon when in flood rushes into this chain of lakes, and helps to fill them up; and when the summer is approaching and the waters are subsiding, the overflow from the lakes, having gathered up all the loose saline matter lying about, trickles back into the river when it can do most damage, just towards the end of winter. The passage in the lakes has a width of only 8ft. This year, I believe, a local resident has dammed the water out by putting some bags in the passage and earthing it up. It is possible that by this simple means he will be able to prevent the salt water from coming down this year, unless we have some very heavy rain, which is not likely to fall now. In ordinary flood years, as I may say, the water enters

the lakes and fills them to overflowing; and at the end of the flush the water brings down all the loose saline matter and poisons the pools in the river. There are various fine, deep pools along the river, but all more or less salt. Old residents say that years ago most of the pools were fresh, or at all events fit for stock. In the summer months now they become very salt indeed, and quite unfit for irrigation purposes, or even for watering stock. The member for Beverley (Mr. C. P. Wansbrough) informs me that after a light rainfall year, when there has been no overflow from the lakes, the pools in the immediate neighbourhood of the lakes are comparatively fresh, or at all events much fresher than in years of overflow. What I want the Water Supply Department to do is to inquire and ascertain whether something cannot be done as a first stage towards purifying the water of the Avon. We know that in all arid countries, and semi-arid countries, rapid evaporation causes certain saline deposits to lie on the land. The first flush of rain that comes along washes those deposits into the creeks, and eventually they reach the rivers. One scheme which has been mooted in connection with the Avon is to clear out and snag the course of the river and to construct a series of dams along it. I believe £20,000 was placed on the Estimates for that purpose 24 years ago by the late Lord Forrest; but the item, for some unknown reason, was allowed to lapse, and nothing beyond the introductory work was ever done. There is a mass of valuable information on the subject lying in the Public Works Department, as I can state, having investigated the files. What at the present stage I desire more particularly is that something shall be done regarding the salt lakes, with a view to testing the possibility of making the water in the series of pools clean, for if this could be done it would prove that the river is not naturally salty. Indeed, we know it is not naturally salty, but simply is infected with saline matter brought down from up country, which saline matter has salted the pools. Let me draw attention to the fact that there is a stretch of 100 miles of this river which, if it could be made suitable for irrigation, could be settled to a depth of 20 miles and put under intensive culture. The possibilities of the project are big. I do not ask that the great scheme outlined by a former mayor of Northam some years ago should be carried out at present. I would propose, however, a comparison of the Northam dam with the Mundaring Weir. It is interesting to know that the overflow from the Northam dam during the flood year, 1917, was large enough to fill the Mundaring dam forty-two times over: 212,000,000 gallons of water ran to waste over the Northam dam. The Avon Valley represents an area of about 4,000 square miles,

whereas the Mundaring watershed covers an area of only 307 square miles. The people of the metropolitan area apparently do not realise that there is such an asset in the shape of water lying, so to speak, at their doors. The Eastern States are now providing all sorts of avenues for agricultural development, and irrigation enters very largely into the Victorian scheme of operations. The list of agricultural works being carried out in Victoria is a huge one. I will not tire the House on this occasion with a mass of figures such as I gave when dealing with the subject previously. But hon. members will, I think, agree with me that the waste of water from the Northam dam is positively wicked.

Mr. Latham: Can the water from the Avon be reticulated by gravitation?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Naturally, with the fall of the river, I presume. The original scheme was, I understand, an examination by an engineering party of the course of the Avon River with a view to arriving at the most suitable method for conserving it and converting it into a fresh-water stream, if possible, and included a systematic and thorough analysis by reliable men of the river water at various depths, at various places, and at various times of the year. A certain amount of that work has been done. The Water Supply Department have been regularly making analyses of the various pools around York and Northam, but nothing very thorough has been done on the upper part of the river, where I understand no analyses have been taken. When I was, at Fleny Brothers' place, which is some little distance out of Beverley, I was informed by them that years ago the water in the pools there was used for household purposes, and that even now, given a favourable year, without overflow from the salt lakes, the water can be used for stock. In fact, many pools along the Avon are being used for irrigation purposes. Mr. Craig of York, for nine years was growing lucerne—which fact shows that the saltiness of the pools was not considerable. I repeat, the Avon is not salty, but has been contaminated by the earthy salts which have gathered by reason of the wholesale cutting down of timber throughout the country and the rapid evaporation that takes place in summer. Before making my final appeal to the House in this connection, I wish to draw attention to the circumstance that there is to be an agricultural college in the Avon Valley. I hear the choice of sites is now narrowed down to Avondale and Spencer's Brook. Mr. Mann, formerly Government Analyst of this State and now a member of the Federal House of Representatives, speaking at a Northam

function was reported in the "Northam Advertiser" as follows:—

Last year when he had been travelling around in connection with the establishment of an agricultural college, one of the things to be decided upon was a favourable area for the growing of fodder crops, and he had been greatly attracted by the flats on the banks of the Avon River between Northam and York. Experts from Perth had come up and they were agreed upon their suitability. There was one great difficulty, however, and that was the question of water irrigation. The pools along the Avon were very salty—more so than they had thought, for no record had been kept, as might have been expected in such a district. From experiments he had conducted in his laboratory he had found that the water contained 300 grains of salt to the gallon, and it was generally accepted that water with over 100 grains of salt to the gallon was unsuitable for irrigating purposes. He contended, however, that if the difficulty was properly studied it could be overcome. The solution was at their door. The only data regarding the river were figures in connection with the amount of water that flowed over the weir at Northam. In flood time over 103,000,000,000 gallons went over, and when the river was in flood the percentage of salt was very much reduced. The water had been tested and showed as low as 53 grains to the gallon, but he thought more complete figures should be obtained. He desired to get Mr. Hampshire's opinion on the flats already mentioned before making any representations to the Government. If by imprisoning the water at different points, as it came down, they could reduce the salinity, the river would be admirably suited for the irrigation of the flats. It seemed to him that the thick growth along the banks was causing obstruction, and the roots of the trees forming silt. Could the river be cleared of these obstacles, and the channel cleaned, they would obtain a flow, which would enable them to flush the river to an extent never before contemplated, and if it were flushed regularly, it would cause a permanent improvement in the land. In support of this theory Mr. Mann instanced an example of sluicing that had been carried out at Mundaring (when the water showed signs of becoming too salty) with excellent results, and maintained that what had been done there could also be accomplished here, although it might take one or two years.

If the river were cleaned up and the pools attended to so that they could be sluiced out, the position would be improved. That,

however, is a matter for future inquiry. I want the House to realise the great possibilities ahead of that part of the State. All I ask is that the department shall continue the investigation to ascertain whether or not the water can be prevented from coming down and contaminating the water required for irrigation. I have given the House sufficient to warrant the passing of the motion. I want the department to continue gathering all the information possible regarding the salinity problem so that we may determine what should be done.

On motion by Hon. J. Cunningham, debate adjourned.

