

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as Subclause 2:—

(2.) Where any salary or wages consists of fees paid to directors of companies or to members of boards, trusts or commissions or commissions paid to an agent and the taxpayer satisfies the Commissioner that expense has been incurred in earning such salary or wages or that for any other reason the payment of tax in respect of such salary or wages under and in accordance with section nine would be inequitable, the Commissioner may by writing under his hand direct that such salary or wages of such taxpayer shall be assessed as income for the purpose of this Act and the tax under this Act shall be payable by the taxpayer under and in the manner provided in this Act for tax in respect of income.

The opinion was expressed last night that possibly an injustice might be done to agents, although it was not the intention that that should occur, and to get over the difficulty the subclause I have just moved has been framed. The Committee will realise that there are included directors and other persons as being liable to come within the definition. The amendment will put the position beyond all doubt.

Hon. G. FRASER: This seems to me a terrible somersault on the part of the Government. We find now that a director may be permitted to deduct certain expenses incurred in earning salary or wages and at the same time we refuse a similar right to a man on a maximum of £3. After all, expenditure is incurred by the sustenance man in earning his sustenance payment.

Amendment put and passed; the clause as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 16—agreed to.

Postponed Clause 2, Interpretation:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That the words "and commission paid to agents" in the interpretation of "salary and wages" be struck out.

My object is to bring this definition more into line with the definition in the Hospital Fund Act.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amendment is not necessary. Any difficulty that might be likely to occur will be provided for

by the new subclause which has just been added to Clause 10.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

*House adjourned at 7.55 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 10th November, 1932.*

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

### QUESTION—DOUGLAS CREDIT PROPOSALS.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: In view of the public interest in the Douglas social credit plan, will opportunity be given to discuss the motion tabled by the member for Claremont?

The PREMIER replied: Yes.

### QUESTION—FARMERS' DISABILITIES.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: 1, What decision was arrived at by the sub-committee of the Premiers' Conference regarding—(a) giving farmers security of tenure for five years; (b) adjustment of liabilities during that period; (c) amendment of the Bankruptcy Act? 2, Is State legislation to be introduced to give effect to (a) and (b)?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No decision was arrived at. As to (c), the Federal Attorney General is giving the matter consideration. 2, No. The position as between debtor and creditor is now more satisfactory, and is being carefully watched.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. A. McCallum, leave of absence for one month granted to Mr. Raphael (Victoria Park) on the ground of ill-health.

### BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT.

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 13th October.

**HON. S. W. MUNSIE** (Hannans) [4.34]: I commend the Minister for Mines and the Government for having introduced the Bill, and I reiterate the statement of the Minister that such a measure is long overdue. Since the Bill was introduced, various comments have been made in the Press. Correspondence from interested sections has been published and letters have been sent to members of this House, almost to a man. The letters point out that if this Bill becomes law, the two big mines on the Eastern Goldfields responsible for most of the tributing parties will discontinue tributing altogether. Even before I heard any suggestion that the Minister intended to introduce the Bill, six months' notice to terminate tributes had been given by the Lake View and Star mine to the great majority of their tribute parties. Every mine-owner has that right. I wish to emphasise that neither this Bill nor the Act could compel a mine-owner to let a tribute. It is purely optional with a mine-owner whether he lets a tribute or not. All that this measure provides, and all that the Act provides, is that when a mine-owner decides to let tributes, he shall let them on certain conditions. The conditions prevailing to-day are certainly not equitable, and this Bill endeavours to make them equitable as between the tributer and the mine-owner. In the "West Australian" of the 5th November there appeared a paragraph headed "Great Boulder Mine, Tribute System, Suspension Rumoured." It pointed out that on the 30th June last there were 260 tribute

parties on the Great Boulder mine, while out of the 1,200 men employed on the Lake View and Star, 140 were included in tribute parties. The paragraph mentioned the rumour that the Great Boulder intended to give notice to tributers. I also heard that some time ago. In the "Daily News" of the 7th November, the following letter to the editor appeared:—

As promised by me in my letter of reply to "Shareholder," which appeared in your issue of October 20, on my visit to Kalgoorlie, I made the inquiries he desired, and the management of the mine informed me that six months' notice of cessation of tributing would be given almost immediately and tributes will only be resumed where necessary and of decided advantage to the company. The cause of this is the general increase of the reserves of the mine, and the fact of the Act now before your legislature, making it more difficult for mine owners. There is little doubt that at one period of the mine's history, tributing was not only advisable but necessary. I may add the mine is opening up to the satisfaction of the management.—Yours etc., Chas. G. Godfrey, Director, Kalgoorlie.

There is a mandate issued by one of the directors of the Great Boulder mine that notices were to be given to the tributers to terminate their agreements. I think I can speak with some authority on behalf of the majority of the tributers when I say they are quite prepared to take that risk. I have attended many meetings of the tributing section, and the men maintain that the present system of tributing is no good to them and that unless they can get better conditions, they do not care if the mines close down on tribute. They go further and say that, in their opinion, the mines will not terminate tributing, and personally I concur in that opinion. Some 12 or 18 months ago it would not have been possible for the Great Boulder mine to continue unless the tributing parties had been at work. The statement in the "West Australian" indicated that—

The value of the tributers to a mine, however, is revealed in the last September returns of the Great Boulder mine, when the company treated 6,968 tons of ore for 2,222 fine ounces of gold, and the tributers 2,940 tons of ore for 3,007 fine ounces of gold. The reason for the reported suspension of tributing on the Great Boulder mine is not definitely known, more especially as at the last general meeting (of shareholders in London) it was decided to continue the system. The value of tributers has generally been recognised in the fact that they will exploit good ore which could not

be profitably mined by the company in an ordinary way. In royalties alone, the tributers have paid £27,293 to the Great Boulder Company.

Those figures are astounding. Later I shall quote some figures that are a little more astounding. Before dealing with the principles contained in the Bill, I wish to give members and the public generally a resume of the tributing position as it has existed in the past. For many years there were two companies on the Eastern Goldfields chiefly responsible for the tributing system. At that time there was no regulation of tributes. No mention was made of them in the Mining Act, apart from one section which provided that if a lessee claimed to hold his lease by letting tribute, he had to see that the tributer earned at least £3 per week before he charged any royalty. If he was claiming to be fulfilling the labour covenants by letting the lease on tribute, he could not take royalty from the tributer until the man had earned £3 a week. There were no other stipulations or conditions under which the tributer had to work. Not once, but on many occasions, tribute parties have worked as long as nine months and have not averaged more than £1 per week. Then someone would strike a rich chute in the workings. They would get one crushing out, or probably two. The first would be a small one, because the tributers would be anxious to get some cash. If the second parcel sent to the treatment plant proved to be valuable, the company's representative would come along next day and give the tributers 24 hours' notice to quit, with the intimation that the company intended to work that portion of the mine. Thus, after working for nine months to find the payable ore, the tributers would be forced out of the mine, and the company would commence to work it. That has happened repeatedly on the Eastern Goldfields. In 1918, the Perseverance mine was practically closed down, and went into liquidation. For about three months prior to that time, they were treating ore of an average value of 21s. per ton. The company decided to cease operations and appointed a liquidator. Fortunately, the company gave the liquidator a free hand to dispose of the mine as a going concern, to break up the plant, and sell it in parcels, or to do whatever he thought best. Instead of acting in that way, the liquidator decided to let tributes wherever he could get

tributers into the mine. Immediately there was a rush for tributes on the Perseverance. I shall not quote this instance with the particular object of showing the values of the ore produced by the tributers later on. I believe that in some, but not in every instance, the position was not fair and above board. I was a member of the Royal Commission, that inquired into the question, and I also sat as an adjudicator with the warden in connection with the tribute agreement submitted by the Perseverance Company later on. Thus I know the full details of what happened. At the outset I do not think the company had a fair deal. I will quote one instance only to lend point to my remarks. After going back through the books of the company for some considerable period, we found that there was one stope in which a fair quantity of ore had been broken out and treated by the company, but there was also a quantity of ore left there that was already broken. The company's assays for the ore in that stope varied from six to 9½ dwts. Strange to say, that stope was let on tribute immediately the mine was available for that purpose. Without breaking a ton of ore, the tributers merely ran the broken ore down, after picking out the mullock, and the first crushing went 3 ozs. Members can form their own conclusion as to what happened in that instance. We cannot blame the tributers for the position. The company, having decided to let tributes, action was taken accordingly, and operations there were carried out exclusively on tribute from 1919 to 1923 inclusive. The company did not employ a single wages man except the brace man. They broke no ore for themselves. They used their own plant and treated the tributers' ore. During that period the tributers put through the mill 163,231 tons of ore that represented a value of £695,463, which worked out at 85s. 3d. per ton. As a result of the work of the tributers during that period the company was able to declare dividends that accounted for £140,000. It will be seen that tributing had the effect of resurrecting the Perseverance Mine. Another manager was appointed, and he decided to work the mine partly by tribute and partly by the company themselves. As a result, he commenced developmental work. He started off with the benefit of information resulting from much of the work that had been done by the tribu-

ters. He was successful in picking up in lower levels the values that the tributers had found in other parts of the mine. The result was that tributing was stopped, and there is no tributer on the mine to-day. The Minister eulogised the manager on account of the erection of new plant. I wish to add a word of praise to that particular manager, for he has done wonderful work. Later, he negotiated for the erection of more plant, and he made the statement to me that if the Government would agree to assist in the erection of new plant, he believed the company could reduce the cost of treatment by at least 5s. a ton, and that it was the company's intention to make it a customer's plant. That is to say, the mine would be prepared to take ore from anyone, or any other company, and treat it at the Perseverance plant. In consequence of that, I, as Minister for Mines, agreed to lend the company £10,000, and I believe the present Government carried out that undertaking. At the time the quantity of gold I have referred to was produced on the Perseverance, there was no legislation governing tributes in this State. In some instances the Perseverance, although able to pay away the enormous sum of £140,000 in dividends as a result of the tributers' work, paid the tributers in some cases on a 75 per cent. extraction only. If any company's mill were operated so as to show a loss of 25 per cent. in comparison with the assay value of the ore treated, the manager would be dismissed the next day. Even then, the treatment had given an extraction of from 90 to 91 per cent., but many of the tributers during the period I refer to received payment on a 75 per cent. extraction. Leading up to the necessity for the Bill, I want to point out that during the years 1919, 1920 and 1921 there were happenings in Australia of which we are aware. We know what took place during the war period. The Commonwealth Government commandeered all the gold produced in Australia at the standard value of gold. Either in the last two months of 1918 or in January, 1919, the Government lifted the embargo, and did not further commandeer gold. The result was that the Government gave the mining companies the right to sell their gold in the open market. In 1920, the price of gold was over £6 per ounce, but for the three years 1919, 1920 and 1921, the average at which gold was sold was approximately £1 per ounce in excess of the stand-

ard value of £4 4s. 11d. The tribute parties thought they would receive the benefit of the excess price of gold, because they believed they had a right to a proportion of it. The companies refused to pay. The tributers took legal action and the case was heard before the magistrate who gave his decision against the tributers. They appealed to the Supreme Court, but again the decision went against the tributers, because the court held there was nothing in the Mining Act to show that they had any claim to payment for the increased value of gold. As I have already pointed out, the value of the ore produced by the tributers during the 5-year period was £695,463. In these circumstances, it will readily be understood that much of the gold that was produced had resulted from the efforts of the tributers. Recognising that though there might not have been any legal right, there was a moral right possessed by the tributers, the companies met the men, and arrived at an arrangement under which they recognised that the tributers were entitled to a portion of the premium on gold. They took royalty from the total value of the premium, and agreed to divide the balance on a fifty-fifty basis with the tributers. During that period, the tributers received about 30 per cent. on account of the increased value of gold. The first amendment to the Act was passed in 1921 and under that legislation any company treating tributers' ore was compelled to pay on a 90 per cent. extraction. In the past they must have made huge profits, seeing that they paid on a 75 per cent. extraction and got their royalty as well. In 1922 a further amendment to the Act was agreed to and it was practically along the lines of the verdict given in the Supreme Court against the tributers. Under that second amendment the owner of the treatment plant was compelled to account to the tributer for not less than 50 per cent. of the premium on the price of gold. The industry carried along satisfactorily. At the latter end of 1921 gold reverted to its normal price and there was no further dispute on the goldfields regarding tribute arrangements until the exchange rate operated against Australia. The exchange rate first rose 5 per cent., jumped to 30 per cent., and then declined to 25 per cent., at which figure it stands to-day. When the tributers asked the companies to grant

them some share of the 25 per cent. exchange rate, the companies again refused. They said, "No, we will not pay. We consider that this is not a premium on gold but represents depreciation of the Australian currency, and therefore it is not a premium on gold." So the companies refused to pay, although the Mining Act provides that the owner of a treatment plant shall account to the tributer for not less than 50 per cent. of the premium on the price of gold. The tributers again took action and won the day in the Supreme Court. The companies then obtained the right of appeal, not to the Full Court of Australia, but direct to the Privy Council. That was 15 months ago. Within the last three weeks the Privy Council met and heard the case and reserved its decision. Therefore, it will be seen that immediately there is an increase in the price of gold, trouble commences. Trouble arose with the tributers before when the premium on gold averaged £1 an ounce for three years; and trouble occurred again in Australia immediately the exchange rate worked against Australia and there was a further increase of 25 per cent. in the price of gold. The present trouble on the fields was brought about purely by the attitude of the companies with regard to any increase in the price of gold. The companies then adopted this attitude: immediately England went off the gold standard, which enhanced the price of gold, they said, "Yes, the tributer is entitled to 50 per cent. of the increased price," and they paid it; but they still held back the 25 per cent. increase due to the exchange. Let me illustrate what led up to that. The Act provides that the owner of the plant shall account to the tributer for 50 per cent. of the premium. In this instance, there was a tribute party working on a mine which refuses to treat the tributers' ore. That mine never has treated ore for tributers, but it reserves to itself in the tribute agreement the right to say where the tributer shall send his ore to be treated. Two mines were mentioned and the tributers nominated the Boulder Perseverance. That is the plant which treated this ore. The tributers mined the ore on the Associated Mine, which has nothing at all to do with the Perseverance. They sent the ore at the request of the management of the Associated Mine to the Persever-

ance, where it was treated. The company also charged their usual fees for treating the ore and deducted from the price they received for the gold 50 per cent. of the enhanced value of the gold, handing back to the tributers their 50 per cent. of such enhanced value. That 50 per cent. amounted in this instance to £217. The tributers naturally took the cheque and paid it into their account at the bank. The manager of the Associated mine then wanted to know what they had done with the cheque and demanded that they should hand it to him, as he wanted to deduct royalty from their half share of the enhanced value. He stopped their tribute. The tributers then got into communication with their legal adviser, who told them to pay the money under protest and then sue for it. That is what happened. They submitted a statement, allowed the manager to work out the royalty to which he contended he was entitled, and which amounted to approximately £100, and then paid him a cheque for £100. They paid that amount under protest and sued to recover it. However, owing to some clause in the agreement, the case went against them. Immediately that became known, every other company on the Golden Mile letting tributaries deducted royalty from the enhanced value of gold. Had those tributaries been working under tributaries for the Lake View and Star or the Boulder Perseverance, those companies could not have got one penny; but now they turn round and say, "We are going to deduct royalty from the premium before we pay it to you." They have done that ever since. This Bill, if passed, will prevent the companies from doing anything of the kind. In my opinion, that will be a step in the right direction. I now want to give a supposititious case. I have a statement here, but will not quote from it as it contains the names of the companies and of the tributaries and other information. I will take the case of a tributer working under existing circumstances on the Golden Mile, without any premium or exchange rate being added to the price of the gold. The tribute party produces 100 tons of ore of an assay value of 4 ozs. per ton. Naturally, one would think that if a party got 100 tons worth 4 ozs. per ton assay value, they would get a fairly good wad out of it. This is what happens: The present arrangement is that the company purchase that 100 tons at £4 an ounce, 90 per cent. extraction. One hundred tons yielding 4 ounces of gold per ton should produce £1,600, but the

tributer gets only 90 per cent., so £160 must be deducted, leaving the value of the ore then at £1,440. Under existing conditions in Kalgoolie to-day, at most of the mines, the crushing charges for 3 ounces or over is £4 per ton, so the company gets £400 for treating 100 tons of ore. As the Minister has explained, and as I desire to emphasise, it is not as if the ore were being treated at a State battery or at a private owner's battery, because all this ore is lumped with the company's ore. There is no alteration in the method of their treatment at all, and most of the mines on the Golden Mile to-day are mining and treating from 27s. per ton down.

The Minister for Mines: Mining and treating?

