

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 17th October, 1923.

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

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS, MEAT CONTRACTS.

Select Committee's Report.

Mr. McCALLUM brought up the report of the select committee.

Report read and ordered to be printed, together with the evidence.

MOTION—KESSELL ROYAL COMMISSION.

To adopt Recommendations.

Capt. CARTER (Leederville) [4.36]: I move—

That in the opinion of the House immediate effect should be given to the findings of the Royal Commissioner in the case of Mr. A. C. Kessell.

I move this because, after a great deal of negotiations with the Premier's Department since the Commissioner's report was laid on the Table, apparently matters have reached a deadlock. On the 24th July, 1923, I received from the Premier's Department a letter, the first few lines of which will indicate the position of affairs. They are as follows:—

In reply to your recent inquiry regarding the case of Mr. A. C. Kessell, I have to advise you that the Government can see no good reason for adopting the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner. The Royal Commissioner's recommendation, the one I am asking the Government to put into effect, reads as follows:—

I am of opinion, however, that on retirement he (Mr. Kessell) was morally entitled to three months' notice (this being the period required of a public servant under Public Service regulation No. 35), whereas he received only about six weeks' notice. I am also of opinion that salary should have been paid to him during his return passage from England to Australia, with a stipulation that such be made within a reasonable time, say six weeks. The value of notice and salary would be about £132

in all, and I consider that if the balance still due on account of furniture (about £160) were remitted, purely as an act of grace, in lieu thereof, Mr. Kessell would be fairly and liberally treated.

Public Service regulation No. 35 reads as follows:—

Officers in receipt of salary of £336 and over per annum shall give three months' notice of their intention to resign.

In commercial circles, and I believe, in official life as well, it is always conceded that any agreement of this nature between employer and employee operates both ways. The notice required on the one side should have operated on the other. After hearing the evidence the Commissioner, it would seem, is of the same opinion. The case has been worn thread-bare in the House, and it is not my intention to discuss the evidence, the mass of which, attached to the report of the Commissioner, is before the House. If the House appoints a Royal Commissioner, and if that Commissioner is worthy of his appointment and has called all the available evidence, it is only due to the House and to the Commissioner that immediate effect should be given to his findings. That being so, I should like the Premier to give us an assurance that this matter will be fixed finally.

The Premier: I wish you could give me an assurance that it will be fixed finally.

Hon. P. Collier: It will not be fixed finally as long as Mr. Kessell lives.

Capt. CARTER: I can give the Premier an assurance that for my part the subject will be finally closed if the Premier will give effect to the findings of the Royal Commissioner. I believe I can give the same assurance from Mr. Kessell.

Hon. P. Collier: If he cannot re-open it through you, he will re-open it through some other channel.

Capt. CARTER: Once the findings of the Royal Commissioner were given effect to, one would require to have a very sympathetic heart indeed to feel impelled to bring the matter again before the House. The House saw fit to order the appointment of the Royal Commissioner, every facility was given for the calling of evidence, and that evidence has been carefully weighed by a judicial mind. That being so, it behoves us to ask the Government to give effect to the findings of the Royal Commissioner. In a report by the Public Service Commissioner in 1917 action was recommended almost identical with the recommendation of the Royal Commissioner. Whilst I am not in a position to say that if that recommendation had been endorsed and put into effect subsequent trouble would not have developed, I can give an assurance for my own part and, I believe, for Mr. Kessell's, that the putting into effect of the Royal Commissioner's findings will definitely close the whole business. It is a matter of no little concern that we should have strife between the State as an employer and its servants. Inasmuch as the House