#### MOTION—OVERSEAS MARKETING.

*To inquire by Select Committee.*

Mr. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [8.3]: I move:

*That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the matter of overseas markets for the products (exportable) of the group settlements, Peel Estate, Upper Swan, and other settlements and agricultural areas.*

- (1) *Such inquiry to investigate the various pooling schemes and marketing legislation in vogue in the Eastern States, United States of America, Canada, Europe, etc.*
- (2) *Co-operate efforts in the marketing of fruit, etc.*
- (3) *To formulate a scheme suitable to Western Australian conditions and calculated to work in with an all-Australian scheme for the better handling and marketing of the products under review.*

Mr. Mann: Will there be a trip in this to the United States of America?

Mr. Thomson: If so, you will all be wanting to get on the committee.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Hon. members should not rush it. I believe it is recognised in Western Australia that agriculture is the Nation's business. Last year this was made manifest when it was disclosed that out of the exports from the Commonwealth that totalled 123½ millions, the products of the agricultural industry accounted for 107 millions. The other evening the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) dealt with the troubles of producers and informed us of five cases of plums that were sold for 8s. 9d. He told us that each case ran out at about a penny per 20lb. case and that 2s. 6d. had to be paid for each case. Then again, there were four 40lb. cases of pears for which a 2d. stamp was received in return. The other day I read in a letter appearing in the Press that four bags of cabbages sent to Kalgoorlie had left the grower 1s. 9d. in debt. These instances show that something is radically wrong with the present marketing system. That particular phase was touched upon by the

member for Perth (Mr. Mann) this afternoon. If we go round the city to purchase fruit, we find that we have to pay 2s. 6d. or 3s. a dozen for oranges, whereas if we go to the orangeries in the hills, 4s. 6d. is enough to purchase half a car load. That cannot pay the man who is growing the fruit, although it may be all right for the buyer. The fact remains that the people in the city do not get the advantage of proper distribution. The member for Perth is amply justified in bringing forward his proposal regarding the establishment of markets for the better sale and distribution of produce within the metropolitan area, and I look for his support for my motion dealing with overseas marketing. Recently a commissioner was sent from New South Wales to the Old Country and he was astounded when he ascertained how our produce was handled there. At about the time he arrived in London, a shipment of butter had been sent back to Australia owing to the market being over-stocked. That commissioner wrote subsequently as follows:—

Australian produce in England is controlled by rings and fair prices can only be obtained by organised marketing. The South American meat combine has 4,000 out of the 8,000 British retail butchers' shops and they will gradually squeeze us out of the business. We have to get amongst them on the same lines and fight them for the business, aided by the proposed Empire Food Corporation. The wholesaler could be cut out and our meat, fruit, butter, etc., could go right through to the retail trader. Our cost of production is high and our freight is higher than that of any of our competitors, while the presentation of our goods is poorer than that of any other country.

Surely, a sorry tale, but there is more!

It is found that our first-grade Australian butter seldom goes into consumption as such and is mainly purchased by companies in the counties, and those companies add moisture and butter substitutes and then place the result upon the market.

In support of the assertion respecting ring control, the writer concluded in the following terms—

I find that grocers' shops and large restaurants, like the butchers' shops, are financed and controlled by men who also prevail as wholesalers. Take a line of Western Australian navel oranges that came on the same boat we travelled on. They realised from 6s. to 18s. a case, and yet they were retailed from 2s. 6d. to 4s. 6d. per dozen. In regard to wheat, we stand in good favour and should the Imperial Food Corporation become an established fact, it could finance the pools and purchase the whole of their output. Californian canners are spending £75,000 in advertising in the retail shops. American dried fruits interests are spending

£150,000 in placing dried fruits in small boxes about the size of a cigarette box as a sweetmeat upon the market. Millers and bakers have arranged to spend £25,000 on an "eat more bread" campaign. Add to this the rebates and discounts the South American meat industry, acting as importers and wholesalers controlling retail shops, are allowing, and one cannot wonder that we have fruit gluts and those dealing in canned fruits, butter, etc., all distressed because there is no organisation for properly handling those commodities.

When the Commissioner was passing through Fremantle some time later, I interviewed him and he told me it was no use trying to compete unless we got busy. He said that when he got back to New South Wales he intended to impress upon the people that it was not sufficient to grow a good article, but they had to see that their commodity for export was put up attractively and that it was properly marketed. He told me that he could not understand at first how it was that other lines of fruit of no better quality than our own secured higher prices. He investigated the position and ascertained that the growers from other countries went to no end of trouble to keep their goods before the notice of the public continually, and that they took much more trouble regarding the condition in which their products were placed before the people. At that time nothing was heard in London of Australian produce. Certainly, since the Wembley Exhibition has been held, interest has been quickened. I hardly know what to suggest as a remedy; I had better leave that over until the select committee is appointed. Legislation has been passed dealing with this subject in other parts of the world. A great deal has been done in Queensland and I give the Premier, Mr. Theodore, credit for the steps he has taken to assist in the organising, handling and the marketing of produce. His idea was to assist the growers by encouraging organisation and he gave details regarding the formation of what was known as the American farm bureau. Mr. Theodore's scheme has since been carried out and it covers the marketing and distribution of products, the securing of improved methods of transport and, generally speaking, assisting industries in many directions. Steps have been taken in Victoria as well. I have a most interesting cutting that was sent to me the other day from Victoria. It shows what the railway people are doing in that State. We should do something along similar lines in Western Australia. In Victoria the controller of the refreshment rooms in connection with the railway system is doing splendid work. He is endeavouring to educate the producers to what is necessary and has gone to such lengths in introducing various lines that some people consider he is overstepping the mark. When

one ascertains his reasons for doing so, one can understand his object. He is advertising various wares. They are going in for raisin bread there.

Mr. Panton: Don't you think the bakers are raising bread enough?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: This officer has been able to organise the trucking orders better and to improve the packing of goods. In return for that they have gone in for propaganda regarding the fruit industry. Showing the results of co-operation and system the newspaper cutting contains the following:—

As the result of the appeal to our customers during the last two years, we have increased the tonnage and mileage per truck equivalent to 5,000 trucks without having to build a single one. As the cost of each truck is about £100, there was a definite saving of two million pounds in capital expenditure and an annual interest bill of £100,000.

In addition to that they have gone into the canned fruit industry, and insisted upon the local stuff being sold in all their refreshment rooms. The railways can reasonably claim some credit for that result. They got the canned fruit into many homes that had not previously known it. So both Victoria and Queensland are doing something in this respect. Recently I have read of what is being done in the United States and Denmark, and I have come to realise that we ourselves should be up and doing. California has spent some £75,000 in advertising their canned fruits through the retail shops; selling their second-class stuff while our first-class stuff is pushed on to back shelves. In addition to our well-known fruit-growing settlements, we have no end of land that can be utilised for fruit growing; but what is the use of bringing it under such cultivation if we have no market for the product? Because of this I appeal to the House to assist me in getting the select committee. I have had handed to me by the Clerk of the House to-day a very interesting newspaper cutting dealing with the co-operative marketing of raisins.

Mr. Latham: I think you ought to read it to us.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That, perhaps, would take too long. I will lend it to the hon. member afterwards.

The Premier: It won't go into "Hansard" unless you read it. You had better read it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I will lend it to the Premier, and he can read it for himself. Then I have another newspaper cutting dealing with the frozen meat trade.

The Premier: Well read that, anyhow.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No, I do not think I shall. It shows that the meat business is in an appalling condition. Members may smile.

