

not get five ounces to the ton. To-day a return of 15 dwts. would pay well and many leases which have produced a considerable amount of gold in small parcels, if reopened to-day would pay handsomely. The Mines Department have all that information in their pigeon holes and I suggest the Minister should make it available to those who would be inclined to put money into the industry.

Mr. Heitmann: We have heard details of old abandoned shows for 15 years.

Mr. SMITH: And if the hon. member had read the *Sunday Times* as carefully as he leads us to believe he has he would know that many of the once abandoned shows are now producing handsome returns and employing a large number of men.

Mr. Heitmann: Where are they?

Mr. SMITH: There are several. The Light of Asia is one.

The Minister for Mines: It was never abandoned; it changed hands.

Mr. SMITH: The Minister will agree that there are many leases which if re-opened would pay handsomely. I hope the Estimates will provide a considerable increase in the mining vote. Every effort should be made to publish particulars of these abandoned leases and of the crushings obtained in the early days. The Minister should not forget that there has arisen a new generation unacquainted with the work done on many of these leases and if the information were made public any number of parties would take up these leases and I am satisfied a big percentage of them would pay well. I would go further and allow such parties to take up leases without any payment, say, for 12 months.

Mr. Foley: They can do it now.

Mr. SMITH: Yes, but they do not know which leases.

Mr. Foley: Any lease in the State can be taken up now.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member may know it, but those who are willing to go out are not aware of it.

Mr. Foley: All the miners who are any good know it.

Mr. SMITH: I would favour the granting to such men of free railway fares to the fields. It would not cost the country anything to carry them to the goldfields because the usual trains would be sufficient.

The Premier: I cannot stand all this.

Mr. SMITH: A little enterprise and energy thrown into the development of the mining industry would result in the absorption of many of the unemployed. I said in my opening remarks that I intended to be brief and in order to keep faith with hon. members I will reserve any further remarks until the Estimates are under discussion.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

House adjourned at 12-18 a.m.
(Thursday).

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 10th December, 1914.

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: The balance sheet and profit and loss account of the State Steamship service for the year ending 30th June, 1913-14.

QUESTION—RAILWAY REGRADING, NARROGIN-WICKEPIN.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Are the Government proceeding with the regrading of the Narrogin-Wickepin Railway. 2, If so, can the Colonial Secretary give any information as regards the cost of this work?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, £54,126 (estimated cost).

BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Colonial Secretary and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.35]: There was very little that was new in the speech of the Hon. Mr. Colebatch. We have heard much of it before in this Chamber and outside the House. He dealt again with the question of stuffed rolls, decreased gold yield, the increase of withdrawals over deposits in the Government Savings Bank, Workers' Homes, and so on, *ad nauseum*. I intend to deal only with a very few of the subjects he has touched upon, and to treat them as concisely as possible. However, I cannot overlook his charge in connection with stuffed rolls. He said "the purity of the electoral system was disturbed and destroyed by the manner in which the electoral rolls were compiled during the general election." Now, that is a strong statement to make and it appears to me that it ought to have been backed up by some strong evidence. The hon. gentleman made a wholesale condemnation of the system of transfer from Federal to State rolls before the election and it seems to me that he was very unfair. He never told the people whom he addressed, as he should have done, that he had ample

opportunity to remedy the matter when it first cropped up. The provision for transfer was made by means of regulation. That regulation under the Electoral Act was placed upon the Table of this House. Every member who objected to what the Government proposed to do had an opportunity of moving that the regulation be annulled.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: It would have been of no effect.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It would have been of this effect that there would have been an opportunity to make a public protest against what the Government proposed to do, but Mr. Colebatch took no action and no other member of this Legislative Council offered any objection to the course which the Government had decided upon and consequently the regulation had all the force of law and the tacit approval of the members of this House. The hon. gentleman throws the blame on the Government for the withdrawal of a Bill for compulsory enrolment. He says it gave absolute discretion to the Electoral Registrar to enrol people whether their claims were in order or not. That conveys an erroneous impression. There was a provision in the Bill that in certain cases the registrar had to be satisfied that the claimant resided in the district (not only in certain cases, but in all cases) but there were some instances in which it would be almost an impossibility for a claimant to name the street in which he lived. In many cases townsites had been declared and streets had not been named, and in other places townsites had been surveyed so long ago that at this stage of the State's history it was impossible for residents to locate the streets or even the townsite itself.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: You had another clause in the Bill covering that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In order to get over the difficulty the Government introduced the amending Act. The reason for the withdrawal of the Bill must be patent to the hon. gentleman's mind. The hon. gentleman moved that "if a claimant's house is not numbered such particulars shall be given as in the

