

Hon. A. THOMSON: Assume the reverse position. Suppose the property has depreciated in value, then the mortgagee can exercise his power of foreclosure and force the owner off the property. The mortgagee would thus be obliged to write down his security, in the same way as banks and financial institutions do. I confidently submit the measure to the favourable consideration of members and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 5th December.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 11.6 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 30th November, 1939.*

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

### QUESTION—AGRICULTURE.

*Flour Tax Payments, Price of Wheat.*

Mr. BERRY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is it possible to obtain immediately the September and October payment of the flour tax as promised by the Federal Government? 2, What action has been taken and has there been any reply in regard to the motion carried in this House relating to the payment of three shillings and fourpence per bushel for wheat at sidings for this season's harvest?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, This information is expected today by telegraph from the Commonwealth authorities. 2, No reply has been received from Canberra.

### QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVICE APPEAL BOARD.

*Allowances to Members.*

Mr. NEEDHAM: asked the Premier: 1, What fees and/or allowances are paid to—(a) the Government's representative; (b)

the Civil Service representative, on the Public Service Appeal Board for acting as such representatives? 2, If there is any difference between the rates paid to these two representatives, what is the reason for such difference? 3, What other fees and/or pension if any are paid by the Government to its representative on the Public Service Appeal Board? 4, What fees and/or allowances are paid to—(a) the Government's representative; (b) the officers' representative; (c) the Chairman, of the Railway Officers' Classification Board for acting in their respective capacities as such?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, The rates paid to Government and Civil Service representatives are governed by regulation published in the *Gazette* of 5th February, 1932. Members of the Board elected by the Civil Service and Education Department or appointment by the Government (if employed by any State instrumentality) receive £3 per day less their official emoluments. Sittings of 4½ hours on any day constitute a day, and additional time is paid for at 13s. 4d. per hour. Shorter sittings are paid proportionately to the 4½ hours for £3—with a minimum of £1 1s. Total fees are subject to an annual limit of £450. 3, The present Government representative receives his pension as well as fees. The Superannuation Act, 1871, permits a pensioned officer to draw from Government employment an amount equal to the difference between his former salary and his pension. 4, (a) Fee £1 1s. per sitting plus away-from-home allowance in accordance with classification conditions; (b) Fee £1 1s. per sitting plus away-from-home allowance in accordance with award conditions; (c) Fee £2 2s. per sitting plus allowance of 25s. per day when away from home.

### INVESTMENT COMPANIES SELECT COMMITTEE.

#### *Report Presented.*

Hon. C. G. Latham brought up the report of the select committee.

Ordered: That the report and evidence be printed.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham resolved: That the consideration of the report be made an order of the day for a later stage of the sitting.

### BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

#### *Report, etc.*

Report of Committee adopted.

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

### BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

#### *Council's Message.*

Message from the Council notifying that it insisted on its amendment now considered.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Labour in charge of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Before moving that the Assembly continues to disagree with the amendment insisted on by the Council, I desire to read a report supplied to me today by the Government Actuary, as follows:—

In connection with the proposed legislation affecting motor insurance, the following reasons occur to me why it is most undesirable that the State Insurance Office be limited in its operations to third-party insurance.

Generally speaking, the owners of motor vehicles desire comprehensive cover which provides for, in addition to third-party risk, insurance against damage done to themselves or their cars. If insurance is limited to third-party risk, the State office will get none of the better class of business because an insurer will not go to more than one company to obtain cover for two risks when it can be secured from one.

The restriction will mean that little revenue will be obtained to meet claims which, judging by cases recently before the courts in other States, may amount to considerable sums. For instance, in South Australia recently, a claimant was awarded £10,000. In other cases insurers have had to pay substantial sums.

If the State is forced to accept third-party insurance, the companies will undoubtedly pass on to us the business they do not want. This office will be used as a dumping ground. It appears logical that we should be allowed to do all the business or none at all.

I understand that at the present time companies will not insure vehicles which have been in use for a lengthy time, or if they do, premiums are loaded, which makes insurance costly. To explain: A car which is valued by the company at £50 will be covered for that amount, but the premium will be assessed as if the car were worth £100. I believe premium

is assessed on a minimum value of £100. In some cases insurance is refused altogether.

With compulsory third-party insurance, it is safe to say that the State office will be forced to cover the type mentioned. We will get the class of business from which the heavy claims will come and will not get the class of business from which a profit may be reasonably expected. Personally, I would prefer not to have anything to do with third-party insurance only.

For the reasons set out in that report and others discussed here on previous occasions, I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendment made by the Council.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

#### *Assembly's Request for Conference.*

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendment insisted on by the Council, and that the managers for the Assembly be Mr. Styauts, Mr. Watts, and the mover.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1938-39.

#### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

#### *Public Utilities:*

*Vote—Railways, Tramways, Ferries and Electricity Supply, £3,331,900:*

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [4.40]: This is my first personal association with the estimates of the Railway, Tramway, Ferry and Electricity Supply undertaking—the four concerns under my administration as one department—and in view of the magnitude of the figures, viz., Revenue £4,431,600 and Expenditure £3,334,900, representing quite a formidable sum of the whole of the Estimates now before the House, perhaps some little detail will not be out of place. In connection with the railways, it is anticipated that the cash receipts and disburse-

ments for the year ending the 30th June, 1940, will be as follows:—

	£
Revenue . . . . .	3,680,000
Expenditure . . . . .	2,744,500
leaving a balance of . . . . .	935,500
to meet interest charges of . . . . .	1,000,000
or a loss from a Treasury standpoint of . . . . .	£64,500

The actual revenue received for the year 1938-39 was £3,586,013; so, to reach the estimate, additional collections of just under £94,000 will be necessary. Up to the end of September an improvement of £18,273 only had been made, but the next quarter's figures should show to advantage. In fact, the October figures up to the 14th disclose an increase over the corresponding period of last year of £35,000, and there seems little doubt that the estimated revenue—£3,680,000—will be realised, provided ample shipping is obtainable.

The principal sources of earnings last year—in round figures—and those forecast for the current year are as follows:—

	1938-39 £	1939-40 £
Passenger and parcels	704,000	710,000
Wheat . . . . .	479,000	580,000
Local timber . . . . .	255,000	220,000
Local coal . . . . .	150,000	160,000
Livestock . . . . .	140,000	145,000
Miscellaneous . . . . .	88,000	90,000
All other . . . . .	1,783,000	1,775,000
	£3,599,000	£3,680,000

Slight increases are anticipated in respect of passenger and parcels traffic, local coal, livestock and miscellaneous, while the returns from timber and "all other" goods promise to be rather less than last year. A substantial improvement is expected from wheat freights, the figure above being based on a harvest slightly in advance of the previous year, of which present indications give every promise.

Allowance is made in the estimates under the heading of Expenditure for £2,744,500, compared with £2,902,677 actually spent last year, a saving of approximately £158,000. Although it was hoped to provide a sum of £100,000 towards renewals and replacement of rolling stock matters of finance dictated otherwise; so, unfortun-

ately, this necessary provision must be held over for the present. With the new engines just completed (10 Class "P") and the programme which is now under way for a further 10 locomotives of 4-S-2 type, designated "S" class, the locomotive stock is being fairly well catered for, and, with repairs, is as much as can be handled with the present staff.

A good deal has been said about our rolling stock. Although if funds were available many improvements could be made, particularly in respect to locomotives and carriages, it must be realised that the present stock is efficiently handling all the traffic that is tendered for transportation. Some members have mentioned miles of trucks stowed because they are useless; that, of course, is an exaggeration—in fact, blue cross wagons, as they are termed, have been replaced from working expenses with up-to-date trucks of equal capacity. True, there may be a lesser number than was the case many years ago, but the carrying capacity now is far greater, and as a result of this progressive policy the ratio of tare to contents carried has been materially reduced. The wagons known as blue cross, to which several members referred, are written off the books, but they are used when suitable short distance traffic presents itself in the busy season, such as phosphate rock, etc., ex overseas to sidings close handy. This enables the main line trucks to do a far greater mileage.

General savings in working expenses, without any loss of efficiency, are planned to lower expenditure. To achieve this aim it will be necessary to practise the strictest economy and, accordingly, replacement of staff upon retirement or death is being avoided as far as possible, overtime and work involving penalty rates are being curtailed considerably and train services closely watched to see that the business offering justifies the retention of the existing train schedules. A considerable reduction has been made in train mileage without delaying traffic, at the same time giving a regular service to the department's customers.

The Leader of the Opposition said that earlier steps should have been taken by the Commissioner to curtail expenditure. When it was known that a considerable tonnage of wheat would not be transported immediate action was taken by the Commissioner. In March last the whole of the train

service was revised and each branch of the service was required to reduce expenditure on a large scale, otherwise the loss on last year's operations would have been considerably more than that shown. Staff was not retrenched because it was not known when the men would be required to handle the wheat traffic. In any case, a trained staff is necessary; furthermore, if retrenchment was resorted to the liability to pay for long service and annual leave was still there and would not have reduced expenditure for the year just closed. The Commissioner, therefore, retired as much leave as was possible with the aid of the surplus staff, and did not fill any of the positions rendered vacant by retirements, deaths, etc. It is hoped, through these measures, which are still being continued, to save considerable expenditure in the current year. In the busy season the staff will be available to handle the traffic, and it is hoped that no additional men will be required in view of the action taken in the last four months of the fiscal year.

Dealing with staff, the Leader of the Opposition stated that the average staff had increased from 7,370 in 1932-33 to 8,565 in 1937-38. It must be remembered that a considerable number of the increased staff was employed on works put in hand to relieve unemployment, such as regrading, re-ballasting, etc., the number being 312 for last year. The advantages gained in these works will go a long way towards helping to reduce expenditure, as the easier grades will materially assist in hauling heavier loads, thus requiring fewer trains.

With rising maintenance costs due to the basic wage and Arbitration Court awards, any programme of improvements had necessarily to be on a rather modified scale, but at the same time some progress in this direction can be claimed. Particulars of the main improvements carried out may be found in the report of the Deputy Commissioner of Railways—a copy of which has been made available to all members of this Chamber—so I shall just briefly refer to them.

Diesel-electric trailers.—Construction of six new trailers proceeded according to schedule and the first vehicle should be on traffic early in December.

Second class passenger coaches.—Improved seating and panel alterations were effected in the case of six suburban coaches.

**Lounge cars.**—Two of the three coaches so equipped were fitted up early in the year under review. This special facility is much appreciated by travellers and has done quite a lot towards popularising the Kalgoorlie line, on which route the cars are a regular feature.

**Improved drawgear.**—An improved type of coupling, designed and manufactured in the Midland Junction workshops, was introduced during the year. So successful has the new equipment proved in service that extensions to other passenger vehicles are proposed as opportunity offers.

**Engine stock.**—Seven of the latest type (Class "P") locomotives were completed during 1938-39 and three in the previous year, while progress in the early stages of construction of ten new engines of a modern type was maintained.

**Wagon stock.**—A total of 52 of the latest type of sheep truck was completed during the year and another 50 are nearing completion, also four cool storage vans. In replacement of 94 obsolete vehicles, 50 trucks of modern design, and of an equivalent carrying capacity, were constructed and placed in commission.

**Regrading and deviations.**—Operations under this heading were carried out at different points of the system during the twelve months and served the dual purpose of providing more even grades for train working and an avenue of employment for a large number of men. This policy is being pursued during the current year.

With regard to the tramways, the estimated results are:—

	£
Revenue .. .. .	304,000
Expenditure .. .. .	257,000
Net revenue .. .. .	47,000
Interest .. .. .	48,000
Deficit .. .. .	1,000

The actual revenue for 1938-39 was £302,354, or approximately £2,000 less than was forecast for the current year. The expenditure indicates an increase of £10,000 on the amount utilised for this purpose last year, and here again the utmost care will be necessary to confine the working expenses to that figure, as, apart from the incidence of basic wage and arbitration court awards, all stores and supplies are showing a definite

tendency to rise in price, which, unfortunately, seems a natural consequence in times of national emergency.

The trolley bus services continue to maintain their popularity but the question of acquiring additional vehicles does not, in view of the European situation, appear too hopeful at the moment. The Leader of the Opposition asked why the tramway capital was not increased by the amount of £100,000 for trolley buses. On page 35 of the Commissioner's annual report will be found a footnote to paragraph 66 which explains the position. In the tramway accounts, working expenses have been debited with £21,000 annually for many years past to meet special expenditure of this nature. If the £100,000 were added to the capital cost, it would only inflate the capital of this undertaking.

The provision of a new central substation, I am glad to say, is now in sight. The necessary expenditure has been authorised, but to what extent the project will be delayed regarding the obtaining of equipment from England, I am unable to state. An appreciable improvement in tramway working should be in evidence when the sub-station is in operation, as this adjunct will permit of a more even supply of power being available, which should present opportunities of accelerating the present tram services. As to the ferries, little change in the financial position of the undertaking is reflected in the estimate for this undertaking, which is as follows:—

	£
Revenue .. .. .	8,600
Expenditure .. .. .	8,400
Net revenue .. .. .	200
Interest .. .. .	200
	..

Tenders closed some little time ago for the propelling machinery of a new ferry boat and this matter is at present under consideration by the Government.

Turning to the electricity supply, the estimate of revenue and expenditure of this concern is:—

	£
Revenue .. .. .	439,000
Expenditure .. .. .	325,000
Net revenue .. .. .	114,000
Interest .. .. .	76,000
Profit .. .. .	£38,000

The figures quoted provide for increases of approximately £24,000 in earnings over those of last year and £12,000 in working expenses. The new power station was officially opened on the 20th January, 1939, and ample supplies of current are now available to meet domestic and industrial demands for some time to come. The older portion of the East Perth power station has given long and efficient service and the opportunity will now be taken for a complete overhaul to bring it more into line with the high standard set by the new "B" station. I now submit the Estimates for this department for the consideration of the Committee.

**MR. STYANTS** (Kalgoorlie) [4.56]: The first item I wish to discuss on these Estimates concerns the recent very appreciable increase in freights, to which I offer very strong objection. While I realise that the Railway Department has been put to very great added expense because of the increase in the basic wage, and that it is possible, or even probable, that it will have to recoup itself for that expenditure, I desire to enter an emphatic protest against the singling out of one section for the purpose of that reconp. That is practically what has happened in this instance regarding the smalls minimum increases and, in addition, C. class goods. That indicates the most unfair incidence of the increased charges, particularly as they affect C. class goods, which comprise practically every article that goes in to the homes of working men. C. Class goods comprise the following:—

Piece goods (clothing)	Pearl barley
Tea	Beans
Coffee	Non-intoxicating beer
Cocoa	Blue
Paper	Starch
Dried and canned fruits	Blue stone
Jams	Grain food preparations
Canned meat	Cheese
Tinned milk	Preserved cream in tins
Rice	Butter preservatives
Sago	Disinfectants
Soap	Dripping
Tapioca	Lard
Canned vegetables	Fish
Bindertwine	Cornflour
Aerated waters	Flour
Arrowroot	

Thus members will see that the increases in freights have to be borne by practically one section of the community. The impost will

fall most heavily on the man with the largest family, the man to whom I think Parliament will desire to extend sympathy and protection. Residents of the goldfields areas that are far-removed from the sources of supply will be particularly hard hit, even more than those in the agricultural areas, where the distance from the metropolitan area is comparable with that of the goldfields. In the agricultural districts people are able to grow some of the produce upon which otherwise they would have to pay freight. That cannot be done on the goldfields because of the climatic conditions; goldfields people cannot grow any of the commodities which are included among "C" class goods. While I have no objection to a general increase in freights if the Railway Department finds it necessary in order to recoup itself unavoidable operating expenses, I have a strong objection to singling out absolutely necessary commodities in a working man's home to bear the brunt of the increase. It may be said that the increase is only slight. The Minister has been good enough to furnish members with figures showing that the amount per cwt. is very slight. But that is not the point. Even if the increase were only half the amount, it should be borne by the whole community. The revenue of the railways last year amounted to £3,600,000 in round figures. I understand the department is desirous of raising £50,000 by this increase in rates. Assuming that an all-round increase of 1 2-3rds per cent. was made in the freight rates and fares charged by the department, that would return £60,000 for the year. I realise, however, that the freight on fertilisers and wheat could not be increased. I find that these commodities comprised 35 per cent. of the tonnage hauled by the railways last year, but they only produced 20 per cent. of the revenue. Deducting that 20 per cent. from the total revenue of £3,600,000, I find that an increase of 2 per cent. on all commodities carried by the railways and on passenger fares would return £60,000. I therefore recommend to the Minister that he recast the freight charges so that all classes of commodities—not only "C" class goods—shall bear a proportion of the increase. The revenue from suburban passenger fares last year amounted to £126,000; an increase of 10 per cent. on this amount—and suburban passenger fares are decidedly cheap—would yield £12,600. In

support of my statement that suburban passenger fares are cheap, I point out that the rate is one half-penny per mile, while country fares are a penny per mile. The second-class fare to Kalgoorlie is slightly over 1d. per mile. When we take into consideration the fact that people in the metropolitan area who patronise the railways are being carried at one half-penny per mile, is there any justification for not increasing the fares? It may be said that because of competition in the metropolitan area an increase in railway fares might lead to a decrease in the number of passengers carried. I do not think that would be the case at all. We have got beyond that stage. During the last eight or ten years a gradual decrease in the metropolitan passenger traffic has taken place, and my opinion is that we have got down to bed-rock now. We have reached the stage when people in the metropolitan areas patronise the railways because they are the most convenient form of transport for them. That is the major consideration. People will patronise the service most convenient to them. An increase of 2d. in the fare from Perth to Fremantle and back, and an increase of from 5 per cent. to 6 per cent. on weekly and monthly tickets would make no difference to the number of passengers carried, because the fares charged by the railways are considerably below those charged by companies controlling other means of transport, especially when that transport is not subject to railway competition. True, the difference between the train fare from Perth to Fremantle and the fares charged by the buses is only about 25 per cent. But when we get away from railway competition, for instance, South Perth or Belmont, the difference is about 50 per cent.