deemed the case worthy of investigation, and the findings of the Royal Commissioner have been presented to the House, I feel I am right in expressing the hope that the Government will take action along the lines recommended by the Royal Commissioner.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.44]: The hon. member has said that if we give effect to the findings of the Royal Commissioner we shall thus finalise the whole business. I do not know whether the hon. member knows Mr. Kessell as well as we know him. I am aware, of course, that the House thinks that the findings of a Royal Commission appointed at the direction of the House should be given effect to. But it is possible that the recommendations of a Royal Commission, apart from its findings, may not always meet with favour, either from the Government or from the House. In this case we appointed a Royal Commissioner who held an inquiry, and made certain recommendations. In addition to his findings. Mr. Kessell was not satisfied with the findings of the Royal Commission. Before the Government had had time to consider them, a circular letter signed by Mr. Kessell and addressed to me as Premier came to my hands. I believe every member received a copy of it. It distinctly says Mr. Kessell was very dissatisfied with the findings of the Royal Commission.

Capt. Carter: If I can assure you that better counsels have prevailed and he is of opinion now that this finding will settle the case, will you give effect to it?

The PREMIER: Well, I am pretty green, but not green enough. No assurance would suit Mr. Kessell.

Hon. P. Collier: He would get this and then go on again.

The PREMIER: It is true that an officer in receipt of a salary of £336 or over per annum must give three months' notice of his intention to resign, and it may be contended that the Department also should give three months' notice. Mr. Kessell's letter dated 9th January, 1923, says:—

The report of the Royal Commissioner has now been laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly, and I beg to most earnestly point out you that the directions of Parliament, as the outcome of the debate on 31st August last, were not complied with in that a Judge of the Supreme Court or an independent legal practitioner of standing was not appointed to determine the matters at issue. I have no hesitation in affirming that the report of the Royal Commissioner (a Government official, the appointment of whom, I contend, was wrong in principle) has (a) failed to present to you a judicial or legal analysis of the valuable evidence and documents submitted; (b) is against the weight of evidence; and (c) has failed to deal with most vital points of the evidence. Moreover, as one of the findings of the Royal Commissioner is that the charges which I made against the ex-Agent General were not sustained, I again

assert that they are true in every particular, hereby reiterate them, and state that I am prepared to do so before a Supreme Court judge, which Parliament directed—Of course Parliament did nothing of the sort—

or at the bar of either House of Parliament if it should become necessary. On the other hand, I respectfully ask that you will take such steps as the Leader of the Opposition and other hon. members suggested should be taken, viz., to ensure that a searching investigation be made in order to obtain proper and legal finality, more especially as I am advised by those competent to judge that the evidence and documents submitted to the Commission indisputably confirmed my statements.

Hon. P. Collier: What about submitting it to the League of Nations?

The PREMIER: I had not thought of that.

There is sufficient evidence, oral and documentary, in the State to enable finality to be obtained.

This letter was written on the 9th January and the Commissioner had reported only at the end of December, just before the holidays. Obviously, the findings were not acceptable to Mr. Kessell.

Mr. Underwood: Cannot you find any possible way of cutting out his pension?

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, that is what we ought to do.

The PREMIER: Mr. Kessell says there is sufficient evidence in the State to enable finality to be obtained. The member for Leederville tells us whatever is said to-day shall be the last word. Mr. Kessell continues—

I trust, therefore, that in the interests of justice to myself and those who are dependent upon me, you will see your way clear to direct that the whole of the evidence, documents and appendices be referred either to a judge of the Supreme Court or to an independent legal practitioner of standing—

Mark that!

—to be mutually agreed upon beforehand, for final review. In any case, Sir, I trust that you will arrange for the report and valuable evidence and all papers connected with the inquiry to be printed in the usual manner in order that the people of the State, whose servant I was, may know officially what statements have been made, and that they may be embodied in the records of Parliament in the best interests of all concerned.

Hon. P. Collier: The people's troubles!