opinion of the registrar are sufficient to enable the exact locality of the claimant's residence to be ascertained." Such a provision had to be made that anyone would be in a position to define the exact locality of the claimant's residence.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Very necessary.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Although it may be necessary, it would entail this trouble that every applicant for the franchise would have to state the number of the block on which the house where he was living had been erected. This would be a very easy matter probably for the owners of property and for those who owned the land on which the house they lived in had been erected, but it would be a very difficult thing for the man who was renting a home. He would have to secure a map of the town-site showing the number of each block before he would be in a position to accurately fill in his claim, so that if the hon. gentleman's amendment had been carried that position would have been brought about, and would have created a state of chaos in connection with electoral matters, and would probably have involved a canvass of the whole of the constituencies of the State and a fresh electoral roll.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: Those words are in the present Act.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Those words are not in the present Act in the way they were in the amendment proposed by the hon. gentleman. Then we have the allegations of corruption made by the hon. member. One of these was mere hearsay and the other was put forward deliberately as a statement of fact. With regard to the hearsay allegation he said a prominent Labour official visited Mullewa and advised men who were on both the Geraldton and the Greenough rolls to vote for Geraldton "as there was no Labour candidate for Greenough." Palpably that is an electioneering rumour and in nine cases out of ten an electioneering rumour constitutes an electioneering lie.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: This is the tenth case.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. gentleman and the members of the

party with which he is associated had ample opportunity during the election and after the election to ascertain for certain whether such a state of affairs existed and whether such conduct occurred, but evidently they placed very little reliance on the report, and consequently I think it is very ill advised of the hon. member to make a charge of that description. If we are to hear every idle remark in this House that has been circulated during the election, then we should hear some very interesting speeches, but they would not add to the reputation of this Chamber. Now for the statement of fact. Persons, it was said, had gone from Geraldton to Mullewa, and when instructions were received to transfer from the Federal rolls they were put back on the Geraldton roll, that these persons voted for the Geraldton election, and that there was a motive behind it. Further that the Chief Electoral Registrar had been supplied with a list of their names. Such a statement as that enabled me to make an investigation into this accusation, and I have taken the opportunity of communicating with the Chief Electoral Registrar. I have discovered, not that there were 100 cases of this description, not that there were even 50, but what the Chief Electoral Registrar states is that only two cases were reported, the cases of a husband and wife. Inquiries elicited that the wife voted by post for Geraldton, whilst she was also on the Greenough roll. The Crown Law authorities are going into the matter, and if there is a sufficient case there will be a prosecution. As regards her husband, he was not on the Geraldton roll, but had been struck off.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: He voted by post.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He may have done so, but at the present time the Electoral Department are not in a position to say whether he did or not. But whether he did or not, I can say that his name was not on the Geraldton roll, so that there remains only the case of one poor unfortunate old lady who was on the Greenough roll who voted in connection with the Geraldton election, and

on the strength of that great discovery, the hon. member wants the Governor to appoint a Royal Commission to go into the question of the compilation of the rolls. At the previous election I was at Geraldton while the contest was in progress and I took a very active part in connection with the matter, and afterwards discovered that there were something like 15 who voted illegally. They were people who had been out of the district for from four to twelve months, and many of them were prominent supporters of the Liberal party, but Mr. Heitmann would not take any action because he came to the conclusion that the votes were exercised without a knowledge that the parties were doing something improper.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What about the postal vote officers?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Anyone was at liberty to take action, at any rate the Labour party would not take action.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: There are several instances of this kind.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member also declared that the Geraldton canvass was completed by the department before the transfer from the Federal to the State rolls took place. That is not correct. Only a portion of the town had been canvassed, and Mr. Colebatch should be in the position to know differently. He was in Geraldton, and was closely associated with the Liberal candidate, and he must have known that the latter put on two men to complete the canvass from his standpoint, and that the Labour organisations had men on for several weeks in order to see that there was complete enrolment.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: The canvass which I said was complete was the official canvass.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was not complete.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: I was informed by the Chief Electoral Officer that it was.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: With regard to the old complaint about electors' names appearing on the roll