The Premier: If that is so, we shall all have to turn vegetarians.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We shall have to turn vegetarians if we cannot otherwise get rid

of our fruit. The Government could do a good deal in assisting to secure improved marketing.

Mr. Clydesdale: Does this mean a trip to America.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If you pay the expenses, I will go. I have been on a good many select committees, but beyond being out of pocket over it, that has never meant anything to me.

Mr. Latham: Then you have been on the wrong committees.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I shall say no more now, but will content myself with moving the motion.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, debate adjourned.

#### PAPERS—RETIREMENT OF MR. W. A. G. WALTER.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [8.21]: I move—

*That all papers in connection with the retirement of Mr. W. A. G. Walter, Police Magistrate, from the Public Service be laid upon the Table of the House.*

Let me, Sir, before addressing myself to the motion, offer you my congratulations on your elevation to the position you now occupy to preside over the deliberations of this Chamber. My object in moving the motion is that we shall at least know exactly what the file contains. I have no knowledge other than what I have seen in the newspaper, namely the statement made by Mr. Walter, and the reply by the Premier. That is not sufficient to satisfy the public. The moving of this motion is not the most congenial task one could hope for.

Mr. Panton: Why?

Mr. TAYLOR: Because there is abroad a feeling of victimisation. I want to see whether or not that is justified. Let me first read Mr. Walter's statement, published on the 26th May. It bears the headings "Is it Victimisation?" "Mr. Walter's Retirement." "Alleged Vindictive Treatment," and it reads as follows:—

When interviewed yesterday regarding his retirement from the magistracy, Mr. Walter said he felt convinced that his summary dismissal was due to political reasons. He was first informed of the Government's intention to retire him on May 2nd, the day after he returned from a holiday in Burmah. In response to a message he called upon Mr. G. W. Simpson, the Public Service Commissioner, who asked him to tender his resignation, and said it was the Government's wish that he should resign. He was given the option of resigning voluntarily. Mr. Walter asked the Public Service Commissioner if any fault had been found regarding his impartiality, his probity or his general fitness to adjudicate. To this question Mr. Simpson re-

plied, "Oh, no, none at all. The Government just think it desirable that you should retire."

That is the first paragraph. Mr. Walter's remarks, naturally, convey that there must have been some reason for the retirement of a man with the long experience that Mr. Walter had, and so far as I know, with a very fine career as magistrate. The report continues—

After promising to think the matter over, Mr. Walter left the office, and on May 6th sent to the Public Service Commissioner a letter in which he said, "After due consideration I have come to the conclusion there is no reason that I am aware of why I should retire from the service. I must therefore leave the matter in your hands." A letter dated May 16th was received from the Public Service Commissioner by Mr. Walter on May 20th. It contained the following: "I beg to inform you that His Excellency the Governor in Executive Council has approved of your being called upon to retire from the service as from 31st May, 1924."

I am informed that Mr. Walter made request to the Public Service Commissioner that he should be allowed to go into his office and adjudicate until the 31st May. But the Commissioner said no, that he had been away on long service leave and had not been in his office up to that date. He was debarred from going into his office to adjudicate. He was summarily dismissed. That is not the treatment to be meted out to a magistrate, unless indeed there are good grounds for it. That is the position, and I want to see the file.

The Premier: You can have the file.

Mr. TAYLOR: In view of all the circumstances we throw our minds back to the time when, in 1911, a previous Labour Government came into office. There were then a magistrate and a Commissioner of Police who had been somewhat unfortunate in having to deal with strikes.

The Premier: Let us go further back, to the advent of another Labour Government in 1904, when you yourself had an experience in retiring civil servants.

Mr. TAYLOR: There was no retirement that I remember.

The Premier: Well, suspension.

Mr. TAYLOR: That was quite different, and was perfectly justified. That gentleman was a capable man, but unfortunately he had had a lot of his own way. A Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into certain conditions of the aborigines in this State, and when the Commission's report was submitted the Commissioner of Police wrote a tirade against the Royal Commissioner. That was against the Public Service Act, and was done without the authority of his Minister. Consequently I suspended him on those grounds.

Mr. Hughes: You would't give him the right to defend himself.

Mr. TAYLOR: I did, by suspending him. He apologised.

The Premier: He had to apologise or get the sack.

Mr. TAYLOR: Nothing of the sort.

The Premier: It was so.

Mr. TAYLOR: That gentleman and I were personal friends before, and have been ever since. I was only doing my duty, the same as Mr. Walter was doing his duty.

The Premier: And the same as I have been doing mine.

Mr. TAYLOR: That officer stepped outside his duty at the time and realised it. Had he been on sound ground, he would not have apologised.

The Premier: He had to do that or get the sack.

Mr. TAYLOR: There was no question of sack about it.

The Premier: There was.

Mr. TAYLOR: If he had not done wrong, he would not have apologised.

The Premier: He was given the option of apologising or taking the sack.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier cannot throw me off the track.

The Premier: I am not trying to do so.

Mr. TAYLOR: That gentleman obtained the opinion of the best counsel in Perth, and found that he could not defend the position he had taken up.

Mr. Latham: Then he was not sacked.

The Premier: No, because he apologised.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier is not going to cloud the issue. I had never been summoned, prosecuted or molested by him, so I was in a totally different position from the Premier when he retired Mr. Walter.

The Premier: That is worthy of you.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier had threatened Walter three or four times that when he came into office he would sack him.

The Premier: Who did?

Mr. TAYLOR: It was a wide rumour. I repeatedly heard it, and the hon. member knows it.

The Premier: Of course you heard it.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier said that when he got into power, Walter would not remain in his position for ten minutes.

The Premier: That is not true.

Mr. TAYLOR: I hope it is not, and I hope to see the file, but that is the prevailing opinion.

Mr. Hughes: You should have a look at some of Walter's decisions as well.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am not concerned with his decisions; I want to see the file. To say the least, the Premier placed himself in a rather invidious position when he dismissed Mr. Walter. He overlooked the Minister for Justice, the Minister controlling that department.

The Premier: You do not know whether that is a fact or not.

Mr. TAYLOR: I only know what the Premier himself said.

The Premier: The matter is on the file.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am only speaking from two reports that appeared in the Press, one by Mr. Walter and one by the Premier.

The Premier: I was speaking for the Government, not for myself.

Mr. TAYLOR: I hope the Premier did not act for the Government in this matter.

The Premier: I acted in the proper way.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier cannot justify his action. It savours of reprisal. If this goes by the board, it means that the judiciary will have to consider how they administer justice, who is in power, and who is likely to come into power.

Mr. Hughes: As they have done in the last ten years.

Mr. Lambert: As Walter has been doing for years.

Mr. TAYLOR: Then the member for Coolgardie knows more than I do. The hon. member would be wise if he did not interfere in this debate.

Mr. Lambert: I shall tell of the scandalous damned way he treated me, if you want to know. I do not mind Walter.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am sorry that the Government and their supporters are justifying my contention. Walter as a magistrate has had to adjudicate on members of this House and members of the Government, and in his duty he has had to punish them. Now they are delivering punishment on him. That is the position. Revenge! That is what is behind it. In my mind there is no doubt of that. Did not the member for Coolgardie interject to the effect that he would show Walter no quarter, simply because the magistrate had done his duty?

Mr. Lambert: Look at the file and see whether he did!

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member did not appeal against the decision.