Hon. S. W. M'UNSLIE: Yes. In addition, the company charge the tributer a royalty of 40 per cent., which amounts to £416. Most extraordinary of all, the company charge the tributers 10s. per ton for hauling the ore up a shaft; that amounts to £50. Then the company charge 8s. a ton to supply the air to break the ore. That amounts to £40. The total charges for royalty, air and haulage amount to £506, leaving the tributer £534 out of £1,440. Then we have a gentleman, a director, saying that they will continue to let tributes when they are more advantageous to the company. I do not know what more they want, unless they want the lot. I cannot for the life of me see that they can get much more. In addition to all those payments, the tributer has to pay all the costs of mining, trucking the ore to the shaft, and light. If he employs a worker, then he has to pay 9s. 6d. per week insurance under the Workers' Compensation Act and the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. I did not deduct those charges from the total amount. I have quoted what the company actually get. The company also get the odd 4s. 11½d. per oz. I did not take that into consideration. I do not think that anyone would contend that those conditions are equitable, nor do I think anyone will say there is no necessity for an amendment of an Act that permits that kind of thing to be done. Particularly do I want to emphasise again, as I did at the outset, that there is nothing in this Bill or in the Act to compel any lessee to let a tribute, unless he so desires. I would point out that other companies charge on a sliding scale. Those charges vary from 15s. If the tributer produces ore containing from 12 to 15 dwts., the companies will crush it for 15s. a ton,

the rate increasing 6d. for each dwt. per ton until it reaches 50s. per ton, which is the maximum at some of the treatment plants, as against £4 per ton in the other instance. Again, the air and baulage charges at some of the mines are a flat rate of 5s. At some of the mines the charge for air and haulage is based on the extraction value of the ore. That works out in this way: For 15 dwts. up to 72 dwts. per ton, 6s. 3d. per oz., 90 per cent extraction. That means that if on such a mine the tributer found a grade of ore the value of which was 3 ozs. 12 dwts. per ton, he would have to pay £1 per ton for the air to break it and £1 per ton for haulage. I would also point out that under existing conditions these tribute agreements have to be registered by the warden, but, as the Minister has pointed out, under the present Act, if a party of men go to the management of a mine and enter into an agreement and sign it, the warden accepts that document and registers it without question, whereas under this amending Act he would certainly have to consider whether the conditions set out in the agreement were equitable or not. That is the difference. I want to quote in another way those figures regarding the value of the ore. The ore is purchased on the basis of £4 per fine oz., and the value of the gold is £4 4s. 11½d. Taking that figure, this is what would happen: The total value is £1,528. The tributer's cut would be £534, and the mine would get £994, purely for royalties, services and treating the ore. The present price of gold, including exchange, represents 70 per cent., or even as high as 72 per cent. Taking the same class of ore now, its value at the first onset is £1,600 at the rate of £4 per oz. There is a 45 per cent. premium on that, or £720, on which the company charges 40 per cent. royalty. So they get £288 of it for a start. Then there is the 25 per cent. exchange, which is now under litigation. That is worth £400 on the same parcel. If the tributer gets the benefit of the decision by the Privy Council, he will be entitled to £200. Take £288 from £720, and you have remaining £432 which the mine owner divides with the tributer, instead of the £720; so they get £216 each. If the tributer wins his case he will get £200, making a total of £416. The tributer will get £534 on the old value. If he wins before the Privy Council he will get £416 more, or £950, and the company will get £1,710. Is that equitable? I say

the time is overdue for the introduction of a Bill such as this. The first amendment the Bill effects in the Act is to Section 142, making it mandatory on the lessee to lodge the tribute agreement. To-day it is not mandatory on either party. Section 145A of the Act is to be left as at present, except for the stipulation that the tributer must earn £3 10s. before any royalty is taken. But this provision does not obtain where the lessee agrees to accept the fifty-fifty proposition; it is only mandatory that he can take no royalty until the tributer earns £3 10s. when set charges are made. Then we have the provision preventing the lessor from making charges on a sliding scale for services rendered, the services being the air, the haulage and the treatment. Surely it is possible for a company to know what is a fair price, a price that will pay the company for the treatment of the ore, and a fair price for the air with which to break the ore, and what it costs to haul the ore up the shaft when it is broken. Under the Bill all those charges will have to be on a fixed rate instead of on a sliding scale on the value of the ore, as at present.

The Minister for Mines: The tributers may not like that.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No, they will be afraid of the charges that might be fixed. The Minister in moving the second reading led me to believe that in future when a tribute has been signed and registered either party can take exception, and it will then be submitted to the State Mining Engineer, whose decision shall be final.

The Minister for Mines: The agreement to be brought under the Act.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The Minister made that reference to this section, but in my opinion it does not and should not apply. If the matter is brought before the warden's court, both parties have the right to argue it, and either party can refuse to accept the warden's decision. The matter will then be submitted to the State Mining Engineer, whose decision is to be final. In my view if they register the agreement under those conditions they have no right to appeal to anyone outside. To-day existing tributaries are registered, and if the Bill becomes law the companies, if they wish to get rid of them, must give six months' notice. They have to come under the Bill immediately it is proclaimed as an Act. I think that is

quite fair. I am glad the Minister has included the alternative proposition to the mine owner. I could never understand the attitude of the mine owners in Kalgoorlie. When Minister for Mines, I put up a strong case to the Chamber of Mines to get them to alter their system to what is known as the Bendigo system. Under that system the tributer takes a block on a mine on a certain tenure. He mines the ore, paying all the costs of mining, and he has also to truck the ore to the plat or into a bin at the plat. The company then haul it and treat it, and whatever the assay value on a 90 per cent. extraction, the company and the men share fifty-fifty. I cannot understand the objection to that principle on the part of mining companies letting tributaries. When the delegation went to Canberra for the purpose of inducing the Federal Government to grant a gold bonus on all gold produced, the mining companies of this State, together with the Chamber of Mines, first opposed the proposition and then, swinging round, supported it and towards the end were pretty active in their support. I and the other members of the delegation had printed matter from the Chamber of Mines at Kalgoorlie giving reasons to put before the Federal Government for the granting of this bonus. One of the reasons put up was that if they got the bonus, ore of an assay value of 6 dwts. would be profitable for them to mine and treat on a bonus of £1 per oz. When I put up to them the proposition that if a tributer has a face of ore 10 feet wide which is easily broken and will go 12 dwts. to the ton, he has to leave it where it is, for in existing circumstances he could not make 10s. a week at breaking and supplying to the company 12 dwt. ore. I put it to the Chamber of Mines in this way: "Since you suggest that you can make 6 dwt. dirt pay on a bonus of £1 per oz., surely if the tributer will mine it, truck it and bring it to the shaft, you ought to be able to haul and treat 6 dwt. dirt at a profit." But they could not listen to it; they said it could not be done. Since I have gone further into the matter and seen what the charges really are, I quite realise why they said it could not be done, for in most instances they take two-thirds of the total value of the gold produced by the tributer. That is the chief reason why they would not listen to my proposition. I do not know that there is anything further to be said, but I hope the Bill becomes law,

because even if the present companies that are letting tributes cancel all, there is no doubt that within a very short period from now some of them will revert back to tributing.

The Minister for Mines: They will all revert back.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Of course they will. I ask members not to take notice of the threat or prediction that has been issued that the tributers will be out of work, for I assure them the existing method is no good to the tributer. I want the House to pass the Bill so that when the companies again realise that it is necessary to let tributes, the tributer will have a reasonable chance to make a living. I want again to impress the Minister with the reading of that section in the Act. I ask him to look it up. It is a matter that can be raised in Committee, but I think the provision in the Bill regarding agreements in existence to-day, if it is passed as printed, will lead to complications, for as I read it the Bill in its present form is retrospective to the 30th September. I hope the Minister will go into that aspect of it and see that this provision is not made retrospective. If necessary, I will move in that direction when in Committee. Meanwhile, I will support the second reading.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1932-33.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Pantou in the Chair.

#### *Public Utilities:*

*Votes*—Aborigines Native Stations, £4,334; Goldfields Water Supply, £108,903; Kalgoorlie Abattoirs, £2,610; Metropolitan Abattoirs and Saleyards, £26,353—agreed to.

*Note*—Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department, £87,154:

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [5.33]: Some effort should be made to improve the water supply at Swan View. For several years the local residents have been endeavouring to get the pipes enlarged in order

that they may obtain sufficient water. Some 18 months ago I made representations to the department in reference to the matter, and the size of the pipes was increased along the Innaminka-road. This certainly increased the pressure on the Swan View pipe. People are again complaining of the inadequacy of the supply. This is due to the fact that the main carrying the water to Morrison-road is only 1½ inches or 2 inches in diameter, and insufficient water is coming through. Many of the people there are endeavouring to make a living from the land and others are engaged in poultry farming. I would urge upon the Minister, if funds are available, to do something to improve the water service at Swan View.

Hon. A. McCallum: Perhaps the Minister would give some information regarding this vote.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall) [5.35]: The work that has been going on in the metropolitan area this year has consisted of sewerage extensions and water supplies. A certain amount of money has been provided by the Treasurer. One of the difficulties we have encountered in the past has been the quality of the water, particularly caused by the rusting of the pipes. The only way to remedy this is to pull up the pipes and recondition and reline them. As far as possible that has been done. We have now let a contract for asbestos pipes, the amount in question being £2,176 12s. They will be 7in. pipes. A small section of such pipes was put down in 1927, and the officers have recommended to me that a contract should be let for 13,000 feet of the same class of pipes. The price is somewhat less than in the case of ordinary steel or cast iron pipes. The manufacture is being carried out in the State.

Hon. P. Collier: Has asbestos been used before for this purpose?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. In 1927, 4in. asbestos pipes were put down on trial. After they had been examined by the engineers, it was decided to let the contract I have just referred to. The pipes are required for relining the mains and thus improving the quality of the water. The principal work carried out during the year have been the lifting, reconditioning, and relaying of 3in. and 4in. diameter cast



iron pipes in the metropolitan area. This work has been carried out in Subiaco, North Perth, Peppermint Grove, West Perth, East Perth and Leederville, and is being carried out in Perth, Claremont, Nedlands-Hollywood, South Perth and South Fremantle. The total chainage completed up to the 25th of last month, is in the case of Perth and suburbs and Fremantle, 3,722 chains of 4in. and 3,115 chains of 3in. We think that will complete the worst section of the mains, and the other work is going on along the same lines. During the year work has been provided for sustenance labour in clearing the Canning Reservoir site, and in providing a road to give improved access to that site, against the day when we shall be able to complete the work. As usual, every year, there is a certain scare regarding the shortage of water. We always have sufficient, provided we get no heat wave, but if a heat wave occurs there is likely to be a shortage of water in the metropolitan area. Last year we put down another bore along the Mount's Bay road. We can now count upon an extra supply from that locality of over 2,000,000 gallons a day.

Hon. A. McCallum: What did you get out of the first one?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The first bore was not completed. It was yielding a little over 1,000,000 gallons a day. We then let a contract for a bore alongside so as to get down to the proper depth. The two bores are now brought together and the total production is considerably in excess of 2,000,000 gallons a day. It is hoped this will be sufficient to carry us on for the present year. Most of the water we are using to-day comes from the hills. We use all we can get from that source, as it is cheaper than pumping water from elsewhere. The sewerage systems at Perth, Fremantle and Subiaco have been extended by 17,065 miles. The total mileage of sewers now laid has been increased from 201,743 to 218,808, and the number of house connections has increased from 22,956 to 23,416. Certain stormwater drainage works have been extended, and a considerable number of new mains are being laid. The extensions which are most profitable to the department are those which happen to cost the greatest amount of money for material. Owing to the limited funds available, however, we can-

not expend all that we would like to expend. To give employment to men on sustenance the following works have been authorised and put in hand:—The reconditioning of 3in., 4in., and 6in. mains, lining with cement, etc.; the construction of 18in. and 6in. mains in South and Solomon-streets, Fremantle; an 18in. main in Kennedy-street, Maylands, and a similar main in Johnston-street, Peppermint-Grove; main improvements in various districts: reticulation of sewerage area No. 18, Nedlands, No. 19 and 20, Wembley, and No. 21, Jolimont; pumping station sewerage area No. 18 Nedlands, 18a Crawley and Wembley; sub-sewerage main area No. 19 Wembley; a section of the Maylands drain; and a Subiaco stormwater drain, Shenton Park to location 714. The revenue from the Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department is estimated to be considerably less this year. The same rates will be levied, but appreciable reductions in annual values, on which the rates are based, have been made both in municipal and road board districts. We anticipate receiving this year £32,000 less in revenue than we received in the previous year. The accrued revenue last year was £378,470, and the estimate for this year is £351,300. Last year the cash revenue amounted to £373,175, and the estimate for this year is £354,000. The expenditure, apart from interest and sinking fund, which is a fixed charge, for 1929-30, on salaries, incidentals, operating expenses and reimbursements was £114,544, and for 1932-33 the estimate is £72,428, a decrease of 36.8 per cent. in the actual maintenance and administrative costs for the year. Plans for the proposed reservoir at Canning are in course of preparation. Unfortunately the officer who was doing the work has not been able, owing to staff reductions, to devote his whole time to it. I was hoping that the plans and specifications for the new reservoir would have been completed by this time. The Government have asked Mr. Ritchie, consulting engineer for the Melbourne Board of Works, who was also consulting engineer for the State Government and who selected the actual site of the Canning dam some years ago and recommended it, to examine the plans and give us the benefit of his advice. It is unfortunate that the plans are not ready, as anticipated. The quantity of water pumped from the bores was 1,152,769,000 gallons. It is anticipated that this year we shall require to pump 2,071,000,000 gallons.

It has been unfortunate that every year we have been told by officers of the department there would probably be a shortage, and that they would find it necessary to impose restrictions on the use of water. Fortunately, however, it was not necessary to go so far. We must, however, look further ahead than we have done, and some money must be found shortly to make a commencement with the Canning reservoir so as to give the metropolitan area a better water supply. The annual cost of pumping is over £20,000. If the water could be reticulated from the hills, most of that money would be saved. The Canning scheme will cost over £1,000,000 and will take many years to complete. I hope, however, that in the near future a sum of money will be available to enable us to make a commencement with the work.

**HON. A. McCALLUM** (South Fremantle) [5.48]: I said previously, when discussing this vote, that I regarded the Metropolitan Water Supply Department as one of the best managed Government departments in the State. I desire to take this opportunity to express my deep regret at the untimely demise of Mr. Haywood, the Under Secretary of the department. That gentleman carried out his duties extremely well. He was a very capable administrator, and as I have said, I do not think any other Government department was better managed than that which he controlled. His services will be sadly missed, and general regret was felt at the passing of one of the State's most efficient and loyal officers. I agree that the principal complaint against the metropolitan water supply is with regard to the discolouration, and it has always been the advice of the professional man that there would be no improvement until all the pipes had been lined with cement. The fault is largely due to the manner in which we have to draw our supplies. The policy of lining the pipes was commenced when we were in office, and we laid it down that all new mains had to be lined before they were put down. I am glad to know that the Minister has to some extent carried on that policy by taking up the smaller mains and having them cement-lined. I would be glad if the policy could be extended to the larger pipes, because the difficulty will never be entirely overcome until all the mains are lined. I understand that the policy up to the present time is to line pipes up to 4 inches in dia-

meter. Pipes of a larger size have not been so treated. The departmental officers are quite right in declaring that until such time as all the pipes are lined there will always be the discolouration trouble. I am surprised to hear that the plans for the Canning dam have not yet been completed. I understood the Minister to tell us last year that they had been completed and that they were then being submitted to a consulting engineer. A year has gone by and we are now told that the plans were not finished. The Leader of the Opposition last year drew attention to the position into which the metropolitan area was drifting in respect to its water supplies, and there can be no question, even if the Canning reservoir were started now, that there will always be the danger of a shortage of supplies and that danger will exist for two or three years at any rate, because it will take that time, or perhaps longer, before we can get any results from the Canning scheme. Every year we have been just on the verge of a water difficulty, and if it had not been for the use of bore water, the position would have been serious. Personally I do not approve of the policy of putting down additional bores. I understand that the reason given for putting down the bore at Mount's Bay-road was the danger of supplies failing, and the need to guard against the immediate danger. Bore water is an expensive proposition, and it is a continuous expense. From the moment you start pumping it up until you have finished, expense is going on night and day. It is dear water and it is not good water; it is objectionable in many ways. Experts will tell us that it is quite all right, that there is nothing harmful in it, but the majority of the public will take a lot of convincing that the experts are right. I know that as far as floral cultivation is concerned there are a lot of objections to its use, and that many people have been forced to provide their own domestic supplies which would not have been necessary had the hills water scheme been completed. That scheme would have met our requirements to the extent of 100 per cent. Unless the work of constructing the Canning dam is pushed on, there is nothing more certain than that there will be a serious water famine in the metropolitan area. The Minister told us that it was proposed to send the plans to Mr. Ritchie, engineer for the Metropolitan Board of Works in Melbourne. I do not regard

that as much of a compliment to our engineers. I should think that the salaries paid to our officers should be sufficient to enable us to command the services of men able to accept the full responsibility in a matter of this description. I do not think any other State in Australia has ever had to call in outsiders to examine a job of a similar description.

The Minister for Works: Mr. Ritchie was consulted before.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, but in the scheme's infancy, when the preliminary investigations were being carried on, and the department had not the experience behind it, or the staff it has now. If the State does not possess the engineering knowledge necessary for the provision of a water supply for a mere 120,000 people, then it does not say much for the professional men employed by the Public Works Department. I do not know how the engineers of the department regard the suggestion of the Minister to forward the plans to Mr. Ritchie for his opinion. It certainly does not appear to be a compliment to the Minister's staff. I was told by the engineers that the site at Canning is ideal; that in fact there was no better site for a dam, and that there were no engineering difficulties. As a matter of fact, all that is required is a concrete wall. The whole of the excavation work has been done, and personally I see no reason for further delaying what seems to be a simple engineering proposition. To go outside the State and consult an expert will mean considerable expense. We should have in our own service a man competent enough to advise the Government and who would be prepared to take full responsibility for a job of this kind. Evidently the Government are determined otherwise, and intend to call in Mr. Ritchie. I have always regarded the Water Supply Department in a favourable light. They get in the highest percentage of rates, and it is admitted that they have met the existing situation in a reasonable way. As the Minister told us, the department employs many men on sewerage work and the reconditioning of the mains. I should like the Minister to tell us what he proposes to do during the Christmas holidays. He should endeavour to give the men employed by this department and who are earning sustenance rates—I do not know whether all are getting over their £1 a week—

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: They are all on sustenance rates, plus £1, and practically all of them have more than three children. For a long time these men have been getting £2 15s. a week with a maximum of £3, and I think something additional should be given them as we are approaching Christmas. I understand the Government have arrived at a decision that extra work will be provided so that they may earn equal to the sustenance for the week that they will not be working at Christmas, and one day extra. That means they will be able to have one day's pay to celebrate Christmas, after having been for a couple of years, some of them, existing solely on sustenance rates. One day's pay will not enable them to have a Christmas at all. If arrangements could be made to give them a little more, it would be appreciated. We all like to have little extras in the home at Christmas time, and in view of the strenuous period through which those people have passed, the majority of them having heavy domestic responsibilities, and the children having had a hard time, it would be a gracious act on the part of the Government to give the men a couple of weeks' work on full time and pay them the basic rate.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [6.2]: I join with the previous speaker in expressing regret at the passing of Mr. Haywood, who was an unusually capable officer possessed of a charming personality. The appointment to the vacancy of the Acting Under Secretary, I believe, meets with general approval. Mr. Long always impressed me as being of the same cast of mind as Mr. Haywood, and I should say the department would be well controlled by him. I wish to speak of the retention in the hills districts for water conservation purposes of land that by no stretch of imagination could affect the purity of the water supply. A fortnight ago I gave notice of a question to the Minister and I regret that he was not in the House to answer it. I dare say, however, that he knew the purport of the reply given. The question was—

In view of the fact that the policy of withholding land suitable for the production of fruit and other primary products is preventing development in the hills districts, will the Minister give consideration to the release of those blocks or sections which, because of their contour or situation, do not provide a course for water flowing into any reservoir,

and the occupation of which could not, in any circumstances, endanger public health?