without sufficient address, for instance: John Jones, Geraldton, instead of John Jones, Marine terrace, Geraldton, so far as the State rolls were concerned the Chief Electoral Registrar took action in the direction of seeing that every person sent in a complete address. Notice of objection was sent out to the different electors, and those who returned their cards with the full address had their names left on the roll, but those who did not reply had their names removed.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: In some cases, but not in all.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: But in the cases of the transfers from the Federal to the State roll, under the Electoral Act it is not necessary to give the complete address—simply Geraldton—and they were transferred as they stood, and in accordance with the regulation which was laid on the Table of this House, which permitted it to be done.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: It permitted anything to be done.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Before the elections took place there were insinuations of corruption against the Government, and it was said also that the rolls had been stuffed. The stuffing, however, was alleged to have taken place in connection with the rolls of the metropolitan area, and the hon. member himself said that it was a singular thing they were stuffed in the metropolitan area where the seats were doubtful.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: And Geraldton was a doubtful seat.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the rolls were stuffed then they must have been stuffed in the interests of the Liberal party. Although there were many names on the roll which should not have been there, this was owing to the peculiar conditions existing at the time, and it was not due to the action of any official or any party. The hon. member also stated that up to the present time 50 per cent. of the Agricultural Bank advances due to farmers were still held back. That was a statement which the hon. member ought to have verified before making.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: I said in some cases.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member made the statement which I have read out. He could have gone to the telephone and called up the manager of the bank before making that sweeping assertion, which is not correct.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: I only said in some cases.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The bank paid at the rate of 50 per cent. for one month, from the 5th August to the 30th August, and during September it advanced 75 per cent., and from 1st October the full amount was paid.

Hon. V. Hamersley: May I call the attention of the House to the fact that I know of instances where these amounts have not been paid.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member can speak afterwards.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I intend to state the whole truth and to keep nothing back. In a few cases there were no applications for the balances, and the amounts are still in hand, and the department are prepared to hand them over when applied for. To show that the total is not very large I may mention that it is between £1,200 and £1,500. All the other claims have been paid, and evidently these people to whom the hon. member refers are not in want of money, otherwise they would have approached the department long before this. The hon. member criticised the Government in regard to the delay in placing the balance sheets of the trading concerns before Parliament. I must say that the matter has given the Government a considerable amount of anxiety. We have exercised every effort in order to present these returns, but it must be remembered that many of the trading concerns had been in operation for months before they were brought under the Trading Concerns Act. Take the State steamers, which were going for several months, and which were conducted on a totally different system from that which is provided for by the Trading Concerns Act. Then after the measure passed through Parliament it was some time before the State steamship

service was brought under it, and in the meantime the old system continued and it involved a considerable amount of labour in preparing the books in accordance with the legislation.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Eighteen months' work?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think so.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: But that is the fact

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The preparation of the balance sheets in connection with the State steamers involved a considerable delay, but it was presented, I think, close on 12 months ago. I laid on the Table of the House to-day the balance sheet and the profit and loss account of the steamship service up to the 30th June of last year, and if hon. members desire it I can present a true balance sheet up to the 30th of last September. I am only too ready to make available all information of that character to members of this Chamber. Mr. Colebatch, in referring to the Trading Concerns Act, remarked that there were 16 such concerns operating. He is correct as to the number, but he stated that nine of these concerns had failed to send in returns, and that the accounts of not one of the 16 had been audited. This statement presumably refers to the years 1912-13.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: 1913-1914.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is an utter impossibility to present the statement in six months after the close of the year. The accounts have to be prepared by the different departments, and then submitted to the Auditor General, and I can assure hon. members that the process is slow. I was under the impression that the hon. member was referring to the year 1912-13. With regard to the 1913-14 accounts, the following is the position: Audits have been completed in respect to the State steamship service, and I laid the balance sheet on the Table of the House this afternoon of the Government meat stalls, and the Boya quarries. Accounts for the following concerns were received at the Audit Department between 20th November and