The effect of the increase in freight charges will be felt severely on the goldfields. About 60 per cent. of the goods which are computed in the cost of living figures come under the heading of "C" class traffic. An increase of 10 per cent. on 60 per cent. of such commodities will inevitably result in an increase in the basic wage. I assure hon. members opposite that we do not stand for continual increases in the basic wage. We realise that an increase in the basic wage is declared because of an increase in the cost of the commodities upon which the basic wage is computed. We believe that to be a vicious circle that is detri-

mental to industry. If there is an increase in the cost of commodities—and certainly that will be so, even if the increase be only  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound—the retailer will put up the price 1d. per lb. That will be reflected in the cost of living and consequently the basic wage will be increased. Workers will not be better off and industries will be affected. A point that must be taken into consideration by the Railway Department so far as the Eastern Goldfields are concerned is that goldfields merchants import from the Eastern States about 30 tons of goods per week. The Commonwealth Commissioner of Railways is permitted to charge what freight rates he considers fit; there is no freight book so far as the Commonwealth railways are concerned, and if they can secure patronage by cutting rates to the lowest point, no one can prevent the Commonwealth Commissioner from taking such a course. If our railway rates are increased, there will be greater inducement for goldfields traders to import increased supplies from the Eastern States. I doubt whether it is absolutely necessary to increase our railway freights. Judging by the report of the Commissioner of Railways for the year ended the 30th June, 1939, it appears that among the items which did not reach the estimate are wheat and timber. On page 9 of his report, the Commissioner says:—

Taking the main commodities the principal variations were—

Wheat, decrease of 18,343 tons and £16,415 in earnings. Owing to low market prices business practically stagnated, resulting in an accumulation of over 200,000 tons in the country at the end of the year.

I do not think that is likely to occur in the ensuing 12 months. I am optimistic enough to believe that because of the war wheat will bring a better price next year. There will be a desire on the part not only of merchants but of producers themselves and the Imperial Government to export our supplies of wheat overseas. Another commodity that showed a decrease was local timber. The Commissioner says:—

Local timber, decrease of 86,324 tons and £60,680 in earnings. A decline in the quantity of timber railed for export was chiefly responsible for this deficiency.

I do not think we shall have that deficiency this year. But the irony of the whole thing is that the "C" class traffic, which is singled

out for this increase, was one of the few classes of traffic that showed a substantial increase in revenue for the last twelve months. On page 9 of his report, the Commissioner says:—

“C” class traffic, increase of 3,762 tons and £11,245 in earnings.

Yet it is proposed to increase the freight for this class of traffic by 10 per cent.

Mr. Seward: The Commissioner is really penalising his own customers.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. I hope the Minister will review this increase. I am sorry that it was decided not to proceed with a motion for the disallowance of a railway by-law authorising this increase. Had the debate on that motion been continued I certainly would have supported the disallowance of the by-law imposing such an inequitable burden on a section of the people.

On looking through the Commissioner's report, I find that the total steam locomotive mileage for 1939 was 8,107,000 miles, in round figures. In 1938 it was 8,041,000 miles, or an increase during the year under review of 66,000 miles. I have constantly brought under the notice of this House the obsolescence of our locomotives and the bad running conditions under which they are being used. I hope to prove my statement by quoting the following figures from the Commissioner's report. The gross ton mileage—the mileage which one ton has been carried—for 1939 was 1,232,000 and for 1938, 1,249,000, or 17,000,000 miles more in 1938 than in 1939. The table on page 62 of the Commissioner's report discloses that the average train load (tons) in 1939 was 295, and 299 in 1938, showing that the trains during the past 12 months carried a lighter average load than they did in 1938.

Mr. Hill: Gross or net load?

Mr. STYANTS: Gross. It shows a lower average train load, but if we turn to the coal consumption we find it has been much heavier. I believe the increased coal consumption is due to the poor condition and obsolescence of the locomotives. I propose to quote figures of engine performances from the report of the Commissioner of Railways to substantiate my contention. Dealing with the consumption of coal on page 17, we find that in 1939 the coal used totalled 339,395 tons, and in 1938 when the loads were heavier and 17,000,000 more ton miles of additional work was done, the con-

sumption was 329,277 tons, or approximately 10,000 tons less than in 1939. If we make a calculation on the figures in the report, we find that the average mileage per ton of coal is about 24, but even there, there was a total steam locomotive mileage of 66,000 more in 1939 than in 1938. It averaged only about 6½ miles per extra ton of coal used. Although there has been a smaller amount of work done, considerably more coal has been used. In the absence of any proof that the quality of coal supplied in the last 12 months was inferior to that supplied in the preceding year, we must come to the conclusion that the engines are not giving the performance they gave in the previous year. With the lighter load, there should have been a lower consumption, and yet the consumption was greater by 10,000 tons of coal.

Dealing with engine performances set out in Appendix F on page 70 of the report, we find that the cost of operating certain classes of engines has increased much more than the cost of operating other classes. We generally find that the increase occurs in the most obsolete type of engine, but there is 100 per cent. difference in the operating costs of certain classes of locomotives. The most modern type of locomotive, which is a particularly good type, is that known as P Class, and this shows the lowest operating cost. Set out in the table is the average cost per locomotive mile, which, of course, is affected by the hauling capacity of the engine. What I wish to show under this heading is that the cost of operating some of these locomotives has increased as much as 20 or 25 per cent. There has been an increase in the price of coal of 6½d. per ton, but as we get 24 miles per ton of coal, that could not possibly account for an increase of 20 per cent. in operating costs. The cost of operating C class engines per locomotive mile increased from 27.39d. in 1938 to 30.54d. in 1939. D class engines have increased from 27.07d. to 29.46d. Ds class engines—these are the old D class super heated—have gone from 21.55d. to 24.02d. The old E class—that is the Pacific type of engine—has gone from 24.46d. to 28.30d. The Fs class—the F class super heated—has gone from 27.97d. to 31.01d. K class engines, one of the most obsolete type of engine placed in the service in the year I was born, which was 1893, have increased



from 36.65d. to 42.57d. M class engines have gone from 31.11d. to 40.76d.

I remind members that these increases have occurred over a period of 12 months. I have looked through the report carefully in the hope of finding justification for such enormous increases, but have been unsuccessful. The only explanation I can suggest is that the engines are in bad condition or that the increases are due to obsolescence. The Ms engine, a Garrett and one of the newest type, has decreased from 33.81d. to 32.47d. per mile. The Msa, which is a slight improvement on the Ms, has been reduced from 39.96d. to 38.20d. per mile. The N class has remained almost stationary. I am at a loss to understand this, because the N class is one of the oldest and worst type of engines we have. Why its running cost should remain stationary while that of many others has increased by as much as 25 per cent. is beyond my comprehension. The P type, our latest and a particularly good type of engine, has remained practically the same, having been 20.56d. in 1938 and 20.62d. in 1939.

These costs, of course are affected by the hauling capacity of the engine. An engine hauling 420 tons will cost more than an engine hauling 210 tons. To get a more accurate idea of relative performances, we must go to the last section of the same table which deals with the average cost per locomotive per 100 tons of hauling power. The table really brings all the different classes of locomotives on to a common basis. The latest class of engine cost 5.3d. per 100 tons, whereas the K class cost 13.30d. Roughly it cost 150 per cent more to haul 100 tons with a K class engine than with a P class engine. The weight of rail in the track has no bearing on these figures, because neither class of engine is permitted to run on a rail of less than 60 lbs. per yard. So it cannot be said that the difference is brought about by one engine running on a 45 lb. rail and the other on a 60 lb. rail. Leaving the P class, which gives the best result, we have the N class—the fourwheel couple engine which hauls some of the suburban passenger trains—costing 13.94d., or 150 per cent. more. The D or Ds type, which are used to haul suburban passenger trains, are doing the work at about half the cost of the N class engine. The Ds engine will haul 100 tons for 7.07d. per mile. compared with

13.94d. for an N class engine, or almost half the cost. So we have the P class engine hauling 100 tons for a mile at a cost of 5.43., a K class at a cost of 13.30d., and an N class at a cost of 13.94d., while an engine comparable with the P class—a 6-wheel coupled Pacific type known as the E and Es class—costs in the vicinity of 15 to 35 per cent more than a P class. The Commissioner's own figures are an indication that many of our locomotives are obsolete. I do not blame the Commissioner for not being able to make a better showing with them, but I believe that the statement set out on page 70 of the report offers an explanation for 10,000 tons more coal being used for doing less work last year as compared with the previous year.

As to the mechanical condition of engines, I am prepared to admit from my observations that there has been an improvement over the last three years. But there is still room for much improvement. I could obtain from the Engine Drivers' Union office, for the information of members, a thick file of complaints received from all over the State about the deplorable condition of locomotives. I do not ask members to accept my word for it. I was greatly struck by an interjection from the Premier some weeks ago when the Leader of the Opposition was discussing the condition of our locomotives. The Premier remarked that the member for Kalgoorlie would complain of their condition, and added that with all due deference to the member for Kalgoorlie, he was prepared to take the word of the Chief Mechanical Engineer before that of the hon. member. That statement rather disillusioned me. It took my mind back 25 years to an occasion when I attended a meeting of the committee of management of the loco. men's union. At the time I was a young cleaner from Collie. At the meeting was a gentleman on his feet hotly contesting the right of any engineer to dispute the opinion of a locomotive driver as to the running condition of an engine. I was enthralled with his argument to the effect that the drivers were the best judges of the running condition of a locomotive. and asked who the speaker was. The reply I received was, "That is Jack Willecock, from Geraldton." Evidently environment has spoilt the Premier because he now says that the Chief Mechanical Engineer is the best

judge of the running condition of an engine. That is not so.

I have no desire to say anything derogatory of the Chief Mechanical Engineer, who is probably an excellent man at his job; nor have I anything to say against the engineering staff, but I do say definitely that the best judge of the running condition of an engine is the man who has to drive it. The Chief Mechanical Engineer is not expected to know anything about the running condition of a locomotive; he is expected to know all about its construction. An engine driver, on the other hand, has only to know sufficient of the engineering features of a locomotive to enable him to effect temporary repairs for the purpose of getting his engine or train back to the loco. depot, where he can get mechanical assistance. To expect the Chief Mechanical Engineer to know anything about the running condition of an engine would be as reasonable as to expect the designer of a ship to know as much about the navigating of the ship as does the shipmaster. It is a well established fact that although two engines may be built to the same specification, have the same height of wheel, the same length of piston stroke, and the same size of cylinder, as well as the same steam pressure, one engine will give 25 per cent better performance than the other. There is no accounting for this difference, but it is a fact well known to loco. men and to engineers.

Hon. P. Collier: The driver finds out the difference.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. The engineer sets his engine to theory, but the man who knows whether it is capable of doing the job is the driver, and he finds out when the engine is labouring on a hill and will not pull the scheduled load over the top. While I do not claim to have any great knowledge of the mechanical construction of a locomotive—my calling did not demand that I should—I give place to no engineer when it comes to deciding whether an engine is in the condition to do the work that the department requires of it. One might as well expect the ground staff engineer at an aerodrome to be able to handle an aeroplane the same as a pilot can. The ground staff engineer is expected to know only the setting of the machine, and all he has to do is to start the engine according to theory. The pilot who takes the machine into the air, however, is

the one to say whether the engine is doing its job properly. Therefore I contend that we cannot expect an engineer to understand the running condition of a locomotive or to be as good a judge of its running condition as is the man who is actually driving it. I asked for some information relative to the working cost of the mechanical cleaning apparatus installed at East Perth and Kalgoorlie. My question was as to the approximate cost of operating the apparatus for eight hours, and as to whether the apparatus was considered a success. In Kalgoorlie I was informed that the apparatus was used about twice in every three or six months. I do not know whether that answer constitutes a reflection upon the department's statement that the apparatus had proved a success. Personally I should think that if the success of the apparatus was as stated, it would be used more frequently. With reference to cost of working, that factor was stated at £1 for eight hours. Now, to work the apparatus needs a boiler and steam. The man in charge of the boiler would require a boiler attendant's certificate, and the basic wage at Kalgoorlie being £4 16s. 4d. per week, with a margin for skill, it is evident that the cost of working would include £1 for wages alone. Then there would be needed a ton of coal to keep the boiler going for eight or ten hours. On the Coal Commission's figures that one ton would cost about £2, representing price at pit's mouth plus freight to Kalgoorlie. Therefore, it seems to me that the department's estimate is far too low.

I have brought up the question of the mechanical cleaner because it affects a matter that I have frequently brought up in this Chamber—the insufficient number of trained employees in the locomotive department. Last year an incident which occurred at Midland Junction almost brought about a cessation of the railway service of the State. There was such a shortage of staff in the Midland Junction locomotive sheds that a lad of about 19 years, with no qualification to look after a locomotive boiler, was employed, not to look after one boiler, but to light up and raise steam in and look after nine or ten locomotives in a shed. He carried on for about a month all right, but then made a mistake which is easy to make. He lit up a boiler that had no water in it, and thus he did considerable damage. I know

of three instances in which qualified men in the service made the same mistake and were awarded only minor punishment. This boy, however, was dismissed from the service. The Engine Drivers' Union cannot by any stretch of imagination be classed as a militant organisation. It has a wonderful record as regards industrial peace, with only one strike in about 40 years. That union gave notice that if the boy was not reinstated by the following Saturday, its members intended to cease work. Immediately upon the delivery of the ultimatum the union got the Disputes Committee from what some members opposite call "the Beaufort-street citadel" to try to adjust the trouble. The view of the Engine Drivers' Union, a view which I took and which I think any fair-minded and just man would take, was that if anyone deserved dismissal, it was the officer who put the boy in charge of the boilers, contrary to the law of the State. Had a private employer placed an uncertificated man in charge of a steam boiler, he would have been severely punished under the laws of Western Australia. But "the King can do no wrong." So the department dismissed the boy by way of making a scapegoat. The Engine Drivers' Union claimed that the boy, not having the necessary qualification for the work assigned to him, should not be punished at all. This lack of qualification was one of the things held against the boy. He had done the work successfully for a month, though unqualified; and the Union urged that as he had succeeded for a month in doing a job for which he did not hold the necessary qualification, and then made a mess of it, he should not be dismissed. Anyhow, despite there being almost a stoppage, the Minister for Railways, who also held the portfolio of Minister for Justice, was adamant that the most that could be done was to reinstate the boy and fine him £1, plus three weeks' wages while he was off work. This in relation to a job for which the boy had not the prescribed qualifications!

I give the entire blame to the Commissioner of Railways for the position which obtained then and obtains now in Western Australia, in regard to unqualified men being placed in charge of locomotive boilers worth thousands of pounds, and the property of the taxpayers. The upshot was that although the Engine Drivers' Union considered that a grave injustice had been

done in fining the boy £1, and depriving him of three weeks' wages, the only course was to assent. One would have thought that this case would be a lesson to the department; but about three weeks ago it was elicited, through a question asked by me, that the same performance was being repeated in Kalgoorlie. The reply to my question admitted that it was so. A youth without any qualification whatever to be in charge of locomotive boilers or any boilers under steam was placed in charge of the Kalgoorlie depot at night. The answer to a question asked by me whether there was anyone on shift with the boy who was looking after half a dozen boilers without possessing a boiler attendant's certificate, whether there was anyone to supervise his work, was to the effect that no one was on shift with him. I know that on one occasion this boy got in such a fluster through a certain mechanical defect, that he ran three-quarters of a mile to the foreman's house to get the foreman out of bed so that he might come and see what was wrong with the engine. That is the cheapness with which our railway administration treats the property of Western Australian taxpayers. It is an absolute disgrace that that state of affairs should be permitted to continue. It is a breach of the law. If a boy who is unqualified happens to make a mistake, he is dismissed. Since the dismissal to which I have referred took place, two qualified men have made the same mistake in other parts of the State. One of these men was fined £5, and the other was reduced from fireman to cleaner for a period of 12 months. These facts prove the viciousness with which the department pursued the youth. The department wished to dismiss him, and but for the fact of having a strong organisation behind him that boy would not be in employment today, but would be out looking for a job with the blot of dismissal from the Railway Department for incompetency attaching to him.

Further, the department treats very lightly the matter of having only qualified men driving trains. I remember that during the time I was in the department, if anything went wrong with the driver in the course of a journey and there was an unqualified fireman—a fireman without a driver's certificate—firing for him, the fireman's duty was to take the train into the first siding, get off the main line, and remain there until a quali-

fied driver came to take the train on. The department, for the sake of saving a few pounds, has departed from that principle on two occasions, to my knowledge. A driver at Laverton, 210 miles from Kalgoorlie, was taken ill and had to be admitted to the local hospital. He had with him a young fireman who did not possess a driver's qualifications. The department decided, instead of spending a few shillings to send a qualified driver from Kalgoorlie either by motor car or by one of the numerous departmental trolleys, which would make the run in about six hours, to authorise the uncertificated fireman to bring the train back a distance of 130 miles, the department sending a certificated driver the remaining distance of 80 miles the next day. This driver got the cleaner stationed at Laverton to fire back to Menzies with him, he himself driving the train. As it turned out, everything went all right; but I wonder whether in the event of an accident the department would have sacked the fireman because he made a mistake on the way home and thus did not carry out the job he was not qualified to perform.

On another occasion recently, a driver became incapacitated at Murrin Murrin. The same policy was then adopted of allowing a fireman, without a driver's certificate, to take charge of the train. He drove it some 40 miles without any attempt being made to send a qualified man to do the job. Such a practice was unheard-of when I was in the service, and it should be unheard-of now and henceforth. For the sake of saving a few pounds in sending relief, the department is prepared to jeopardise not only rolling-stock and locomotives but also the lives of the travelling public by placing the train in the care of an unqualified man. These are mixed trains, having two or three passenger carriages on them. The Commissioner of Railways should be instructed that he must not play fast and loose with the property and lives of the taxpayers of Western Australia, and that he must have qualified men in charge of locomotives in depots, and in all cases have a qualified driver in charge when a locomotive is hauling a train on a main line.