The reply of the Minister was—

It is necessary in the interests of the Metropolitan Water Supply that no Crown land or land acquired by the department that is required for future use for water supply catchment should be given up to private ownership.

Not only is the land withheld from private ownership; it is not open for occupation on leasehold. If it were made available on leasehold, it would not be so bad. The land does not provide a course for water flowing into any reservoir and the land is below the level of any reservoir and could not contaminate the water supply. The policy that prevents the use of such land could be reconsidered. This is an important matter because land suitable for settlement has to remain idle. It is of no utility for the water service since the water does not flow over it, or if it does, it flows to a point lower than any reservoir.

**MR. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle) [6.7]: Is there any prospect of the rate of interest charged on the cost of sewerage work being reduced? Quite a number of people are on part time work and have been hard hit by wages reduction and by taxation.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall—in reply) [6.8]: The member for South Fremantle raised the question of reconditioning the smaller water pipes. Last year we reconditioned a considerable mileage of mains and the work is being continued. To clean 3-inch and 4-inch mains involves hand work and is a laborious and expensive job. Dealing with 6-inch mains, however, it is possible to insert a torpedo and turn the water on and that cleans the pipes. Whenever we receive complaints we investigate them, and if possible we recondition the mains in the section whence the complaints arise. The department are reconditioning the mains that have been longest in the ground, because they are in the worst condition. If people, instead of writing to the Press, would send their complaints to the department, men would be sent out to flush the mains and do whatever was possible to improve the quality of the water.

Hon. P. Collier: I did not know of that. You will have a ring from me to-morrow.

The Minister for Lands: There are many rings each Monday morning.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS**: When a main is relaid, some of the discoloured water from the uncleaned pipes runs into the new main and affects the water, but that is only a temporary difficulty. The discolouration, however, is one of the most important problems confronting the department. Last year we spent £66,000 from loan funds on reconditioning mains, and I hope a larger sum will be available this year. The engineers estimate that it will cost £300,000 to recondition the whole of the old mains. The life of the old mains was estimated at 25 years, but those that have been reconditioned and cement-lined, the engineers say, will last for another 50 years. Regarding the Canning dam, the plans have been altered considerably during the last two years. In order to consider the needs of the future we had to decide whether we could increase the height of the dam and use sufficient of the water catchment for the purpose. During the last year or two the engineers in charge of the department have been investigating the problem and have recommended an alteration of the whole of the plans. The estimated cost of the dam is £1,250,000. I have nothing to say against the officials, who are capable men, but as, for a matter of £100 or so, it would be possible to get a man like Mr. Ritchie to investigate the proposals, I thought it would be much safer to obtain his approval of the altered plans. It would relieve the Government of some of the responsibility for making the alteration, and Parliament would have the satisfaction of knowing that the work had the approval of a man who has designed so many of the large reservoirs in Australia.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: You would not get that advice for £100, would you?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS**: It would not be necessary for him to come to Perth; the plans could be sent to him, or could be taken to him by one of our engineers. We estimate that the cost of consulting him would not exceed £200, and for the sake of that expenditure, it is better to be on the safe side. I know that the engineers do not like having their work referred to Mr. Ritchie, but I consider it only just to me and to the Government. I therefore brought the matter before Cabinet and received approval

to the suggestion to consult Mr. Ritchie. The member for South Fremantle referred to rate collections. The amount collected last year was marvellous, but the estimates for the present year show a big reduction. Whereas last year we collected 92 per cent., this year we estimate that the collections will be only 85 per cent.

Mr. H. W. Mann: The position is getting a great deal worse because people cannot get rent for their houses.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I thought we had turned the corner.

Hon. P. Collier: That was the corner to the right; this is another corner to the left.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The department can congratulate itself on the fact that Perth is the only city in Australia where it has not been necessary to increase the rates. In Sydney and Melbourne, owing to large reductions in the valuations and to the water supply schemes there carrying certain fixed charges, it was necessary to increase the rates. Although we have had to reduce valuations, and although we anticipate receiving about £32,000 less revenue this year than last year, we still expect to be able to carry on and show a small surplus. The hon. member suggested extra work at Christmas time. The proposal is as he stated it. The Government have decided that sufficient work shall be provided to enable the men to have the week off without losing any money. Additional work will also be provided to the extent of enabling the men to earn an extra day's pay, which will be paid in cash. The member for Swan said I was not in the House when he asked a question about making land available in the water shed. I have heard him on that question so often in the House and in the office that I did not think it was necessary to hear him again.

Mr. Sampson: You put up something that purported to be an answer, but was no answer.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have put up answers to the question about 20 times since I have been a Minister. I do not consider that any land in a water catchment area should be used for farming purposes. For three days I travelled with Mr. Ritchie over the catchment areas in Victoria, and I was impressed with the foresight that

had been displayed in the early days by reserving such a huge area for catchment purposes and preventing any settlement there. To-day Victoria has probably one of the finest catchment areas in the world, sufficient not only for the needs of to-day, but for the needs of 50 years. Whatever happens, I hope we shall preserve our catchment area for all time. The member for Fremantle asked whether the interest rate on money for sewerage connections could be reduced. I cannot give him any promise. The interest rate is 7 per cent.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.37 p.m.*

Item—Engineer, Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage, Metropolitan Area, £768:

Mr. SAMPSON: I would have been more interested in the remarks of the Minister had he replied to the question I put to him.

The Minister for Works: I have replied to it several times.

Mr. SAMPSON: To my knowledge, the question I submitted has never before been asked in this House.

The CHAIRMAN: The item relates to the Engineer for Water Supply in the Metropolitan Area and has nothing to do with the subject that I understand the hon. member has in mind.

Mr. SAMPSON: The engineer will be concerned regarding the levels and the contour of the land I have in mind.

Hon. A. McCallum: The member for Swan does not think the Minister is on the level!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The item has nothing to do with land resumption and the hon. member is out of order.

Mr. SAMPSON: In his reply to me, the Minister said that whatever happened, the Government would preserve the catchment area for all time, but that had nothing to do with the question I put to him.

The Minister for Works: I have replied to it, and you have had your answer.

Mr. SAMPSON: I submit it was no answer. So far as the Minister went, I am in agreement with him, but the point he dealt with had no relation to my question and I consider that anything in the nature of a subterfuge is out of place. I asked whether land that was below the level of the reservoir and from which no water could run into the reservoir, would be

thrown open and made available for production. I hope the Minister will give some consideration to that question.

**Mr. PANTON:** Does the department intend to continue making sewerage installations under a six-year lease, and will consideration be extended to those persons who are suffering from hardship as a result of the demand for the payment of the pan charge in addition to the sewerage rate? For some years the system was that after a person had been ordered to connect up with the sewer, he was compelled to pay the rate in addition to the pan charge until the connection had been made. Cases of hardship have occurred and I trust the department will give that matter attention.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** We stopped carrying out installations for people who could not provide the money because we also were not in a position to finance the work. Recently the Treasurer made £17,000 available and for some time past contracts have been let for that work. Under the Act as soon as a main was constructed past a property the owner had to be served with an order to connect his premises up and until he did so, both charges operated. Those notices have been withdrawn because neither the Government nor the persons concerned were able to provide the necessary funds. Now that money is available, contracts are being let. Consideration has been given in cases of hardship.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote — Other Hydraulic undertakings chargeable to revenue, £22,476:*

**HON. M. F. TROY** (Mt. Magnet; [7.38]: I draw the Minister's attention to the necessity for making available improved water supplies in the remote areas. In former days adequate provision was made, but latterly wells have been allowed to fall in and in some instances water in wells has become contaminated. In some of the outback mining areas in particular, the population has increased twofold and in some places to a much greater extent. At some of the centres the water supply is in a very bad condition. It may be suggested that the prospectors should clean up the wells themselves. Many of those men lived in the metropolitan or agricul-

tural areas, but, owing to conditions that exist at present, found it necessary to return to prospecting in order to make a living. They are not in a position to spare the time to clean out wells. They have had sufficient pluck to leave the city and the more comfortable living conditions here and face the hardships of the outback country once more. I have every admiration for them and the Minister, I feel sure, will do his best to encourage them. They are eking out a living as best they can, and do not despise even kangaroo and emu. Some have families of small children and the nearest hospital or doctor is 150 miles away in some instances. Throughout those areas the wells require to be cleaned up, because the people there should not be faced with the dangers of contaminated water. As a man who has lived in the back country himself, the Minister will appreciate the attitude of those people and will desire to encourage them in their efforts. The people have no resources whatever and have gone back to the bush in order to make a living. If this suggestion is placed before the departmental officers, the attitude should not be adopted that these people should provide their own water supplies. The department should encourage the people because their work is in the interests of the State. It is of advantage at present that they should leave the city where conditions are so difficult, particularly as they are engaged in promoting the production of gold, which is of value to the State at the present juncture.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall) [7.42]: The vote deals with the Revenue Estimates and relates to hydraulic undertakings controlled by the department and various water supplies to the agricultural and goldfields areas. For many years past, long before I became Minister, the control of water supplies in the agricultural areas was handed over to the local governing bodies who were required to maintain them. On the stock routes, provision was made for maintaining wells in order by setting aside £10 per well. Since then the vote has been cut down to £5 a well and that is what is provided in the Estimates.

**Hon. M. F. Troy:** But the wells I referred to are not on the stock route.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I know that. It is better for the local governing

authorities to maintain the wells because they can do the work more cheaply than the Government. We would have to send men hundreds of miles to look after those wells and I am satisfied that the local boards can do the work much better than we can.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Perth City Markets, £600:*

Mr. MILLINGTON: I presume these are the old city markets near the Horseshoe Bridge.

The Minister for Lands: That is so.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I know that inquiries were made with a view to scrapping these old markets, yet I see that £600 is to be spent upon them. I presume some revenue is derived from them.

The Minister for Lands: We are making a profit of £500, after spending that £600.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The site is a valuable one. Has the Minister taken any steps to scrap the old ramshackle buildings erected on it? They are an eyesore and have just about outlived their usefulness. The Minister says they are showing a slight profit, but I presume he is not taking into consideration the value of the land. If it were not owned by the Government, probably the buildings would have been scrapped long ago.

The Minister for Lands: We would have another hotel on the site.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Has the Minister taken into consideration, or had any report upon, the advisableness of scrapping the old buildings?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am sorry the hon. member has raised that question, because now I have to make a confession in front of my colleague. As a matter of fact, the Railway Department own the land. They own a great deal of land round about the central railway station, and now my colleague may decide to pull down the buildings.

The Minister for Railways: If we wait a little longer they will fall down.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This year we are receiving £1,100 odd. Last year we received £1,126. I quite agree with the hon. member that the site is a valuable one, but at the present time we cannot do anything in the way of erecting new buildings. We already have buildings untenanted. I am satisfied so long as we are making a profit.

Mr. Marshall: And when they fall down?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We shall have to see that the people occupying them are insured. We have entered into some very short-period leases, for three and six months. Considerable improvements have been effected, as we think it is probably better to have the fish merchants there than to have them scattered around the city, with their somewhat offensive smells. The property seems now to be used principally for a fish market. If we do pull down the buildings my colleague here will reap the benefit.

Vote put and passed.

*Department of Minister for Railways, Tramways, Ferries and Electricity Supply (Hon. J. Scaddan, Minister).*

*Vote—Railways, Tramways, Ferries, and Electricity Supply, £2,468,000:*

# THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS

(Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [7.52]: There is but little information I can give members apart from that which they already have. The Commissioner's annual report has been laid upon the Table and distributed amongst members, and it furnishes a great deal of detailed information regarding the operations of the railways and the difficulties which have to be contended with in their management. I propose, however, to make a few remarks to provoke some discussion by hon. members, otherwise it might appear that our most important department of State, that is, from a financial point of view, is being overlooked. As members will see by turning up the Commissioner's annual report, the total amount of capital which is debited against the railways is not less than £24,412,032, nearly £25,000,000. That is a very heavy burden to be carried by a population of approximately 420,000, but it becomes greater when we realise the fact that, while the population is so small, the mileage is so great. The earning capacity of the railways is therefore reduced accordingly. Our railway system is spread over a very large territory and our products have to be hauled very long distances, while there is little or no back-loading. This remark applies particularly to wheat. If hon. members will turn to the Commissioner's report, they will find that of our total ton-mileage about 50 per cent. is accounted for by the haulage of wheat. The earnings from that

haulage fall below the average earnings of the railways, and thus 50 per cent. of our actual haulage is done at a loss. I am speaking now from the point of view of the Railway Department, not from the point of view of the State. It is very necessary that that tonnage should be available to enable the State to exist. However, that all adds to the difficulty of operating our railway system. This year it is estimated that our revenue will amount to £2,950,000 and our expenditure to £2,050,000, leaving a gross profit, as they call it in the Railway Department—I call it a net profit—of £900,000, against which there is interest estimated to amount to £1,010,000. Therefore, on the Estimates we anticipate making a loss after meeting our interest account at the Treasury. That total loss is not all due to the Railway Department, because there are sinking fund charges which have to be met in accordance with the financial agreement. The loss last year was greater. For the year 1931-32 the working expenses and interest exceeded revenue by £208,189, so that an improvement of £98,189 is forecast for the current year. The interest for the past year amounted to £998,173, but we estimate that will be increased by £20,827 this year, mainly on account of new lines which will be taken over shortly. The Wiluna line will be chiefly responsible for the increase in interest. From a Treasury point of view, that does not affect us very seriously because that interest has been paid on money previously borrowed, but now it will be transferred to and chargeable against the railway earnings. It is not anticipated that the actual revenue from the lines to be taken over will meet working expenses. It is anticipated that the revenue will this year amount to £2,950,000, as compared with £2,897,336 last year, an increase of £52,664. We hope to earn that increased revenue this year owing to the more hopeful outlook, and, may I say, to the fact that we expect increased trade to be brought to the railways because people are becoming what I may term more railway conscious. The people should be conscious of the fact that the railways belong to them and that if they do not use them they will have to be taxed to make up any loss sustained. We are hoping to get increased traffic during the coming year from the primary producer; and

I have reason to believe that with a readjustment of freights on some of our commodities there will be increased haulage on the railway system. We have suffered serious depletion of revenue on account of road transport competition. However, I believe people are beginning to realise that, although on the face of it there may appear to be a saving by transporting goods by road, in the final analysis, owing to the fact that we have to meet interest charges in connection with our railway system, charges which cannot be transferred to anyone else, it is a dead loss to build unnecessary road transport and allow our railways to go seeking for traffic.

Mr. H. W. Mann: But would you not lose the petrol traffic?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think the hon. member has studied the question very closely, or he would know that the system operating here is the same as in every other railway system throughout the world. There always has been differentiation in rates in respect of various commodities that are carried over a railway system. I may tell the hon. member that exactly the same thing applies to road transport. The difference, however, is that the carrier by road can choose the traffic that suits him best, and leave the balance. I previously referred to a case where a farmer was requested by a carrier to send his wool from his farm to Fremantle by road. He inquired what the charge was and found it quite satisfactory when compared with the cost of sending it by rail. Wool has always been a high and satisfactory freight. The farmer was careful enough, however, to ask this question, "Will you bring my super back at the same rate as you take my wool to Fremantle?" The reply was, "Certainly not." Then the farmer said, "I have to view the matter from two standpoints. There is the cost of taking my wool to Fremantle and the cost of bringing my fertiliser back; you cannot compete with the railways when you take those two matters into consideration." But the carriers by road do pick out the eyes of the traffic and that is exceedingly unfair from the point of view of the general taxpayer. I believe people are beginning to realise that it is not to their advantage to send goods by road. The most astonishing thing



to me is that there are so many people who believe, and I think rightly believe, that it is not possible to develop our country without a railway system, and yet side by side with a demand for railway construction, you will see the same people patronising transport by road. When it comes to a question of carrying wool, wheat and other primary commodities, everybody knows that the most satisfactory method is to send it by rail, and that is why we are continually getting demands for the construction of additional railway lines. If the people demand increased railway communication, they should be asked to use the railways to the fullest extent. I admit that at times they find reason for complaint, but when they have a complaint against a State utility they can make their voices heard, whereas we never hear a complaint against privately-owned transport facilities. If a man be not fairly treated by a private carrier he bottles up his complaint because there is no redress, whereas if he has the slightest reasonable complaint against the railways, he not only writes in to the department, but writes to the Press as well and so makes his complaint very loud. That does not prove that the railways are not satisfactory. Taking it on the whole, our railway system is rendering magnificent service to the community and particularly to our primary producers. It is a very extensive system that we have for a very small population, and a very heavy monetary burden is entailed, a burden that we cannot put on to anybody but the taxpayers. So the sooner the people patronise the railways to the full and thus save the burden of taxation, the better it will be for all. It will be remembered that last year, owing to a gradual but steady reduction in the amount of traffic on our railways, we put out of commission quite a number of trucks and locomotives. Now we realise that business is likely to increase, and in order to meet that expected increase, we are making provision for repairing quite a number of locomotives and wagons, and an amount of approximately £53,000 has been provided on the Estimates for that purpose. We are also providing re-sleepering, re-laying and re-ballasting. Last year we did but little of that. In fact, we have not done more than was absolutely necessary during the last two years.