30th November:—Perth city markets, North Fremantle sale-yards, Albany cold stores, North Fremantle abattoirs, Government refrigerating works, Kalgoorlie abattoirs, and the State implement works. The audit officers are now busily engaged on the examination of those accounts. The Government are desirous, even more than members, that balance sheets should be presented as early as possible, because the Treasury returns have a misleading tendency. According to the Treasury returns up to the 30th June last, there was something like a deficit of £40,000 on the State implement works, simply for the reason that stock had been purchased, with money which came from the Treasury and there was practically nothing going back, because when the implements were manufactured they were sold on the time payment system. That is the position of affairs. It is misleading to those who endeavour to gain their knowledge of those returns from the Treasury.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Yet you want business men to make monthly returns of their profits.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Control of Trade in War Time Commission came in for severe criticism. It could hardly be expected that gentlemen who have to perform such responsible duties and who have to defend the interests of the whole State against individuals, could escape criticism. Mr. Colebatch in his speech referred to the action of the Royal Commission in declaring the value of f.a.q. wheat at 4s. 6d., and he stated that the country emphasised the necessity for public and private sacrifice. Admittedly that is a lofty sentiment and it can be proved that the Government did make very considerable sacrifices on behalf of the farmer in declaring wheat at 4s. 6d. a bushel, as it was clearly understood by all concerned that it was only wheat of the 1913-14 harvest that the proclamation dealt with. Four shillings and sixpence per bushel for wheat in Perth was the parity of London value on the 30th September, the date of the proclamation, giving to farmers a parity of 4s. 3d. at sidings. The proclaimed rate

gave farmers who held wheat in excess of their requirements an opportunity to sell the surplus at from 1s. to 1s. 2d. better price than in the previous year. Thus the farmer was making no positive sacrifice in selling at the proclaimed price. The Government know well that a considerable quantity of seed wheat will be required for supplying necessitous farmers during next year and as the limited number of well-to-do farmers who have wheat for sale are, generally speaking, in a financial position to be able to help the less fortunate farmer who has little or no seed wheat for next year's sowing, I think it is due to them to assist in supplying seed wheat at reasonable prices.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: Do not you know that this price does not apply to seed wheat, but to wheat sold to the mills?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, but no price has been fixed for new seed wheat. I am giving the statement from the point of view of the Commission. It is emphatically a necessity for the farmer obtaining seed wheat from the Government to be able to secure it at the lowest possible rate. I hope I shall be permitted to state the case and state it accurately from the point of view of the Commission. Owing to lessened farm power—shortage of labour and horses—and to an increased price of fodder and provisions, it will cost the farmer more to put in and take off the 1915-16 harvest than ever formerly, to say nothing of the interest due to the Government. The Government are undertaking the risk of 1915-16 being a good year. Even then the wheat can only be valued against the world's market price. Any action taken by the Royal Commission has been taken to secure seed wheat for the farmers for next harvest, or to get a supply of wheat for the mills, to enable them to keep up the supplies of bran and pollard to meet the demand by dairymen, poultrymen, etc. The market prices to-day show how ineffectual has been the result. Farmers will not sell either old or new free wheat. This is the common report from both wheat buyers and millers. It is therefore a fair conclusion that the farmers who do hold wheat are not practising the pre-