The PREMIER: What action was possible in face of that circular? We are not without some evidence of what may happen, because in 1917 the Public Service Commissioner wrote to Mr. Kessell informing him what the Government were prepared to do. He had received in London the following payments:—Six months' long service leave, £264; two weeks' an-

nual leave in respect of the year 1917, £20 5s., fares for himself and family from Liverpool to Fremantle, £238 4s. 9d.; cost of sleepers and meals on train across America and railway fares London to Liverpool, £40 17s. 11d.; removal allowance, furniture, £70; allowance of 15 per cent. on Mr. Kessell's fare (£52 18s. 10d.) in accordance with Public Service Regulation No. 54, £7 19s., total £641 6s. 8d. In addition he made other claims, in respect of which the Public Service Commissioner wrote on the 27th December, 1917:—

The further claims you have submitted have been carefully considered by the Government and His Excellency the Governor in Council, while denying any legal liability, has approved of the following payments conditionally on your agreeing to their being in full satisfaction of all claims, if any, you may have:—(1) Payment of any loss actually incurred up to £23 11s. 8d. for rent and taxes on your private residence at Home, being the balance of rent, etc., to 30th September, 1917, whilst the house was unoccupied. (2) Allowance of £10 for cab hire, portage, etc. (3) A special annual allowance amounting to £132 per annum from the expiration of your long service leave, namely, from the 1st January, 1918, under Section 6 of the Superannuation Act. I shall be glad to have your concurrence in the above proposals so that I may take further necessary action.

To this a reply was received as follows:—

13th May, 1918. With reference to your letter of the 27th December last, I have to inform you that I have decided to accept the offer therein made by your Government. As I am urgently in need of funds, I shall be glad if you will arrange for early payment to be made to me. A. C. Kessell.

In face of that, the House approved of the appointment of a Royal Commission. The Commissioner, after having carefully considered the evidence and correspondence, is of opinion that the Government did not act improperly in declaring Mr. Kessell an excess officer and calling upon him to retire. Therefore the Government's action was justified. Referring to his treatment after retirement, the Commissioner, after recounting Mr. Kessell's claims and the decisions of the Government accepted as a final settlement by Mr. Kessell, said—"From the foregoing it would appear that a final settlement of all outstanding matters had been arrived at." That was prior to the appointment of the Commission; his acceptance was contained in his letter of the 13th May, 1918. The Commissioner also said—

I am of opinion that on retirement he was morally entitled to three months' notice, this being the period required from a public servant under Public Service Regulation No. 35, whereas he received only about six weeks.

Three months' notice is rarely given or demanded. Kessell received seven weeks' notice plus six months' long service leave. The Commissioner also said—

I am of opinion that salary should have been paid to him during the return passage from England to Australia, limited to six weeks. . . . The value of notice and salary would be about £132 in all, and I consider that if the balance still due on account of furniture (about £160) were remitted purely as an act of grace, Mr. Kessell would be fairly and liberally treated.

The value of the notice is actually £120 and I see no reason why, if £120 is given as an act of grace, we should make Mr. Kessell a present of £40, the difference between the £160 and the £120. If he is to receive three months' notice, he cannot have what he has actually received—a pension for the three months. Even if the Commissioner had recommended that this be done, I do not think the House would agree to the funds of the State being paid away in that manner. The pension for 12 weeks would amount to £30 and would surely be a set-off against the three months' notice, if he is to have it. The Government also paid £450 freight on his furniture and all of that has not yet been repaid. The State is paying interest on the balance and the total interest will amount to about £50. I think this should reasonably be paid by Kessell. Where the Commissioner erred in his calculations, they should be set right. I do not wish the House to think I am trying to flout the Royal Commission, but an error made should be set right. I want the House to realise that with Mr. Kessell's letter of the 9th January before me, nothing more can be done. So long as that letter remains, nothing should be done.

Capt. Carter: Which letter?

The PREMIER: The circular letter I have read, in which he made it quite clear that the findings of the Commission would not be accepted by him as a final settlement. He took exception to the Royal Commissioner, to the method of appointment and to his findings.

Hon. P. Collier: He wants to address us from the bar of the House, evidently.

The PREMIER: He addressed the House by means of his circular; I understand each member received a copy of it.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes.