It was not possible, because the railways were not earning sufficient money to enable them to pay for those improvements. Money had to be found from other sources to meet the obligation of the Treasury, and the result was, to speak candidly, we had to transfer from one period to another the cost of maintaining our rolling stock and the permanent way. But I am assured by the Commissioner that he was always careful to see that the road was kept in such a condition as to avoid any undue risk. That completes the railways. In this division of the Estimates we have railways, tramways, ferries and electricity supply. The tramway revenue is estimated at £290,000 and the expenditure at £223,000, leaving a balance of £67,000 against which there will be interest charged to the Treasury of £53,000. Therefore we shall have an estimated profit at the end of the year of £14,000. Last year the actual results were revenue, £286,641; expenditure, £220,623, and interest £52,259, leaving a balance of £13,659. So we estimate that the year will close practically on all-fours with last year. We shall have increased our earnings by £3,000 and our expenditure by a like amount and we are providing another £21,000 for re-laying tramway tracks. There is one phase of the tramway operations that might well be considered by members. For some time past it has been known by the department that a certain section of our tramway system was in a very dangerous condition. I may say that now, because we have ceased operating over that section. We are faced with the position of having to find a large sum of money to re-lay that track and we could not see that, after finding that money, we would earn any additional revenue. That would mean that the whole of the system would have had to carry an additional interest burden without the possibility of earning increased revenue. I am referring to the Kensington-street line.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Is revenue the only consideration? What about public convenience?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member is quite right in that, but if he has been alive during the last three or four years and has been watching the trend of events he will know that whatever our desire to consider the public convenience, we have also to consider how we are going to

find the money to meet it. There is not very much done in this world without somebody having to pay for it. Unfortunately, while we have been anxious to render service we have not had the wherewithal, for we cannot provide any Government facilities without the necessary funds. In round figures the cost of re-laying that track would be between £14,000 and £15,000 and that only to render the same service as previously and earn the same amount of revenue with, of course, an additional charge on that revenue.

Mr. Marshall: That line does nothing more than carry passengers from the Perth central station to the East Perth station, a duplication of the railway. It is nothing but a farce.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know that the hon. member's opinion on that is worth very much, because I am not aware that he is greatly interested in the subject. The member for East Perth knows much more about it. He knows that the line has been rendering a very good service, although I do not know that it has been a profitable line.

Mr. Marshall: It never will be.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: As the member for Perth remarked just now, that is not the only consideration. The railways themselves do not pay, and I doubt very much whether the Wiluna line, in which the member for Murchison is interested, will pay.

Mr. Marshall: You cut out the tramway section from Hill-street to Barrack-street.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Because it was too dangerous to operate any longer. But let me revert: The question was whether we could find any means by which we could maintain the existing facilities without loss to the Treasury and if possible increase the earnings in order to meet the additional interest charges on the inevitable expenditure. The re-laying of the tramline would have brought no additional revenue, and on investigation we found that the modern system known as trolley buses or trackless trams afforded the best means of meeting the situation. We could convert that line from a rail tram to a trackless tram, continue it on along Wellington-street, westward, past the West Perth markets to some point in Leederville, either Oxford-street or Cambridge-street, perhaps as far as the Leederville town hall. Thus it would serve a factory area and the markets, the

authorities of which have asked for additional facilities to enable people to patronise the markets. And such a system, it is estimated, would give additional earnings sufficient, not only to meet the interest charges on the outlay, but also to leave a profit and thus turn a non-paying line into one that will pay.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Will you have to pay the municipality three per cent. on the earnings for the right to use the roads?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No. When a road surface is not interfered with at all by rails no three per cent. will have to be paid.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: But each motor car has to pay a license.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, but in this instance not to the local authority; it goes into a pool. Whether there will be a charge made on a similar basis I do not know, but as the hon. member is aware we have not been paying three per cent. on newly constructed lines to any local authority.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: I only wondered what financial arrangements had been made.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We certainly will not pay anything along the section from Barrack-street to Leederville.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: But surely you will make some contribution to the maintenance of the road.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We may, but as yet we have not discussed it. In any case, it will not be very great, because on a modern road there is no very great wear and so there cannot be any very heavy burden.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: But the buses are charged £7.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, but that is on an entirely different basis. I do not think there is any comparison between a tramway system run by the Government in the interests of the community, and a privately-owned bus service. The Government service is in the interests of the community who, after all, find the money for the road surfacing.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: No, the local authority finds that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Well the local authority is representative of the people whom the trams are serving. After all, the local authority is only the medium through which the ratepayer pays, just as the Government are the medium

through which the taxpayer pays. In this instance, every inch of the line will be within the city, thus serving the ratepayers exclusively. The hon. member knows how he feels about the city council and what they have been getting out of past Governments, and probably on that point we think pretty well alike. However, we are discussing the difference between methods of transport, the trackless tram as against the rail trams. Two outstanding features might be mentioned: At present we have very rapid road transport by motor cars and buses, and one of the grave dangers is that people joining tram cars run the risk of being knocked down by passing motor cars. It is not always the fault of the driver; sometimes it is the fault of the passenger. There was an instance the other day when a boy jumped off a tram before it had stopped. We take precautions under the traffic regulations to prevent a motor vehicle from passing a tramcar which has pulled up to enable passengers to alight or board it, but if a passenger jumps off a tram before it reaches the stopping place, and a fast-moving vehicle is following, he takes the risk.

Mr. Marshall: Motors can pass stationary trams.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There are exceptions, namely at the termini. With trackless trams the risk does not arise. The vehicles pull up alongside the kerb and take on their passengers, just as motor buses do. There is no need for passengers to stand on the road, and therefore that risk is eliminated. That is an important point in favour of trackless trams. Another point that ought to be mentioned is that once trackless trams are installed, the cost of extending the route a quarter or half a mile is so slight that it is always possible to meet some demand or cater for a growing area. The expenditure for overhead wiring is all that is necessary, whereas heavy cost is entailed to import and lay the material necessary for track trams. Extensions are often warranted, and yet are delayed long after they are necessary because of the expense.

Mr. Marshall: The maintenance cost of the trackless trams must be high.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, it is very slight. To break up a street, lay the rails and instal the equipment necessary to run a tram costs £6,000 to £8,000 per mile, according to the condition of the street. Once trackless trams have been

established, to extend a route one mile would cost not more than £700. From that point of view, the trackless trams are a tremendous advantage. They are capable of being extended at very slight cost, or of being used to meet any sudden demand.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: How many passengers would they carry?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: A trackless tram would carry approximately the same number as a small tramcar. The type we propose to get will have seating accommodation for 35 passengers. In some cities, double-deckers are operated, but we propose to use only the single-decker.

Mr. Marshall: What standing accommodation will they have?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Sufficient for the hon. member, if he so cares, to give up his seat to a lady who wants to sit down.

Mr. Marshall: I could squeeze in anywhere.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The estimated results of the Electricity Supply are as follows:—

	£
Revenue .. ..	272,000
Expenditure .. ..	187,000
Balance .. ..	<u>85,000</u>
Interest .. ..	<u>62,000</u>
Profit .. ..	<u>23,000</u>

The actual figures last year were revenue £274,516, expenditure £192,924, interest £61,476, leaving a balance of £20,116. We anticipate that earnings this year will be slightly less, but we expect to make a saving of approximately £6,000 on the expenditure of last year. The ferries, which are the subject of a measure now before the House, have been operated by the Commissioner of Railways as part of the metropolitan transport system for the last eight months. The ferries are expected to earn £9,000 during the current year. Expenditure, including depreciation, and interest, are estimated to total £8,600, leaving a surplus of £400. In 1931-32 earnings were £8,475, working expenses £7,516, interest and depreciation £764, leaving a balance of £195. Hence a slightly better result is expected this year. I believe that the staff have applied themselves to the work as they always have done. From the Commissioner of Railways to the porter, the staff desire to

serve the public, and serve them well. It is not possible to operate such a system without there being occasional complaints. Sometimes passengers complain of lack of courtesy shown by railway servants, but if they realised the conditions under which the men have to work and the trying periods they experience, the public would forgive any slight shortcomings of that kind. Taking everything into account, I believe the railways are serving the State very well.

**HON. J. C. WILLCOCK** (Geraldton) [8.21]: An important point to consider is the interest cost, which constitutes a tremendous drain on the railways. Has the Minister any information to give regarding interest adjustments? Instead of interest coming down, it is increasing, though the increase for the past year has been slight. Quite a number of undertakings during the last seven or eight years have been financed out of loan money raised in Australia, and one would have expected that the loan conversion, under which the interest rate was reduced from 6 per cent. to 4 per cent., would have relieved those undertakings of certain interest charges, and that the services could have been run more economically. Yet, instead of a curtailment of interest charges, the Commissioner's report shows a slight increase for the railways, though for tramways the figure is about the same. The Commissioner states that the interest has been fixed by the approved methods of calculating the rate, but for all that the amount is going up instead of down, notwithstanding the benefit we are supposed to have received from the conversion some 12 months ago. Why have the railways been singled out by the Treasury officials to pay a higher rate of interest when all governmental activities should show some slight reduction? I notice with regret that nearly 1,000 fewer employees have been engaged in the department during the last 12 months. While that to some extent is due to decreased business, it is noteworthy that the number of employees has been reduced by 12 per cent., while the earning capacity of the system has been reduced by only 3 per cent. and the train mileage by 7 per cent. It takes as many men to operate the running part of the system.

The Minister for Railways interjected.

**HON. J. C. WILLCOCK**: That was a recoup from loan expenditure.

The Minister for Railways: We have not been able to do that.

**HON. J. C. WILLCOCK**: More men have been retrenched from the department than the decreased work warranted, and it is fair to assume that a considerable proportion of them were taken from maintenance work. While it was gratifying to hear the Minister say that an increased amount was provided on the Estimates this year, most people will be fearful lest the decreased expenditure on wages has caused maintenance to suffer and that the condition of the system is growing worse. The Commissioner states that "the system has been kept up to the standard we can expect in these depressed times." I do not think we should have a different standard in depressed times from the point of view of safety. While in the past maintenance work was kept up, money was not spent on maintenance unnecessarily. If we adopt a different standard for the maintenance of track and rolling stock in depressed times, as compared with normal times, the standard must be lowered to the detriment of the system, and possibly to the danger of the public. When the Commissioner pointedly brings before Parliament the fact that he is maintaining the system in a different manner from that practised during the previous 10 or 12 years, we should take notice of it. We should insist that even if times are depressed, the hitherto high standard of maintenance should not be broken down. The Minister has stated that during the last few years all unnecessary maintenance charges have been cut out, but maintenance cannot be regarded as an unnecessary thing year after year. We have had two or three years of this policy of serious curtailment of the money spent on maintenance. The Minister said that £50,000 would be expended this year. That will not bring the road and rolling stock up to the proper standard. I hope that the policy of neglecting to do things because times are depressed will soon be ended. To restore the permanent way to standard will involve considerable expenditure during the next few years for what has been called delayed repairs, and I do not want the system to fall into such a condition as to endanger the travelling public. I impress upon the Minister that we do not want a different standard of maintenance in what the Commissioner describes as depressed times.

The Minister for Railways: That does not apply to locomotives and rolling stock. It applies only to the permanent way. He is putting rolling stock out of commission instead of repairing it.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: References to the permanent way branch show that a considerable number of men have been taken off maintenance.

The Minister for Railways: We have improved the methods a little.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Fortunately for the State, the department is always endeavouring to improve the methods, and has met with considerable success. It is impossible to retrench a comparatively large number of men and expect the road to be maintained at the standard of previous years. Can the Minister tell us what improvements have been introduced in the permanent way that would render 7 or 8 per cent. of the employees unnecessary, as compared with two years ago? So far as I know, there has been no drastic alteration. The business is only about 3 or 4 per cent. lower than it was, but on the other hand the proportionate retrenchment of employees has been much greater. That can have only one result if continued for long. The system must get into such a condition as to necessitate employing the number of persons that were previously employed in order to maintain it in a safe manner. The Commissioner says in paragraph 29 that there is urgent necessity for replacing the fishplates. The Commissioner, who is responsible to Parliament and the public, says that certain repair work is urgently necessary and it is not being done and the Government are taking a grave responsibility if they take no notice of such a statement. They should not withhold the money that is necessary to keep the track in order. The Commissioner is not very sanguine as to his being able to carry out the work associated with the coming harvest. He hopes there will be sufficient locomotive power and rolling stock to enable him to cope with the business. I now wish to refer to the policy of putting lads off when they reach the age of 21. For many years the Commissioner has selected bright, highly trained intelligent and well educated youths to enter the service, and given them the idea that their career in life is that of rail-

way men. These lads have studied, passed many examinations, and proved themselves in every way fit to carry on railway operations. When they reach the age at which they should have a feeling of hopefulness and encouragement for the future, they have the fear of being thrown out upon the streets. I would not mind if they were men whose services could be dispensed with because of their lack of ability. I know several who have passed every examination they could sit for, such as in accountancy, safe working and ambulance work, in order that they might qualify for any position that might be offering. They have shown energy, application and intelligence, and have given up their spare time to become competent to undertake whatever duties that may come their way in the course of their varied career in the railway service. Notwithstanding all this they are ignominiously put off when they reach the age of 21, and there does not seem to be much chance of their getting back into the service. I do not know that any member agrees with the Commissioner's policy. The members of Cabinet with whom I have discussed the matter, do not seem to be very enthusiastic about it. I am sure it is not endorsed by anyone in the country. Young men who reach the age of 21 are pushed out of the department and have to walk the streets looking for work, although they possess a wide and varied knowledge of railway working acquired during a period of intensive study.

Mr. Kenneally: They are put off at an age when they have less opportunity to engage in other walks of life.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Yes. This action has destroyed all their ideas in regard to the rewards that should come with hard work. They feel that they are numbered amongst the unwanted.

The Minister for Railways: That is not the fault of the Railway Department.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Most people are not dismissed merely because they reach a certain age. There should be some means whereby the service can retain at all events some of the best of these young men. It is not much encouragement to a young fellow to make himself proficient in the work when he is ignominiously put out of the service because he reaches the age of 21, without

any hope of getting back into it. If they could be given work at a lower remuneration, or some other system could be evolved whereby a series of competitive examinations could be held, 15 or 20 per cent. of these young men could be retained in the department. As it is, it does not matter how proficient they are in railway working they have to go out at a certain age. I understand that those who married before they reached that age have been retained in the service. It has even been said that some young fellows married in order to retain their jobs.

The Minister for Railways: I have heard of some who married so as to increase their sustenance allowances.

Mr. Marshall: Having got married they find they have a better job than they expected, I bet.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: We have a responsibility towards these young men. I have not discussed the matter with the Commissioner, but I think he is playing rather a lone hand. I do not know whether the Minister takes up the usual attitude that the responsibility of the railways and the staff is vested by Parliament in the Commissioner.

The Minister for Railways: That is laid down definitely in the Act.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The Minister has certain responsibilities and powers in railway matters. Generally speaking the Commissioner discusses matters of policy with his Minister, and desires to be in accord with Government policy. I do not know if that is part of the Government policy, but I am sure members will not subscribe to it, and will agree that it should be reconsidered. The Minister said that another £53,000 was to be spent on maintenance and other things. I hope that will make it possible for some of the young men to look forward with hope to their being retained in the service when they reach the age of 21. In anticipation of increased business there may be a certain amount of reorganisation in the system, and this may render it possible to provide openings for some of these bright lads.

The Minister for Railways: They used to be retained in the service.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Nowadays lads of 16 or 17 are being put on in place of them.

The Minister for Railways: You cannot ask a man to do the job of a messenger.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Young fellows in the Postal Department are doing work which would not be remunerative for an adult in ordinary circumstances, but because there is no other opening for them they are kept on in the department at the smaller jobs. I am sure that the advantage to be gained by retaining the services of some of the highly trained young men, would outweigh any additional expenditure involved. I should like to know whether it is intended to do anything with the rails on the manganese line between Meekatharra and Horse-shoe. These now belong to the Government. There are places where railway communication could with advantage be established. The only reason why the lines are not being constructed is because of the heavy capital cost. The rails I speak of could be used for such a purpose.

The Minister for Railways: They are very light rails.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: They are 45lb. standard weight rails.

The Minister for Railways: That is not the standard now.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The line to Wiluna was built of 45lb. rails, as was also the line from Mullewa to Meekatharra. All branch agricultural lines are built of those rails.

The Minister for Lands: They are 60lb. rails now. During your time rails of that weight were being used.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I think not.

The Minister for Lands: On the Kulja northward and Kulja eastward.

The Minister for Railways: They are dropping the light rails.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I know that. They are pulling up the light rails from the main line, putting down heavier rails in place of them, and the light rails are being used on agricultural branch lines.

The Minister for Lands: The line from Merredin to Naremben is built of 60lb. rails. A colleague of yours had that line constructed.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I am not talking about the lines which go from one point of the system to another point by means of a loop, but I am speaking of such lines as the Lake Grace to Karlgarin line, which is built of 45lb. rails. We are taking up the 45lb. rails on heavy traffic lines and putting them out into the agricultural districts.

The Minister for Railways: Look at the legal process that will have to be gone through to get the Horseshoe rails. They are not ours.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I understood from statements in the Press that the Government were in a position to take immediate possession of them. I do not think anyone would contend that the line should be left there indefinitely. If it could be shown that within five or six years the line would be used to assist in the economic development of the State, it would be another matter. No one would object to leaving the line in those circumstances, but I would like to know what the intentions of the Government are in that respect.

The Minister for Works: The matter is being looked into now.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: With reference to the freight on crude oil and the opinion expressed by the Minister when dealing with mining matters that the use of suction gas in connection with mining operations is more economical than crude oil, if that can be demonstrated, I do not know why the railways should carry crude oil to the goldfields at a loss.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: They do not carry it at a loss.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Yes, they do. I know arrangements were made with the Wiluna mines to carry crude oil at a rate that was distinctly unprofitable, and the object of doing so was to assist the mining industry. At that time we were told the use of crude oil was the most economical means by which power could be developed for working the mines. If a different system of generating power can be shown to be more economical, there should be no need for the Railway Department to haul crude oil 400 miles or more at a decidedly unprofitable rate. Especially is that so if it can be shown that by the expenditure of a comparatively small amount of capital, the improved system could be used with greater advantage. If it could be shown that a more satisfactory means of fertilising the land could be adopted than by the use of superphosphates, the railways would not be justified in hauling super at a rate of £1 per ton.