cept of Mr. Colebatch that public and private sacrifices should be interpreted into deeds. Although we are all hopeful that the world's market for 1915-16 season wheat will prove very satisfactory, and that we shall have a large surplus for export, there is no guarantee that the rate will be a high one. The Government therefore propose to do everything to ensure that the cost of seed wheat is kept as low as possible, and by that means help those farmers who have had to obtain the assistance of the Government to make their repayments as they become due. On the 30th September the Government, on the recommendation of the Royal Commission, proclaimed the maximum selling price at which buyers could demand to purchase surplus stocks of f.a.q. wheat at 4s. 6d. per bushel f.o.r. Perth, with parity of value at sidings. The Commission unanimously agreed to this rate on the recommendation of the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt. The Commission publicly stated that this price would apply only to old wheat, and they would, if necessary, reconsider the position when the new season's wheat became available. I may add that no action was taken by Commissioner Rae without the full knowledge, consent and approval of the whole of the Commissioners.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What about the 5s. man.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think it will be seen that the Commissioners acted in the best interests of the State. They agreed to fix the price of old wheat at 4s. 6d. a bushel. Last year the price of wheat f.o.b. Fremantle was 3s. 10½d. less 5d. for handling charges, bringing it down to 3s. 5d. per bushel.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What has that to do with it?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In July of this year, before the war broke out, the price of wheat was exactly the same as last year, namely, 3s. 5d. Farmers had made contracts for this year on the same basis as last year. It is not the poor farmer who would benefit if the price of wheat were fixed at more than 4s. 6d. a bushel. There are only

nine persons in Western Australia at present who have large stocks of wheat and they are not poor farmers, but a different class of person altogether. If the price of wheat were fixed at even 7s. a bushel some people would not be satisfied, but what position would this bring about? The Government will have to finance the vast majority of the farmers of Western Australia this year and provide them with seed wheat, fertiliser and food, and if there was no control over the price, it might happen that we would have to pay 6s. and 7s. for the wheat required for seed. The farmers would have to put in their crops, fodder would have to be supplied by the Government in order that they might feed their horses, and what would be the cost of putting in crops under such conditions. Would it be in the interests of the agricultural community of the State? If the Government did not take action, but allowed the old state of affairs to exist, if they did not fix a reasonable price, what would be the position of affairs? The farmers would put in their crops with Government assistance, they would probably have to pay 6s. or 7s. a bushel for seed: the cost of putting in the crops would be immensely increased owing to the drought and the high price of fodder and even with good crops and good prices, the farmers would still be in an impoverished condition at the end of the season. There is no reason to believe that the price of wheat on the London market will be unduly high next year. Cultivation is going on extensively in other parts of the world, there is an immense harvest in the United States and Canada, and during the coming season there will be a very much larger acreage put under crop in all the wheat producing countries of the world, so that we cannot rely upon the price of wheat in London next year being double what it was last year. The Government and the Commission are endeavouring to prevent a few persons in the community, speculators in some instances, from securing undue advantages simply because of the occurrence of the war. If the war had not occurred even old wheat would be worth less than 4s.