The PREMIER: I am not averse to settling the matter fairly. The House would expect that to be done, but so long as Mr. Kessell's letter of the 9th January stands, nothing further should be done. I do not think that he has acted in a proper manner in first accepting certain proposed terms of settlement, then securing an inquiry and afterwards objecting to the findings. The House agreed to the Commission only because of the serious charges Mr. Kessell made against other people.

Mr. Latham: That was the only reason.

The PREMIER: The Commission was not agreed to on the question of salary. This House should not be troubled time and again by Mr. Kessell. The question is: Are we prepared in view of his letter to give further consideration to the matter of his pension.

Hon. P. Collier: His opportunity will come next March to get in here and fight it out here.

The PREMIER: Yes, I do not know whether the member for Leederville wishes to adhere to his motion in view of Mr. Kessell's letter. I do not know whether he was aware it had been written or whether he was aware of the final settlement suggested three or four years ago.

Hon. P. Collier: There is nothing final about Kessell.

The PREMIER: I hope the hon. member will withdraw the motion and give Mr. Kessell an opportunity of also withdrawing the letter. Until the letter is withdrawn the findings of the Royal Commission cannot be given effect to.

Capt. Carter: If the Premier will say that effect will be given to the findings of the Royal Commission I will withdraw the motion, and endeavour also to have the letter withdrawn.

The PREMIER: I merely make the suggestion. The House should not agree to the motion with this letter before it.

Mr. Latham: Let the House decide.

The PREMIER: The House must decide if the hon. member wishes. If the motion is withdrawn it should be withdrawn unconditionally. On the present basis any member who comes down with a proposal to re-open the Kessell case may well find it treated with scant courtesy. The findings of the Royal Commission cannot be considered while this letter stands.

Hon. P. Collier: Are you going to withdraw the motion?

Capt. CARTER (Leederville—in reply) [5.2]: In view of the Premier's statement I can only say that this has been sprung upon me. As yet I have no concrete assurance from the Premier that if the letter is withdrawn—

Mr. Latham: You cannot get any assurance from the other man.

Capt. CARTER: The findings of the Royal Commission will be given effect to. The letter referred to was written without my knowledge, and though I received a copy of it, in the same way as other members did, I am very sorry it was sent. If the Premier will indicate that the matter will be considered by the Government I will withdraw the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has been asked to withdraw it.

Capt. CARTER: I should like to have an interjection from the Premier to that effect.

Mr. Latham: Don't give it to him.

Capt. CARTER: I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Mr. MARSHALL (Murchison) [5.5] in moving the second reading said: I do not propose to preface my remarks by stating that this is an innocent Bill, for I have noticed the manner in which so-called innocent Bills have been mutilated in their passage through this Chamber. It is not intended to make the parent Act more comprehensive so far as the liability of employers is concerned. My desire is merely to so tighten up the Act as to avoid what may be termed any deliberate evasion of the intentions of Parliament when the Act was framed. The Act has been in operation for a long time, and flaws have been discovered in it permitting certain employers to evade the responsibilities set forth in it. Last session the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) found it necessary to hurriedly introduce a Bill to cover a certain class of workers in the timber industry. He took this course in view of a decision given by the Supreme Court in connection with two timber hewers whose case was being fought by the Government.

The Premier: It was on behalf of the widow of one of those men.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Court decided that a timber hewer engaged on piecework did not come within the definition of worker.

Mr. Harrison: He was his own employer.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Bill now before the House aims at extending the definition of worker, as set forth in the Act of last session, to other industries. There are men employed in the mining industry on piecework, who are practically on all-fours with the timber hewers. Up to the present I know of no case of a pieceworker on the mines having been refused compensation for injuries he has sustained, but I can quote cases of men who have been employed on the piecework basis, and who have been insured by an insurance company in Perth, but who failed to secure any compensation on the ground that they were pieceworkers. One of these cases is that of a man working on the Mebbien Station. He was employed as a boundary rider, and doing odd jobs. He was asked by the manager to sink a well. From the point of view of the employer as well as the employee piecework is beneficial. The worker will generally do his work conscientiously and rapidly in order to finish the job.