Mr. Lambert: He only fined me for not putting in an income tax return, and the Taxation Department remitted the fine because it was a vicious fine. See what the Taxation Department thought of him!

Mr. Hughes: He gave a chap six weeks for stealing £800 and a boy a month for stealing 2s.

Mr. TAYLOR: I may be a little excited, but those who are listening to the debate must realise how vindictive was the interjection of the member for Coolgardie.

Mr. Hughes: And realise how vindictive was the treatment meted out by Walter.

Mr. TAYLOR: Not only did the hon. member emphasise his remarks, but in doing so uttered almost unparliamentary words in his disgust of Walter and his pride that the Government had gone in for reprisal.

Mr. Lambert: Really terrible!

Mr. TAYLOR: The Press report goes on to state—

"To what reason do you ascribe your retirement?" asked the interviewer. "I believe that I was retired for two reasons," said Mr. Walter. "One is that during the conscription campaign, in the course of my duty, I was responsible for inflicting a fine upon Mr. P. Collier for an alleged disloyal utterance at Kalgoorlie (a conviction which, however, was afterwards quashed by the High Court)."

Mr. Hughes: That shows how rotten it was.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have no information on that point, but if I make a statement that in my opinion is correct and it proves to be incorrect, the Premier can put me right. I think the conviction was not quashed. I think it went by default, because there was no appearance on behalf of Walter in the High Court. The Premier knows whether that was so or not.

Mr. Lambert: That is immaterial.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is very material, because a conviction cannot be quashed if it goes by default. It may be quashed because it is bad in law, or because the facts do not warrant conviction, but neither of those contentions was raised at the time. At any rate, I saw no account to that effect in the Press. If that be so, then it is entirely different from the conviction being quashed. It was rumoured at the time that the reason the appeal was not defended—I think this statement came from the Federal authorities—was that it was bad policy to follow up and inflict the fine, and they did not proceed with the case in the High Court. If that is not right, the Premier can correct me. Walter went on to say—

"The other reason is that I did my duty and assisted to put down the Kalgoorlie riots. Naturally my actions were not very acceptable to a certain section of the community in those parts. At that time the position became so acute that I journeyed to Perth for the purpose of having rifles and ammunition sent to Kalgoorlie to ensure adequate protection to the residents of the goldfields. My action in this regard was resented, and I was bitterly attacked by adherents of the Labour movement."

The Premier replied to that by saying the magistrate acted outside his duty, but I shall deal with that aspect later on. In my opinion Walter, as a magistrate, should prevent crime if possible, and not wait for it to be committed and brought before him in the court. It is the duty of any private citizen to prevent crime. If it comes to the knowledge of a private citizen that crime is about to be committed, he should inform the proper authorities. It was no more than a police magistrate should do. If he thought it necessary to take the action he did, he was perfectly justified in doing so.

Mr. Lutey: It existed only in his diseased imagination.

Mr. TAYLOR: There was no doubt about the feeling that existed on the Golden Mile at the time.

Mr. Panton: You know who made it up, I was there.

Mr. TAYLOR: We know that but for the returned soldiers, there would have been a very different tale to tell.

Mr. Panton: The Returned Soldiers' Association may have had something to do with it.

Mr. TAYLOR: The returned soldiers went out—

Mr. Panton: They did nothing of the sort.

Mr. TAYLOR: And they stopped the riot.

Mr. Panton: You are saying something that is not true.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in accusing another hon. member of saying something that is untrue.

Mr. Panton: Then he should not have said it.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am stating the general opinion voiced in the Press and by members now on the Government side of the House when they returned to Perth. Contradiction I defy.

Mr. Panton: I am contradicting you.

Mr. TAYLOR: We know full well it is idle for members to try to camouflage the position. Men were kicked and knocked about in a most brutal fashion, and it would have been worse but for the soldiers. As soon as the returned soldiers came out, that quietened matters.

Mr. Panton: Returned soldiers like Cornell who never heard a shot fired.

Mr. TAYLOR: Members can ask police holding high positions in the force, men I have known to be associated with the force for the last 25 years, and they will learn that never in the history of Western Australia were we ever so near a calamity as on that occasion.

Mr. Panton: Bunkum!

Mr. TAYLOR: I was not there—

Mr. Panton: Of course you were not.

Mr. TAYLOR: But we can rely upon the Press reports. In view of that, the Government, soon after taking office, dismissed the magistrate. There was nobody else to adjudge, and he did his duty fearlessly and well.

Mr. Lambert: What was the inspector of police doing?

Mr. Panton: He could not have had much faith in the 200 men he had there.

Mr. TAYLOR: The inspector of police is a personal friend of mine, and he says it was the returned soldiers, and not his force, that quelled the disturbance.

Mr. Panton: Say "some" returned soldiers.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am not including the hon. member.

Mr. Panton: You had better not include me or any of my confrères.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Returned Soldiers' Association—

Mr. Panton: They do not represent us.

Mr. Latham: They should.

Mr. TAYLOR: The country gave them credit for quelling the disturbance, and to-day it stands to their credit for having stopped a riot that had begun.

Mr. Panton: I suppose the member for Perth and his 200 comrades did nothing.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not wish to depreciate anything that anybody did. I want to deal with the facts and what I have gathered from those in authority at the time. It was a very troublesome time, but people little dreamed that four or five years afterwards the magistrate would be punished for having done his duty.

Mr. Lutey: You were a wilder man yourself a few years ago than were all that mob put together.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member cannot find any magistrate or anyone with whom I came into contact that would speak of wildness in me. It is my calmness that has held me back in this world. If I had the fire, force and eloquence of some of my friends on the cross-benches I should not be content to sit in a State Parliament, I should be going Home to get into the Imperial Parliament. Look at that wasted energy there, while a Parliament is open to receive them in England! There is some semblance of character in the statements that are made in the Parliament of that country. Later on I will read what Mr. J. H. Thomas said, for I wish to commend his remarks to the Premier. It would be difficult for the Premier to appreciate them unless he took a great pull upon himself in dismissing people from the Government service when they were doing their duty.

Mr. Hughes: Thomas's opinion of you would be worth having.

Mr. TAYLOR: Unless he were blinded by prejudice, he must have a decent opinion of me. At one time my friends used to say to me, "Oh, George," and others more familiar would say "Oh Mulga, you are all wool and a yard wide," when I used to stand on this side of the House fighting hour after hour for the Labour movement. For the last 23 or 24 years I have been fighting for the Labour Party to be recognised in the House, when there was trouble on and fighting to be done. Long ago in Queensland I played my part in the Labour movement.

Mr. Hughes: What a pity you turned traitor in your old age.

Mr. TAYLOR: I will deal with that traitor business later on. I am not going to allow my friends over the way to make disparaging remarks about me unchallenged, but on this question I am not going to be involved in any other issue. The matter I have in hand is of too serious a nature. It is scandalous that a Government should take the bread and butter out of a man's mouth, after 30 years of good ser-

vice, when he was doing his duty, because that duty conflicted with its political views.

Mr. Lutey: I have not seen him at the Labour Bureau yet.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have not seen the hon. member there either, and from a casual glance at him I would not think he would be likely to be there.

Mr. Lutey: I have been there, just as you have.