Most of what I have said has been in a critical vein, but I hope that at any rate the criticism was constructive. As regards the management of the railways generally, I consider that the administrative officers

and staff are deserving of commendation for the performance they have put up with the obsolete material placed at their disposal by the State. Undoubtedly, on account of financial stringency, the State has not been able to provide those men with up-to-date means and modern apparatus such as would enable them to furnish a really up-to-date service. I consider that Western Australia is in a position, with modern locomotives and proper roads, to run trains satisfactorily; but we cannot expect a greatly improved service under present conditions. The narrow gauge is an obstacle, but not insuperable; for in other countries having narrow gauge railways the trains attain fast speeds. In Japan, Java and South Africa trains are run on a 3ft. 6in. gauge similar to ours at an average speed of 45 miles per hour.

Hon. P. Collier: In New Zealand too.

Mr. STYANTS: I do not think that in New Zealand 45 miles per hour is averaged seeing that the country is mostly hilly, which factor reduces the speed of trains. But in other countries, which have rails 80lbs. to the yard, high speeds are attained. The majority of our rails are 45 and 60 lbs. Our only 80lb. rails are in the double line from Fremantle to Northam. So I say that if an up-to-date service is not being provided, it is not the fault of the administration. I know most of the men who are officers of the Railway Department, and I know that a majority of them rose from the ranks through sheer ability. There may, of course, be a couple of exceptions, but I repeat that most of those men holding administrative positions in the service secured their promotion through ability. Many of them were officials of the various railway organisations before they were promoted to the salaried staff and to administrative positions, and they got their official position in the union organisations because they showed outstanding ability; for the same reason they were promoted to the administrative staff of the railways and they are to be congratulated on the general performances they have put up. At the same time I do not consider they should be immune from criticism and I trust that the criticism I have levelled against the department will be taken as an endeavour on my part to be constructive. Therefore I hope that the department will pay some heed to what

I have said, and bring about improvement in the service.

**MR. SEWARD** (Pingelly) [5.47]: I do not intend to say very much on this Vote, but there are one or two matters upon which I wish to comment, because I have, at various times, indulged in certain criticism against the railways, not with the object of criticising the department—because a man has a bigger duty than that to perform—but for the purpose of exposing what I think were faults, and so have them remedied, and in that way do a good service to the department. Unfortunately, I cannot speak with the practical knowledge possessed by the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants), who certainly gave us a most instructive speech from a technical point of view. I can only speak as a passenger on the railways, and possibly also as a farmer. I view the position from the service the railways give to the people, but though I have not technical knowledge, I venture to say that as one of the users of the railways, I am as capable of expressing an opinion on the standard of efficiency provided as is anyone else. Before I offer any destructive criticism, I want to pay a tribute to the work of the railways, especially the work performed by the country staffs during the heavy washaways last year. There were unexpected calls upon the officers on account of the heavy rains that fell, and in one or two instances, what might have been tragic accidents were averted by the promptness of the department's officials in carrying out repairs. I have particularly in mind the mishap to the Albany train, which was derailed in the middle of the night during heavy rain. Had it not been for the vigilance of those in charge, what might have been unfortunate results would undoubtedly have followed. The engine turned over on its side, and within 24 hours repairs were effected and trains were running as usual. Work of that character reflects credit on the officials. Really I have nothing but admiration for the staff of the Railway Department; my complaints, when they are complaints, are directed towards the head of the department and those who are immediately under him. I think it is largely because they have the idea that they know all about the railways that therefore they must also have an intimate knowledge of the

requirements of their customers. With that I disagree. I remember on one occasion when the Commissioner visited my district, we pointed out to him that the loop there was too small to hold the trains, with the result that people were not able to cross the line, and often they had to wait half an hour or so before they could do so. The Commissioner on that occasion was accompanied by one of his technical officers, and he suggested that I should tell the driver to break the train so that people might cross the line. I replied, "Do you really mean to suggest that I should ask him to break his train to enable us to go across?" His answer was, "Yes." I hardly expected anything like that to come from an officer of the department, and when I refused he said, "Well, that finishes that." But the Commissioner thought otherwise and called him back to discuss the matter further. Unfortunately, that is the attitude adopted by the subordinates when complaints are made to them. The complaints do not get the consideration that they deserve. If they did, a better feeling would prevail between the Railway Department and its customers.

I express pleasure at reading in the Commissioner's report that it has been possible to add more CX sheep vans to the service. That is a popular truck with owners and it is what we have been asking for. A number have been completed, and in due course another 50 are to be built. That will give general satisfaction. In addition, cool storage vans of the EA type have been added to the service, and another 11 are to be constructed as soon as money is available in the coming year. These matters will give pleasure to users of the railways, who deserve to be given the best type of refrigerator vans and, indeed, the best type of other rolling-stock. As I have pointed out before, and I intend to reiterate it, it is only by the department keeping up to date and improving its system that it can hope to get the support of the public. Years ago when the only competitor the railways had was the horse-drawn vehicle—really it was not a competitor, because it could not haul loads over long distances—it was possible for the department to do practically as it pleased; but all that has changed, and today we have fast-moving traffic over the roads with ever-decreasing costs. Therefore, if the railways are to maintain the patronage of the people,

again I say it will be necessary for the department to bring the service up to date. The most effective way of doing that is to meet modern requirements. I can give an illustration of what happens at the present time, and will quote Kulin and Newdegate. Kulin is the centre of a very large and rich agricultural area, but there is no one in charge at the station; it is an unattended siding. That siding receives 500,000 bushels of wheat every year, and a district that produces that quantity of wheat also accounts for a good deal of general merchandise going in and out all the year round. Yet there is nobody there in charge. The same thing happens at Newdegate, which is the centre of two transport systems, one running to Ravensthorpe and the other to Lake Varley, a distance of about 75 miles. One would think that involved sufficient work to justify the appointment of an official, but again there is no one in charge there. If a person receives goods from Perth, those goods are unloaded at Newdegate and left there until they are picked up. Last year, while wheat was being taken in to Newdegate, there was a severe thunderstorm. The wheat was damaged and the person in charge of the bins refused to take delivery of some of it. Consequently, as it was not possible to put that wheat into the bins, the only thing to do was to dump it in the yard, and there it was left, the owners living up to 60 miles away and therefore unable to protect it. When the Railway Department is responsible for that kind of service to the people, it is only natural that it should lose patronage. There is also a weekly motor passenger service to Newdegate, and people who go there could consign by rail whatever they have to send, but as there is never anybody at the siding the opportunity is seized to despatch commodities by other forms of transport. So again the department suffers loss. No effort seems to be made to regain lost traffic; rather does it seem to be the other way, and that has been going on for a few years.

It is remarkable that the Commissioner in his annual report this year deplores the activity carried on in country districts whereby passengers are being brought from those centres to Perth by means other than the railways. That is all due to the services given by the Railway Department. Take my own town: a majority of the people there cannot remember when they last travelled

by rail. I do not wonder at that, because the express takes 6½ hours to come to Perth whereas a motor car will do the trip in 2½ hours. The other day I was talking to a man who told me that some weeks ago he had to come to the Midland stock market, and be there at a certain time. The Railway Department had then introduced a fast train on the Great Southern, leaving Albany a little earlier on Thursday night and arriving in Perth at 9 o'clock on Friday morning instead of five minutes to eleven. Incidentally I might mention that I asked the Commissioner whether it would be possible to run that train on Wednesdays to enable people to attend the fat stock sales. The Commissioner said that he would inquire into the matter. That was some years ago and we have heard nothing further about it. Reverting to the person who had to attend the stock markets, he informed me that at York he met a friend and was induced to continue the journey to the stock sales at Midland by car. Having arrived in good time, he spent a couple of hours there, during which the sales took place, and then walked to the railway station and inquired about the next train to Perth. The information he got was that he would be in time to catch the train that was on its way down from York, and that was the train that he had left at York several hours before. What I have related applies to the main line. Coming now to a branch line, I shall quote Wickiepin as an instance. Wickiepin is 188 miles from Perth, and if a person leaves Perth by train at 4 o'clock in the afternoon he will arrive at his destination at 1 o'clock next day—21 hours to do 188 miles. In addition, he has to pay for his bed and his breakfast at Narrogin. Even then one has to wait about before the train leaves Narrogin at 11.30 a.m. Now a car will run anyone through in the short space of between four and five hours. Unless the Commissioner can do better than he is doing at the present time, he cannot expect to receive the continued patronage of the people. The answer we have this year is that as the public are not patronising the mixed trains, the services have been curtailed. The Commissioner—somewhat humorously to my mind—puts it this way—

Although a certain amount of criticism was voiced at the time the curtailed services came into being, the amended schedules, now that

they have become more or less accustomed to by the public, are providing quite an efficient service fully adequate for the traffic offering.

Mr. Withers: So they are not encouraging any more.

Mr. SEWARD: If certain trains are to be discontinued, people will not consult calendars to ascertain whether or no the train travels that day. They will make inquiries with a view to discovering whether any car or truck happens to be travelling in the direction they desire to go and, if so, will use that means of transport. If the Commissioner believes in reducing the services to the amount of traffic offering, it will not be long before trains will cease running altogether. That is the manner in which the falling off in traffic is dealt with in the country. The remarkable fact is that when city traffic declines, as it has done in the suburbs, better facilities are offered with a view to recovering that traffic. To offer better facilities for people in the country is the only way to regain the lost ground there. I will later indicate directions in which improvements can be effected. Before doing so, I wish to draw attention to another paragraph in the Commissioner's report which impressed me. The Commissioner refers to the "steady progress in making railway travelling more comfortable." As the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants) has pointed out, certain suburban second-class carriages have been reconditioned and made comfortable, but the same cannot be said for country trains. Years ago I brought under the notice of the Commissioner the most uncomfortable conditions that the unfortunate country people travelling second-class have to endure, particularly on the night trains on the Albany and South-West lines. I see the Albany train coming into Pingelly in the winter and the unfortunate passengers are huddled together on the seats, not in separate compartments but in those wretched long, open carriages through which, when the door is opened at one end, the wind rushes from front to back. In those carriages people have to walk up and down all night if they wish to keep warm. When I suggested to the Commissioner that he should use separate compartments instead of the open coaches, so that passengers might have some degree of warmth, he replied that people preferred the open carriages. I wish he would travel in one of them on a cold winter's night. If he

did he would then understand why more people do not patronise that type of coach.

The Commissioner, in his report, has drawn attention to the increased patronage since the Diesel cars have been used. The reason for the popularity of the Diesel cars is the comparatively short time they occupy in travelling from place to place. For instance, the Albany express takes  $6\frac{1}{2}$  hours to make the trip from Perth to Pingelly, a distance of 130 miles. On the other hand, the Diesel car occupies only five hours, a difference of one hour and a half. That is a considerable saving of time. There is no doubt that those cars are being well patronised. Frequently I travel by the Diesel coach to my home on a Friday morning and there are times when to get into the coach itself is impossible and one has to find a seat in the trailer. That proves that if fast services were the general practice, the railways would be patronised to a far greater extent. Frequently in the summer time, and particularly during the holiday period, the Diesel cars have difficulty in coping with the passengers seeking accommodation. Consequently, steam trains are employed and they are run to the same schedule as the Diesel. If the same time can be made by the steam coaches, why should not they be used regularly on the main lines and the Diesel cars on the branch lines? That would do away with the need for people to travel on the slow mixed trains that proceed at the rate of about 10 miles an hour. People cannot be expected to patronise such slow-moving trains. I believe the suggestions I have made are of a constructive character, but to persuade the department of the fact seems impossible. Diesel coaches are still being used on the main lines and the unfortunate people who have to travel on the branch lines are compelled to do so by means of the slow-moving mixed trains. The train on the Merredin-Kondinin line takes eight hours to do the trip on the two days a week on which it runs. The Diesel coach does the same journey in  $3\frac{1}{4}$  hours. If the Diesel car were used on those two days a week to cater for passenger traffic and the mixed trains were kept exclusively for the carriage of goods, people would more liberally patronise the railways and some lost trade would be recovered.

I have referred to the fact that the Commissioner has said that steady progress is be-

ing made in making railway travel more comfortable. That reminds me of the fact that I have the misfortune to have to board a train at 4.30 a.m. to come to Perth. I like to have a little sleep on the journey because the Government, being sometimes in a businesslike mood on a Tuesday night, is apt to keep the House sitting late and if one has been deprived of sleep, he is not able to do his work satisfactorily. Every week for the last five weeks when I have boarded the train the carriage blind has been half-way up. When pulled down, the blind refuses to remain there. The only thing to do in the circumstances is to take the lace out of one's boot and tie the blind down, but the difficulty is to find something to which to tie it. I know that the Railway Department is hard-pressed for money: nevertheless I asked whether a nail could not be put into the wall to which I could tie the lace attached to the blind. But I could not even get that! Consequently, as soon as one pulls down the blind, it begins to rise again and when daylight appears that is the end of sleep.

The Minister for Mines: You ought to get a rebate on the shoe laces.

Mr. SEWARD: I cannot even get that. It is unfortunate that we should have to mention such matters as this in Parliament because we have far more important subjects with which to deal; but people ask why better service is not rendered and it is necessary, therefore, for us to take up the time of the House ventilating these grievances in the hope that some day in some way they will be remedied.

Turning to the question of goods traffic. The Commissioner says in his report—

Many producers are making special trips to Perth for the express purpose of carrying their own petrol and oil requirements.

As I told the Commissioner recently, the reason for this is that people cannot afford to pay the high freights that are being charged. I gave him the example of a farmer at Kulin, who told me that if he could have his oil conveyed at a reasonable rate over the railways, he would patronise the railways instead of having the commodity carried by motor truck. He said that he could bring it by truck at the rate of 7s. a drum, whereas the railways charge £1. The point he made was that if the department would carry it for 10s. a drum, or £2 10s. a ton, he would be agreeable to having it taken

by train. I passed that information on to the Commissioner, who said it could not be done. I have already mentioned the need for having responsible railway officials in large centres. Such men could interview the farmers on matters of this kind. I do not suggest that the department should carry one drum of petrol for 10s., but a resident representative of the department could interview farmers and make arrangements with them for the running of a train on a certain day for the purpose of carting oil and petrol at a reduced rate. If that were done, a large proportion of the oil and petrol now carted by truck would be taken on the trains. I can assure the Minister that farmers do not want to make these special trips to Perth and only the absolute necessity for keeping costs as low as possible induces them take such a course.

That people in outback country towns are not sympathetically treated by the department is evidenced by what occurred at Marble Bar recently. I hope the member for Pilbara (Mr. W. Hegney) will pardon my mentioning this matter. The Acting Commissioner made his inspection journey to that area this year and a request was made to him by the chairman of the Marble Bar Progress Association, Mr. J. Ironsides, for a better railway service for Port Hedland. According to the Press report—

The chairman of the progress association outlined the disadvantage of the present system under which trains were run irregularly and often resulted in Marble Bar mails and passengers missing the aerial service between Port Hedland and Perth. He said that the district wanted a regular service from Port Hedland on Wednesday and to Port Hedland on Thursday, in addition to a freight train service after the arrival of each vessel which carried cargo for Marble Bar.

That seems only a reasonable request, particularly from a district situated so far away. What was the reply? According to the Press report—

The Acting Commissioner replied by stating that the annual loss to the department on the Marble Bar line was approximately half the total annual loss sustained by the State railway system and that in these circumstances he could not see his way clear to grant any better service at present. Had the additional service been granted, it would have meant an extra expenditure of between £300 and £400 annually.

My opinion is that £300 or £400 a year could very well be spared to provide an additional



service for people in a far away electorate like that.

Mr. W. Hegney: On what date did that paragraph appear?

Mr. SEWARD: It appeared in the "West Australian" of the 11th July. I do not want to interfere in matters affecting the district of the member for Pilbara but I read that item because it is an instance of the unsympathetic treatment meted out by the department to far-removed country districts that could justly expect more consideration. Recently I moved a motion for the disallowance of certain regulations designed to increase railway freights. Subsequently I consented to withdraw the motion because in the "Gazette" of that week appeared a notice to the effect that the regulations had already been disallowed by the Legislative Council and to continue debating the matter in such circumstances would have been a waste of time. However, the Government took advantage of Section 22 of the Railways Act to re-impose those additional freight charges. I do not want it to be thought that in withdrawing my motion I indicated that I agreed to the increased charges. I intend to give the House an opportunity to express its opinion on the increases that have been made but before doing so I wish to remind hon. members of recent utterances by the ex-Premier, the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) who referred to the disgraceful manner in which the Commonwealth Government had flouted the will of the Federal Parliament by imposing regulations that Parliament had already disagreed to. But here we have exactly the same thing being done by our State Government. The Legislative Council discussed these regulations and rejected them, but the Government flouted the will of that House and acted contrary to Standing Orders that provide that if either House disallows regulations, those regulations shall cease to exist. The Government appears to have forgotten some of those democratic principles disregard of which by the Federal Government moved the member for Boulder to such an extent. I hope to receive the vote of that hon. member when I move an amendment at the close of my remarks designed to give this Chamber an opportunity of recording its opinion on this matter. I shall not say much about those rates because members will find my opinions expressed in "Hansard" of the 18th October (page 1299). On that occasion I indicated the effect of these freights par-

ticularly on those living in towns at a considerable distance from Perth—such places as Katanning, Moora, Geraldton, Wiluna and Kalgoorlie. In perusing the report of the Commissioner one finds that he regards the decreased patronage of the railways by passengers from country districts and the falling off in freights as being due to the decline in prices for agricultural products. Thus he said that wheat was left in the country and not railed because of the low prices offering. He mentioned that there was a decline of £4,199 in revenue in respect of fertilisers carried because of the poor outlook for agricultural products having restrained agriculturalists from ordering superphosphates. The same reason was given for the decrease of revenue by £7,337 in respect of "other goods." Passenger traffic, he said, fell away on account of country people not having money to enable them to travel. Such are the reasons advanced by the Commissioner for the decreased patronage of the railways.