Mr. Teesdale: That is a new policy for your crowd.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have yet to learn that the hon. member put on any extra speed when he was engaged by other people. The employer in a case like this is often miles away from the scene of activity. The member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) suggested that these men employed themselves. As a fact they are directly supervised in a large measure by their employers.

Mr. Harrison: They are contractors.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is ridiculous. They sign no agreement and are bound in no legal way to their employers. They have no specified quantity of work to do, and there is no semblance of a contract about the whole business. They can be dismissed and get their time any day in the week. In order to avoid inconvenience and loss of time employers say to these men engaged in well-sinking, "We will give you so much a foot, and then we will not have to sit on the bank watching you." That is the only redeeming feature about it. It is certainly an advantage to the employer to be able to get men to work on that basis. The man I refer to was sinking a well. Unfortunately, whilst fitting the fuse into the detonator, the detonator exploded and blew off some of his fingers. He was not at the time engaged on a weekly wage basis. Because he was a piece worker the insurance company said, "We cannot pay you compensation, because the defendants in the timber hewers' case lost their claim, and if you press this we shall have to fight it." It is not fair that this class of worker should be excluded from the benefits of the Act. Men engaged in fencing or shifting sand are also directly under the supervision of their employers, but because of the weakness of the Act if the insurance company desire to be hostile they can refuse to pay compensation to them. My object is to bring this class of worker, who is of great benefit to the State, and use to the employers in the remoter parts, within the scope of the Act. I cannot think the House will hesitate to give these men the same privileges as are accorded to others.

Mr. Teesdale: To what occupations are you referring?

Mr. MARSHALL: There are many different kinds of workers on the mines.

Mr. Latham: Why should they not insure themselves against accident, for that would cover everything?

Mr. MARSHALL: Why does not the hon. member insure himself against lack of intelligence.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MARSHALL: There should be no discrimination between workers. Under the Act a man is a worker only if his income is below a certain amount. Every worker is in a position to insure himself against accident if he so desires, but if he earns more than a certain amount, he is not a worker under the Act. The intention of Parliament was that in cases where the premiums paid to individuals fell below a certain amount, they should not be required to insure themselves. By this Bill I only ask that the definition of "worker" be extended to include workers in other industries as it was extended during last session to include workers in the timber hewing industry.

Mr. Money: Surely you should seek to do it by a separate section, seeing that the section of the amendment Act to which you refer deals solely with timber hewers.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Crown Law Department have drafted this Bill, and therefore I am not responsible in that regard. My intentions are clearly expressed by the Bill as drawn. If there is a legal error in the drafting, it will have to be rectified. As to the amount of compensation payable for specific injuries, the Bill provides that specific amounts of compensation shall be paid in respect of injuries set forth in the Second Schedule of the parent Act. The Bill does not propose to interfere in any way with agreements made between the parties in respect of compensation for injuries as to which the parent Act does not provide specific amounts. Let me quote a case which occurred recently in Kalgoorlie, and which illustrates what this Bill does not propose to interfere with. By some mishap a young fellow suffered an injury to one of his eyes. It necessitated his coming to Perth to be treated by Dr. Paton. The injury was such as deprived the sufferer of the loss of half of the sight of one eye. For such an injury the parent Act does not provide specific compensation. The two parties agreed upon a lump sum in full settlement of the compensation due. With such cases the Bill does not propose to interfere. But there are cases in which people have lost the sight of both eyes, and when seeking a final settlement of their compensation, those people have been met by the employer or the insurance company with a demand, based on some intricate system of calculation, for a discount off the full amount of compensation. I believe this practice has resulted from a decision given by Mr. Canning, formerly a magistrate of this State, who laid it down that the employer could, if he so desired, continue to pay compensation on a weekly basis, and that the person to be compensated must, if he wanted compensation by way of lump sum, submit to a basis of discount. That, I submit, represents a direct evasion of the desire of Parliament in framing the Workers' Compensation Act. That Act provides £500 compensation for total incapacitation. The member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) can endorse my statement that there is in Perth now a man who, unfortunately, had both eyes blown out, and who moreover has suffered financially as the result of the practice in question. Having been healed as far as possible, but of course in a state of total incapacitation, the man went to obtain a final settlement of his compensation. He was offered £453, and the people concerned refused to pay any more.