6d. a bushel, and why should the Government make it more? For whose benefit would it be? Would it be in the interests of the country? I say it would not be. Mr. Cullen made no charges, but he expressed his opinions and his bitterest complaint was that there had been two trains a day to Katanning and that one of them had been cut off. I think all will admit that this is a time for retrenchment. The Government were severely criticised for the existence of the deficit and for the monthly increase of the deficit. There has been a falling off in trade and there must be a reduction in the train services. One train a day has had to be dispensed with so far as the Katanning service is concerned. Whenever there is any proposal for increased taxation Mr. Cullen is one of the strongest objectors, and there are others who take a similar stand. Mr. Gawler strongly objects to taxation and so does Mr. Hamersley. At a public meeting at Queen's Park a few weeks ago both these hon. gentlemen denounced the Government because they had taken off one train a day between Perth and Armadale. Mr. Gawler said the Government deserved condemnation and that it was a trumpety measure of retrenchment. There will be several other cases of trumpety measures of retrenchment before very long, and when the matter is considered altogether apart from their own constituencies, they will approve of the action of the Government.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: I denounced some of the costly accidents that occur.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I was rather surprised at Mr. Cullen's condemnation of the new State enterprise the fish supply. I think he is about the first gentleman I have met who has spoken against the action of the Government in this respect. Hon. members must be aware that there is now a considerable amount of distress in the community, and the Government deemed it necessary to take some action in order to provide cheap food for the people, and I think we shall succeed.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Whether you lose by the transaction or not?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Certainly not. There must be no undue loss. A few pounds loss we will not care about, but there cannot be a very large loss in such an undertaking. If, however, it cannot be run so as to make ends meet, it can be and will be closed down so far as I am concerned. This scheme has received the endorsement of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries. It has not been pressed upon him; he has recommended it and if it is possible to make a success of it I have every confidence that he will do so. The boat has not been purchased; it has been chartered.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Given to you.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, practically given to us, because the Company from whom we chartered it are anxious to co-operate with us to provide cheap fish for the people. Mr. Baxter said the East Perth works were not needed, but I would impress upon him that these are not works especially designed for the unemployed, although they will do very good service in that direction. These works should have been completed long ago. Certain re-grading had been in progress between Perth and Fremantle and it had been nearly completed, but until it is completed the full advantage from the re-grading cannot be derived. It is necessary that the whole of it should be finished and before the whole of it can be completed, certain improvements must be effected at East Perth in order to permit of the removal of the sheds from West Perth to East Perth. These works are urgently needed in the interests of economy. Sir Edward Wittenoom advocated assistance to the pearling industry. Before the war broke out the price of pearl shell in London was £220 a ton, but at present there is no market at all for it and it has been ascertained that there is a considerable quantity of shell in England unsaleable. The markets previously were principally Germany and Austria. Those markets are closed against us now and I dare say will be for many years to come. Up to the end of this month there will be about 350 tons of pearl shell at Broome. There is no doubt the pearlers are in a very dis-

tressed condition. They are not in a position to be able to pay their men and there might be trouble. We have been requested to advance anything up to £120 per ton on the shell. Even if we advanced £100 per ton it would mean £35,000 and that would serve only to the end of the year, and goodness knows how much would be required next year. It is a very difficult problem and we are advised that it is too risky to make advances or to take any action in the direction of guaranteeing them. It may be many years before there is again a market for pearl shell in Europe.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: No more risk than in brickworks.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Sir Edward Wittenoom stated that the Government had harassed the mining industry. I think, however, I can give one substantial fact which alone will disprove that assertion. Since we have been in office, the time came for the renewal of the leases of some of the principal gold mining companies in this State, and we renewed those leases without imposing any new condition. It has been ascertained recently that it had been the intention of the Liberals—they have boasted about it—if they had been in office, to secure nearly £20,000 additional rental from those mining companies before a renewal was approved of; but the present Government have not imposed anything of the kind. I do not think, therefore, that the hon. gentleman has correctly interpreted our action in connection with the mining industry. How could he come to the conclusion that it is, or was, our intention to harass the mining industry of this State? Mr. McLarty urged railway construction, and especially the building of the Margaret River railway. Now, it is the intention of the Government to go very slowly indeed as regards railway construction. What we do will be in the direction of ensuring that there shall be as speedy a return as possible from all expenditure, that the work to be done shall be not merely "ultimately reproductive"—as the official files very often phrase it—but immediately reproductive, and that as far as

possible no work shall be undertaken which involves the spending of a large amount of money in the purchase of material. So far as may be, the money will be spent in labour. Therefore, I do not think there is much prospect of the Margaret River railway being undertaken at a very early date. Before concluding, I must express my deep pleasure at the conversion of Sir Edward Wittenoom to the day labour system. Yesterday the hon. member expressed himself very clearly on that subject. I cannot call to mind that he expressed himself on it before, but yesterday he left no doubt whatever on my mind as to what his views are on the question. Coming from such a source those views will, I feel sure, have a very widespread effect on the community, and certainly the effect of leading many of those up to the present hostile to the day labour system, to give the matter the most careful reconsideration, as the result of which they cannot but be in complete accord with the opinions expressed by Sir Edward Wittenoom yesterday. But, so far as the clearing work on the Yandanooka estate is concerned, it is not practicable to carry out that work on the day labour system. That system would necessitate the employment of supervisors, and consequently add to the cost. Under the circumstances, therefore, the Government have no option but to carry out the clearing on the piece work system, which has proved satisfactory up to date.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

House adjourned at 5.21 p.m.