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

Mr. SEWARD: I was pointing out that the Commissioner, in the course of his report, gave reasons for the decline in the revenue from passengers and freights. He said in most cases that was due to the decline in the price of agricultural products. The way he proposes to obtain additional revenue in order to balance the budget is by asking the people in the country areas, those engaged in primary pursuits as well as in industrial and commercial pursuits generally, to pay a higher price for their goods as a consequence of an increase in the freight charges. As pointed out by the member for Kalgoorlie, if freight charges are increased, particularly in the far distant towns, the storekeepers must pass them on to their customers, who in turn will find the cost of living has been increased. Before the rise a farmer could send a box of eggs from Pingelly to Perth on which he paid freight of 6d., and another 6d. when the shack was being returned to him. That charge, however, was increased by sixpence and the farmer now has to pay 18d. If these charges keep on piling up, country storekeepers may be driven to getting their goods by means of motor transport, which would be far cheaper than if they were sent by rail. Unfortunately, they would be pre-

vented by the Transport Act from doing that, and that being so people in the country will come to the city, and buy their own requirements, with consequent loss of business to the country storekeeper. Another factor about the position would be that country storekeepers would have to discharge some of their hands. I ask the Minister to bear these matters in mind and endeavour to have more equitable charges imposed.

It is not only on country business that the falling off in railway revenue has occurred. Let me take the passenger traffic figures to prove my statement. The decline in country traffic was 50,181 passengers or 4.08 per cent. In the suburban traffic the falling off was 545,417 passengers, or 5.35 per cent. The greater amount of falling off in passenger traffic has, therefore, been in the suburban and not the country areas, and yet the country districts are penalised. In the city areas the remedy is to put on trolley buses while the railways grant extended terms for return tickets, and offer cheaper fares to induce people to patronise the railways. Let me take a brief glance at the revenue to see where either increases or decreases have occurred. Increases in revenue have taken place with respect to wool, £4,173; fruit and vegetables, £26,543; grain (excluding wheat), £13,260; livestock, £2,313; and "C" class goods £11,245, a total increase of £57,534, of which all but £11,000 comes from the depressed primary industries. The record is a creditable one. The decreases in revenue have been—wheat (postponed), £16,415; hardwood timber, £60,680; fertiliser, £4,199; miscellaneous (this consists mostly of stone and gravel), £13,536; "A" and "B" class, £12,363; first class, £16,306, a total decrease of £123,499. The decrease of £16,415 in wheat is only postponed, because it will have to come down to port, and much of it has already done so, and the revenue from all of it will ultimately be collected. If, therefore, we add 16,415 to the increases, we get a total of £73,949, and if we subtract that from the decreases of £123,499, we get a total net loss of £49,550. The decrease in freights on hardwood is due mostly to the loss of the export market. The revenue from that source has shrunk by £60,680, so that the net loss of £49,550 on freights is accounted for by that one item. Is it fair to penalise people who are buying goods in the country by

asking them to pay the whole of the losses occasioned by the railways through the decline in the timber industry? The proper course for the Commissioner to take would be to call upon those people who decline to patronise the service, and are actually patronising motor transport, to shoulder the responsibility. But that is impossible. The only equitable course to follow, therefore, is to call upon the general taxpayer to make up the deficiency. The Commissioner should not ask those who live in far distant towns, the agriculturalists and the pastoralists, who already patronise the railways and pay their full share of the cost of running them, to bear the loss that has been sustained.

I wish to give another illustration of the treatment received by the wheatgrower at the hands of the Railway Department. When bulk handling was brought into being the Commissioner was enabled to carry much greater loads than under the bagged system. To fit in with the requirements of the bulk handling company arrangements were made by that company for trucks to be extended so that they could carry their full loading, such as could not be done with bagged wheat. The growers, of course, have to pay for the extensions both to and fro notwithstanding that the Commissioner has been enabled through them to carry a full load. The bulk handling system permits of trucks being loaded more quickly than under the system of bagged wheat, and they can be more quickly emptied. Indeed the system has greatly facilitated the handling of wheat. Notwithstanding all this an extra freight of 9d. per ton was put on to the wheat, and thus we have another illustration of the so-called sympathetic treatment meted out to the producers. A further illustration of that sort of thing is afforded by the answer given by the Minister to a question I asked the other night. Members representing agricultural electorates know that a lot of wheat was in store in country bins, and some of it is still there. That wheat has been sold, will have to be brought to port, and shipped away. Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. was anxious to get the wheat out so that the bins could be cleaned and made ready for the incoming harvest. An application was made to the Railway Department for the rental of a piece of waste and vacant land at North Fremantle, comprising about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  acres. The company desired to erect temporary

bins there so that the wheat could be held in store and be ready for shipment. The rental asked by the Commissioner for that small area of vacant land was £360 per annum. I was not surprised when the Minister said that no answer had yet been received from Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. There was every justification for declining to reply to such an offer. The charge was an iniquitous one to place upon an industry which is already hard pressed. I think the price of the wheat in question is 1s. 10d. per bushel. If the Commissioner wishes to profiteer on the industry he can give no better example of his intention than by asking a rental of £360 per annum for  $1\frac{1}{4}$  acres of waste land. Regulations which added freight charges to users of the railways were disallowed in another place, but subsequently the charges were reimposed under a different section of the Act. To give the Committee an opportunity to say whether it thinks these added charges should be imposed upon country people, and upon those engaged in farming and pastoral pursuits, and whether it thinks those charges are fair, I move an amendment—

That the Vote be reduced by £1.

**MR. WATTS** (Katanning—on amendment) [7.43]: I support the amendment, for the reasons that have been clearly expressed by the mover. It is remarkable that when an effort is made to obtain additional revenue by a department such as this, such revenue should be extracted from those items which most closely affect people who belong to what may be said to be the poorer section of the community. These are what may be referred to as bread and butter lines. In addition to that aspect of the question there is also the action of the Government, referred to by the member for Pingelly, in preventing results being achieved from the disallowance of the regulations in another place. We live, I understand, in a country that is democratically governed by a Parliament consisting of two Houses. Either of those Houses may, by virtue of a statute passed by both branches of the Legislature, disallow a regulation that has been gazetted, and that regulation having been disallowed, no longer remains the law of the country. I claim—in this respect I agree with many of the statements made by the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) some time ago—

that there is no justification to be found in any form of democratic government, under a Constitution that provides for two Houses of Parliament, for overcoming the decision of one House by the method that has been adopted in this particular instance. I cannot understand, therefore, why, on this occasion, the Government should seek to obtain revenue from the source it has sought to exploit. I know perfectly well, from discussions I have had with storekeepers and others in my electorate, that the observations made and the figures quoted by the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) are substantially in accordance with the situation as explained to me, and, as the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants) very wisely said, if the added cost to a retailer is one-eighth of a penny per lb. when worked out, that charge cannot be passed on by the storekeeper, who must charge at least  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in our currency before he can recoup himself for the added outlay. Furthermore, as the member for Kalgoorlie pointed out, an impost that produces one-eighth of a penny per lb. to the Government costs the consumer  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. extra for his supply. I realise, as the member for Kalgoorlie again so wisely pointed out, such a position makes for an increase in the basic wage. As a result of such increases in the basic wage, so far as the Railway Department is concerned, we have been told again and again that increased expenditure has been caused partly by increases in the basic wage. Should there be another such increase, as I believe there must be before long, there must be still another addition to the basic wage, with the result that there is really no such extra revenue as is supposed to be gained from the increased freight charges. All we shall achieve is increased costs for the poorer section of the community and very little return to Government revenue. Regarding the other point I mentioned concerning the disallowance of the regulation by another place and the consequent action by the Government—I have no doubt it was lawfully taken under the relative statute—I say there was no justification for the adoption of that course in the face of the disallowance by one House of the regulation that enforced the increased rates. It was perfectly clear that that section of Parliament—notice must be taken of that section of the Legislature in view of the provisions of the Constitution

and the Interpretation Act—arrived at the conclusion that the augmented charges were unjustified, substantially for the reasons given by the member for Pingelly and the member for Kalgoorlie. Therefore there can be, in my view, no justification for the imposition of those charges against the users of the railways, on whom they would place a burden representing a substantial amount. The greater proportion of that would come from the people residing in the goldfields districts and the outer portions of the agricultural areas. There can be no good reason for such an imposition upon them in the circumstances. While I realise the amendment has been moved only in the nature of a protest, I intend to support it, for I regard it as a very definite protest against an unjustifiable increase in charges upon the country people, more especially as, in the end, those increased costs will produce very little for Government revenue, while at the same time imposing a burden upon the country users of the railways quite out of proportion to the gain to the finances of the State.

**MR. TRIAT** (Mt. Magnet—on amendment) [7.50]: It is not my intention to support the amendment, and I propose to explain my reasons for adopting that course. If I believed that, in consequence of the imposition of the added charges on the goods affected, the cost of living experienced by the people in the back country would be increased appreciably, which in turn would mean a further increase in the basic wage, I would not vote in favour of the new rates. On the other hand, I am of the opinion that the amount involved by the imposition of charges, which will represent  $\frac{1}{8}$ d. per lb. in respect of commodities affected, resulting in an increase in the cost of goods by  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 1d. per lb., as suggested by the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants) and the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward), would not result in an increase in the basic wage because the addition to the cost of living must amount to 1s. before there can be an increase in the basic wage.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But only 1d. might be required to bring the cost of living up to that figure.

Mr. TRIAT: The increases will not have that effect. In fact, there is a difference of opinion between the member for Katanning

(Mr. Watts) and the member for Kalgoorlie. One said the increase would be  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. and the other said that the extra charge would be 1d. per lb. There is a divergence of opinion on the point between those two members, but I say definitely that the increased rates will not mean any addition to the basic wage. Particularly is that so in view of an Act of Parliament recently passed by both Houses as a result of which traders are prevented from increasing costs unless the added charges are warranted. By that means ample protection is accorded people in the back country. I would not support any increased charges upon any one section of the community, whether in the metropolitan area or in the back country. After hearing the discussion and having met the Minister for Railways in conference on this particular question, I am convinced that most of the complaint centres round the fact that action has been taken without the sanction of Parliament. I do not think the impost will be of any consequence. Before I record my vote, I desire that members shall know my reason for not supporting the amendment.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan—on amendment) [7.52]: The remarks of the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) have given members cause to think furiously. It is amazing to realise that the impost upon primary production consequent upon the additional railway charges, should have received consideration. Such a position cannot do other than cause discontent throughout the State. If anything were calculated to do injury to the outlook generally, such a state of affairs as that indicated by the member for Pingelly would certainly have that result. I have no hesitation in saying that, unless a complete answer is forthcoming from the Minister, there is no alternative for the Committee than to agree to the amendment, thereby indicating strong disapproval of the situation confronting us today. Beyond that, I do not think there is any need for me to say much. Some reference, however, may with justice be made to the proposed rental of a vacant block in the Fremantle district where it was proposed to store wheat. The rental suggested was £6 per week. To think that such a charge could be made for vacant land the use of which really means added revenue to the Railway Department, almost

passes belief. It may be that the Minister has some explanation, and I hope he has. However, I cannot do other than support the amendment.

**MR. DONEY** (Williams-Narrogin—on amendment) [7.54]: As a representative of a country electorate, I am very glad indeed of the opportunity to express my views during the discussion on the amendment. The Premier's announcement that £30,000—the member for Kalgoorlie stated the figure at £50,000—represented the amount to be secured from the people in the rural areas, has caused angry feelings among the country folk. How anything else could be expected is difficult to see. Naturally, the people feel it would be very unjust if, having borne the brunt of the depression, they are now to be selected for special taxation along the very crude lines—and they were indeed crude—outlined by the Premier during his Budget speech. The country people cannot understand why the railway deficit should not be charged to Consolidated Revenue in precisely the same way as are losses on other public utilities, nor can anyone else explain why that is not done. Every public body with which I am connected in my electorate has written to me strongly condemning the proposal. Their views must be taken into account. Neither the Premier during his Budget speech nor the Minister for Railways—I do not blame the Minister for these imposts—has made any attempt to justify the proposed increases in the freight rates. I would not expect them to endeavour to do so for the reason that they know very well that while working up a case in support of the impost upon the country people, they would at the same time demonstrate that they should take similar action regarding metropolitan train and tram fares. I do not know why there should be any differential treatment as between the country and city users of the railways, unless it be that the metropolitan people are in a position to retaliate against the Government in that they can choose between the several forms of transport available to them. On the other hand, the country people, because of the provisions of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, have no choice and are therefore considered fair game by the Premier. With all respect to that hon. member, I say the proposal is neither fair nor is it sound business, for the reason

that the people to be penalised when the charges become operative are those that all along have accorded support to the railways. It is bad business indeed on the part of the Premier to single out people for such a tax. Then, again, people in the country areas have experienced eight very bad years, during which the whole period of which they have been consumed by worry and overloaded with debt, to which reference has been made on many occasions. They do not know where to turn for a single penny and, as members realise, at this moment they are confronted with the prospect of a return for their products, as a result of confiscation by the Federal Government of their wheat and wool, that does not represent an amount equivalent to the cost of production. In face of all that, the Premier considers the present just the very time when another little tax will not do them any harm! Members will recall that 18 months ago the Government decided to ignore the judgment of the Arbitration Court in connection with a dispute that was raging at Collie. As a result, action was taken by the Government, under pressure from a very powerful and certainly very shrewdly-controlled union, to impose its decision upon the Commissioner of Railways by requiring him to accept an added financial burden that operated materially against the economic working of the railways. How can the Commissioner of Railways stand up against that? He is under too many thumbs. Whose? The Government's—but that is proper enough—the Arbitration Court—again that is quite right—and that of the Collie mines—that is very wrong. In the circumstances we cannot blame the Commissioner of Railways, or those associated with him in the control of that large department, for the situation that appears to have arisen. I say, too, that, arising from the same circumstances—and I commend this question to the Minister for answering in due course—the present is a time when the House should be told exactly what extra expenditure the Commissioner of Railways is met in annually on account of this decision with respect to Collie coal. I raise this point, too. May not the deficit, after all, right itself? I do not mean permanently, but temporarily, or for the duration of the war. There is a shortage of petrol which

is likely to be intensified as the months pass. If that means anything at all, it certainly will mean a reduction in motor transport; and so it would naturally follow that there would be a corresponding increase in the transport over the railways. That in turn would naturally lead to an increase in railway revenue, which even if it did not wipe out the deficit would go a long way towards doing so. I hope members on the Government side of the House will not regard the question before us as in any sense a party question.

**The Minister for Mines:** Not a vote of no confidence?

**Mr. DONEY:** I regard the question other than as a motion of no confidence. I admit that usually a question such as this is regarded as a motion of no confidence; but it is not incumbent upon the Government to regard it in that light. Surely the House must recognise that this question is one upon which all country members of the House could agree, that is, of course, if they wish truly to protect the rights, privileges and needs of their electors. I assert that in such case they should certainly support the motion before the House. This business of railway freights is always bad for country people. When city houses send their goods to the country, the country people must pay the freight; when the country people send their goods to the city, again the country people must pay. There is another aspect of this increase in freight, namely that whereas the price of goods in the city would remain unaffected, that is not the case in the country, despite what my friend the member for Mt. Magnet has said. Therefore country people, who are as keen as people elsewhere, are likely to purchase their goods where they can secure them at the lowest price. They will turn down the country storekeeper and make their purchases in Perth if the prices in the country are increased. I am sure this House recognises that our country storekeepers for the past eight or nine years have had a particularly bad time. Do not let us deliberately make it worse for them by insisting upon the increases that have been outlined by the Premier and referred to so amply and completely by my friend the member for Pingelly.

**MR. MANN (Beverley—on amendment)** [8.3]: As previous speakers have said,

people in our farming districts have had a bad spin for a number of years past, and they should not now be saddled with these increases in freight charges. Farmers in my electorate, rather than pay the increased charges, have decided to purchase motor trucks, in which they will carry their produce to Midland Junction, taking their groceries back with them. If that continues, we shall soon reach a point when our country towns will be wiped out from a business point of view. City people have great advantages over country people. They have no freight charges to pay, and why should country people be burdened with these extra charges? Every member of the House, whether Labour, Country Party or Nationalist, will agree that our primary industries are the State's main asset. The farmer is often criticised; nevertheless without our farming community the State would cease to exist. If these increased charges are to be maintained then in my opinion the Railway Department will suffer considerably.

**The Minister for Mines:** Is it a party matter?

**Mr. MANN:** The member for Williams-Narrogin said it is not a party matter, and I agree with him. It is an expression of opinion by members of the House.

**Mr. Patrick:** The amendment could have been moved by a member on the Government side of the House.

**Mr. MANN:** That is so, and I am surprised it was not. I hope the House will take the question seriously. As I said, if the increased freight charges are to be maintained, not only will they have a detrimental effect upon our country towns but they will add seriously to the costs of our primary producers. You, Mr. Chairman, know, as one representing a country electorate, that the pastoralists could not bear an increased burden like this. For years they have suffered from drought conditions and low prices for their wool. They have borne the burden and heat of the day. Is it right that they should be made to suffer still further? I hope members will seriously consider the views that have been expressed and support the amendment.

**MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson—on amendment)** [8.6]: I support the amendment, without any desire whatever to stonewall the Estimates. I know that that is not the idea of the member for Pingelly in moving the

amendment. As a matter of fact, I fully expected that the member for Kalgoorlie would move a similar amendment. It is mere camouflage for the Minister to suggest that the amendment is tantamount to a vote of no confidence. It is not. It could have been moved by any member of this Chamber. I have heard of amendments to reduce an item in the Estimates by £1 being moved by members on the Government side of the House, and in nearly every instance they were defeated. Like the member for Mt. Magnet, I believe that any increase in freights that apply to country districts will increase the cost of living. In turn, the basic wage will have to be increased, while the man on the land—the producer—has to pay the piper. That will always be so as long as we continue with our present system. The member for Pingelly was right when he said that the general taxpayer should take upon his shoulders some of the burden of running our railways. The whole burden should not be placed upon the users of the railways who live in the country. I hope the amendment will pass, although I do not think much good will result. I am not so concerned about that point as I am about something which occurred in this House. Had the Leader of the Opposition been sitting on the Government side of the House, I think he would have moved a motion dealing with the way in which Parliament was recently ignored. I ask the Minister for Railways when he is replying to give his reasons for laying the by-law on the Table, and especially why he flouted the wishes of Parliament. The by-law was disallowed by Parliament; but the Commissioner of Railways, by virtue of a section in the Railways Act, imposed the self-same increase. That is a course which the member for Boulder stated the Federal Government was following. I cannot understand why, after Parliament disallowed the by-law, its decision should be immediately flouted by the Commissioner of Railways. Why should he make fools of 80 members of Parliament, and make of Parliament a mockery and a sham? Why did he not follow the second course, instead of adopting the method of laying the by-law on the Table of both Houses of Parliament? However, members are having an opportunity to express their opinion. I support the amendment.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. J. C. Willecock—Geraldton—on amendment) [8.10]: I hope the House will not carry the amendment. I intend to trace the history of the Railway Department and its relationship to the general finances of the State; what Parliament, in its wisdom, decided when it passed the Railways Act in 1904, and what the policy of various Governments has been in regard to the relationship of the Government of the day to the policy of the department. When I became Minister for Railways in 1924, the then Commissioner of Railways told me that the policy of Governments for 19 or 20 years had been that the railways should, as far as possible, give the best service they could to the community; and for those services the Commissioner was expected to collect sufficient money so that the general revenue of the State would not be burdened with a loss on account of railway transactions. Parliament, when it passed the Railways Act in 1904, set out therein what the Commissioner could do and what Parliament could do. Parliament said to the Commissioner: "We will remove the railways from the sport of politics. The railways are a business concern and must be run on business lines. The Commissioner is to get back from the users of the railways the cost of the services rendered to them." On the occasion referred to, the Commissioner asked me, "Do you want the railway system to be run on commercial lines, on a business basis, or do you want them to be run in such a way that, by resolution of Parliament, fares and freights can be forced up or forced down, irrespective of what the Commissioner—the expert vested by Parliament with control of the railways—considers to be right? Do you want to interfere on every possible occasion in the administration of the railways?" I gave him the same reply that he had received from previous Ministers. I told him that the railways were primarily designed to give a transport service to the people of the State; but that in regard to certain matters, we had to undertake the responsibility for developing the State, and in order to do that cheap rates would have to be charged in certain cases. In pursuance of that policy the railways have, for the last 20 years, been transporting super for hundreds of thousands of miles at the rate of ½d. per ton per mile, which is about three-sevenths of the ordi-

nary cost of transporting one ton over one mile of the railway system. Three-sevenths of the actual cost of transporting fertilisers is charged to producers; the other four-sevenths is recovered from the people of the State, if it is not recovered from other users of the railways. Similarly, in regard to wheat, if one turns to Table J in the Commissioner's report, one will find that wheat is placed in one category, and that various other commodities are placed in other categories. This is done to provide a basis of charges that has been approved by railway experts all over the world, and that basis is the ability of the commodity to pay a certain freight. It is not a question of what the service costs the Railway Department. Freight rates are charged on the ability of the commodity to pay. To charge a freight rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton per mile on gold or diamonds or wearing apparel would be ridiculous. Different rates are charged, but the things that are important to the community and are requisite for the development of the country are carried at special rates. I refer members to page 84 of the Commissioner's report, where they will find set out the different rates levied for various articles. Nobody would dream of charging a freight according to weight on bricks for use in the country, because bricks are heavy and the cost of building would be made prohibitive. Therefore a low rate is charged. Members will see the rates for such commodities as wool, wheat, hay, straw and chaff. Wool is a valuable commodity and the practice has been to charge a higher freight on wool than on wheat. When wool was about 1s. 8d. a lb. the freight was 4d., but it is now down to 3d. per ton per mile. Wheat, however, is charged at about one-third of that rate. In other words, wool is charged three times as much as is wheat, but it is of about 20 times the value. What is done here is done all over the world. A scale is fixed according to the ability of the commodity to pay. A ridiculously low rate is charged for fertilisers, namely,  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton per mile, whereas it costs the railways four times as much to transport it. We do that deliberately. We deliberately transport fertiliser at one-quarter of the cost so that the settlers may get it cheaply.

Three or four years ago, when the Transport Act was passed and we cut out some of the competition with the railways, wages

receded and we found that we could almost balance accounts after making reductions in freights. We made reductions to the extent of £100,000 to £120,000 a year, and there was no criticism of the Railway Department for reducing freights. Members accept the principle of arbitration; they agree that the Arbitration Court is the authority to determine and fix wages. The court raised the wages of railway employees from £3 10s. to £4 2s. a week, and now members say, "Notwithstanding that each of the 8,000 employees obtained a rise of 12s. a week in wages, you are not to alter your freight charges at all, but have to make good the deficiency from Consolidated Revenue or from some other mysterious source."

The amendment has been moved because the Commissioner has acted on business lines in order to meet an increased burden of £180,000 to £200,000 represented by the heavier wages bill. He told the Government that in order to get around, he must increase freights to the extent of £100,000. We pointed out that it was a bad time to make such an increase and instructed him to make reductions in the staff, though not by way of retrenchment, to cut out some of the frills or some of the conveniences provided for the public. We told him that when employees retired from the service, the vacancies must not be filled, but the work must be distributed over those that remained. We told him that all possible means must be adopted to counteract the increased expenditure. The Commissioner wanted to recoup himself to the extent of one half of the increase; but we told him we would agree to his recouping himself to the small extent of £50,000 in freight increases. This was the set-off against the £180,000 increased expenditure brought about, not by any action of the Government, but by the policy of arbitration to which we all subscribe.

Mr. Doney: The protest is against the metropolitan area escaping this increase.

The PREMIER: The people of the metropolitan area do not use the railways. If that is to be the argument, and members insist on scrapping the policy adopted since the inception of the railways, namely that the users of the railways shall recompense the department for the services provided, it will be a revolution in transport business in this State. That attitude has never been adopted.



Mr. Doney: But it is fair.

The PREMIER: No Government of any political complexion would adopt that policy. Labour and anti-Labour Governments alike carry out practically the same railway policy.

Mr. Doney: I agree with you there.

The PREMIER: It would be a revolution in railway administration if Parliament said we must impose a land tax or some other tax to recoup the railways for the extra expenditure imposed upon them. The Commissioner is merely following the practice that has been adopted ever since we have had a railway system. He has done what every Commissioner has done. Whenever there has been an increase in cost, he has endeavoured, as far as possible, to recoup himself for some of the new outlay. That is where the Commissioner comes in as against members of this Chamber. He, with his knowledge of technique, considers this is the right method to adopt.

Mr. Doney: There need be no revolution because you have not increased metropolitan rail fares.

The PREMIER: Let me inform the hon. member that Mr. Stevens, then Premier of New South Wales, attended a meeting of the Loan Council seven or eight months ago and submitted a proposal to finance a deficit of £3,500,000. Mr. Stevens was asked what he proposed to do, and he replied that he was going to increase taxation, railway freights and fares, as well as other things. Six months afterwards I asked him how he had got on with his increases in metropolitan rail fares, and he replied, "We increased the charges and lost more money."

Mr. Warner: This might have the same result.

The PREMIER: We have not imposed increased charges on the people of the metropolitan area.

Mr. Doney: The increase in country freights might have the same effect.

The PREMIER: Let us consider the increased cost to the people who will be affected. For a man with a family of three or four, the increased cost will be less than a farthing per day on various commodities. That is the total effect of it. We have entrusted the administration of the department to the Commissioner, and do members intend to say to him, "You do not know your job. We know it ever so much better.

What you say does not count. We will be the railway experts and show you how little you know about running the railways?"

Mr. Doney: We take that same control in regard to all other activities.

The PREMIER: It has never been done with the railways. The policy was determined by Parliament.

Mr. Doney: But Parliament would instruct a specialist in certain lines.

The PREMIER: And a specialist was instructed by Parliament in this matter. He was asked what he proposed to do about the £180,000 bill he had to meet because of the determination of the Arbitration Court. The Commissioner considered the matter in the light of his knowledge and that of his officers. They considered the whole question, including the development of the country on which the success of the railways depends. The matter was discussed for weeks, and finally the Commissioner submitted a recommendation to the Government. I can claim to know something about the railways. I administered the department for 10 years, and for 20 years before that I worked in the railways. I understand the different aspects, but I never felt myself competent to challenge the decision of a conference of railway officials, who are loyal and good servants, when they suggested something that they considered was in the best interests of the State. I do not think anybody in this House is competent to express a sounder opinion as to what should be done.

Mr. Doney: But we are competent to say whether the tax is evenly distributed or not.

The PREMIER: But not as competent as are those people whose life's work it has been to deal with these matters.

Mr. Doney: We are, in that respect.

The PREMIER: Then are we to adopt the attitude in future that no matter what the Commissioner or his experts say, we are more competent to express an opinion? Are we to adopt the attitude that we shall foolishly pay £2,000 a year to an alleged expert who does not know his business? Are we going to tell the Commissioner to get out of the way and we will show him how to run the railways?

Mr. Doney: We are dealing with the impost.

The PREMIER: The impost is eminently fair and reasonable. "I shall have to look after my electorate in relation to the scheme for decreasing expenditure as much as possible. Recently I went up to my district, which had a station master when I was in the railways 40 years ago. The department cut out that station master. He had been a very great convenience to the people of the district; but he was only a convenience, and not an earner in the sense of earning revenue. The Commissioner in his discretion decided that the people of my district would have to do without that convenience. I dare say the member for Swan would say that the Kalamunda people are suffering enormous inconvenience because of the removal of their station master.

Mr. Sampson: Not a word has been said about it.

The PREMIER: In my district the people had something to say. However, the station master did not earn anything except the goodwill of the people, and the Commissioner of Railways said his department could not pay an officer to earn mere goodwill. Let us split the decrease of £150,000 in expenditure into three parts. The users of the railway are to pay £50,000. The railway administration will have to effect economies to the extent of another £50,000 by cutting out conveniences and other things. Then, if no other way is possible, Consolidated Revenue will have to stand the third £50,000. Is not that an eminently fair and reasonable allocation of the increase in costs? That is the spirit in which the Government approached the question. We would not say "Select the farmers and put imposts on them," or "Select the mining industry and put imposts on it." We said, "Select freights which can bear added imposts, and spread that method right over the Railway Department." Without boosting up the Commissioner and his staff, whom I know to be good men, I say that is a fair and reasonable method. Incidentally, this is not a time when I want to boost men who seem to be unpopular, as the Commissioner of Railways and his staff appear to be. The Government considered what was done to be a fair and reasonable solution of the problem of getting the £150,000. Many railway employees are growling about the reduction, but they have to stand it. The incidence of the freights

shows that no individual will be affected adversely to the extent of more than perhaps, a couple of shillings in the year—3d. on a parcel, which may be sent about once in six weeks. A man recently said to me, "I used to send down three cases of eggs per week, but the department is charging me 3d. more per case." I asked, "How much does that increase mean per dozen?" He replied. "About a farthing a dozen. I am robbed to that extent." It has been asked why the Minister for Railways did not lay something on the Table of the House. The Railway by-laws are provided for in Section 24 of the original Act, which section says that the Commissioner when he makes a by-law will have to obtain the approval of Parliament. The Commissioner does make by-laws which do affect the public considerably, and it may happen some time that the Commissioner may pass a by-law to regulate the conduct of people in railway carriages and on railway stations and may go too far. Then Parliament has to say which by-laws shall be enforceable. Under a railway by-law a man may be haled to court and fined as much as £5. Parliament must reserve to itself the right to deal with such by-laws.

But as regards freights, Section 22 of the original Act vests in the Commissioner the right to make alterations in regard to freights, fares, conditions, fees and charges of all descriptions being purely railway matters. However, in order that the country's interests may be conserved and in order that there shall be some control, the Commissioner of Railways cannot do those things except by the authority of the Minister. In this case the Minister's authority was obtained, and therefore this could be done. For the sake of economy in administration, the Commissioner of Railways has a reprint of his by-laws published from time to time—not very often. Every few months there is need for a new by-law; and every four or five years the railway by-laws are reprinted. In order that all the by-laws may be available to the public, they are printed in a book called "The By-laws of the Railway Department." Most people are more concerned about freights than about by-laws; but it has been the custom to incorporate them in a by-law.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It has been done so long that it has become customary.

The PREMIER: Yes. I do not remember any occasion during the last 20-odd years that a motion has been moved in Parliament relative to things which the Commissioner, with the Minister's approval, had specific power to do. Railway charges being printed in the form of a by-law, they automatically go on the Table of the House. So successful has been the administration of the Railway Department that not one by-law made by the Commissioner of Railways has been challenged here. When another Chamber attempted to do something it had no legal right to do, it was time to say who has the authority and who has not the authority. We have got back now to the proper legal position. Neither this Chamber nor another place has any right, under the Railways Act, to question this by-law. A Chamber of non-railway experts says, "We are going to take from a man who is vested with authority by Act of Parliament, something which has worked successfully for the past 35 years." The hon. member asks this Committee to agree to an amendment for a reduction of this Vote by £1 to indicate to the Commissioner that in the opinion of this Chamber he does not know his business when he makes these increases, small as they are, on the community. This Chamber wants to know what it is doing.

Mr. Doney: Why did not the Commissioner levy something similarly small on the fares?

The PREMIER: The Commissioner discussed that matter with me on one occasion, and I told him what I had learnt from the Premier of New South Wales. The Commissioner of Railways said to me, "We have that information. The Commissioners meet in conference every 12 months and discuss questions of policy. If a suggestion is good, we adopt it; and if it is bad, we reject it." I know what has happened in New South Wales. That State's railways have lost about £100,000 by not encouraging people to patronise the trains, apparently preferring to run empty trains. I see by the Press that the New South Wales Commissioner of Railways has decided to abolish the system of two classes of accommodation in and around Sydney. About 3 per cent. of the people use the first-class carriages, thereby monopolising 33 per cent. of the accommodation; the rest of the train is overcrowded by people paying sec-

ond-class fares. It is now recognised in New South Wales that making two classes is a retrograde step in the metropolitan area. After all, in travelling from Subiaco to Perth what is the difference between travelling first-class and travelling second-class, so long as either accommodation is clean? In London, for instance, the whole of the underground system is one class. In Japan and other countries there is only one class of accommodation. Trolley buses, although first-class, charge only second-class fares. I think I have now satisfied the Committee. The Minister had no desire to hoodwink or insult or delude Parliament. As a matter of convenience, and following a custom which has existed for 35 years, the Commissioner decided to do this. But when one House of Parliament decided to usurp powers vested in the Commissioner by Act of Parliament, naturally we sought to get back to the original legal position. The fair thing has been done in regard to these increased charges. They do not press unduly on any section of the community, but represent an eminently fair, wise, reasonable and equitable solution of an admittedly difficult problem. If we turn down, coldly and deliberately, a decision that has been come to by the Railway Department, which has given much consideration to the matter, and say that the department does not understand its business, we must take that step in the light of all knowledge that we have gained since the Railways Act was passed 35 years ago. I hope the amendment will not be carried, but that the present system will be continued. Parliament, after many years of unsuccessful direct Ministerial control, arrived at the conclusion that that was not the method by which to conduct the railway system. The Railways Act has been in force for 35 years without an amendment. That in itself indicates that over that long period Parliament has been satisfied with the scheme of administration embodied in the Act. Yet, because we have an alteration in freights which might affect someone to the extent of one-tenth of a penny on a lb. of sugar, are we to scrap all that experience? Are we to revert to the bad old system of Ministerial control, which Parliament brought to an end because it was unsatisfactory? I do not think we have sufficient reason for altering the present system,

which has proved to be so very satisfactory. The Railway Department has done a good job for the people of the State, especially for farmers and goldfields residents. It would not have been possible for those people to be settled where they are had it not been for the railway system.

Mr. Seward: What would be the position of the Railway Department without them?

The PREMIER: There is mutual co-operation, and that is for the benefit of the State as a whole.

Mr. Doney: That is a different matter.

The PREMIER: Railways have increased the value of land and have increased opportunities for production. How would the mining companies at Kalgoorlie fare if they had to revert to the transport system of our original prospectors—camel teams? How would they fare if forced to use what has been termed the most up-to-date form of traffic? I refer to motor traffic. How would Kalgoorlie, Wiluna and Laverton fare if, instead of being able to use railway transport, they were called upon to pay the cost of transport by motor?

The Minister for Railways: And Mukinbudin.

The PREMIER: Ask motor transport to cart goods to Mukinbudin or to Lake Grace! We know motor transport could not cope with the traffic. In fact, the Minister for Works, in his capacity of Minister for Transport, reminds me that the Government is subsidising farmers at Lake Grace and Newdegate, in the Lakes country. The Government is giving those farmers a chance to produce successfully. The Government says, "We will give you money." We have done so and are continuing to do so, because these people are most unfortunately placed.

Mr. Seward: I saw a contractor taking 100 gallons of oil on his motor truck.

The PREMIER: Many people break the law. If the Government expended a tremendous amount of money, it could probably prevent much law-breaking, and such people as the contractor mentioned by the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) would be mulct in considerable sums of money.

The Minister for Works: You did not notice whether he had a load of super?

Mr. Seward: No. He had oil on his truck.

The PREMIER: I do not desire to delay the Committee longer. The Railway Department is, as I said, doing a good job. The department is endeavouring to recover as much as it can of the additional impost put on to it by the Arbitration Court—not that we object to the impost, but it is there, and the department has to make ends meet. I hope I have satisfied the member for Nelson that the tabling of the by-law and the subsequent action of the Commissioner were not intended as an affront to the House, nor was the subsequent action taken with a view to showing our smartness. It was taken to conform to the legal position. Having made this explanation to the satisfaction at least of myself, I hope the amendment will not be carried, but that the Committee will endorse my attitude.