Mr. TAYLOR: Mr. Walter goes on to say, he was not much surprised when he heard of the Government's intention to retire him. He says—

A report was current at the time that Mr. P. Collier, following up the Kalgoolie incident, threatened me publicly in Hannans-street, Kalgoolie, and said "He will go out 10 minutes after Labour comes into power."

Mr. Hughes: I think that was the outcome of a guilty conscience.

Mr. George: Who had the guilty conscience?

Mr. Hughes: Walter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TAYLOR: That may be so. Mr. Walter goes on to speak of the length of time he had been in the service. He commenced his service in 1891. He winds up by saying—

It seems strange, but nevertheless it is true, that on two occasions the advent of a Labour Government has been marked by the dismissal of magistrates who have been called upon to sentence prominent Labour members of Parliament. My case is similar to that of Mr. Roe. I have no hesitation in saying that both Mr. Roe and myself were singled out for vindictive treatment for political reasons. In my case the Government cannot pretend otherwise, particularly in view of the Public Service Commissioner's statement. There is very little chance of anyone seeing what reason was given for my dismissal by the Public Service Commissioner, in the minute on the file which was placed before the Executive Council.

Mr. Hughes: Did you call for the file when Mr. Roe was retired?

Mr. George: What has that to do with it?

Mr. TAYLOR: I told my chief what I thought of him and his Government, and members opposite know that well.

Mr. Hughes: You made no protest then.

Mr. TAYLOR: In caucus I was checking some of the things the Government were doing, and did, and that was why I was so unpopular with the party.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Ring off!

Mr. TAYLOR: Members know that.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Stick to the truth, old chap.

Mr. TAYLOR: The country knows it.

Mr. Hughes: You were disappointed that you did not get a portfolio.

Mr. TAYLOR: I know how revenge animated the mind of some sections of the Labour movement. I know how they chased

me and harassed me when I would not tamely submit to some of the things that were being done. I was dragged to the Trades Hall council, where charges were laid against me, though they had no jurisdiction to do so. Typed statements of the charges were sent to Mount Margaret and Leonora so that the district council might try me. There was no Trades Hall in my time, 40 years ago. We had to stand up for our rights against powerful forces. We were fighting in those days to lift the wages of the worker. The workers on the stations were getting £1 a week, and some of them 15s. a week. They were rationed on 10lbs. of flour, 2 lbs. of sugar, ¼lb. tea, and 12 lbs. of beef per week. We thought that 30s. a week at least should be paid to them.

Mr. Panton: One would think that your experience would have taught you more sense.

Mr. TAYLOR: To-day those men are getting £3 a week. We fought for £1 a hundred sheep for the shearers in the days when they were being paid 15s., 17s. 6d. and £1. Now they are asking for £3 a hundred sheep. Is all this not ample justification for the part I played? Whatever I suffered I have kept to myself. I suffered more than any other man in the Southern Hemisphere on behalf of the Labour movement. In those days men of sterling quality were needed to stand up against a great force, not a number of highly paid officials such as we find to-day, who would have been looked upon as hangers-on in the movement in my time. I am not afraid of them. There are only 27 of them. In my early days when I was battling for the Labour movement I realised that it held no room for men other than the bravest and of the highest quality. Just as that held good then, it holds good now.

Mr. Panton: Those were the days.

Mr. TAYLOR: I like to hear these whippets in the Labour movement giving utterance to their opinions.

Mr. Hughes: You started all right, but you slipped in your old age.

Mr. TAYLOR: But the hon. member has not started all right.

Mr. Hughes: I will not slip in my old age.

Mr. TAYLOR: I never used any privileges I enjoyed to malign anyone.

Mr. Hughes: What are you doing now?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to deal with the subject before the House. I know there have been interjections and I have allowed a certain amount of latitude, but I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the motion.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have been endeavouring to do so, but the volley of interjections led me astray. I am so nervous that they disconcerted me.

Mr. Panton: I will hold your hand.

Mr. TAYLOR: If I were a stalwart, and capable of being a Labour pioneer, no one would disconcert me, but I am only a humble and ordinary citizen, and am naturally of a nervous disposition. The concluding sentence of Mr. Walter's statement justifies the production of the files, and warrants Parliament at an early date expressing its views on the question. I now come to the statement of the Premier. This appeared in the "West Australian" on the 28th May. The article reads—

Yesterday afternoon the Premier (Mr. P. Collier) consented to reply to the interview with Mr. W. A. G. Walter, published in Monday's "West Australian," in which he alleged that his retirement as police magistrate was due to victimisation. "Mr. Walter's statement," said the Premier, "calls for very little comment, as it is largely self-explanatory, and in itself furnishes ample justification for Mr. Walter's retirement. He explains that it was optional whether his services were retained or not after passing the age of 60 years, and admits that his retirement is within legal right, but complains of the manner in which his services were terminated. I must confess that I know of no other proper manner of terminating an officer's services except by the legal and constitutional method laid down by the Public Service Act and the Superannuation Act, and this procedure is being followed in this case."

It does not appear that it was followed in this case. After returning from his holidays on the 1st May, Mr. Walter was notified by the Public Service Commissioner on the following day that it was the wish of the Government that he should retire, and he was informed that if he did not retire he would have to get out. The Government did put him out of the service. The Premier goes on to say—

Mr. Walter's statement that a report was current of a threat of his retirement 10 minutes after Labour came into power is barely worthy of notice. I may say there was also a report current that Mr. Walter threatened in Hannans Club to register a conviction in adjudicating upon the above case.

If Mr. Walter made that statement in the club he was very foolish. I do not think any magistrate worthy of his position would do so.

Mr. Panton: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: But if he made it, if what the Premier says is true—

Mr. Panton: You don't take notice of all rumours, do you?

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier said he was told Mr. Walter had made that statement in Hannans Club. If Mr. Walter did

make that statement, he was very foolish; and if the Government of the day had full knowledge of the making of that statement by him, they were indeed negligent of their duty in allowing him to remain on the bench. I think this was in Sir Henry Lefroy's time as Premier. Mr. Walter, if he did make that statement, should not have been allowed to hear another case. I doubt, however, whether a man of Mr. Walter's standing would make such a statement.

Mr. Lutey: Would you believe the other rumours, those about Mr. Collier?

Mr. TAYLOR: As regards those rumours, we know. They were so patent, wherever one went. But this other was a statement in a club, not a street rumour, not what everybody knew. The statement which the Premier heard repeated was repeated as having been made in Hannans Club. But the statements concerning Mr. Walter and the Premier were known far and wide. Whether or not there was any foundation for them, I will not say; but they were rumoured, and rumoured with such effect that they were believed.

Mr. Hughes: But you wouldn't believe them.

Mr. TAYLOR: The belief was more than borne out. It was overwhelming testimony, when the Premier took the action he did take, that there must have been a great deal of truth in those rumours. That is following the matter up on logical lines.

Mr. Hughes: There were no rumours to that effect in the metropolitan area.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not know what happened in the metropolitan area. The Premier took exception to Mr. Walter coming down to Perth to point out to the police authorities the seriousness of the position at Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and to ask for men and munitions in case an upheaval should occur. The Premier went on to say—

My impression of the duty of a magistrate is that he is there to administer the law in a judicial capacity. The preservation of peace or the procuring of firearms and ammunition to this end is purely a police responsibility.