The Minister for Railways: We resisted an application for a similar rate for the haulage of crude oil to Kalgoorlie, and that is what the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe has in mind.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: If it can be shown that power can be developed on the mines by the use of suction gas more economically than with crude oil, the railways should not be asked to carry the latter commodity at an unprofitable rate.

The Minister for Railways: If it can be shown that power can be developed at the same cost, the railways should not be called upon to carry it at the present rate.

Mr. Marshall: What would be used to produce the gas at Wiluna?

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The Minister gave us the impression that it would be more economical.

Mr. Marshall: But what would they use to produce the gas—charcoal or timber?

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I presume they would use charcoal.

Mr. Marshall: Where would they get the wood with which to make the charcoal?

The Minister for Railways: There is not much difference between Gwalia and Wiluna. There is plenty of mulga there.

Mr. Marshall: It is a better class of timber than is to be found around Wiluna.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: We have heard something about the millions of tons of wood recovered from those desert areas.

Mr. Marshall: That was mostly gum.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: It was mostly mulga.

The Minister for Railways: Salmon gum and gimlet.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I was working for some years in the district and on the Pingal mine we burnt a lot of it.

Mr. Marshall: At present they have to go out 40 miles to keep one mine going at Meekatharra.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: But that is an old mining district, and the Wiluna mine is in a new area.

Mr. Marshall: But there is no timber available, and that is the difficulty.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: My remarks were based on the statement of the Minister.

The Minister for Railways: Wiluna is not comparable with Kalgoorlie, but at the same time there is no warrant for the application of the special rate to Kalgoorlie in view of the wood supply available.

Mr. Marshall: That is a different argument altogether.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The rate fixed for the haulage of crude oil to Wiluna was a

specially cheap one to assist in the successful inauguration of the mines there.

The Minister for Railways: We should not be carrying the commodity at the existing rate, bearing in mind the present price of gold.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The concession was only for a period of three years.

The Minister for Railways: There is no limit provided.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I know the concession was asked for the first three years.

The Minister for Railways: I will have the matter looked up.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I know that once a concession is granted, it is very difficult for a Government to alter it.

Mr. Marshall: I suggest you deal with Kalgoorlie, which is an old-established field, rather than Wiluna. There are timber supplies and everything else at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: If this matter does not apply to Wiluna, much of the point in the Minister's contention is lost. If it applies to other portions of the fields, there is no necessity to consider the railing of the oil at the present unprofitable rate. I do not wish to deal with the tramway system to any extent but I am pleased that the trolley-bus system is to be inaugurated. Some years ago we made inquiries somewhat along the lines that the Minister has indicated.

The Minister for Railways: But the trolley-buses have improved considerably since then.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: So I understand. The system has been successfully tried out in many parts of the world and has proved efficient. I am glad the system is to be inaugurated here because it will do away with one of the great disabilities of city life. I refer to the noise created by passing tramcars. When I was in Singapore a few years ago it was impossible to carry on a conversation in the street because of the noise of the tramcars. Speaking a few days ago to a person who had returned from a visit to that city, I learned that, with the advent of the trolley-bus system, the position is now entirely different. So with the establishment of the system here we shall do away with the noise that doctors inform us is so detrimental to the health of people who have to live in the city area. I do not think

we should allow the Vote to go through without having something to say about the projected sale of the East perth power house. It may be suggested that this matter does not concern my constituents so much as those who are residing in the metropolitan area, but I take the broader view in dealing with the question. The power house will have such a tremendous effect upon the industrial life of the metropolitan area that I can hardly conceive that any Government would seriously consider the selling of a utility, which can be of such tremendous importance in the development of our secondary industries.

The Minister for Railways: It has been a long time in doing that.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: If the Minister were to call for a return, he would find that there are hundreds of factories in the metropolitan area, some of which are comparatively small, that are making use of the cheap electric power that is available. Without it they would not be able to carry on successfully.

The Minister for Railways: It is not very encouraging to the department when something like £60,000 a year profit can be made out of it by the City Council.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The Minister had an excellent opportunity during the past two years, when Governments of all shades of political opinion deliberately and absolutely broke written contracts of years' standing. If in times like these a contract could be shown to be detrimental to the people, the opportunity was available at least to alter it and make it more just.

The Minister for Railways: That is not the point at all.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Of course it is.

The Minister for Railways: The point is that the City Council are making that profit out of the consumers.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: No fear.

The Minister for Railways: Of course they are. They are buying power from the department and selling it to the consumers and making a profit of £60,000 a year on the deal.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Because they are getting the current at a price that enables them to do so.

The Minister for Lands: Then why do not the City Council sell it to the consumers at a cheaper rate?



Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: That is another matter.

The Minister for Railways: The City Council have been making an exorbitant profit at the expense of the consumers.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I notice that the manager of the power house is still endeavouring to make arrangements for the sale of current at a price less than the cost of production.

The Minister for Railways: That is not the point. The point is that the City Council have been making a profit of £60,000 on the sale of a commodity that we produce. They are getting that money from the consumers in excess of the cost of supply.

Mr. Kenneally: Should a company get hold of the power house, both the City Council and the consumers will have to pay more for the current.

The Minister for Railways: That is merely an assumption, and you do not know anything about it.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The Minister naturally will say that anyone who took the power house over would have to take the existing contract as well.

Mr. Kenneally: But the contract does not last in perpetuity.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: It has a considerable time to run. The effect such a transaction as the sale of the power house will have on the economic life of the community will be such that I do not think any Parliament will sanction the sale of the utility, irrespective of who may be making profits from the production of the commodity. The present position will not last forever. If, as the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) suggests, the generation of electric current should pass into the hands of a private monopoly without any proper supervision, goodness knows what the effect will be on industry.

Mr. Sampson: No such sale would be agreed to without being subject to definite conditions.

Mr. Kenneally: Of course not—not that you would notice!

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Companies have a way of getting round those difficulties. Does the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) think that private enterprise will expend a lot of money and be content to secure a return of 2 per cent. only?

Mr. Kenneally: They are philanthropists.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: They would not consider embarking on such an undertaking for so small a return.

Mr. Sampson: Conditions could be laid down that would secure a just and reasonable return.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: And the cost would be passed on to the consumers. The Minister will agree that with the expenditure of a comparatively few thousand pounds, the plant has been run as economically as it is possible to generate current under the existing system. I do not think private enterprise could do much better, even with the expenditure of a large amount of capital. As a matter of fact, money has always been provided generously for power house requirements. I do not think private enterprise could reduce costs to any great extent so that the current could be sold at appreciably cheaper rates.

Mr. Sampson: The power house did not have sufficient capital in the time of the hon. member.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The hon. member is talking about the provision of capital for the extension of the power house, which is an entirely different matter. That would have nothing to do with the company that took over the power house. When at Kalgoorlie recently, the Premier talked about the apparent prosperity of Melbourne. That result there has been effected by the provision of cheap electric power for industrial purposes, which enabled factories to be run economically. In consequence, Melbourne has become one of the principal manufacturing centres for the whole of Australia. That position has been created because of the extremely cheap power provided from Yallourn. That cheap power has enabled factories to lower the cost of production, thereby enabling them to compete successfully against other industrial concerns throughout the continent. Ten or 12 years ago a strike of coal miners in Newcastle meant that within four or five days all the factories in Melbourne had to be closed down. Since they have been made independent of coal and have been guaranteed cheap power, the factories of Melbourne have been increasing by leaps and bounds, so much so that it seems Melbourne is becoming the manufacturing centre of Australia. If we desire to emulate the progress Melbourne has made, if we want to provide work for

our young people, then we should keep the power supply in the hands of the public, otherwise we will lose an opportunity which may never recur. That is the aspect of the matter with which I am particularly concerned. If we cannot guarantee cheap power in the metropolitan area, there is not much possibility of our establishing secondary industries. I do not wish to add anything further, except that I hope the Minister will have something to say with regard to the continued employment of youths who reach the age of 21 years, and that he will be able to reassure this House and the public generally that, so far as maintenance is concerned, more money will be expended.

**MR. BROWN** (Pingelly) [9.2]: I wish to congratulate the officers of the department, from the Commissioner down to the lowest employee, for the most efficient service they render. When we take into consideration that per head of the population we have more miles of railway than probably any other country in the world, and are so free from accident, it points to the fact that we have a most efficient staff. I have always been treated with the greatest courtesy by station masters and train staffs, and I think that is the general experience of the travelling public of Western Australia. Another matter to which I wish to refer is the speed at which the trains travel. They average between 25 and 30 miles an hour. The trouble, however, is the many stoppages. For instance, I have to travel from Pingelly to Perth and the journey occupies 6½ hours. I have timed it myself. Very often the train attains a speed of 35 to 40 miles an hour. The first stop is at Chidlow and the next at Spencer's Brook. That is a junction and I admit there must be a stoppage there. There is also a junction at Clackline, where there is a stoppage of some duration. Twenty miles further on we reach York. There is a stoppage there. Then there is another stoppage at Brookton. I do not think the passenger traffic warrants the running of a special train right through from Pingelly to Perth, but the department might wonder why there is so much motor traffic. The distance from Pingelly to Perth by road is a little over 100 miles and the journey by car takes from 3½ to 4 hours. I admit the roads are good. It seems a pity that we have to waste so much more time to travel the same distance

by train, but I fail to see how that can be obviated, because the necessary stoppages must be made.

**Mr. Corboy**: Could you not obviate that by making the people who use the roads pay for the roads?

**Mr. BROWN**: That is another question altogether. When travelling between Spencer's Brook and York, I was surprised to find on looking through the window the dilapidated condition of the railway fence. There is a fence belonging to the railways on the right hand side going to York with panels down every few miles. There is nothing to stop travelling stock on the road walking on to the railway line and it is possible that a very severe accident may occur.

**Mr. Corboy**: Is that why you started off by commending the Commissioner of Railways?

**Mr. BROWN**: The Commissioner told me himself that he will maintain the track in good order. We owe our freedom from accidents to the fact that the track is maintained in good order. The reason why I brought up the matter of the fence is because we have a tremendous number of unemployed men and it should be possible to employ them on the work of repairing this fence.

**Mr. Corboy**: You would have them repairing fences on the other side of the road.

**Mr. BROWN**: The wire fences are in much better order. There should be wire fences all along the line. The fence I refer to is a very old one. In some places it is beyond repair. A new fence is required.

**Mr. Corboy**: You want new railways.

**Mr. BROWN**: Take the Karlgarin railway, this railway ought to be completed and placed under the control of the Railway Department. Under the system under which it is at present being conducted, we find that, although wheat and superphosphate are carried at the same rates as those charged by the Railway Department general merchandise is carried at a special rate.

**Mr. Corboy**: You are lucky, because before, the higher rate was payable on the wheat and superphosphate also.

**Mr. BROWN**: Yes. The settlers appreciate what has been done for them, but the Government are losing a tremendous amount of revenue by adopting the system I have mentioned.

Mr. Corboy: Do you mean to say that those settlers, although they have got the railway, are using motor transport?

Mr. BROWN: Yes.

Mr. Corboy: Although they have the railway?

Mr. BROWN: That is so. For instance, I had an application for 60 tons of timber required to build a hall at Karlgarin for the local agricultural society. The society were quite willing to have the timber carried over the railway line from Lake Grace, provided it could be carried at the usual rate. The Railway Department refused to carry it at the usual rate.

Mr. Corboy: Not the Railway Department?

Mr. BROWN: I have every reason to believe that that timber was carted from Kondinin.

Mr. Corboy: The people who built the hall had the timber carted by road? They do not deserve a railway.

The Minister for Railways: They do not. You are quite right.

Mr. BROWN: It is possible that general merchandise is now carted by truck from Kondinin. It may be carted all the way from Perth by road. The railways must cater for the public.

The Minister for Railways: That is right: run them for nothing.

Mr. BROWN: We wonder why the people are using motor trucks. I am giving the reason. I do not approve of it myself.

The Minister for Railways: How do farmers get their superphosphate?

Mr. Corboy: Let them cart their superphosphate by motor trucks and their wheat also.

Mr. BROWN: They appreciate having their wheat and superphosphate carried over the railways.

Mr. Corboy: They do not deserve a railway at all.

Mr. BROWN: I do not think it is quite right. These people are extremely lucky to have a railway. However, things are cut so fine now that the farmer must save every farthing he possibly can.

Mr. Corboy: If there were no railways, would private enterprise carry goods at the same rate as the Railway Department? The people you referred to could not have built a public hall at all had it not been for the railways.

Mr. BROWN: What I say applies, I suppose, to other districts as well. I would like a minimum charge fixed for carrying wheat, irrespective of the quantity. At the present time, there is a minimum charge for a quantity of not less than 6 tons. A case was brought under my notice recently. A man at Dwarda had 19 bags of wheat, weighing 1 ton 9 cwt. It cost £2 5s. 2d., or 30s. a cwt., or 10d. a bushel to get those 19 bags down to Perth. It may be wondered why this man had only 19 bags of wheat. After seeding a man may have 19 or 20 bags over. He had not enough to fill a truck, and he had no alternative but to send it down to Perth for sale.

Mr. Corboy: Why did he not send it by motor truck?

Mr. BROWN: Because his truck is not licensed for that purpose. He could, however, have hired a fully licensed truck to take it down at a cheaper rate.

The Minister for Railways: In the case you mentioned do you suggest we should make a general reduction in freight?

Mr. BROWN: No. I want a minimum charged fixed for wheat. I know the railways carry first, second and third-class goods at varying rates.

The Minister for Railways: Why did he not take the wheat to Narrogin? It is not far.

Mr. BROWN: What is happening is that many men are using horse teams to take their wheat to Narrogin to be gristed. Motor trucks are also used for the same purpose. Farmers who are fortunate enough to own trucks can use them to take their wheat to the nearest mill. They are doing so now. However, if the minimum charge were reduced, in my opinion they would patronise the railways. A number of farmers could join together and make up a truck load, but that is not always convenient. It would be in the interests of the department to reduce their minimum rate on wheat.

The Minister for Lands: If you would keep your railways you must make them pay.

Mr. BROWN: Many of the storekeepers in the country are using trucks, but no man loyal to the railways will use trucks. It has been suggested that for big towns like York, Northam and Toodyay the railways should have a flat rate for all goods.

Mr. Sleeman: All except super.

Mr. BROWN: It is thought the people would then patronise the railways instead of the motor trucks. I am inclined to think that myself.

Mr. Marshall: You never thought anything in your life.

Mr. BROWN: It certainly would be advantageous to the railways to reduce their minimum rate on wheat. I was in accord with the member for Geraldton when he referred to the retrenchment of many of our young men from the railways. I have known young fellows who joined the service at 16 years of age, going into the workshops at Midland, or perhaps acting as porters on country stations. They had to sit for their examinations periodically, and after a few years they are now retrenched from the railways. Having served the most impressionable years of their lives in the service, they are not of much use for any other occupation. I understand the railways are trying to 'meet those young fellows who have been retrenched by giving them part-time employment, but I want to know is there any possibility of those young men ever again being engaged permanently on the railways.

Mr. Corboy: How can the railways want men while you farmers are carting your stuff over the roads?

Mr. BROWN: I am told there is not much chance of those young fellows' being reinstated on a permanent basis.

Mr. Panton: What are you going to do about it?

Mr. BROWN: When a new railway is built and handed over to the Commissioner, it cannot be made to pay for the first few years, and so it adds to the difficulties of the Commissioner.

Mr. Panton: Is it not the responsibility of the farmers to help make the railways pay by using them?

Mr. BROWN: The motor traffic is the difficulty. The Minister cannot shut his eyes to that. The question is, how are we going to combat the motor traffic? This year a lot of wool was brought down by road which ought to have been brought down by rail. Of course, motor truck owners have to pay fees amounting to £40 a year.

Mr. Marshall: If I were Minister for Works, I would stop the lot of them.

Mr. BROWN: This year Pingelly sent more wool by rail than ever before. It is the people outback who are using the motor trucks. As I say, it is impossible for a new railway line to pay at first, and so it is not fair that the Commissioner should be expected to make that line pay. It should be maintained out of general revenue. Personally I will always patronise the railways.

Mr. Corboy: On your gold pass!

Mr. BROWN: What about other members? After all is said and done, we ought to be proud of our railway system and proud of our railway officers who keep that system free from accident. No other country in the world can compare with us in that regard.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.23]: I was interested to hear the remarks of the member for Geraldton, for by reason of his past experience as Minister for Railways he is closely in touch with many of the railway problems. I understand that about two years ago the Midland Railway Workshop engineers suggested to the Commissioner for Railways that railway work should be rationed. Clearly, had that suggestion been adopted a great deal of suffering would have been saved, for it would have meant that all railway men would have had some work and so the Government would have been saved a good deal of expense in providing relief. All the railway men would have been maintained on part-time, and so would have had at least some money to take home at the end of each fortnight. It is tragic that so many young railway men should be forced out of work, and it seems to me that if the rationing proposal had been adopted they could very easily have received special consideration. Rationing would have saved a great deal of suffering amongst the workers in the railways, and in turn the reflected saving to the Government would have been considerable. I am sorry the Minister should be giving consideration to the possible installation of a trackless tramway.

Mr. Kenneally: You always are against progress.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not aware that the hon. member knows much about trackless trams. If he does, it is an oasis in a desert of lack of knowledge.

Mr. Corboy: You are an authority on lack of knowledge!