MR. F. C. L. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe—on amendment) [8.55]: I presume that when Railway Estimates are before the House, members are entitled to discuss every aspect of the department; and as an increase in railway freight is one aspect of railway administration, members are permitted to exercise their critical function, and express dissatisfaction with the increases; and, should they think it desirable, to protest against such increases. If members seek to protest, as they have done on this occasion, they are entitled to protest by moving for a reduction in the vote appearing in these Estimates. I accept the Premier's assurance on the subject, but I am forced to the conclusion that the increases do not affect the metropolitan area at all. People in the metropolitan area apparently are not interested in the railways.

The Premier: Neither is the North-West.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: These increases affect country districts and the goldfields, where the people who effectively use the railways reside. They are the people who mainly benefit from the railways, and they pay for the services rendered to them. But all the people of this State benefit from the activities of the Railway Department. That aspect of the question has received considerable attention in some of the other States of the Commonwealth. The argument that the actual users of the railways should be the only people to pay for them has been discounted by the fact that in other States

the capitalisation of the railways has been reduced: and therefore the interest that the railways must pay out of their revenue has been reduced proportionately. By that means not only the users of railways, but all the people of the State bear some proportion of the cost of running the railways. In Victoria, railway capitalisation has been reduced to the extent of £30,000,000. I am not sure of the Queensland figures, but I think the reduction there was £29,000,000.

Mr. Boyle: Quite correct.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: In New South Wales the Government makes an allowance to the Railway Department from Consolidated Revenue to the extent of £850,000 per annum. The Commissioner of Railways in that State, in his annual report, complains of the inadequacy of that provision. I take it the allowance is made because—just as has occurred in this State—many miles of developmental railways have had to be constructed and maintained, although such work could not be economically justified. The railways are a kind of public utility for the purpose of opening up country and developing its possibilities, potentialities and resources, with a view to increasing the actual population capacity of the country. That is the purpose of developmental railways. Every member of the community, whether residing in the metropolitan area or in the country, must contribute to the cost of such pioneering work. I agree that our Commissioner of Railways has been placed in his position to manage the railways. I also agree that, in pursuance of the provision contained in the Railways Act, the management and control of our railways must be placed entirely in his hands. I would feel, even though I had had many years' experience as Minister for Railways, that I would not be as well placed to conduct and manage the affairs of the Railway Department as is the present Commissioner, because no person in the department except the Commissioner is as well placed to make decisions with respect to railway administration and policy as is the Commissioner himself. I know we can find within our own railway system many people who think they can do the Commissioner's work better than he can, just as we find many people attending football meetings who consider they can fill the umpire's job better than can the umpire.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not see any reference to football in this vote.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I hesitate to be critical of the Commissioner's action in making the recent increases. In my judgment, the right class of goods has not been selected. Without going into all the details, because it would be merely reiterating some very valuable evidence given by the member for Kalgoorlie on the subject, I feel that the choice of "C" class goods is not a wise one, as that class includes many commodities that enter the homes of our people. So there will be protests not only by members but by the general public that is affected by the increases. I am not altogether wedded to the idea that because there has been an increase in costs through an increase in the basic wage, the Commissioner must of necessity reach out for new revenue to meet those added costs. As hon. members know, last year our revenue was considerably lower than was estimated but we had it from figures supplied by the Premier that there were 130,000 tons of wheat left in the country last year that under normal conditions would have come to ports. So we can reasonably expect last year's wheat to come to ports this year, together with all the wheat produced this year. Consequently the Commissioner will have that source of additional revenue. Furthermore, he could make some effort to reduce general expenditure.

I am strongly opposed to the idea that the users of the railways should be called upon entirely to find the revenue necessary to make the railways pay. I am more strongly opposed to the idea that because the goldfields lines have always been good paying lines they should be looked to for increase returns. I am satisfied that we have to meet active competition from the Eastern States in respect to the supply of necessary commodities for the goldfields, and the effect of these increased rates, small as they may seem, will be to increase that competition and place the Eastern States firms in a better position to gain the market of the eastern goldfields than they have occupied in the past. People talk about an increase of an eighth of a penny a pound as though that meant nothing. For a period of ten years I had some experience in the printing trade. If I was able to buy paper for one-eighth of a penny a pound less than my competitor I could obtain jobs, because, through my wise purchase, my price

was lower than theirs. It will therefore be seen that the saving of even a small amount in the original cost will often lead to increased business, because a man who has been able to effect that saving can tender at a lower figure than his competitors, even though the reduction may be only small. The whole question of the railway freights should be reviewed. I do not favour the amendment moved by the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) because I feel it is in the nature of a protest that would be ineffective; but I am glad it was moved because it has given members an opportunity to discuss the increases. The whole subject should be reviewed by the Minister and the Commissioner. Conditionally on the Minister giving me an undertaking that he will go into the matter with the Commissioner, I propose to vote against the amendment.

### THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS

(Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna—on amendment) [9.5]: I do not intend to detain the House long, especially after the fine exposition by the Premier who, having been Minister for Railways for many years, has a thorough grip of the position. After all is said and done, the matter appears to be rather a tempest in a teacup. The increase in freights, especially for "C" class goods, is really very small. I have here figures that throw some light on the matter, Kalgoorlie being taken as the standard for comparison. The increase of 10 per cent. on the present freight would represent 7s. 7d. per ton, equal to 4d. on every 100 lbs. of goods taken to Kalgoorlie. The average haulage of wheat is 1.35 miles, and that would work out at not quite 2d. on every 100 lbs. The increased cost will thus be seen to be almost infinitesimal, so small indeed that it could not be handed on to the consumer. The increased freight on "C" class goods will affect only about 40 per cent. of the goods consumed, so the figures used by the Premier were somewhat extravagant, when he said that the increased cost of living would not be more than 1d. a day. In 1914 the freight on certain goods to Kalgoorlie was 98s. 4d. per ton or .53d. per lb.; in 1919, it was 123s. 3d., or .66d.; in 1934, 124s. 3d., or .66d.; in 1935, 76s., or .40d., and in 1935, as a result of the Transport Co-ordination Act, it was reduced to 76s. per ton, or .40d. per lb.

Mr. Cross: Nothing was said about reductions that were made.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. Cross: Members can very conveniently forget.

Mr. Seward: What was the effect of the reduction on the railway returns?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The revenue was reduced to the extent of £105,000 a year. The increase operating from the 1st October this year brought the rate per ton from 70s. in 1935 to 83s. 7d., or .44d. There has been a slight effect on the goldfields line, but so small as to make it impossible for business men to hand on the increase. It will certainly make no difference to the basic wage; there is no question of that. There was no opposition in this House when a reduction was made from 124s. 3d. in 1924 to 76s. in 1935. No one had anything to say about that.

Mr. Seward: Not even the Railway Department, because its revenue was increased.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No. Its revenue was not increased but reduced by £105,000 below what it would have been had the rate been left at 124s. 3d. per ton. At the same time an increased cost of £160,000 for wages has had to be met on account of the findings of the Arbitration Court and that sum has been increased to £200,000 as the result of findings of the appeal board. There has, in addition, been an increase of over £12,000 in interest. Where do hon. members imagine the Commissioner is to get this extra money? As a matter of fact, through these increased railway freights, he is asking for only £50,000 out of the deficit of £313,226. From the increased freight on "C" class goods an amount of only £12,500 will be returned. When that sum is spread over the whole population it will be seen to be very small and incapable of being handed on. It seems to me that country members must have some other objective in referring to this matter, because the Railway Department in 1939 made a contribution of not less than £566,915 to the primary producers of this State by not applying to wheat and superphosphate the average freight rate of 1.91d. per ton mile for tonnage handled. In adhering to the Government policy of fostering primary production, this average rate is not applied to those commodities. Wheat is carried at 1.12d. per ton per mile and superphosphate at .47d. per ton per mile.

The difference between the actual earnings per ton per mile on these two commodities, and what they would be at the average rate of 1.91d. per ton per mile represents the sum contributed to primary production by the Government Railways each year. The figures for 1930 are as follows:—

Wheat—Earnings per ton mile .. .. .	1.12d.
Difference .. .. .	.79d.
102,237,091 ton miles at .79d. per ton mile ..	£336,530
Superphosphate—	
Earnings per ton mile ..	.47d.
Difference .. .. .	1.44d.
38,397,663 ton miles at 1.44d. per ton mile ..	£230,385
	<hr/>
	£566,915

Mr. Patrick: Superphosphate is carried free in New Zealand.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Perhaps it is. I can tell the hon. member that the Western Australian railways carry superphosphate and wheat more cheaply than do the railways in any other State in Australia. I have here a table showing a comparison of freight rates in the different States. It is as follows:—

Comparison of Freight Rates.

(Average haul of wheat in W.A.—136 miles.)

		Wheat.	Manure.
W.A.	.. .. .	12s. 2d.	4s. 10d.
	(Bulk 9d. ton extra)		
S.A.	.. .. .	14s. 11d.	12s. 11d.
Vic.	.. .. .	11s. 10d.	6s. 8d.
N.S.W.	.. .. .	13s. 9d.	8s. 1d.

In respect of the carriage of wheat in Victoria, the Government provides a certain sum to the railways which makes the rate in that State higher than the wheat freight rate in Western Australia. That subsidy is equal to about 1s. 2d. per ton and brings the amount up to 13s. In New South Wales the rate is 13s. 9d., compared with the rate in Western Australia of 12s. 2d. for bagged wheat and 12s. 11d. for bulk wheat. On manure the rate in Western Australia over an average distance of 136 miles is 4s. 10d., in South Australia 12s. 11d., in Victoria 6s. 8d., and in New South Wales 8s. 1d. I am a primary producer myself, and am sympathetic in this matter, but I do not think primary producers generally have anything to growl about when we compare our charges with those appertaining to other States. There has been an increase in freights throughout Australia but no one

has said anything about it. I think the position is thoroughly understood by members and I will say no more. With reference to the remarks of the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe, I can make no definite promise but I undertake to review with the Commissioner the position as it stands and will see what can be done.

MR. HILL (Albany—on amendment) [9.16]: We are paying heavily for the failure of the Collier-Willecock administration to carry out the advice of the experts. The Premier talks about experts and the need for carrying out their recommendations, but a report was handed to the Commonwealth Government years ago and no notice was taken of it by the State Government.

Mr. Cross: Read it.

Mr. HILL: It would take too long to read. I contend that the unsatisfactory condition of our transport is due to the failure of Governments to carry out the recommendations of the experts.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member may not discuss those recommendations unless they refer to the amendment.

MR. CROSS (Canning—on amendment) [9.17]: It is amusing to hear the sob stories told by members opposite. The member for Williams-Narrogin made a series of complaints and referred to the freight increases as an impost on the agricultural industry. Many imposts on industry have been made but I have heard no voice raised by the hon. member against them. He considers that these particular imposts were unjust, and stated that several public bodies had written to him protesting against the increase in freights. These protests are made by interested and biassed people. Naturally they want to place upon the rest of the community some of the charges they themselves should pay. The hon. member said that because of the transport Act the Government had an opportunity that would otherwise have been lacking, and spoke about a monopoly of the business. One has only to keep a close watch on country roads to know how many people are evading the provisions of the transport legislation. When such people gain by evading railway freights, they do not pass their savings on to the country

community. I heard a country hotelkeeper boasting of the amount he could save by coming to Perth during week-ends to attend the races, and taking back with him in his car seven or eight cases of whisky and other spirits.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. CROSS: If people had been observing the law and everything was being carried by the railways, there would have been no need to increase freights. The increase amounts to the paltry sum of 4d. in every 100 lbs. of freight carried over a 400-mile journey. In recent weeks an increase was made in the sales tax amounting to considerably more than that, but no protest was voiced by members opposite. Because that tax is an invisible one and is paid at the source, consumers do not realise that they are being taxed. I can visualise the position in two or three years and the attitude that will be adopted by members opposite, if something had not been done by the Railway Department to stem the drift. If the railways increased freights to prevent losses members would complain, and if they had not increased them and created further losses, again there would be complaints. Members have forgotten the position that occurred in 1934 when, as an experiment, freights were decreased by about 50 per cent. All took full advantage of that decrease. When the department found that, by reason of rising costs, its own costs had increased, and it could no longer give adequate service without incurring heavy losses, and it made an attempt to regain a small portion of its previous position, its action was viewed with disgust. Members suggested that the losses should be borne by people in the metropolitan area, and that Parliament should step in and adjust the freights because of the effect they had upon the poor farmers. In some concerns in the metropolitan area substantial profits are being made. The Electricity Supply Department is making thousands of pounds profit after paying interest and all charges to Consolidated Revenue. The Country Party wants to take full advantage of that. Members suggest there has been no increase in charges in the metropolitan area. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) declared that this was

arranged so that cheap fares might be charged the people who use the trams. Not long ago a 75 per cent. increase was made on workers' tram fares in the metropolitan area. A year or so ago the workers could travel to any part of the city on a worker's ticket before 8.30 a.m. and return at any time of the day for 3d. That system was abolished and the worker now has to pay 2d. in the morning and the ordinary fare back at night. That represents an increase of 75 per cent. and was imposed because of rising costs, though no protest was voiced by members opposite. Members opposite say that the country has borne the burden of increases in freights. I have yet to learn of any State concern where Parliament is asked to fix prices. Does the manager of the State Sawmills come to Parliament when his costs are rising and he has to increase the price of timber? Parliament is not interested.

Mr. Patrick: Question the rest of the ring.

Mr. CROSS: That is the hon. member's opinion.

Mr. Patrick: The prices are the same all round.

Mr. CROSS: That applies to other concerns. Parliament does not fix the price of electricity or the freights charged by the State Shipping Service. It is hypocritical on the part of the Opposition to raise the point.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not reflect on other members.

Mr. CROSS: I do not think that is a reflection upon them.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not continue on those lines.

Mr. CROSS: I oppose the amendment, and am astonished that the question has been raised. The matter of fixing railway freights should be outside political control and be left in the hands of experts.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	..	23
					—
Majority against	..	..	..	..	5
					—



## AYES.

Mr. Berry  
Mr. Boyle  
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver  
Mr. Hill  
Mr. Latham  
Mr. Mann  
Mr. McDonald  
Mr. McLarty  
Mr. North

Mr. Patrick  
Mr. Sampson  
Mr. Seward  
Mr. Shearn  
Mr. J. H. Smith  
Mr. Warner  
Mr. Watts  
Mr. Willmott  
Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Coverley  
Mr. Cross  
Mr. Fox  
Mr. Hawke  
Mr. J. Hegney  
Mr. W. Hegney  
Mr. Holman  
Mr. Hughes  
Mr. Lambert  
Mr. Leahy  
Mr. Millington  
Mr. Needham

Mr. Nulsen  
Mr. Panton  
Mr. Rodoreda  
Mr. F. C. L. Smith  
Mr. Styants  
Mr. Tonkin  
Mr. Triat  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wise  
Mr. Withers  
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

## PAIRS.

AYES.  
Mr. Keenan  
Mr. Stubbs  
Mr. Abbott

NOES.  
Mr. Collier  
Mr. Raphael  
Mr. Johnson

Amendment thus negatived.

**MR. HOLMAN** (Forrest) [9.31]: My remarks will be brief. I wish to bring under the notice of the Minister one or two matters affecting the Forrest electorate. During the debate we have heard much about the disabilities under which country people exist. I can take the matter a little further by referring to conditions in a couple of the mill towns. My ambition is to be of service to the people by securing the appointment of attendants at railway sidings there, but so far my efforts have been unavailing. The disabilities that militate against the comfort of people residing in rural areas are great enough without their having to be deprived of railway service available to users of that utility in more favoured centres. I wish to draw attention to the position at Holyoake and Worsley. Recently the Worsley people asked me to approach the Minister to secure the appointment of an attendant at the local siding, but I met with no success. On behalf of the people of that centre, I voice an emphatic protest. The position there is quite unfair. The siding at Worsley is two or three miles from the main mill centre. Goods are delivered at the siding, but there is no one in attendance. The guard locks the goods in the shed and people to whom those goods are consigned have to break the shed open to secure their supplies. If caught in the act I presume they would be charged with a criminal offence. Such a state of affairs is decidedly unfair. At one time there was an attendant at the siding, and he was paid the munificent

wage of 10s. a week. I understand that later he was asked to accept 5s. a week, with the responsibility to keep the shed open.

**Mr. W. Hegney**: That was for part-time work!

**Mr. HOLMAN**: Exactly. Naturally he did not accept the offer, because such a small payment would hardly cover the cost of boot repairs necessitated by the walk to and from the mill centre. The people at Worsley are still hopeful that the position will be reviewed, and that they will be accorded the consideration to which they are entitled. We urge the populating of the rural areas; if we encourage people to go there, we should look after their interests. Then again Holyoake is another centre that has been established as a result of the operations of the State Sawmills Department. Because of a recent edict of the Transport Board the residents are to be deprived of the opportunity to secure fresh food-stuffs. At the end of this year those that have held a license permitting them to supply the residents of Holyoake with fresh fish, small goods and vegetables, etc., are to be deprived of their licenses and the residents will have to rely on the railways for future supplies. When goods are railed to that centre they are put into a shed or left in a truck, but there is no one appointed to look after them. When I was there recently I was informed that one man who had been energetic enough to establish a small orchard, had made arrangements to despatch a consignment of apples. He sent the fruit to the siding, where it was delivered at 12 o'clock. An hour later he went along to see that it was all right and found that evidently some of the residents had had a fine feed of apples. They were all gone. These may be small and parochial matters to mention in connection with a Vote of such dimensions, but if there were no privates, there would be no British Army. That is how I regard these matters from the standpoint of my constituents, and I hope they will be rectified. If the latter course is adopted, we shall at least have the benefit of some service from the Railway Department. To proffer such a request is not asking too much.