I say Mr. Walter was amply justified in his action if, at that great distance from the seat of government and from the heads of the Crown Law Department and the Police Department, he thought, from information he had gained, that there was a riot imminent. In those circumstances he was justified in journeying to Perth for the purpose of preventing a possible riot. In my opinion it is a magistrate's duty to prevent a breach of the peace, if possible—not to wait till the breach comes and then inflict punishment.

Mr. Davy: That is his constitutional duty.

Mr. Hughes: That is the legal aspect.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is his moral duty as well as his constitutional duty.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: And then he is to sit on the case later.

The Minister for Lands: I am afraid that if the mover had a case in the court next day, he would very strongly dispute the right of the magistrate to hear and determine it.

Mr. TAYLOR: The thing is indisputable. It is a private citizen's duty to prevent a breach of the peace if he can, apart altogether from the police.

Mr. Hughes: No; it is a police business.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is as much a private citizen's duty to see that the law is not broken, as it is the duty of the police.

The Premier: A magistrate is not a private citizen.

Mr. TAYLOR: Mr. Walter was a magistrate, and it was his constitutional duty to prevent a breach of the peace. For that prevention he is now punished. The gravamen of the Premier's charge was that Mr. Walter journeyed to Perth for the purpose of getting arms and ammunition from the Police Department.

Mr. Hughes: And that he would then sit in judgment on the case.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier's statement continues—

If the law should be broken by the individual, and firearms are used by the police, and injuries inflicted with or without just cause, the duty of adjudicating upon the causes, and the result devolves upon the magistrate, who should be entirely free of any special interest in either party.

The Premier must realise that Mr. Walter had no special interest in either party.

Mr. Panton: Hadn't he?

Mr. TAYLOR: His very action proves that he had a special interest in the welfare of the community as a whole. There is no argument about it. Hon. members opposite, no matter how blinded they are by prejudice, must admit that this very fact stands for all time, that Mr. Walter's consideration was for the public, and not for any party. Two parties were quarrelling. The member for Menzies (Mr. Panton) informed us early in this discussion that the returned soldiers were not on the side of law and order, that the Returned Soldiers' Association was on the side of law and order, but not the returned soldiers themselves. However, the Returned Soldiers' Association must have been infinitely stronger than the returned soldiers, because the association did maintain law and order. It was their function to do so, and they did it with great effect.

Mr. Panton: There was nothing to maintain after the first day.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member is giving his case away.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You are not making too good a case for Walter on this, anyhow.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am doing the very best I can.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You have a very hard case.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am putting up a case which will stand against the case put up by the Premier in this interview. Hon. members opposite will have a lot of cases to defend before long. Hon. members opposite will hear from me. I am not going to allow them to twit me unchallenged. However, as I told the House, I will not dwell on that aspect on this occasion. In view of the remarks I have made, I hope the Government will not exhibit such revengefulness in future as is patent to me and beyond doubt in the general opinion. All that leads up to the case and all that surrounds it prove fully that this was a case of victimisation, that the magistrate was victimised because he did his duty. I want to tell the House and the country, no matter what my political views may be—

Mr. Panton: We know what they are.

Mr. TAYLOR:—that we must protect the judiciary and protect the police force. If the people lose confidence in our law courts, they lose confidence in our government and in our country, and we shall have no order. It is the fact of the people recognising the law that keeps them in subjection. Otherwise we would have here a repetition of what occurred in Melbourne. It is idle for anyone to deny it who delves into humanity at all, in view of what occurred in Melbourne the moment the police force pulled out. The Melbourne happening proves that the veneer which separates us from savagery is indeed thin. The police having pulled off their coats and refused to go on duty, Melbourne citizens were instantly looting the city. That shows how civilised we are.

Mr. Panton: You are speaking for yourself, of course.

Mr. TAYLOR: I did not happen to be in Melbourne. It is the respect which the people have for their country's laws that keeps order. We cannot have respect for laws if the people who administer them have to administer them with consideration for the Government in power or the Opposition who may be likely to obtain power next year.

Mr. Hughes: That was the very trouble.

Mr. TAYLOR: I say the case is a scandal and a shame, and I trust the House will support the motion standing in my name.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [9.11]: The display of fireworks we have just witnessed is perhaps, in the circumstances, justified. The mover, having been very silent for a number of years because of the position he occupied in this House, finds himself translated to a subordinate sphere, which, one can well imagine, has not tended to sweeten his temper or to make him more amiably disposed towards the party who are responsible for his translation. The hon. member spoke very

wildly a good deal of matter which I consider irrelevant to the subject of his motion. He spoke of vindictiveness on the part of members of this House, while his own speech was seething with vindictiveness from beginning to end—

The Minister for Mines: We know him.

The PREMIER:—the kind of vindictiveness that is frequently experienced from men who have taken the course in political life that the hon. member has taken. He made a pretence, a hollow, hypocritical pretence—

Mr. Taylor: The hon. member is not in order.

The PREMIER:—in my opinion, a hollow, hypocritical pretence—

Mr. Taylor: The Premier is not in order.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Mt. Margaret objects to the words, "hypocritical pretence."

The PREMIER: Very well; I withdraw them. He made a pretence of being fair in this matter. He spoke of the rumours which were common property, concerning an expressed intention on my part to take a certain course should this party come into power. He said it was common talk, it was rumoured; and he said these things in such a manner as to leave no doubt in the minds of members that he, at any rate, believed every one of those rumours. But he could not believe the other rumour, which was a rumour also, of the alleged statements of the magistrate in Hannans Club, which, of course, were not confined to the four walls of Hannans Club, but soon became the property of Hannans-street, and were just as much a rumour as the other matters to which the hon. member has referred. But whilst his eager ears heard all the rumours which would tell against the attitude of myself or the Government, he heard not a word of the rumours of alleged statements made by the magistrate in Hannans Club.

Mr. Taylor: I said that if those rumours were true—

The PREMIER: The hon. member said he heard the other rumours, but heard none of those alleged to have come from Hannans Club.

Mr. Taylor: I said that if those rumours were true, Mr. Walter should not have been allowed to remain on the bench.

The PREMIER: Such is the fair, impartial mind the hon. member has brought to bear on the subject. He went on to say that there was foundation for the rumours that told against myself, but that he could not believe there was any truth in the rumours on the other side, could not believe that the magistrate would say such a thing. He believed the one, but he did not believe the other. He spoke of other matters in an endeavour to bolster up his case. I do not believe there is any sincerity in the hon. member's attitude upon this question. I believe he is actuated by no other desire than to sling stones at the party to which he no longer belongs. That is borne out by the

fact that to-day his spirit rises in protest against the vindictive actions of the Government—

Mr. Taylor: You know that—

The PREMIER: He accused the Government of vindictiveness, but he offered no protest when another magistrate, the late Mr. A. S. Roe, was retired.

Mr. Taylor: I protested and you know that I did.

The PREMIER: At the time that magistrate was retired he sat silently in his place in the House and at the party meetings and offered no protest.

Mr. Taylor: You know that I did.

The PREMIER: What rank hypocrisy to come here with his protest and his regard for the administration of justice! So long as he was in the ranks of the Labour Party and so long as it was possible for him to enjoy the emoluments of office that might come to him, he was willing to endorse any action of that description that was taken.