Mr. SAMPSON: I have a pretty good idea of the hon. member's capacity. However, I do not wish to pursue that, because, if one speaks the truth one says something unpleasant. I do not claim to know very much about trackless trams, but I rode in one out from Leeds to Otley on the River Wharfe. That was in 1928, and doubtless some progress has been made since then. The tram was slow and cumbersome, and I should say that for city travelling it was very unsuitable. Otley is not a big town, and practically the roads were available to the tram alone. I submit that greater consideration should be given to the putting on of motor buses, which are far more flexible, easier and cheaper to run and better in every respect than trackless trams.

The Minister for Railways: And they run on imported fuel.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister will say that the fuel for the trackless trams comes from Collie. I agree there is something in that, but if we carry that argument farther, it might be, in view of the progress made in transport by means of producer gas, that we would be able to run our motor buses in the same way as agricultural tractors are being run.

The Minister for Railways: It is not a question of what we might do, but of what we are able to do.

Mr. SAMPSON: Great progress has been made in tractors operated by producer gas.

Mr. Hegney: Do you suggest the Minister should wait until that system is adapted to trams?

Mr. SAMPSON: I suggest that anything in the way of a trackless tram would be a mistake. It would pay better to purchase the necessary rails—we can provide the sleepers, anyhow—and run the track as it is being run to-day. The provision of trackless trams is an innovation.

The Minister for Railways: It is not.

Mr. SAMPSON: In this country it is, and it means a departure from standardisation, which is prejudicial from the standpoint of economical administration and operation. Having ridden in one of the trackless trams, I consider it would be a mistake to introduce them here.

The Minister for Railways: What about an Irish jaunting car?

Mr. SAMPSON: I have ridden in an Irish jaunting car and also in a train in Ireland that ran on one rail. It is being said the world over that the days of the tramcar are

numbered, that this is the day of motor transport, and I hope consideration will be given to that aspect before a new system of passenger conveyance in the form of trackless trams is adopted. Regarding the power house, I am not particular whether it is sold to a private company or to the local authorities. I realise the difficulties confronting the Government. Both the ex-Minister for Railways and the present Minister have been deeply sympathetic to the need for making extensions, but lack of funds has rendered that impossible. I hope that the monopoly enjoyed by the Government will be disposed of, subject to conditions fair to all parties being imposed, so that we can ensure that the people who require electric current will be supplied.

**MR. WITHERS** (Bunbury) [9.32]: When one considers the figures in the Commissioner's report showing the reduction in staff and expenditure as compared with working expenses generally, one wonders how the figures have been arrived at. The report states that the wages decrease for the year was £589,000, while the reduction of working expenses for the year was £487,000. There seems to be some discrepancy. The Estimates show that in the Commissioner's Department, where the heads are located, there is to be increased expenditure this year amounting to £3,300, but for wages and salaries for the traffic and mechanical branch, a decrease of something like £54,000 is shown. If the administration is going to cost more, there must be something wrong with the management. I do not know whether I have placed a wrong construction on the figures, but that is what the figures convey. Mention is made in the Commissioner's report of the lack of funds to continue the work of ballasting the South-West line. Members who have had experience of railway work know that to stint maintenance is not only detrimental to the system but creates a heavy burden to be borne in later years. Considering the enormous depreciation that has occurred, hundreds of thousands of pounds will be required to restore the system to its previous standard, and if this work is not undertaken, the time will come when our railways will not be able to show the results they should. Recently we have had experience of what the railways can do. For many years I have been urging the Government to consider means for combating the opposition to

the State's transport system. The Commissioner of Railways and the chief transport officers are paid high salaries to look after transport affairs, but they have not been able to visualise the needs of transport in the metropolitan area and we have lost much of the traffic to motor buses. It is hard to tax those people off the road because they come into competition with the railways. The railway authorities should have combated the opposition when it was first experienced. If they had seriously considered the position at the time and had introduced motor buses to combat the opposition, we would not have lost the traffic as we have done. We can only blame those at the head of affairs for the existing position. Proof of that is to be found in the recent illustrations that the railway authorities are waking up. It seems to me that the younger officers are able to exert a little influence over the older officials and consequently we are getting concessions that were not given some years ago. Let me refer to the "Back to Railway Week." We do not want a "Back to Railway Week." It must be "Back to the railways forever." That is possible if the railways provide efficient service. It will not be accomplished by depleting the service or cutting down the maintenance costs. I do not often travel in the metropolitan trains, but on Tuesday last I had occasion to go to Midland Junction. At the central station I entered a carriage that was certainly not a credit to the department. A fellow passenger who had paid a first class fare to Bayswater remarked, "Look at that carriage, and the railway people expect women to travel in a compartment like that when they have the choice of travelling in a bus." It was a standing disgrace to the department to run a carriage in such bad condition. It is false economy. I suppose some member of the cleaning staff had been retrenched and that that accounted for the disgraceful state of the carriage. The department ought to consider matters of that kind. Service is the first essential. If the railways give efficient service, the traffic will return to them. The reduction of fares in the metropolitan area has proved a great success, but there is further scope for enterprise in this direction. I belong to a seaside resort, and people will travel to that resort if reasonable facilities are granted them. At the Bunbury end we can

provide attractions to entertain them if the railways will only continue to transport them as they have done on one or two occasions for a reasonable fare.

Mr. Marshall: Why do not the motor bus people cater for it?

Mr. WITHERS: They have too few buses. Quite recently a sports gathering was arranged at Bunbury and we tried to arrange a train service from Perth for the occasion. The railway authorities could not realise the possibilities and we had to guarantee £75 before they would run a train. Yet before the day was out, the department had to run three trains of 40 coaches which carried some 2,000 passengers, and instead of £75, they got about £600 for the day's work. That proposal was not suggested by the chief transport officers; it was suggested by a man in Bunbury as a means of benefiting the railway revenue. Last week-end the department instituted another system, namely that of running Sunday trains at a fare of 7s. 6d., and they got 600 passengers. On the week-end train that left Perth on Saturday night they issued second class tickets for 12s. 6d. and something like 150 passengers took advantage of that excursion. Opportunities of that kind are offering throughout the State and the department should take advantage of them.

The Minister for Railways: That is not so; there is only one Bunbury.

Mr. WITHERS: If the department ran excursions of the kind fairly often, the revenue would be benefited. It should not be necessary to ask for guarantees when such traffic is offering; the department should look out for traffic and cater for it. I hope the officials will take this matter into consideration and will realise that when there is a chance to make money, they should not consider the rate-per-mile rule before agreeing to run a train. That is a very conservative method of working and something more up-to-date is required. There are quite a lot of things for the department, if not to learn, to put into operation. Regarding trackless trams, I do not know whether it is intended to run them on established routes or continue existing services with the present facilities.

Mr. Kenneally: They will not be run to Bunbury.

Mr. WITHERS: We do not want them because they would not carry enough people. Do the Government intend to run

the trackless trams in competition with established bus services? If the new system is going to be of any advantage, the trackless trams should be run in competition with the buses. That would be just a way of getting rid of the buses that have established services in opposition to the railways. The report of the Commissioner makes mention of the timber mill, which is in the Dwellingup area. I refer to this because I saw timber arriving at Bunbury to be used as firewood. I do not know whether it had been cut out of long lengths of timber, but a truck I looked at contained dry, seasoned scantling in 3-foot lengths, and it all appeared to be of remarkably good quality. Rather than use scantling of that kind for firewood for the locomotives, it would be better to seek other avenues for firewood. It seemed to me to be a waste of good material to use such timber for firewood. While the Government are considering ways of saving money, they should also consider how the buildings throughout the service are deteriorating. Buildings are in need of painting and repairs and are falling into a dilapidated condition. As the member for Pingelly pointed out, even some of the fences have fallen into disrepair. It is time the system was brought up to standard so that the public would have some incentive to use it to the fullest extent. Then we would be able to pride ourselves upon it and make the best possible use of it.

**MR. J. I. MANN** (Beverley) [9.45]: I wish to refer particularly to railway fares in country districts. There has been a reduction in this direction in the metropolitan area but not in the country. Trains which run in the Great Southern districts are to-day practically empty. Fares have certainly not been reduced there. I am sure that if fares were reduced in the country districts so many more people would use the service that a greatly increased revenue would result. Even if the fares were reduced 50 per cent. I feel certain that more revenue would come in.

The Minister for Railways: Not on your life!

**Mr. J. I. MANN**: We frequently see trains consisting of four or five coaches and containing in all not more than 25 or 30 passengers.

The Minister for Railways: You would have to get 100 per cent. increase in passengers if you reduced fares like that.

**Mr. J. I. MANN**: At present only a handful of people are using the trains. The distance between Perth and Beverley is 90 miles, but a train takes five hours to do the journey. A person can cover that distance by motor car in 2½ hours. The Monday morning train leaves Beverley at 6 o'clock, and arrives in Perth at half-past ten. On other days it leaves at 10 minutes to six and arrives in Perth at 10.55. There are too many delays along the track, and too many refreshment rooms to cause the journey to be broken. There seems to be no sign of hurry to get the train through. There are stoppages at Chidlow, Spencer's Brook, York and so forth. I notice that if the train is a quarter of an hour late when arriving at Beverley, it is still able to reach Perth at the proper time. I wish to compliment the railways upon the greater punctuality of running. Evidently there has been a general shaking up in the service, and the trains are running much closer to schedule than used to be the case. Transport on the spur lines is not what it ought to be. Women and children travelling on the Narrogin and Kondinin lines arrive at Merredin at the early hour of 4 o'clock in the morning. It is a very long, slow journey. No one seems to care about hurrying. It ought to be possible to give the people out-back the advantage of steam coaches on some of the lines. It would be better to use the main trains as goods trains, and the steam coaches for the passenger service. Only in that way will it be possible to attract public support to the system. I must say, however, that during the last two years greater efficiency has been shown in the conduct of the railways. Station-masters, porters and others seem now to be catering for trade, whereas at one time they did not seem to care who came or went. It was no wonder that competition with the railways came into existence and proved so successful. The employees have now wakened up to the importance of the service and to the fact, I suppose, that their livelihoods are at stake. I hope there will be a reduction in railway fares. Only comparatively few people are using the railways to-day. Along the Great Southern there are many farmers who would be only too glad to send their

wives and families to the seaside if reduced fares were offered to them. Some years ago it was possible to get a return ticket between Perth and Albany for 30s. This concession included Beverley and Pingelly. To-day the fare is between £3 and £4.

Mr. Withers: People used to travel between Cue and Geraldton for £1.

Mr. J. I. MANN: The fares are altogether too high. The railways are continually showing a deficit. The chief trouble must lie with the administration.

The Minister for Lands: The hikes have been successful.

Mr. J. I. MANN: Yes. If a little ginger was put into the railway administration we should soon see results. It is very costly to run motor transport. I know of men who have to pay £40 or £50 a year on their trucks, but they are able to make a good living. It is most necessary that country fares should be reduced. It seems to me that everything is for the city, and that it does not matter what happens in the country.

**MR. KENNEALLY** (East Perth) [9.50]: It appears to me that there are some members who would like to see the railways show a greater loss than they are showing to-day. One of the references in the report of the Commissioner is to the effect that a gift of £50,000 has been made to the woolgrowers. If that does not return interest and reduce the deficit on the railways, members of the cross-benches will no doubt be the first to draw attention to the loss, even though it has been intensified by the endeavour of the department to help the wool-growing industry.

Mr. J. I. Mann: Unless there is an alteration in the condition of our primary industries, there will soon be no railway transport at all.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Unless the farmers cease to make a convenience of the railways, there will soon be no farmers in the country.

Mr. J. I. Mann: We want a combination of the two.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It is not a profitable proposition for farmers to allow their super and wheat, the freight on which is very low, to be carried by the railways, and then to use motor transport for all those other goods on which the freight is comparatively high. If they want a continuance of cheap freights

on super, etc., they must give the railways the benefit of the freight on the other commodities in order to make up for that.

Mr. Marshall: Motor transport has to pay for the roads.

Mr. KENNEALLY: We have prided ourselves on having had such a great freedom from accidents on our railways. We shall soon arrive at the time when we can boast of that no longer. The railways have been freer from general accidents, or accidents involving personal injury and loss of life, than the railways in any other part of the Commonwealth, but we are running a big risk of losing that fine record.

The Minister for Railways: Oh no.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I think I shall be able to show that we are running that risk, by quoting no less an authority than the Commissioner himself. Notwithstanding the great reductions in staff, the railway employees are performing yeoman service. During the year under review the staff has been reduced by over 900 persons, and yet excellent work has been performed. I do not agree that the officers of the department have only lately awakened. The railways have been manned by men who know their job and are prepared to carry it out on all occasions, at the call of the country and of the department. All hands are giving a splendid return for the money they earn. I wish to deal now with the maintenance of Ways and Works. In 1928 the cost of this maintenance was £731,000. In the following year it was £748,123, and in 1930 it was £800,784. This year it is only £470,544. If we take the amount expended in 1930, £800,784, and deduct from it the amount spent this year, we find that £330,240 less has been spent on the maintenance of Ways and Works this year than was the case two years ago. If we add to that the difference between 1931 and 1930, £224,061, we find that in the two years under review £554,301 less has been paid in maintenance on Ways and Works than was previously spent. The Minister says we are not getting near the time when we shall forfeit our claim to running the railways without risk to passengers. Either the Minister is of opinion that the money previously expended was wasted, or he must agree that it is necessary to spend money in ensuring the safety of the railways. The Commissioner's report to



Parliament bristles with a cry of despair concerning the safety of the railways, and it is time members took some notice of it. When I was directly connected with the service I remember waiting on a previous Commissioner. When anything is put up to the head of the railways he at once desires to get into a safe position. I have had it pointed out to me by previous Commissioners that they desire to put on record warnings to the Government of the day. It then becomes the responsibility of the Government to take action. I do not blame the Commissioner. I can see that the present occupant of the position has adopted the idea of safety first. He is reporting to the Minister and Parliament that the danger signal is hanging out. I do not expect him to upbraid the Minister or Parliament, but he goes as close to that as he can. He says that the maintenance of Ways and Works expenditure declined this year by £106,179, and when compared with that of the year 1930 the decrease amounted to £330,240. This heavy decline, he says, illustrates that every avenue for postponing expenditure has been exploited, and that, as pointed out in his last report, the leeway will have to be made up when times are more propitious. The savings in transportation, £126,362, and locomotive power £119,532, were partly due to reduced traffic, reduced wages and fuel bill, and the postponement of repairs to rolling stock partly accounts for the decrease under that heading. The Commissioner goes further in his report in that regard. Not only does he point out that position, but he refers to the safety of the track and indicates that economy has gone the limit. Dealing with that phase, and after pointing out that the staff comprises 929 fewer officers than in former years, he says—

Maintenance was further curtailed in the way of postponement of repairs to rolling stock, re-sleeping, etc., which means that future years' earnings will be mulet to make up the leeway. However, the whole system has been kept up to standard commensurate with the traffic offering and depressed times.

There is a definite statement indicating, as the member for Geraldton (Hon. J. C. Willcock) pointed out, that the system has been kept up to standard only commensurate with the traffic offering and the depressed times. Because there is less traffic hauled over the

lines, that does not mean we can afford to pay less attention to repairs. It is the adoption of that policy elsewhere that has led to difficulties regarding safe working. The Commissioner makes another interesting observation with regard to boilers, and says in his report—

One hundred and sixty-four locomotive boilers passed through the workshops, of which 60 were generally overhauled. Five new boilers were constructed for maintenance purposes. This is far below the usual output, and is the result of the reduction in workshops staff through the depression. The necessity for heavy boiler replacements will require serious consideration in the near future.

All these remarks by the Commissioner tend to indicate the legacy that will be left to a future Administration. There has been a paring down below the safety point, and it will be left to someone else in the future to shoulder the burden. It almost appears as though the Minister realises that he will not occupy his position much longer, and has conceived the idea that the brighter he can make the position seem now, the easier it will be for him, and his successor will have to accept the responsibility of making up the leeway. While that may be all right from the standpoint of the Minister, it will only create a more difficult position for his successor.

The Minister for Railways: Are you trying to make a joke?

Mr. KENNEALLY: There is no necessity to do that; the Minister himself is a joke. In another paragraph the Commissioner draws attention to the fact that another legacy is being left for a future Administration. He goes on to say—

The corrosion in boilers owing to the quality of the water, particularly that from the Goldfields Water Supply, is a serious question, and heavy expenditure on boiler maintenance is imminent.

Mr. Brown: Do you not think that some of those engines should be scrapped, as they are out of date?

Mr. KENNEALLY: A good many of them have been scrapped. Dealing with re-sleeping, the Commissioner reports—

In the last quarter of the financial year 73,642 sleepers were renewed in the main lines by special gangs, which assisted in a small measure to alleviate the position brought about by the financial stringency. However, there are a number of sleepers in inferior condition, and heavy expenditure will be necessary in the near future to overtake arrears in

this connection. With 4,235 miles of main line, approximately 9,000,000 sleepers are in the road bed, and even with a life of 20 years, 450,000 sleepers should be renewed annually if permanent way is to be kept up to the standard desired by the Administration.

On the Commissioner's own showing, the provision falls far below the necessary re-sleepering that should be done annually. We are allowing the track to fall into disrepair, and it will be the responsibility of the Minister's successor to remedy the position. Dealing with bridges and culverts, the Commissioner says—

There are many old bridges throughout the system which have practically reached the end of their useful life. Their entire reconstruction is very necessary in many cases, and this work will be pressed forward as opportunity offers.

Here again it will be seen that all this work is for the future. Dealing with jetties, the Commissioner says—

Extensive repairs to the Hopetoun jetty were commenced at the latter end of the year, and a number of walings and braces were renewed. Further renewals will be carried out as funds permit.

Regarding the position at Esperance, the Commissioner reports—

The Esperance jetty was maintained sufficiently well to meet shipping requirements. A number of condemned piles were replaced and piers were strengthened. It cannot be denied that the whole structure is too weak for the class of shipping it is called upon to serve.

On the subject of ballasting the Commissioner says—

It is a matter for regret that further funds could not be provided for the re-ballasting of the Perth-Bunbury line and for improving the position pointed out in my last annual report regarding the condition of the present class of ballast on that section, which has become quite unsuitable for the locomotives and class of traffic it has to carry.