One other matter to which I shall allude, refers to the recent decision of the Government of New South Wales to abolish first-class fares. I congratulate the Government

upon having arrived at that decision. The abolition of differential fares has been urged in practically every State. According to a Press statement, only 3 per cent. of the metropolitan population in New South Wales travels first-class. The same applies to a large extent in Western Australia. When living in the metropolitan area and having to travel to Bassendean while working at my trade, often I had to stand in the corridors while dozens of first-class compartments were empty. It is high time that the procedure now adopted in New South Wales was followed by the Government of Western Australia. I hope the Premier will take notice of his own remarks when he mentioned that matter himself, and that he will endeavour to persuade the Minister for Railways to follow suit. From my own observations I should say that here the margin of 3 per cent. could be whittled down a little more, when we view the situation from the standpoint of our own travelling public. Probably quite a considerable number of those who do travel first-class have the benefit of free passes. I do not grumble about that, but I certainly hope that something will be done to enable people to travel in reasonable comfort as against the necessity to suffer discomfort while empty first-class carriages are hauled over our suburban lines.

**MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [9.41]:** There are two matters to which I shall refer when discussing the Railway Estimates. I wish to draw the attention of the Minister to the necessity for making provision so that people in the outer goldfields areas may have a reasonable opportunity to secure supplies of perishable foodstuffs in vans suitable for the purpose. According to the annual report of the Railway Department, 49 refrigerator vans are operating in Western Australia. In areas like the Murchison where the railway journey extends over 700 miles, highly perishable foodstuffs such as meat, eggs, butter, vegetables and fruit are transported in trucks that are not refrigerated. They are equipped with a cooling system by means of ventilation that causes a draught of air to pass through the trucks. But that air carries with it dirt and dust while the vans are in transit. Certainly there is not a lot of dirt, but a certain amount. In many instances when the foodstuffs reach their destination at, say, Mt.

Magnet, they may have to be conveyed another 60 miles by motor truck, as far as Youanmi. Members can imagine the condition in which meat would be during the summer months when it reaches its destination after having travelled 408 miles over the railways and an additional 62 miles by truck without the advantage of refrigeration. Naturally the meat is not fit for human consumption. I do not think the people on the goldfields areas and on the Murchison ask too much of the department when they urge that refrigerated vans should be made available for the haulage of perishable goods. The Commissioner has been approached with that end in view, but his reply has been that it would be too costly. If there are 49 refrigerator vans in use throughout the railway system, surely it would not be asking too much if two or three were liberated for service in the outback areas. I include in my references such outback centres as Leonora and Laverton. Leonora is 536 miles from Perth and if goods are to be taken on to Laverton they have to proceed by motor truck for an additional 43 miles. I urge the Minister to ascertain whether it is not possible to give the people better haulage facilities so that perishable foodstuffs may be in a reasonable condition when they arrive at their destination. Surely it is not beyond the conception of members generally to realise what conditions apply during the summer months in the outback areas. The temperature averages more than 100 degrees for two months in a year. Under existing conditions foodstuffs become unpleasant. If not altogether bad, they become sour. People in the back country have few facilities to enable them to deal with foodstuffs on arrival. Most of them have only the old type of Coolgardie safes, and refrigeration is not available in those areas. Surely the Government should ensure that foodstuffs consigned to the far distant centres arrive in a perfectly clean and wholesome state when they reach their destination. I hope and feel sure that the Minister will take up this matter and give it consideration. The amount of money required for the purpose of putting on one or two refrigerator vans will not be great.

Another matter to which I should like to refer is that of passenger traffic from the goldfields in the summer time. As members opposite have mentioned, many of the

trains coming to the city occupy too long a time on the journey, especially in summer time. To put in two nights on the train is a tax on people who are not strong and on women and children who are suffering from the rigours of the goldfields climate. The trips down are very often dusty and hot, and when the trip is a slow one, that makes the conditions still worse. The price of petrol has increased and the supply might be rationed to such an extent that the railways will receive a very large amount of traffic from the goldfields during the festive season. If decent facilities are provided for people who probably have not used the railways for some time past, it will be an inducement for them to continue their patronage when motor transport returns to normal.

The only way to retain their patronage is by giving them proper facilities in the way of clean and wholesome carriages. I have travelled in carriages that have been anything but clean; the conveniences often are not satisfactory and are not sufficiently attended to. No drinking water is provided that is reasonably cool, and the stoppages on the journey to Perth are altogether too numerous. Stoppages are made at places where a lengthy stay is not warranted and such stoppages are made so frequently that I am satisfied two, three or more hours could be cut off the time occupied on the journey from Wiluna to Geraldton. That being so, I leave members to calculate what saving could be made between Wiluna and Perth, a distance of over 700 miles.

Another matter I wish to bring under the notice of the Minister is that of the sleeping accommodation provided for second-class passengers. One would hardly credit that it would be possible to treat people in such a manner when they travel second-class. I have travelled quite a lot, but in late years I have been fortunate enough to have a pass and have been able to travel first class, and I realise the enormous difference between the two classes. Passengers pay 6s. for a second-class sleeper in a compartment containing four berths. I do not object to that, although everybody is cramped, but it is scandalous that people should be asked to sleep in blankets without sheets. One never knows whether the blankets have been used by people who are sick or well, by foreigners or others. Sheets and pillow slips should be provided on every bed; in

fact, the time is overdue when the railways should have provided these requirements for second-class passengers. Surely our people are deserving of this consideration. When people pay 6s. for a sleeper, they are entitled to decent conditions. The adoption of one class would be an improvement, provided it meant first-class for everybody. First-class accommodation for the second-class fare would satisfy me. The people who travel second-class are certainly entitled to have clean beds. The practice is to throw one rug to each passenger and he can please himself whether he spreads it on the bed or puts it on the floor. If the department rectifies these deficiencies, and the time occupied in the journey is cut down, I feel sure that people will patronise the railways. As a first-class passenger I have found the service reasonably good, and if similar service is extended to second-class passengers, the department could expect to receive quite a lot more patronage. I urge the Minister to consider this matter and if he gives effect to my suggestion, the response, I feel sure, will be satisfactory.

**MR. CROSS** (Canning) [9.49]: I was surprised that the Minister, when introducing his Estimates made very little reference to one of the most important departments under his control, namely the Tramway Department. This department made a loss on the running of trams last year to the extent of £21,800. I wish to draw the attention of the Minister to a bright spot in his department, namely the trolley buses. While the figures have not been segregated, they do indicate that greater consideration should be given to the conversion of the present obsolete trams to a system of up-to-date trolley buses. The earnings of the trolley buses increased from £12,800 in 1937-38 to £56,000 in 1938-39. The Commissioner states that the increased figures for 1938-39 were mainly due to a full year of operation on the Swanbourne route.

I have taken the trouble to obtain some figures which are of striking interest. The Claremont tramway system, when operated as such, carried 26,000 passengers a week. I have taken, not an isolated week, but a full year in order to get the average number of passengers carried. Since that line has been converted to trolley buses the number of passengers carried has increased to 58,000 a week, and the earnings have risen from

an average of £300 to £690 a week. Members who advocate the railway system for the metropolitan area should listen to these figures. The trolley bus route from St. George's-terrace to the Swanbourne Fire Station has a length of six miles four chains. The distance by railway from Perth to Claremont is six miles. The average train running time from Perth to Claremont is 27 minutes, this with five stops, excluding Karrakatta. The average running time of the trolley buses for a slightly greater distance is 22½ minutes, and we should bear in mind that the train has possibly six stops and the trolley bus about 30 stops. The train also has an uninterrupted run, whereas a trolley bus has to travel over a road frequently carrying dense vehicular traffic. With such a fast service, faster even than the train service, is it any wonder that the number of passengers has increased from 26,000 to 58,000 a week?

The Minister for Railways: It is the fastest service in the world.

Mr. CROSS: As the Minister says, it is the fastest service in the world.

Mr. Patrick: You must have told him that.

Mr. CROSS: No, even including American services, ours is the fastest. The second fastest is in one of the suburbs of New York. Therefore, I was surprised that the Minister made no reference to the conversion of the South Perth trams to trolley buses. The Commissioner in his report mentioned the following as immediate requirements:—

Walcott-stret, North Perth.—New trolley bus route from the city, via William-street.

Claremont route.—Extension of trolley bus route along Stirling-highway to Jarrad-street, with a spur line at Erie-street to Cottesloe and North Cottesloe beaches.

South Perth route.—Conversion to trolley bus, with extension along Fremantle road to Canning Bridge, or, alternatively, via Coode-street and Roberts-road to Canning Bridge.

That is not what we want. Let me tell the Commissioner what we want.

Mr. J. Hegney: I thought you were content to be guided by experts.

Mr. CROSS: Perhaps I am more of an expert than is the hon. member. We want the tram line from South Perth to the Zoo converted to trolley buses and a new line installed from Carrington-street to Coode-

street via Thelma-street and Roberts-road to South Como. The Commissioner need not worry about Canning-highway to Canning Bridge, which has a good bus service. The Government should open up the country that is not now served.

The running time of trams from Perth to the Zoo is 30 minutes and the conversion of that line would permit of a service being run in 20 minutes. The manager of the tramway system admits that this is possible. Taking what has happened on the Claremont route where the time has been cut down from 45 minutes occupied by the trams to 22½ minutes for the trolley buses—and the trip is often done in minutes less than that—members will appreciate why the people of South Perth are anxious for this conversion. It is evident that the conversion to trolley buses would not only save time but would also save wages, and this would affect the comparative running costs. I have had figures taken out as a check on some I gave previously dealing with running costs.

Mr. Hughes: What do you propose to do with the men whose wages are saved?

Mr. CROSS: No man would be put off: we want more services, and more men would be needed to provide them. The running cost of the trams last year, leaving out decimals, was 19d., and of the trolley buses, 12d. per mile, a saving of 7d. per mile. Is it any wonder that I consistently advocate the conversion of the whole of the metropolitan tramway system to trolley buses? This conversion would save the time of people and enable the system to be run at a profit. The tramway system last year incurred a loss of £21,000, and the few miles of trolley buses, after paying interest, sinking fund and other charges, showed a clear profit of £7,800. Members will probably ask how the conversion could be financed. On page 96 of the Railway Commissioner's report it appears that for some years past a sum of £21,000 has been put aside for replacement of trams by trolley buses. The total amounts to about £100,000. Out of that fund the system has been extended. Even if sufficient funds are not available at the moment, I suggest that the Government make an advance for the purpose of immediate conversion. Not only is there a single line in South Perth causing delays, but there is the Causeway, over which passes the densest traffic in the State. That is

peculiarly so at peak hours when it is common to see a continuous line of motor vehicles extending from the Ozone hotel to the east side of the Causeway. At the present time the South Perth tramway service is being run at a loss. People are exasperated because it could have been run at a profit. Some people ask, "What about providing petrol buses?" However, it may not be possible to get oil. Further, trolley buses can be run on power produced from Collie coal. Since the outbreak of war, private enterprise has bought four or five chassis for the purpose of establishing a service to South Perth and is prepared to put in that service at a few days' notice. South Perth is not getting the service to which it is entitled and it must have it. If the State has to find the money, the Premier knows where it can be obtained. There is a rapidly growing population on the south side of the river. Last night an hon. member said that I influence the Government. I have not been able to exercise much influence, but I hope that my influence will be sufficient to secure justice for the south side of the river.

**MR. J. HEGNEY** (Middle Swan) [10.5]: After listening to the eloquent and forceful speech of the member for Canning, I put forward with diffidence two or three requirements of my electorate. They are hardy annuals. I have done propaganda work with Mr. Nulsen in the matter of requirements. One question is the construction of a siding at Meltham between Maylands and Bayswater. Deputations waited on the Premier when Minister for Railways, and the same reply: "The time is not opportune." Three subsequent deputations received the same reply: "the time is not opportune." The local authority was prepared to contribute £750 during the initial stage to cover the cost of maintenance. Representations have been made to the Transport Board for a bus service in that direction. That has been pressed by the local authority. In a few years the vacant land between Maylands and Bayswater will be occupied, and there will be patrons of the railway system in that area. Possibly a review of the original proposal may be made. Certainly the time has arrived when something should be done in that direction.

The Commissioner for Railways and the general manager of the Electricity Supply

Department and, I think, the chairman of the Transport Board have made a review of the possibilities and needs of the transport system in the metropolitan area for the next ten years. They suggest that the Beaufort-street tramline should be extended a little farther. The line should be both duplicated and extended. There has been considerable development in the district, and houses have been built half a mile beyond the end of the tramline. I have no doubt that the Beaufort-street extension will come, but I feel certain that increased development might have occurred there had the proper steps been taken.

Before the Transport Board agreed to the extension of the Morley Park bus service, I suggested to the Minister that if he had money, there was an opportunity to extend the trolley bus system to Inglewood and Morley Park. The cost of carrying power into places now served by a private bus company would be small. The Government's cry is always, "We have no money for those purposes." The Beaufort-street tram represents one of the best systems in the State. A good service is given there.

Now as regards means of stepping out of the trams. A tram may be stopped on a curve, with the result that elderly or infirm people find the step up difficult. On the other hand, if the tram stops on level ground, the same difficulty is not experienced. There is one other matter, the question of extension of electricity supplies. The member for Swan is possibly more interested in this matter than I am, although we are all interested in the extension of cheap power supply to our outer urban areas. Various Ministers for Railways have been taken to those areas and entertained, and they have made promises which have not been kept. The time has arrived when electricity should be made available in these areas. The State would thus benefit by increased production of wealth. I hope the Minister will give further consideration to the matter.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna—in reply) [10.17]: I shall be brief in my reply. I have listened attentively to the constructive criticism of hon. members and also to their requests. I promise them that every consideration will be given to such criticism and requests. I could deal now with all the matters that have been raised on this Vote,

but I do not think it would be helpful to do so. It would only hold up the House.

Vote put and passed.

*Mr. Seward took the Chair.*

*Vote—State Batteries, £113,642:*

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [10.18]: I wish to offer a few comments on this Vote. I appeal to the Minister once more to give favourable consideration to the charges for treatment of tailings at State batteries. Those charges for many years have been exorbitant. They are made by way of deduction of gold to the extent of 2 dwts. 8 grains. In view of the increased price of gold, and also in view of the fact that the State batteries receive a premium on the gold so retained, the battery charges have actually increased as the value of gold has risen, and so the charge is out of all proportion to that made some years ago. Speaking on this subject previously, I referred to the fact that at one period in the history of the State batteries a straight-out charge of 7s. per ton was made for treating tailings belonging to prospectors. The present Minister for Mines and the former Minister for Mines (Mr. Troy) both denied that such a charge was ever made. I knew my statement was correct, and therefore on my return from the Murchison during the last recess and after the elections, I wrote to the Under Secretary for Mines asking him to supply me with information on the matter. I received a letter from him in reply dated the 14th April, 1939. It reads—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 5th instant and advise you that a charge of 7s. per ton for tailings treatment was in force from 12/5/26 until 23/1/32.

During part of that period the present Minister for Mines was member for Menzies. Strange to say the then Minister for Mines sanctioned the change-over in the system. As the statements made by both Ministers can be found in "Hansard," I shall not delay the House by reading them. I do not think the present Minister for Mines will doubt what I have said; but in that event he can ascertain the facts by interviewing his own Under Secretary. I know that the Minister will advance the argument in connection with these charges that has always been used. The ground upon which I protest most bitterly against them is that it matters not how concrete

a case is made out, a member gets less consideration than does the departmental officer, notwithstanding that the member may thoroughly understand the system and processes. When departmental officers find they have a Minister who will fall in behind them and make excuses in this House for failing to make the reform I have suggested, they have an opportunity to hide their inefficiency and to make things light for themselves in their official position.

The Minister for Mines: We have no inefficient officers, for a start.

**MR. MARSHALL:** I shall quote a case in a few moments which will convince the Minister conclusively that there is inefficiency, and that these charges are made for the purpose of balancing the ledger. But let me complete the point with which I was dealing. The Minister will, as I have said, advance the argument that all sands, whether of high or low value, are put through the treatment plant, and consequently some quantity of the ore treated is of very little value. The Minister should ascertain from his departmental officers why this should be done. Why go to the expense of treating ore of such low value that it will not pay to treat it? A State battery manager should have no difficulty in segregating the tailings. He knows their value. I know of a battery that treats hundreds of thousands of tons of valueless ore. The battery manager knows before he commences operations that he can put the tailings in separate dams. He mixes poor tailings with rich tailings and treats the mixture in bulk. Prospectors are penalised by the State system. The State charges the prospector, by way of deduction, 2 dwts. 8 ozs. When ore assays only 2 dwts. and a little better, the State battery manager should know at once that the tailings will be valueless; but instead of segregating, he does what I have said, mixes them with richer tailings and then puts the mixture through the process. That is the point I desire to make, and it was what I was hinting at when I said that the departmental officers were making things easier for themselves.

The Minister said there was no inefficiency in the department. Let me put a case, the details of which can be checked with the departmental records. Two years ago, perhaps a little longer, the engine at the Peak

Hill Battery became almost useless. The department then brought an engine from Meekatharra. The battery was stopped and the engine was placed on a new bed. It had been working only four months when the bed gave way and the battery was stopped for at least a further month. Whether the Minister will say that the two stoppages were the result of inefficiency, or that something was at fault, I do not know, but I was at Peak Hill when the stoppages occurred. Later on there was some argument between myself and the late Mr. Munsie, who was then Minister for Mines. The department decided to recondition the Peak Hill Battery. The reconditioning occupied three or four months. So there were three stoppages. I wish to inform the Minister that some years before this stoppage, when the present Inspector of State Batteries was manager of the Peak Hill Battery, he knew and must have told the superintendent that the timber in the well supplying the water to the Peak Hill State Battery was in a state of disrepair. I know for a fact that the well was reported as having been dangerous for several years, but the matter was not attended to. During the stoppages that I have referred to, no attention was given to the well, and about 12 months ago it entirely collapsed. Then there was a further stoppage of approximately four months. If the Minister considers that is not inefficiency, then I am hard pressed to find some other explanation. Undoubtedly the departmental heads knew of the state of disrepair of the timber in the well. Whatever may have been the cause of the two stoppages for bedding the engine, it all points to the fact that the departmental officers did not look ahead. They did not seem to be very much concerned. The facts were known to them for many years before, and when the battery was being reconditioned the work on the well should have been done. The officers should not have waited for it to fall in. The Minister is fortunate, because when the timber collapsed one of the employees, the man in charge—known as the right-hand man—missed being buried by only a fraction of a second. If I am told that these men are doing their job efficiently when they are allowing this sort of thing to occur, I shall be at a loss to understand what is meant by the word "efficient." It is no good the

Minister trying to bolster up a case for them because it cannot be done, and the Minister is not doing the right thing in attempting it. I know battery work as well as the superintendent of the State Batteries.