Mr. Taylor: You know we are gagged in caucus.

The PREMIER: Gagged in caucus! The hon. member knows perfectly well that he did not take any such action then.

Mr. Taylor: Oh yes; you know I did.

The PREMIER: The hon. member said that Magistrate Walter was right in the action he took when he came to Perth for rifles and ammunition. He said it was the right of any citizen to prevent a breach of the peace. Does the hon. member not know that in his capacity as magistrate, Mr. Walter was not a private citizen? He occupied a position as magistrate at Kalgoorlie and that position necessitated his sitting on the bench and adjudicating upon cases that might have arisen, and probably would have arisen out of his action in coming to Perth to obtain rifles and ammunition? As a matter of fact he did sit on the bench and deal with some such cases. Twelve or 13 men were arrested and he sat on the bench to deal with them. He refused bail and they were sent to Perth for trial. They were acquitted by a jury of their own countrymen. The magistrate said they were not entitled to bail nor yet to a hearing in the district where the alleged offence took place. Thus the men had to be sent to Perth and were acquitted.

Mr. Taylor: They were committed for trial.

The PREMIER: If as a result of the magistrate's action in coming to Perth for rifles and ammunition and of the use of those arms, the peace was broken and men were wounded, with the result that Police Court proceedings followed, that magistrate would have been the one to sit on the bench. In such circumstances how could he bring to hear an open mind upon charges which fundamentally arose from an action for which he was responsible?

Mr. Taylor: That is all supposition.

The PREMIER: It is not all supposition. What about the police? There was

a responsible officer in charge of the police in Kalgoorlie and whilst it might have been within the discretion of the magistrate to discuss with the police officials what steps should be taken to preserve the peace, the fact remains that it was the responsibility of the police inspector and his officers to take such steps as were necessary to secure that end. It was assuming the functions of a policeman when the magistrate came to Perth and asked that rifles and ammunition should be despatched to Kalgoorlie. I wonder what the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) would have said regarding such actions by magistrates in other days. He has had some experience of action taken by magistrates and I wonder if to-day, looking back across the years to those magisterial actions I refer to, he would hold different opinions. I wonder how he regarded the use of firearms in the earlier days in Queensland that he knows of.

Mr. Taylor: It was not the magistrate then; it was others.

The PREMIER: The hon. member had to go through the hands of the magistrate before he got to his final goal.

Mr. Taylor: The magistrate did not do much.

The PREMIER: If there was one man who ought to have kept out of this matter it was the police magistrate, Mr. Walter. The member for Mount Margaret says that Mr. Walter was dismissed and that his dismissal was prompted by political bias, vindictiveness and all the other terms with which he described our action. I want to tell the hon. member that this magistrate was retired in precisely the same manner as dozens of other men have been retired from the public service in Western Australia during recent years. Mr. Walter was retired in strict conformity with the law of the land. The hon. member should know that the Public Service Act prescribes that it is optional for public servants between the ages of 60 and 65 to remain in the service, and it is also optional for the Governor-in-Council to retire such officers if it is considered by the Government of the day that the efficient administration of the service would be best served by such retirements. Thus it was in strict conformity with the Act that Magistrate Walter was retired from the service. I can give other similar cases but I do not desire to mention names before the House. During the past few years no fewer than nine officers have been retired from the public service. Those officers had records just as long and just as honourable as that of Magistrate Walter. In some instances men younger than Magistrate Walter were retired from the public service. The hon. member did not get down from his exalted position at that time to trounce the Government of the day respecting their actions then. He did not allege political bias or vindictiveness then: in those instances the Government of the day were quite right.

There has never been more hypocrisy respecting any other case than has been indulged in by the critics of the retirement of Magistrate Walter. One section of the Press that charged the Government with vindictiveness sat silent during recent years when a number of officers were retired from the service in similar circumstances and with less justifiable cause.

Mr. Taylor: There was never a suggestion of victimisation respecting those instances.

The PREMIER: No, because the party in opposition to the Government of the day had a far higher sense of what was fair than to level charges against the Government. At that time it was open to me as Leader of the Opposition to make charges with regard to the retirement of a dozen men during the past eight years, had I been actuated by the same spleen and vindictiveness as the hon. member.

Mr. Taylor: But the Press took up this case.

The PREMIER: It did not suit the hon. member to protest then. The hon. member's principles did not suggest to him to protest against actions by those now sitting in opposition to us. It did not suit the Press to raise charges against the late Government when they took similar action.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Didn't it? They did.

The PREMIER: I do not think so. The member for Mount Margaret talked about honesty; he talked about rumours. There was more than a rumour; there was certainty in the feeling in this House that some of the other officers had been victimised because of their political feelings. The Press did not raise one word of protest then and the hon. member did not raise a protest either.

Mr. Taylor: I did not hear of it.

The PREMIER: You did not want to hear of it. Mr. Walter is not the only magistrate who has been retired. Another magistrate was retired at the age of 62 years. That happened during recent years. That magistrate did not wish to be retired but he was retired all the same. That man joined the service of the State prior to Mr. Walter and was one of the oldest officers we had in point of service. He was forced out. I do not charge the Government of the day with any wrong action. Doubtless that magistrate was forced to retire because the Government considered that the service would be better served by his retirement. Where was the Press then? Where was the member for Mt. Margaret, that guardian of the judiciary! It was open to any member of the party to take up the same miserable attitude had they been of the same calibre as the hon. member.

Mr. Taylor: You are a bit wounded.

The PREMIER: I considered that the Government had good and sufficient reasons for that retirement and believed the interests of the service would be served by

the change. In the circumstances I made no protest. I could have taken the same jaundiced vindictive attitude as the hon. member has adopted.

Mr. Taylor: You don't like it, anyhow.

The PREMIER: Two men were sacked on their 60th birthday. On the very day they reached the age at which it was possible to retire them they were dismissed. Those men are in the prime of life to-day and one is earning a bigger salary than when he was in the service. To-day he is still fit and qualified to carry out the duties of his former office. Such a man, however, received as his 60th birthday present a notification that he was to be retired. Against the wishes of both officers was that action taken. Where was the member for Mt. Margaret then? Where were those impartial newspapers who are criticising the retirement of Magistrate Walter to-day? Again I make no charges against the late Government. Doubtless Ministers felt that the departments concerned would be best served by their retirement, just as in this instance it was considered that the service would be best served by the retirement of Magistrate Walter. Retirements were effected in other departments of the State. In the Surveys Department, the Electoral Department and in the Engineering Department men were retired in recent years on practically the day they became 60 years of age.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That happens all along. Those officers are retired in the ordinary course.

The PREMIER: Of course that is so. The former Chief Electoral Officer (Mr. Stenberg) was retired when he reached 60 years of age and Mr. King, for 24 years Under Secretary for Mines, was retired from his position as Surveyor General when he reached the retiring age. Mr. King held a higher post in the Government service and commanded a higher salary than did Magistrate Walter. Yet he was retired. To-day he is doing field work as well as ever he did and is earning a larger salary than he was paid when he was in the Public Service. Those retirements took place two years ago. I made no complaint. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, that is the ordinary procedure to adopt when officers reach the age of 60 years. The Chief Electoral Officer was only just 60 years of age when he was retired.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I think he asked to be retired.