Mr. Money: But had he received weekly payments?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, and the £453 included those weekly payments. What the Act says is that a man totally incapacitated shall get £500, less the weekly instalments. The provision in the Act as to continued weekly payments was inserted in order to meet the case of an employer whose financial circumstances would not permit of his paying compensation to such an extent as £500 without his business becoming crippled. Un-

fortunately other employers, who are well able to pay lump-sum compensation, have taken advantage of that provision to demand that the injured worker shall submit to a discount for lump-sum compensation. This Bill seeks to put a stop to that practice. If the measure is passed, the employer whose financial position prevents him from paying full compensation by way of lump sum, will still be entitled to make weekly payments until the full amount of compensation has been paid. It is a remarkable thing that three cases analogous to those which the Bill contemplates have been in Perth within the last three months; I believe two of them are here still. I now come to the only other amendment proposed by the Bill. Unfortunately it is found that when an accident has taken place the victim of the injury is visited, as soon as possible after the accident, by the agent of an insurance company, or whoever may be liable to pay compensation, with a proposal that a certain sum shall be accepted as compensation for the injury as it is then. The worker and the agent agree upon a certain sum, and a settlement is made accordingly. But it has happened in connection with such cases that after a certain sum has been agreed upon as full compensation for the injury, there has been further development of the injury. I will quote a case in point. A man working on the Fenian mine lost part of one foot, as the result of a fall of earth. When he had been in hospital a couple of weeks, he was approached by the agent of an insurance company, who asked would he agree to accept £100 in full settlement. The injured man, with a view to ascertaining the extent of his injury, consulted the doctor attending him. The doctor informed him that he would be in hospital not longer than three months, and that when he left the hospital he would be short, as regards his foot, only of what was jammed off underground—either one toe or two toes. The doctor also stated that after three months the man would be as fit and as well as ever, except for the loss of the toes. But, as it turned out, after the agreement to accept £100 had been executed and a few months had passed, the man's foot was in a worse condition than when he signed the agreement. He had to remain in hospital for nine months on the fields, and eventually he came to St. John of God Hospital in Perth, where the leg was amputated between the knee and the ankle. That man should have received about £280 compensation, instead of £100.

Mr. Money: That illustrates the danger of accepting a lump sum.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not charging either one side or the other to this transaction with dishonesty. The injured man acted practically upon the recommendation of the doctor, who should have known. Evidently even the doctor did not at the time properly gauge the extent of the injury. Therefore it is not too much to ask, as this Bill asks,

that if within six months of the occurrence of the accident it is found that the injury has developed to such an extent, that the injured person has not received approximately the compensation awarded by the parent Act, and if he can prove this before a legal tribunal, the agreement should be subject to review by a court. The Bill proposes to give the injured party the right, in such circumstances, to appeal to the local court, and proposes to empower that court to restore the parties to their original basis. The employer or insurance company would not be asked to pay twice. Anything that had already been paid would be allowed for by the court in fixing compensation afresh. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

MOTION—JUSTICES OF THE PEACE, APPOINTMENT.