Notwithstanding the Commissioner's comments, the Minister lightly passed this phase over. He said that the position was not serious enough in that respect, but I hope the Committee will not be content to allow matters to drift along until our railway system is in the same condition, from the standpoint of safe working, that has characterised the system in some of the other States. There they would not spend the money necessary for the protection of human life conveyed over their railway systems, with

unfortunate results. I want to draw the attention of the Minister to another matter. At the Naval Base, a number of trucks are housed and they seem to be disappearing piecemeal. Timber from the sides of the trucks is evidently being used for domestic purposes.

Hon. A. McCallum: That is a reflection upon my electors!

Mr. KENNEALLY: The electors referred to by the hon. member must be very painstaking because some of the metal work has also disappeared from the wagons. When traffic increases, those wagons will be required for active work, and extra expenditure will have to be incurred to effect repairs. When that time comes members sitting behind the Government will say, "When we were in power, we made the railways pay. Why don't you make them pay?" Later on when the extra expenditure will have to be faced by a future Administration, those members will be the first to complain of increased costs. I want it placed on record that the heavy expenditure which some future Administration may have to incur will be the result of the neglect of the present Government to maintain the trucks in an efficient state of repair. Trucks can be found at various sidings. They have been red-carded and blue-labelled and thrown out of use. I have some slight knowledge of the expenditure necessary to place into service again trucks that have been left out in the weather and not cared for. As we are likely to require those trucks for the coming harvest, I am of opinion that the present time is opportune to get them repaired. If the work is put in hand, additional workmen will be required. I want to draw attention to the attitude of the department towards its employees who, as most members on both sides of the House will admit, are doing their work in a creditable manner. In a previous debate I had occasion to direct attention to the position that had arisen not only in Australia but throughout the world with respect to hours of labour. We find the Government of the day ignoring all schools of thought that are advocating shorter hours. On the other hand, the Government on every conceivable occasion are endeavouring to lengthen their employees' hours of work. The Minister may say, as he has said before, that that is the Commissioner's job. I do not think we can accept that, because

we cannot exempt the Government from some of the responsibility in that respect. I am of opinion that the lengthening of hours of work will not solve the unemployment problem. If the hours of labour in the Railway Department be increased by one-twelfth, we invariably find that one-twelfth of the men engaged become superfluous. Under present conditions, the Government will dismiss them from the railways, and then they will have to seek sustenance. Continual increases in the number of hours to be worked, and continual reductions in wages are not going to solve the unemployment problem. The Railway Department, by their attitude at the present time, seem to think that is the only method by which the problem can be solved. I desire to express my opposition to the Government's attitude towards the hours of labour of tramway workers. When the Government are asking for reduced wages and increased working hours, they ordinarily instruct their representative to point out the loss that is being incurred in a particular concern. The Government made application to the Arbitration Court quite recently to increase the hours of the men employed by the Tramway Department from 44 to 48 hours per week. Now, let us analyse the position from the financial point of view of the tramways. We find that in 1931 the loss on the tramways was £9,367. For the year ended June, 1932, the profit made by the tramways was £9,342, so that the year's operations converted the loss of £9,367 into a profit of £9,342. This made a total difference to the year's transactions of £18,709. In face of that improved position, the department made an application to the Arbitration Court to increase the hours of labour from 44 to 48. What surprises me is that the department get such loyal service from its officers. It does not seem to matter to the Government, or in this case, the Commissioner—and no doubt he is acting under the Government's instructions—whether the men perform their work well or not. In connection with the Tramway Department, the authorities waited on the men and asked them if they would work fewer hours and so obviate the necessity for dismissing 40 or 50 men. The men agreed to do so; they accepted the shorter working week and less pay. Notwithstanding that the men agreed to do that, the department applied to the Arbitration Court to increase the hours of

work of the men still employed. Actions like that compel the men to ask themselves whether it is worth while trying to meet the department in a reasonable manner. We are told that during the year when the profit of £9,000 was made, the track was kept in efficient order, as well as the rolling stock and overhead equipment. In view of that creditable result, can hon. members justify the application for the extension of the hours of work of these men? If they can, I should like to hear the justification. Reference has been made to the trolley buses or trackless trams and some little opposition has been shown to them. When the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) was speaking I said he is usually to be found against progress. Where progress is to be found, the hon. member is absent.

Mr. Sampson: What do you mean by progress?

Mr. KENNEALLY: In that respect the position he occupies in this House is unique. Whilst he opposes the policy of sending any printing out of this country, when it comes to a policy that means work for people in other industries in this State he would prefer to send the work abroad. All work can go out of the State except printing, an industry in which he is engaged. The trolley buses or trackless trams will be an improvement on the existing system. Nothing could be worse than trams running on that track from Barrack-street to Hill-street in its present condition. Deputations have waited on the Minister, and we were promised that the track would be relaid, and that as soon as a gang of men had finished at Mt. Hawthorn they would be put on to that work. However, the Treasurer said there was no money with which to do that or any other work. Since then the tramway track has become worse than ever, and we had a few derailments there before the traffic was stopped. That is why I am anxious to see that the same thing does not occur on the railways; for whilst we can have a derailment on a tramway track without loss of life or even injury, if we let the railways get down we cannot continue to run them with any degree of safety, for we cannot afford to play with human life. At present with a reduction in two years of over half a million in the money spent on the maintenance of our railways, we are simply playing with the safety of human life. The Minister should give attention to the preparing of a road for

this trackless tram. One portion of the track has been closed, and there should be no difficulty in making good that section of the road. When we waited upon the Minister about this system he pointed out that the engineers of the tramways and the railways had said it was a question whether the existing track should be covered over, the lines being left there, or whether the line and the sleepers should be taken up and a permanent road made to carry the proposed new system for some considerable time without repairs being required. The closing of that system and the running of the trains through Hay street to Hill-street will enable the Minister to get to work on that road. Then there is the section from the junction of Wellington-street and Hill-street to the end of Kensington-street. If an immediate start be not made in getting that road ready it will mean additional delay. Then it will be necessary to give attention to the extension of that service. The Minister has pointed out that the proposed extension will not cost a great deal of money. Experience in both tramway and railway working teaches me that a spur line is far more expensive to operate than is a continuous system. So I say it will be necessary to give attention to the extension of the present Kensington-street tram, to connect with the Maylands tram or, if the crossing of the railway line be an insuperable bar, alternatively attention should be given to connecting up with the car barn, via either Trafalgar-road or Jewel-street, in order to do away with the spur line, and so allow the system to be worked at lesser cost. Reference has been made to the proposed sale of the electricity power house. Usually when members, particularly those opposite, advocate the sale of a Government utility, the first thing they point to is the loss entailed by that utility. But in this instance they find themselves in a difficulty, because the audited figures do not permit of that plea. For years past the power house has been showing a continuous yearly profit. In 1928 there was a profit of £11,734, in 1929 a profit of £7,703, in 1930 a profit of £16,869, in 1931 a profit of £7,717, and in 1932 the biggest profit of all, namely £17,871. Over the five years the total profit to Consolidated Revenue from the power house was no less than £61,894. No wonder that

people with capacious financial paws are reaching out after it. But the sorry feature is that we should have a Minister who is prepared even to listen to overtures for the sale of this people's property which is paying so well. It is proposed to negotiate for the sale of it. As a matter of fact, the general manager apparently is now carting the proposition around Europe trying to dispose of it.

The Minister for Lands: That is not correct.

Mr. KENNEALLY: He has gone as far as England, and we do not know how much farther.

Mr. Angelo: He has gone to buy trolley buses.

The Minister for Lands: He has gone to supply information.

Mr. KENNEALLY: He has gone to get information and send it out here.

The Minister for Lands: We want to find out who they are and what they can do.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am afraid the Government are taking a step which will not make for clean action towards this community.

Member: That is hot.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It is not hotter than is required when we send the manager to England to vend the proposition.

The Minister for Lands: He is not vending it.

Mr. KENNEALLY: He has gone to England, and the Minister cannot say that people were not out here viewing the power house before the manager went to England. The Minister cannot deny that.

The Minister for Lands: So far as we know, they were not.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Minister does not know much.

The Minister for Lands: Who were the firm?

Mr. KENNEALLY: Before the manager went to England, people were out here securing information, and apparently the manager has gone Home to give it to them.

The Minister for Lands: Well, it was quite unknown to the Government.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The power house has been showing a profit year by year, and in 1932 it showed the largest profit in five years.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: After paying interest commitments.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Yes. Yet the Government are negotiating for its sale. If I know the temper of the people, there will be such a hullabaloo against its sale that the Government will not go on with the proposal. There is more involved in the sale of the power house than has been mentioned. The Government own the tramway system and are absolutely dependent upon the current produced at the power house to run the trams. At one time the possibility of selling the trams, as well as the power house, was suggested. Now it is proposed to sell the source of tramway power, and if the power house were sold, the Government would be placed in the position of having to purchase current from a private company, or, alternatively, of having to consider any proposal for the sale of the trams. It would pay the Government to give some attention to what it has cost other parts of the Commonwealth for having lost control of the electricity supply. Even allowing for the £60,000 profit that the Perth City Council is making, the current supplied in Perth is still cheaper than the current supplied elsewhere in the Commonwealth. I am not defending the agreement under which current is supplied to the Perth City Council. I believe the City Council could let the people of the metropolitan area have current at a rate even lower than that now being charged.

The Minister for Lands: Surely you do not think they should take £60,000 from a service they are rendering and construct footpaths with it.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am not supporting the City Council in their action.

Mr. Hegney: That is the practice with a lot of them.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am not considering the purposes to which the Perth City Council apply that money. On the statement of the Minister for Railways, the City Council are making a profit of £60,000 out of the electricity supply, but even so the people of Perth are getting current at a cheaper rate than are the people in other parts of the Commonwealth. Is it thought that the people negotiating for the purchase of the power house are philanthropists, desirous of making things better for us? They will want their rake-off, and it is for us to see that they do not get it. If they get it, it will probably be at the expense of the people. Let us consider what other communities pay who have not taken the precaution to secure public ownership of the electricity supply. The

Sydney Light and Power Supply Corporation supplies current in 33 suburbs, and in block to 11 municipalities and shire councils, and the rate ranges from 5d. per unit, down to 1½d. if a certain quantity is used. In Perth the charge under the domestic rate is 3½d. per unit for the first 28 units and thereafter 1½d. per unit.

The Minister for Lands: That is only in the city, not outside it.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If the proposal to sell the power house is persisted in, the cost of current will be increased, not only to people outside the city, but to those inside as well.

The Minister for Lands: I think a firm would be very glad to take the £60,000 and be content with it.

Mr. KENNEALLY: We now find the milk in the cocoanut.

The Minister for Lands: A very rotten cocoanut.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Minister said a company would be glad to have the £60,000. Is it proposed to hand the £60,000 to a company?

The Minister for Lands: No, that was put up as an argument against the increased rate you are talking of.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If it is proposed not to let the ratepayers of Perth have the benefit of the £60,000, but to hand it over to a private company, we know where we stand. I am not defending the charge that enables the City Council to make a profit of £60,000.

The Minister for Railways: You are.

The Minister for Lands: Of course you are; you always have done.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Ministers cannot mention one sentence I have uttered in support of it.

The Minister for Lands: You have just supported it.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I have thrown out a challenge to both Ministers.

The Minister for Lands: I will take up the challenge because you have.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Minister speaks an untruth when he says I have supported it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KENNEALLY: If the £60,000 is to be charged to the people of Perth, it is infinitely better for it to go into the revenue of the City Council and save taxation to that extent in other directions than let it go to a private company as the Minister suggested.

The Minister for Lands: Do you not think that any private company would be glad to make £60,000?

Mr. KENNEALLY: It is not our function to pass the money over.

The Minister for Lands: I am surprised at your saying the ratepayers should pay that much in excess in order to build roads and footpaths for the landowners.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Minister is repeating what has been denied and knows that his statement is incorrect.

The Minister for Railways: I have not known you to put up much of a fight to get some of that £60,000 for Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If the Minister had put up a better fight and had had a better appreciation of relative values when the agreement was entered into, the City Council would not be making that profit.

The Minister for Railways: That is no answer to my remark.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Of course not. The Sydney Light and Power Corporation supply current by agreement to various municipalities. Balmain is supplied in perpetuity. The agreement with Leichardt operates till 1953. I mention the dates in order to show for how long those local authorities are bound by their agreements. The Petersham agreement also ends in 1953. In the case of Newtown there is an agreement to supply current until 1967. There is another agreement for Ashfield lasting until 1943. The price for light in connection with all these municipalities is 4.55d. per unit.

The Minister for Railways: What is the source of your information?

Mr. KENNEALLY: I will let the Minister see the return with the exception of the price per unit, which I got from Sydney direct by wire.

The Minister for Lands: The wire will be available too?

Mr. KENNEALLY: I think that was torn up last night.

The Minister for Railways: You will have to put the pieces on the Table.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I will answer for the correctness of the information.

Hon. A. McCallum: You can get a copy of the wire.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Yes. These people are bound for periods extending up to 1967, and are called upon to pay 4.55d. per

unit for all the lighting they require. Even after the £60,000, which has been made so much of, is paid to the City Council and goes back to the ratepayers of Perth, we must not forget that in Perth people are getting their lighting for 3¼d. for the first 28 units, and for 1¼d. afterwards, as against the figure I have quoted of 4.55d.

The Minister for Railways: I should like to know where you got that from.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If the Minister will ring up the City Council he can get the information for himself. This has been in operation for some years.

The Minister for Lands: At the power rate only.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am dealing with light.

The Minister for Lands: There are many parts of Perth where the people are not getting their light at that figure. The power point is 1¼d. and the light is 3d.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I back my information against that of the Minister for Lands.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You can get it at that rate if you like to have your house measured up.

The Minister for Railways: What do people pay at South Perth and Subiaco? Do they have to buy it secondhand from Perth?

Mr. KENNEALLY: As chairman of a road board the Minister ought to be able to get that information.

The Minister for Railways: They supply current in our district, take the profits, and spend them in Perth.

Mr. KENNEALLY: In none of these cases do people pay what the residents of Adelaide pay with private enterprise, namely, 7d. per unit.

The Minister for Lands: There is no local coal there.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It is because I do not want our people brought to that position, that I am so anxious to see that the proposal to sell the power house is not gone on with. We have heard a lot about turning the corner. Before we have properly turned the imaginary corner we shall want increased power. The Minister may say we have not the money with which to supply it. The answer is that the interests of this State warrant an extension of the electricity supply. We must find money for necessities. The way to overcome the difficulty is not to sell the rights of the people to control the production of electric current.

The Minister for Railways: You could not sell the rights of the people.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If that is the Minister's opinion, he should tell Mr. Taylor to go no further.

The Minister for Lands: He is looking for trolley buses.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Minister for Railways was quite frank about Mr. Taylor's mission, and it is no use other Ministers saying that he went away for some other purpose. The whole question is involved in the financial policy of the Government. They have had nearly three years run of unparalleled financial bungling. It looks as if the manager of the Electricity Supply has been sent to England to sell the household furniture in order to keep the financial wolf from the door a little longer. The people will not stand for that sort of thing and I am sure they would never agree to the disposal of the power station. In every place where private ownership has controlled electricity supplies the public have had to pay heavily for their power and light. In Victoria until the Electricity State Commission took control, Melbourne people were paying very dearly for their current, but since that control operated costs have been considerably reduced. Although the tendency is to institute public ownership of these undertakings, even at considerable additional expense, we now have the proposal to sell our State power station. I hope the Minister will see the necessity for preserving the public ownership of our electricity supply. If that is not so, we will have a further opportunity to deal with this matter before any definite action is taken to dispose of the people's rights. With regard to the various branches covered by the Vote, I hope the Minister will exercise what influence he has with the Commissioner, regarding the hours of labour. I would suggest that at a time when the tramways are showing an improved turnover of £18,000, it is inopportune for the Commissioner of Railways to make application for the working hours of the employees, who laboured assiduously to achieve that end, to be increased. It would be a poor recognition of the services of those who have helped to make a success of the operations. I hope nothing of that sort will be done in the near future.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [10.52]: I wish to ask the Minister one question. Does he think it still necessary to have three booking offices at the Perth railway station? I refer not only to the one at the central entrance, but to those at William-street and Beaufort-street. I do not think there is any other central railway station in a capital city of Australia where such conveniences are provided, and Perth is the smallest of those cities.

The Minister for Railways: There are several booking offices at the Flinders-street station.

Mr. ANGELO: What does this provision entail? In addition to a booking clerk, there is the gatekeeper. There are probably three shifts, or at any rate two. In these hard times, can we afford that expenditure?

Mr. Kenneally: You want to bring the people in at one entrance!

Mr. ANGELO: It is all very well for the Government to provide people with facilities, but the extra walk of 160 yards or so would not make much demand upon the public. I do not know whether it is considered necessary to have the additional booking offices, but I would like the Minister to go into the matter.

Mr. Kenneally: You wish to drive the people to the buses.

Mr. ANGELO: There are no buses operating in that part of the city. I suppose the facilities I refer to involve an expenditure of between £3,000 and £4,000 a year, and I think we should do without them. I may be wrong, but I would like the Minister to make inquiries.