The Minister for Mines: Better!

Mr. MARSHALL: No, I will not say I know the work better than the superintendent; but I have had many years' experience with different companies and my experience has been far more varied than his. I do not know that the superintendent had a very lengthy period of practical experience, whatever his theoretical knowledge may be.

The Premier: If you were in the Chair you would tell members to address the Chair and not the Minister.

Mr. MARSHALL: I hope I am not being misunderstood. I want the Minister to understand the situation. I have often put forward concrete cases, but members' utterances are not accepted as being worth while. No matter how wide their experience might be in regard to these matters, members will find that departmental officers can influence Ministers into believing that what they—the departmental officers—say is right, and what the members say is wrong. That is what has happened to all Ministers. I hope it will not happen to the present Minister but that he will recognise the fact that there are some hon. members who can speak with knowledge on some subjects. I give these cases to the Minister and the records are there to demonstrate that what I say is true. The charges made by the batteries are exorbitant because of the fact that the supervision is not as efficient as it could be and should be. We should not call upon prospectors to pay for inefficiency. I ask the Minister favourably to consider a reduction and that he will take action to alter the procedure adopted by these departmental officers of keeping down expenses at the cost of the prospectors with the idea of balancing the budget.

When he was Minister for Mines the late Mr. Munsie, some years ago, gave people on the Murchison to understand that relief might be given them by way of an altered carting subsidy. He told a deputation at Mt. Magnet that as the new regulations in regard to the carting subsidy had just been brought into operation, he could not say whether there would be a reduction in the

charges as compared with previous years. If he found there was a reduction he would be more favourably inclined to give prospectors the benefit of that reduction. I have figures from the department to show that the carting subsidy in 1935-36 was £18,647 10s., and in 1939 it was £13,182 12s. 11d.

The Minister for Mines: The end of our year is December.

Mr. MARSHALL: I supposed it would be to the 30th June last.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member should address the Chair.

Mr. MARSHALL: These are the figures given by the principal registrar. I cannot argue with the Minister or with the department. These are the figures supplied. There is a saving of £5,460 to the department as a result of the latest regulations. What should be remembered is that the fact of the price of gold having risen to its present figures does not mean all prospectors are experiencing a period of prosperity. Some men go for months on end and secure only a small quantity of gold and many live on less than the basic wage. They are entitled to favourable consideration in the matter of a reduction of charges by the State Batteries.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [10.36]: I agree with the remarks of the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) regarding the treatment of tailings the value of which does not warrant treatment. In the report of the Mines Department the matter of profitable and unprofitable tailings is dealt with. Fifty-two per cent. of the tailings last year were profitable and 48 per cent. unprofitable. Unpayable tailings amounted to over 43,000 tons. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) is quite correct in suggesting that those tailings would be second-class, but with an increase in the price of gold, tailings producing 1dwt. 10 grns. per ton would be worth treating. That would reduce the whole cost of treating. Fifty-thousand tons could be treated at less cost and the charge to the prospector could be reduced. The milling of ore in the State Batteries has resulted in a loss of £20,000 but in the treatment of tailings the Government has made a profit of £32,000. Consequently I feel sure the Minister will give sympathetic consideration to a reduction of the tailing charges from 2 dwt. 8 grns.

Another matter about which the prospectors feel keenly is the fact that when they receive their assay value from the State Battery no premium payment is made until the gold is recovered.

The Minister for Mines: You had better talk to the Treasurer about that; not to me.

Mr. TRIAT: I am hoping the Minister will be able to persuade the Treasurer that it is unfair to hold half a man's money for six or eight months. In some instances six months elapse before the sands are treated. Some private crushing plants, however, when the tailings are worth over 3 dwts., will make a special advance of 90 per cent. of the value of the gold. That is done at Leonora, for example. If premiums were paid to the prospectors by the State Batteries it would be a big advantage to the men. I shall not further delay the Committee because I am sure the Minister is prepared to give every possible assistance to prospectors. If a reduction in cost to the prospectors is effected I shall be satisfied with the condition of the State Batteries.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Panton—Leederville—in reply) [10.39]: With regard to the argument advanced by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall), the change-over, of which he spoke, to the present system, represented a change from 7s. to the equivalent of 7s. The department has never got 2 dwts. 8 grains. That amount has never been charged, because the Government battery extracts only 75 per cent. We have actually got 1 dwt. 18 grs. That is the amount received. The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat) during the Address-in-reply spoke of batteries he knew that would be thrown out of commission if they could not do better than that. That is rather an interesting point. What the hon. member overlooked—and he had no right to overlook it, in view of his experience—is that the batteries he spoke of were erected to treat particular ores. Before they were erected, it was known what class of ore would be treated, and the batteries were erected specially to deal with that ore. There is no State battery in that happy position. State batteries have to be erected for the purpose of assisting prospectors to develop a field. We cannot afford to put up flash batteries for a start, because we have to treat all classes of ore. In some fields, no two ores are the same, and it would be impossible to



establish a battery to get the extraction obtained by the batteries of which the member for Mt. Magnet spoke. In those cases it is known exactly what class of battery has to be established, and such batteries are erected to treat hundreds of thousands of tons. The State batteries are in the unhappy position of having to open up fields. That has been done time after time. A battery has been established at a cost of £5,000 to develop a field; then, when the field has been started, the prospectors have sold out to a big company which has installed its own battery. The member for Murchison knows that there are batteries that have never crushed a ton of ore after their initial crushing; so there is no analogy between a battery erected by a company for the specific purpose of treating a special ore, and a State battery treating all classes of ore. It is all very well to say that we are charging too much. We are receiving 1 dwt. 18 grs. That is the exact amount we are receiving, including the premium. Apparently everybody can receive the premium except the State batteries! The member for Mt. Magnet and the member for Murchison will agree that there is no comparison between the salaries and wages paid to employees of the State batteries to-day and those paid in 1935, but there has not been one penny increase in battery charges since that year. Notwithstanding all that the member for Murchison might say, the 1 dwt. 18 grs. charged to-day is equivalent to the 7s. formerly charged, and the only difference we are getting now is the premium on the 1 dwt. 10 grs. I gave some figures when discussing the Mines Estimates that are interesting, and I should very much like to know how we can reduce the price below what it is. Last year the expenditure on State Batteries was £112,557 0s. 9d., depreciation absorbed £9,157 8s. 1d., the interest was £19,146, and the sinking fund £1,234, making a total of £142,094 8s. 10d.

The revenue we received amounted to £124,179 11s. 11d., leaving a net loss of £17,914 16s. 11d., on the transactions of 1938. In addition, there was the cartage subsidy of £14,957 12s. 8d. and the capital expenditure, which is not included in the figures I have given, £12,408 10s. 11d. If we take the batteries from their inception in 1898 to the end of December 1938, we find that the total loss was £1,176,943 6s. 6d, yet members talk about balancing the budget. The State batteries are in a position very

similar to that occupied by the railways. They are used for developmental purposes and not for profit making. Many railways were pushed out into the wheat belt to develop that part of the State, and State batteries are used for the development of the mining industry. Of course, we cannot keep on erecting batteries all over the place, for a five-head battery costs anything between £5,000 and £7,000. I fail to see how the charges can be further reduced. Quicksilver itself has gone up in price over 100 per cent, and every commodity used on a battery is bound to increase in price. Awards of the Arbitration Court are also continually giving increases in wages. We have to face all these questions, and yet we are asked to reduce our charges to prospectors. I think those people are getting a fair deal. For sustenance to prospectors alone the Government is paying out £33,000 a year. Surely that is worth something to the men concerned, and it cannot be said that the department is hard upon them. The position has now been clarified. It is not fair to ask the department to reduce charges any lower than the existing rates.

Mr. Marshall: You have reduced the charges to 1dwt 10 grns.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: When did you do that?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The reduction was gazetted the day before yesterday, so that the Minister for Mines has done something after all. The hon. member has a happy knack of telling the Minister that he is under the thumb of departmental officials. My experience of the department is that we have as fine a set of officials as could be found anywhere in the world. There is no need for any Minister to be under their thumb. They give him advice when he wants it, and altogether we have confidence in each other. We decide together what is best in the interests of the prospectors and of the State. The department is just as keen on helping prospectors as is the member for Murchison. Some members have a happy knack of saying that we have inefficient officers. It is said that we have an inefficient Commissioner of Railways, and inefficient officers here and there. I do not know how they came to be appointed, and why members of Parliament are working for £600 a year when they could get £2,000 a year in the employment of the Government.

Mr. Doney: Who said they were inefficient?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Some members have a happy knack of talking about the inefficiency of officers. My experience tells me that officers of the Mines Department are very efficient and courteous.

The Premier: And very enthusiastic.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. Wherever I have travelled on the goldfields I have heard nothing but good comments about the officials of the department, their courtesy, efficiency and enthusiasm. I know of no set of officials that is more anxious to push the industry along.

Mr. Doney: We agree.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Then we have agreed upon something at last. We cannot reduce the State battery charges below 1 dwt. 10 grains. It is not fair to ask us to do so. Every application by prospectors or members representing districts receives consideration, and no one gets more than does the member for Murchison. He seems to be able to "put it over" my officers and me and to get what he wants. He is one of the few members who can "put things over" the Mines Department. I hope we shall hear no more about this question.

The Premier: And he is the only member who can ignore the Chairman of Committees!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and give it to the other fellow when he is in the Chair. The batteries are not expected to make a profit. With regard to the point raised by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triaf), as to certain men not being paid in full, I have to say that the Treasury is to blame for that.

The Premier: Oh!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Treasury wants to know where the money comes from before it pays. I think that most of the money will now be paid. I reiterate that members can come to my office, put things over me, and in my unsophistication I give the lot away.

Item, Working and all other Maintenance Expenses in connection with the running of State Batteries, £111,500:

Mr. MARSHALL: I cannot allow the Minister to get away with what he has said, although I am grateful to hear that a reduction has been made in battery charges. We only have his word that the total extraction

from the leeching process attached to the State batteries is 75 per cent. He did not tell the Committee that the State batteries took 10 per cent. from the total amount of ore crushed for the prospector. He loses that.

The Minister for Mines: So do we.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is problematical. All the slimes, as well as the sands from the tailings, are treated by the State battery, but the prospector is paid only on a 75 per cent. extraction, from which the State battery gets 1 dwt. 10 grains. At the Peak Hill battery hundreds of tons are treated by the leeching process, when the manager knows that much of it is of very little value and should not be treated. If that ore was set aside the percentage of extraction would be higher. Free milling ore should yield more than 75 per cent. I do not think officers of the department are as enthusiastic as has been suggested, and some day I will have something further to say on that subject. I am pleased that a reduction has been made in the charges.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Cave House. £11,595—agreed to.*

This concluded the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

*In Committee of Ways and Means.*

**THE PREMIER AND TREASURER**  
(Hon. J. C. Willecock—Geraldton) [10.59]:  
I move—

That towards making good the supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ended the 30th June 1940, a sum not exceeding £6,812,914 be granted from Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

## **BILL—APPROPRIATION.**

### *Message.*

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

*All Stages.*

In accordance with resolutions adopted in Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, Bill introduced, passed through all stages without debate and transmitted to the Council.

# STATE TRADING CONCERNS ESTIMATES, 1939-40.

*In Committee.*

Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the State Trading Concerns for the year ending the 30th June, 1940, now considered. Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

*Divisions—State Brickworks, £38,830; State Hotels, £2,606; State Implement and Engineering Works, £66,500—agreed to.*

*Division—State Quarries, £38,050:*

Mr. SAMPSON: In conformity with his promise, the Minister sent an officer to Darlington to investigate the operations of the State quarries, which are very unsatisfactory. The fact that annually the quarries show a loss, and that the past financial year disclosed a larger loss than usual, does not constitute the only cause for complaint. The operations are helping to make life hideous to people who live at Darlington. Although an officer of the department was sent to inquire regarding the quantity of Fracteur used in the quarries, the annoyance to the residents still continues. Will the Minister promise to send another officer to make further inquiries to ensure that reasonable consideration is extended to the people at Darlington? I am not acquainted with the technique of blasting, but the quarries definitely constitute a menace to the happiness and contentment of at least a section of the residents, while a number of houses have been seriously damaged because of the operations. I am convinced the Minister desires to extend the consideration I suggest, and I hope he will be good enough to give me some assurance on the point.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that the Vote be agreed to.

Mr. SAMPSON: In the absence of a reply from the Minister, I can have no sense of satisfaction as to the treatment the Darlington people are to receive in future. I

have asked the Minister to give up the apparently futile effort to make the quarries pay. Perhaps it is impossible at this juncture for a decision along those lines to be reached, but it is not too much to ask that a qualified officer should be sent to Darlington, or that the Minister would consent to accompany me to that centre, in order to investigate the damage that has been caused by the operations in the quarries. No one can dispute that this is a serious matter. The people in the vicinity should have an opportunity to live quiet and peaceful lives, and not be left in a state of mental distress because of the intensely disconcerting detonations that occur at the quarries. The Premier will agree that some consideration should be extended to these people.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member wants a competent officer to visit the quarries and see whether the noise and shock can be minimised. That will be done. I hope he will not have the experience that I had on one occasion. On my visit I found that the quarry proprietor was also engaged in selling land in the immediate vicinity for residential purposes, and I am afraid we made no headway that day. Here is a district devoted to quarrying and people have settled there. The interests appear to conflict. However, I will get expert advice, but I cannot promise to close the quarries. We have no intention of doing that whatever the report might be. We have invested quite a lot of money in the quarries, and if we closed them we would still lose money. Last year we made working expenses plus £361 towards interest and sinking fund. The loss is accounted for by interest, £1,814, depreciation £1,624 and sinking fund £88. Last year we employed 92 men, and I do not propose that they shall be put off. These quarries have been added to the quarrying interests in the hills and have had the effect of keeping prices within bounds, and if for no other reason they are worth while on that account. There is no suggestion that the quarries should be closed; other quarries are also a nuisance to residents of the district.

Item. Salaries, Wages, and General Expenses of Management and Conduct of Works, £35,000:

Mr. SAMPSON: I thank the Minister for his assurance.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister is not mentioned in the item.

Mr. SAMPSON: Ninety men are employed, but if the quarries were closed, those men would get work in the same industry elsewhere. Therefore, there would be no reduction of labour.

The Minister for Works: Have you a guarantee from other quarries?

Mr. SAMPSON: There has been a good deal of talk about the price charged for stone and private quarries have offered to supply the Perth City Council—

The CHAIRMAN: The Perth City Council is not mentioned in the item.

Mr. SAMPSON: But this relates to the item.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member insists upon departing from the item, he must resume his seat.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister said the State quarries stand in the position of a policeman in the industry. If that is so, they should be closed forthwith.

The Minister for Mines: A silent policeman.

Mr. SAMPSON: In imagination, perhaps. The fact that the Minister has promised to have an investigation by an expert indicates that serious consideration will be given to the matter.

Division put and passed.

*Divisions—State Shipping Service, £208-250, State Sawmills £590,807, Wyndham Freezing Works, £117,500—agreed to.*

This concluded the Estimates of the State Trading Concerns for the year.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

### **BILL—NOXIOUS WEEDS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it did not insist on its amendment disagreed to by the Assembly.

### **BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).**

*Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it did not insist on its

amendments Nos. 1, 13 and 22 to which the Assembly had disagreed, but had agreed to the amendment made by the Assembly to the Council's amendment No. 24 subject to a further amendment in which the concurrence of the Assembly was desired.

### **BILLS (2)—RETURNED.**

1, Increase of Rent (War Restrictions).  
With amendments.

2, Plant Diseases (Registration Fees)  
(No. 2).

Without amendment.

### **BILL—LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendments to which the Assembly had disagreed.

### **BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.**

*Council's Pressed Request.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that its requested amendment to the Schedule (second part) was pressed.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the amendment to the Schedule pressed by the Council be not made.

Question put and passed: the Council's amendment not made.

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

### **BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX.**

*Council's Pressed Request.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that its requested amendments to the Schedule (second and third parts) were pressed.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the amendments to the Schedule pressed by the Council be not made.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments not made.

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

**RESOLUTION—PUBLIC BUILDINGS.***To Inquire by Joint Committee.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it concurred in the Assembly's resolution that a Committee of members of both Houses be appointed to consider alternative sites for the erection of public buildings subject to the addition of two provisos as follows: Provided that the Committee consist of four members of each House; and provided also that the report to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor be not given effect to unless signed by at least three-fourths of the members of the Committee; and further notifying that if the foregoing provisions were agreed to by the Assembly, the Council would be represented by Hon. C. F. Baxter, Hon. E. H. Gray, Hon. J. J. Holmes and Hon. W. J. Mann.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the modifications made to the resolution by the Council be agreed to and that Mr. Patrick be appointed to the Committee as the fourth representative of the Assembly.

Question put and passed and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

**BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.***Council's Amendment.*

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 10 (5)—Delete the word "minimum" in line 4, on page 12.

The PREMIER: The word the Council proposes to delete is redundant and its omission will not affect the administration of the Act. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

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

**BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.***Council's Further Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council and had appointed Hon. J. Nicholson, Hon. H. S. W. Parker and the Honorary Minister as managers for the Council; the President's room as the place of meeting and the date and time Tuesday the 5th December at 7.30 p.m.

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

*House adjourned at 11.31 p.m.*