The PREMIER: No, not one of them. There is that other magistrate I mentioned.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But I believe Mr. Stenberg asked to be retired.

The PREMIER: Well, that is not my information. There were two magistrates retired who were younger than Mr.

Walter; perhaps one was about the same age. They were retired because it was considered right to do so. No complaint was made by members now occupying seats on the Government side of the House. There were nine officers so retired.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You can get 99 such retirements if you go back far enough.

The PREMIER: Of course. Yet we have witnessed the hypocrisy of this wretched paltry charge of vindictiveness levelled against us. What was virtue on the part of the late Government in recent years is now vindictiveness where the present Administration are concerned. That is the position now in the eyes of the member for Mt. Margaret and of the Press. From their standpoint there can be no other motive than political vindictiveness. But it was all fair and aboveboard, there was no motive behind the actions of other Governments in recent years.

Mr. Taylor: The circumstances were different.

The PREMIER: The circumstances were different! In some of those instances, perhaps, if I liked to deal in personalities I could find animus or bias.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why go into all this?

The PREMIER: I have to defend myself against the unjustifiable attack made by this newly recruited apostle of justice.

Mr. Taylor: We will need a few if you remain in power.

The PREMIER: There are a good many years to go before we can hope to reach the number of retirements given in the list I have here, retirements made since this party was last in office. Yet it all passed without the hon. member's knowledge.

Mr. Taylor: There were no Press comments. Nobody ever suspected that anything was wrong.

The PREMIER: The hon. member takes action only when the Press calls attention. If the Press makes no comment, all is right; there is no occasion for him to be alert in the interests of justice! The section of the Press that has raised the alarm on this occasion was actuated by similar motives to those actuating the hon. member, namely to cast a stone at this party. That which I consider the reputable section of the Press has not raised the question. It had sense enough to know there were no grounds for making a charge against the Government.

Mr. Taylor: The leading Press commented on it.

The PREMIER: Which is the leading Press? I have here another list of a dozen men retired in recent years before even reaching the age of 60. It may be said, of course, they were retired because

it was necessary to reorganise the departments. I do not wish to read out the names, for I have no desire to drag them into the glare of publicity. It may be thought there was political vindictiveness in some of those retirements.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I can assure you there was not.

The PREMIER: I do not think it for a moment. Had I thought it, of course, it was open to me to raise the question when the retirements were made. Had I thought they were due to political reasons or improper motives, I should have raised the question in the House; but I entertained no such thought. I felt then as I feel now that, in the view of the Government of the day, the changes were brought about in the interests of the service. That is all that has been done on this occasion. Yet because an officer within a year of the compulsory retiring age has been retired, we have all this high falutin', these fireworks thrown at us to-night for the edification of the public. When the ex-Government Analyst, Mr. E. A. Mann, was retired from the service, was it not rumoured that there was some bias against him because of the action he had taken in respect of the public service strike? I did not believe it. Yet the hon. member to-night says the retirement of Mr. Walter was accepted by him as confirmation of the rumour that it was our intention to retire him. Did he take the retirement of Mr. Mann shortly after that officer had led the public service strike as being confirmation of the wide-spread rumour that Mr. Mann was to be retired? Mr. Mann, it will be remembered, was not 60 years of age. He was not even 50 years of age. Yet the members of this party did not accuse the then Government of being actuated by vindictiveness towards Mr. Mann because of his association with the strike.

Mr. Taylor: There was a difference of opinion between Mr. Mann and his Minister long before the strike.

The PREMIER: But it was open to any section of the Press or any member of the House to have then adopted the attitude the hon. member has adopted to-night.

Mr. Taylor: The circumstances are not the same.

The PREMIER: If we merely wanted to throw stones at a political opponent, it was easy for us to have made political capital out of it. But I did not think then nor do I think now that Mr. Mann's retirement was due to his association with the strike. I would not think it of the late Government. But the hon. member is prepared to think ill of the actions of this Government. If any officer between the ages of 60 and 65 should be retired by this Government, we shall be open to a similar charge to that levelled by the hon. member to-night. It is easy to impute motives, no matter how straightforward one's actions may be; easy to get up in the House and impute motives.

That is all the hon. member has done to-night, just because a section of the Press has urged him on. Apparently he is to be the mouthpiece of that section of the Press that is going to attack this Government. Well, he will have a pretty busy time, will have many opportunities for spreading himself as he has done to-night, because I rather expect this Government will do many things that will incur the displeasure of a section of the Press of the State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You do not object to the hon. member's moving for the papers?

The PREMIER: I do not. If the hon. member had desired to view the question with an open mind he would have moved for the papers without indulging in his high falutin' criticism. The papers are open to him, he could have had them.

Mr. Taylor: A nice chance I had.

The PREMIER: He said he wanted the papers, and then he proceeded to prejudice the matter.

Mr. Taylor: Following up interjections.

The PREMIER: He saw fit to read newspaper statements that enabled him to get into "Hansard" the fact that I had appeared in the police court before Mr. Magistrate Walter.

Mr. Taylor: I do not look upon that as a crime.

The PREMIER: And that I had been fined.

Mr. Taylor: No, I did not say that. You know better than that.

The PREMIER: It was entirely unnecessary to read those newspaper clippings. Everybody in the House and in the country knew what happened on that occasion. I am not ashamed of it. I am proud of it, and would do it again to-morrow. In order to again let down the magistrate the hon. member went on to say he did not think the case was lost on appeal, but thought it was dropped. I hope the hon. member is satisfied now that he has been able to read all that to the House and get it into "Hansard," where he will be able to refer to it in future. I am not concerned about it. Although I was fined, I hope I can take a stand above vindictiveness.

Mr. Taylor: I passed no comments on it.

The PREMIER: I hope I can bring to bear a mind free from spite or vindictiveness, notwithstanding anything that might have occurred between me and any officer in the Public Service. However, as I say, I can quote dozens of instances where actions similar to ours have been taken. We have conformed to the Public Service Act and to the Superannuation Act. We have moved in accordance with the precedents of all the years. Ever since I have been in the House it has been a common thing to have officers 60 years of age retired for reasons good and sufficient to the Government of the day. Nothing more was done in this instance than has been done in past years.

I have no doubt the hon. member will avail himself of opportunities to bring cases of this description before the House. It is a pity he has slumbered for so many years, that he has awakened only in his old age.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You do not object to the papers being asked for?

The PREMIER: No, but it is the way in which the motion was moved.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I think you misunderstood the hon. member.

The PREMIER: One thing the hon. member leaves no doubt about, namely, his meaning. One might disagree with him, but one certainly could not misunderstand what he is saying. Anyhow, if it will give him satisfaction in his old age—I will not say declining years—to adopt the role of defender of purity and justice in administration, I have no objection whatever to his having the papers. And if, in the course of our administrative duties, we do something that will enable him to more frequently indulge in that role, the hon. member is quite welcome to it.

Mr. Taylor: It is a pleasure to listen to you. I have worked you up a bit.

The PREMIER: This is only a preliminary. The papers are available. I have no objection to the motion, nor to the papers being laid on the Table.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 9.13 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 28th August, 1924.*

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

### QUESTION—FRUIT MARKETING, LEGISLATION.

Mr. SANPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce legislation this session to control fruit marketing on the lines of the Queensland Fruit Marketing Organisation Act?