The Minister for Railways: I will make a note of it.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough) [10.54]: I intend to speak briefly on the vote. Railway finance is of paramount importance because of the effect it has on our national finances. In past years the railway deficits have been largely the deficits of the various States. In Western Australia our problems are far lighter than are those in the other States, principally because of the low capital cost of our lines. With 1,570 miles of railway in excess of those constructed in South Australia, our capital expenditure has been £4,500,000 less. I refer to the State railways alone. All over the world railways have been adversely affected by the growth of motor transport, and even in Australia, with the artificial prices charged for petrol,

that competition has proved detrimental. Petrol that is landed in Australia at 8d. a gallon has to pay a duty of 7d. a gallon, so that it will be agreed the price charged is largely artificial. During last year, competition from motor transport fell off to a great extent. Last year the importation of motor spirit to Australia represented a value of under £3,000,000 as compared with £7,000,000 during the previous year. Even more striking was the falling-off in the importation of motor vehicles. When the boom period was at its peak, we imported £14,000,000 worth of motor vehicles, and last year it had fallen to £1,000,000 worth. The latest statistics to the end of June last show that imports had fallen off to under £500,000. The Minister for Railways referred the other night to the possibility of the discovery of oil in Western Australia and if that should occur, motor competition will be intensified. In South Australia at present a large percentage of the passenger traffic is hauled by motor power. They have eliminated the expensive process of dragging a heavy locomotive, and motor traction is used to haul the cars to country districts as well as throughout the suburban system. One of the reasons for the railway deficit here is that we are running too many non-paying lines. In South Australia there is a Transport Committee, whose business it is to inquire into the cost of railway lines, and at present they are investigating the position of eight lines with a view to dispensing with them altogether. If they can show that the services can be run more efficiently by means of motor transport, they have power to recommend the closing of those lines. Something of that sort is required in Western Australia, and in view of the great improvement that has taken place in the last few years, some of the lines already authorised in this State should be brought under review. That applies especially to some of the lines in the South-West. I have been told that in that portion of the State some of the lines built are conveying practically nothing at all, and the traffic available, which consists of a few cream cans, is conveyed by motor transport alongside the railway. That contention would appear to be confirmed by a letter that appeared in the "West Australian" over the name of Mr. Thomas Kenafick, General Secretary of the Railway Officers' Union, who, I presume,

should know what he is talking about. After referring to non-paying railways, Mr. Kenafick said—

Amongst these proposed is the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook line. The present Donnybrook-Boyup Brook-Katanning line is a white elephant. This one will be worse.

If that statement is correct, then the proposed railway should be inquired into before it is proceeded with. I believe there is necessity for the provision of a Parliamentary public works committee to inquire into such matters, quite apart from the reports that may be furnished by the Railway Advisory Board, judging by what has happened in the past. There is also necessity to provide railways in the northern parts of the State.

The Minister for Railways: Pull up in the south and put down in the north.

MR. PATRICK: In the past, the south has been criss-crossed by railways, and the north has been neglected. As to the Minister's interjection, the people in the northern parts would be only too pleased if the Railway Advisory Board were to inquire into any proposed railway lines in their part of the State before they were commenced. I am confident it would be found that the construction of the lines was amply justified. The Government have already expended a large sum of money on the Geraldton harbour and if that expenditure is to be justified then the country served by the harbour must also be served by new railways. I refer to the country north and east of Yuna, and at Mendels and Wungundy. In addition, we should permit the Midland Railway Company to build the necessary spur lines to open up their lands. I would like to ask the Minister whether he intends to make any improvement in the obsolete stock trucks which are at present doing duty in this country. After seeing the stock trucks in the Eastern States, I think the trucks we are using here are a disgrace.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [11.2]: In going through the report of the Commissioner, we find, when we come to that portion dealing with electricity supply, that there are some serious statements. The report states—

The steaming capacity of the boiler house should be increased by the addition of two larger boilers, economisers, buildings etc., for



the winter of 1934 and by an additional generating set for the winter of 1935. As it takes from two to two and a half years for completion, the issuing of specifications should not be delayed beyond Christmas of this year, and I would be glad to have your instructions to prepare same.

If things are as bad as that, I think we should get on with the job and see that something is done. It will be a very serious matter to the State if anything should happen to cause a breakdown of that plant. From various statements that have been made, I understand the work would have been proceeded with had it not been for the inability to provide finance. Now, the Government during the past few weeks brought down a Bill in this House to provide for further borrowing powers. If it could be done in the one case, why could it not be done in the other? Surely the Minister would find it easy to provide finance by simply forming a board, giving it borrowing powers and the right to pledge the credit of the State.

**MR. NULSEN** (Kanowna) [11.5]: I notice that in the Commissioner's report he condemns the jetty at Esperance. That is a very serious matter so far as the settlers in that district are concerned. I would ask the Minister what he intends to do to make this jetty reasonably secure. The report states:—

The Esperance jetty was maintained sufficiently well to meet shipping requirements. A number of condemned piles were replaced and piers were strengthened. It cannot be denied that the whole structure is too weak for the class of shipping it is called upon to serve.

If something is not done very soon I do not know what will happen to the producers in the district. The crop in our district this year will exceed that of any previous year since the inception of wheat growing in the mallee district. About a fortnight ago I went down to the jetty and noticed a number of new piles ready to be put in. The putting in of those new piles, however, will be really more or less a waste of money. They may possibly tide us over for this season, but nevertheless there is a big possibility of the jetty collapsing at any moment. I would like the Minister, if possible, to look at it himself and so ascertain how serious the position is. I hope the Minister

in his reply will state definitely what the Government's intention is in the matter.

**MR. HEGNEY** (Middle Swan) [11.8]: There are one or two matters I desire to bring under the notice of the Minister. One is in connection with the extension of the Beaufort-street tramline beyond its present terminus. There is no question about the necessity for that extension. I saw the Minister some months ago about it and I knew he is sympathetic towards it. There are people living a mile to a mile and a quarter beyond the head of the Beaufort-street tram terminus who have no other means of transport. There is no bus or taxi service running competition with the tramline and consequently the extension should be proceeded with. Furthermore as one who uses the tram regularly, I think the duplication of the line is long overdue. It is necessary in order to speed up the service, so that the travelling time to the city may be accelerated. The only argument against the extension is that no additional revenue will be obtained from it by the Railway Department. The fact is that the people living beyond the terminus have to use this service, and if the line is extended for a further mile it will give ample transport facilities to those people. If the Government are not prepared to proceed with the extension, then I think they should not adopt a dog-in-the-manger attitude and not allow other transport to compete. About four years ago a taxi service was operating along the route. It was of considerable convenience to the people living in the outlying portions. However, when the extension was made to Maylands that taxi service was cut out and rightly so. I think that because of the fact that the Beaufort-street line is one of the best paying lines in the State, and also because of the fact that there is no bus competition, the department should give urgent consideration to the extension of the line. Another facility which I think would help the railways would be to put in an unattended siding between Bayswater and Maylands. Frequently trains stop at what is known as the Hotham-street bridge, and if we could have put in there a siding where trains could stop to pick up or set down passengers, it would be of great service to many people in that locality, who at present have to walk a long way to the nearest station. That proposal might well be considered by the department. The people out

there have been thinking about submitting a petition to the Minister so as to bring the matter under his notice with a view to his discussing it with the Commissioner. I see on the Estimates an item of £5,200 for a temporary bridge over the Swan River at East Perth. Can that be for the maintenance of the old bridge? Recently I was at a conference where the Minister was trying to give that bridge away to the City Council. I should like to know whether this item on the Estimates is for the maintenance of that bridge.

The Minister for Railways: No, it is for the new bridge, which is still called a temporary bridge.

Mr. HEGNEY: I am glad to be able to say that recently many men who were retrenched from the railway workshops at Midland Junction some 18 months or two years ago have again found employment in the railways. I do sincerely hope that the department will expand and that it will be able to re-engage still more of the men that were retrenched. The question of transport is continually increasing in importance and as time goes on it will be found necessary to nationalise the whole of our transport system. In Sydney, of course, the motor buses run parallel with the trams and hasten from one stop to the next with a view to picking up the traffic before the tram gets there. Fortunately we have nothing like that here, but nevertheless this question of transport is becoming more and more important. I hope the Minister will give consideration to the two points I have mentioned.

#### THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS

(Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands—in reply) [11.13]: Whilst appreciating the friendly nature of the criticism of these Estimates, I cannot help feeling there has been misunderstanding on one or two points. The member for Geraldton referred to the retrenchment from the service of young men who had reached 21 years of age. But he omitted to inform the Committee that at the beginning of the retrenchment in the railways, due to the depression, the Commissioner agreed to retain the services of those young men if they were filling junior positions in the service. That was satisfactory to a point but it could not go on indefinitely and finally the Commissioner decided that as it would not be practicable to make exceptions, he could not proceed any further: where the young men

were filling junior positions and there were no senior positions available they would have to retire. The Commissioner did not take any pleasure in retrenching these men. But it has not applied to the railway system alone. It has applied to all forms of business and industry, and men who have given a lifetime of study to their professions or avocations have suddenly found themselves stranded with no work at all available. I know many young fellows who were passing through secondary schools with the intention of following on through the University in order to join some of the higher professions, but were suddenly left stranded. I know of one young fellow in those circumstances who has had to resort to selling chocolates in a theatre. So it does not apply to the railways alone but to all the avocations, and perhaps the people most heavily hit by the depression are young fellows up to 25 years of age.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Yes, it has been tragic for them.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It has been and I regret it as much as anybody. But the Commissioner could not keep those young fellows in the service. He saw me about it and I took no exception to his retaining them, but I said I didn't want him to introduce anything that could be regarded as a breach of the conditions applying to the union, that if they were agreeable to continuing those young fellows 21 years of age in junior positions I would have no objection. The Commissioner did so but a certain amount of feeling became evident. For instance, it was stated that if he would but remove those who were approaching 65 years of age it would make room for the young fellows. We found anomalies cropping up, and so the Commissioner decided to lay down the definite rule that if there were no senior positions available for those advancing from junior positions they would have to retire. The member for Beverley made reference to some of the fares on the railways, and said this was a matter we ought to review. But we cannot introduce reductions at a time when traffic is falling off and the earning capacity of the system falling with it, for we cannot shunt our capital cost. The hon. member referred to railways that ought to be taken up, while suggesting others that should be built. But if we take up a more or less disused railway we do not lift the capital burden, for we have to maintain interest and sinking fund on the outlay. So we have to be very careful how we reduce fares and

freights on the railways when revenue is already falling off. The hon. member spoke of cheaper fares for the farming community. I do not suppose he would suggest that the farming community can be travelling every day in the week or in the year.

Mr. J. I. Mann: No.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am glad to hear that. The hon. member ought to know that there is a regulation under which at any time of the year a settler with his wife and family can travel at excursion rates to any of the ports.

Mr. J. I. Mann: That is news to me.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: When they have not previously travelled over the system during the year, they may make application to the station-master and obtain a cheap summer excursion rate at any time of the year.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The only section of the community that can do that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member is wrong. Any man working on the Kalgoorlie mines who obtains a certificate from the mine manager that he is due for annual holidays may apply to the station-manager and obtain a cheap summer excursion ticket to Perth or Albany or, I believe, Esperance at any time of the year. It has paid us handsomely to do that.

Mr. J. I. Mann: The average country member is not aware of that and neither are the public.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They are aware of it.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Many concession tickets are applied for, so they must know of it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think we can anticipate that the farmers, under existing conditions, will be able to travel much more freely than they do to-day. Even if we gave them free passes, they could not afford to live away from their holdings. They could not afford to stay at boarding-houses or hotels in Perth, and so there could be no additional travelling. If they desire to get away once a year, there is an opportunity to get a cheap summer excursion ticket. I suppose those people who use trucks to carry high-class freights would take advantage of the concession.

Mr. Corboy: What about extending that concession to the Goldfields Water Supply employees. They are the only ones left out.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member can put that up at another time. The question of the booking offices at Wellington-street and Beaufort-street was introduced. I do not think it is desirable to close those conveniences to the public. The trouble is that one member suggests that we might save money by cutting out a convenience and another says we are losing traffic because we do not provide the facilities. What is the Commissioner to do?

Mr. J. I. Mann: Ours is like a voice in the wilderness. You have a policy and it does not matter what we say.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is not so. The Commissioner is located right alongside those two booking offices and is in a position to judge whether they are essential facilities or whether they are incurring unnecessary expense and should be cut out. I do not think we can deprive the public of too many facilities and expect continued patronage from them.

Mr. Corboy: You have made a mistake in closing at night the booking office on the horseshoe bridge.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I never go that way at night. One member referred to stock trucks. It has been admitted for a long time that our stock trucks are not what they should be. The Commissioner has asked for funds to enable the stock trucks to be converted into an improved type. I had an opportunity to see one that was altered a few years ago—the only one in our system, I think. It was taking sheep into the Midland yards and it provided a fine example of the advantage to the producer of sheep arriving in a clean as compared with a dirty condition. I am advised that in some instances it means a difference of 6s. per head in price. That is a big difference. For transporting sheep or lambs to market, the improved facilities are essential. The only question is one of funds.

Mr. Patrick: The trucks are slow for loading, too.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The question we are concerned about is keeping them reasonably clean so that producers will get the best price for their stock. The Commissioner has directed attention to the Esperance jetty, and there again it is a question of funds. To tramway extensions, the same remark applies. Regarding the extension mentioned by the

member for Middle Swan, so far we have been successful in keeping out competition of any kind against the tramway system in that district. If we do that, we cannot refuse to provide facilities.

Mr. Hegney: Are not rails available?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is not a question of rails alone. It is a serious matter to replace any rails used. We have only a limited quantity which may be required for replacements, and we have not money to send out of the State for the purchase of material. I do not intend to make any extended reference to the larger question introduced by the member for East Perth except to tell him that the Premier has already said, and I repeat the statement on his behalf, that whatever negotiations may take place or whatever may happen, the Government will be no party to finalising any agreement for the sale of the power house except on the definite understanding being included in any agreement that it will be subject to the approval of Parliament. Members can rest assured that unless Parliament agrees to any terms and conditions that may be finalised—if they ever are finalised—the matter will not be proceeded with. That will be the time to discuss terms and conditions. I think it was Abraham Lincoln who, when trying to instil into the minds of the American community the desirability of helping their own industries, used these words—

If you purchase from overseas £100 worth of goods, it is true you have the goods, but they have the £100. If you purchase £100 worth of goods in America, you still have the goods and you still have the £100.

Subject to our being able to get such terms and conditions included in an agreement, we would have our power station here as we have it to-day, but instead of being short of £1,500,000, we would have the power house plus the money. That aspect might be worth considering. For a number of years I was as keen as is the hon. member on what is known as public ownership, but I am thoroughly convinced that if a careful survey were made of the whole question of Government ownership of utilities, not only in this State but in other parts of the world, the possibility of going too far along that road would be realised. I believe it is better to adopt the attitude of not wishing to own, but of insisting on

control. If we can get proper control, there is not much in the matter of actual ownership. As to the power house, do the people really own it even today? Do they actually control the power house to-day? Do they concern themselves with the control or ownership of the power station? All they really are concerned about is the amount of the account they get. That is where their chief interest lies. Without any knowledge of what may be the final outcome of the negotiations, I venture to say it is possible under the conditions existing in England where they have similar companies generating electricity, to provide by Act of Parliament and by-laws for such conditions that the Government would be in an infinitely better position than if they actually controlled and owned the power station, especially in view of the continuous demands for the expenditure of further capital. It is to the shame of those who have controlled our power station in the past—and I include myself—that, with the opportunity we had for the production of cheap electricity in Perth, we have been the slowest to move in the way of providing facilities to the public that ought to be provided any community within the British Empire owning its own power station. We may be said not to have lifted a finger in this direction. If we go into Murray-street and pass through the show rooms there, on one side we can see gas appliances of all kinds available to the public for purchase from the Perth City Council under hire purchase agreement. On the other side we find electrical appliances of every known type that are supplied by private firms.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: At a high price.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In Great Britain there are methods by which without any outlay all that is required in the home in the way of electric appliances is provided. That is done by adding a certain amount per unit to the charge, sufficient to meet the interest and sinking fund on the capital outlay and cost of maintenance. We have not moved along the lines of the domestic use of electricity. We import Newcastle coal, and complain about the idle mines in Collie. We spend £40,000 or £50,000 of the ratepayers' money in the purchase of Newcastle coal in preference to spending half of one year's profit made by the Perth City Council in the establishment of a fund that would

provide all the appliances required and recoup itself out of profits. In this way we could replace with electric appliances all those that are now used for gas. We are stunted in our growth. Are we going to say it is not possible to deal with some would-be purchaser of the power station? We have a demand on every hand in the metropolitan area for power and light, and for additional facilities outside the metropolitan area. Those facilities are necessary for the development of our industries. We say we cannot find the money, and yet we have a million and a quarter tied up in a power station which cannot be removed. We could find the capital of a million and a quarter through somebody else, and still retain all our facilities. I know of British companies that are controlling some of the finest electricity systems in the world. If they could not do as well as we are doing, I would be very sorry for the British Isles. It is all a question of whether the terms and conditions can be such that those who are going to use the electricity will get adequate protection, and will not be squeezed for the benefit of a few shareholders. There is a lot to be said in favour of disposing of the power station. There are not too many monuments to me, but this is one of them, and I am certainly not anxious to dispose of it; but I am anxious to do justice to the community which has to carry the burden. Only a small number of people are getting the benefit of the power station as it is, whereas a large number of people are at a disadvantage because of the capital that is locked up in this concern. We must hear that in mind, before we rashly come to a decision on a question which is not before us. People are continually discussing the matter as though we were on the point of signing away this asset, or had come to a final say in the matter. Nothing whatever will be done by the Government except with the definite approval of Parliament. That ought to be the final answer to any discussion on the question. I appreciate the many things that have been said by members in support of the work of the staff of the Railways, Tramways and the Electricity Supply. We have been passing through a very difficult time, but every person connected with those departments has risen nobly to the occasion. Our country station-masters are specially to be commended for the manner in which they

have gone out after business on behalf of the system. That is worth a great deal to the community, and all the officers and employees are entitled to our best appreciation for their efforts. This applies to most of our Government departments. The officers have risen to the occasion, greatly to their credit and to the benefit of the State.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.37 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 15th November, 1932.*

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

### BULK HANDLING BILL, SELECT COMMITTEE.

#### *Extension of Time.*

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley, the time for bringing up the select committee's report was extended for a week.

### RETURN—MAIN ROADS AND MOTOR LICENSES.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East)

[4.36]: 1 move—

That a return be laid on the Table showing:—1, What has been the total expenditure to date on our main roads? 2 What proportion of same has been provided from State funds? 3, What is the estimated contribution