Debate resumed from the 19th September on the following motion by Mr. Pickering:—

That in the opinion of this House a definite policy should be laid down for the appointment of justices of the peace.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.30]: I do not know exactly what the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) means by his proposal. Is it an educational test or something of that sort? We have been appointing justices of the peace for a long time and they have carried out their duties fairly well. In a settled country such as Western Australia, we must appoint justices for the convenience of the public. Usually these appointees do not sit on the bench, but their main function is to witness documents requiring signature by a justice of the peace. Every few days we receive an application from some hon. member for a justice of the peace to be appointed in some centre or other. The reason given in most cases is that the nearest justice of the peace is a long way from the centre concerned. We endeavour to meet the convenience of residents when new settlements are established. Remembering these facts, I do not know what can be in the hon. member's mind. For my part, I think there are too many justices of the peace in some places and it is often difficult to get those justices to act. Under our laws many documents must be signed before a justice of the peace, and it is therefore to meet the convenience of the public that so many justices have to be appointed. They do not receive the commission because they possess any special qualifications, and the outstanding reason for the great majority of appointments is the convenience of the public. In the old days men were appointed to the commission of the peace in recognition of some public service. What does the member for Sussex mean by his reference to some definite policy governing these appointments?

Mr. Teesdale: Don't appoint so many.

The PREMIER: The appointments are made to meet the convenience of the people.

Mr. Richardson: On the recommendation of an hon. member?

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member mean that he desires a policy laid down setting out that the appointment shall be in recognition of some public service? That has been the policy in the past and I hope it always will be so. If a man has been chairman of a road board for some considerable time, he is generally appointed a justice of the peace in recognition of his services.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. Latham: A chairman of a road board automatically becomes a justice of the peace.

The PREMIER: Only during his term of office.

Mr. Latham: That is so; no other qualification is necessary.

The PREMIER: If a man is elected chairman of a road board, the fact that he has been so appointed is usually sufficient guarantee that he is a suitable man. I hope the House will not agree to the motion. It would not be possible to lay down any hard and fast rule governing these appointments. I would like the hon. member to recognise that justices of the peace are appointed for the convenience of the public, and many of them accept appointments on that ground only, not because they desire the appointment.

Hon. M. F. Troy: What is the rule now?

Mr. Latham: That is what we want to know.

Mr. Pickering: There is no rule.

The PREMIER: The rule is to appoint justices of the peace for the convenience of the people.

Mr. Latham: In some districts that may be so.

The PREMIER: It seems to me that in some places, there are very few who are not justices of the peace. When I read birth notices showing that a couple of boys have been born I say, "Thank God there are some more coming on, because there will be a great many more to appoint."

Mr. LATHAM (York) [5.36]: The Premier does not recognise the difficulties being experienced to-day. Applications are frequently made to the Premier for appointments of justices of the peace for the convenience of the public. Sometimes it takes 12 or 18 months for a nomination to be accepted.

The Premier: Sometimes it should take longer.

Mr. LATHAM: I agree with that statement, but the fact remains that no set policy is laid down governing these appointments. A little while ago a name was submitted to me to be forwarded with a request that the individual should be appointed a justice of the peace. I looked into the matter and found he had been a justice of the peace for 21 years! Despite that fact, his name could be sent to me for endorsement!

Mr. Richardson: He should be struck off.

Mr. LATHAM: The Premier should appoint an officer to revise the list of justices of the peace. The existing list contains the names of some men who have been dead for many years. The list is an exceedingly long one for a State such as Western Australia. Men drift away from the outside areas, and thus it is that in some centres it is extremely difficult to get a justice of the peace to sign necessary documents. The present system is ridiculous.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is not necessary for a justice of the peace to sign all those documents; a commissioner of declarations can do so.

Mr. LATHAM: The Premier says that these appointments are made to meet the convenience of the people, but to-day settlers have to go many miles to secure the signature of a justice of the peace on some of the official documents that are sent out. I refer to documents such as applications for loans. There is no necessity for signatures on many of these documents. It merely makes the position ridiculous. The Premier should go into this matter and simplify the forms sent out by the various departments. Applications are frequently made and no notice taken of them. For my part I wait until the local body concerned forwards its nomination before I do anything in these matters.

The Premier: What is wrong?

Mr. LATHAM: Take Bruce Rock for instance. There is one justice of the peace there and last year he dealt with 55 cases. That man is engaged in business and it is unfair to expect him to devote all his time to this work. Why should there not be another justice of the peace appointed for that town?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Those cases would be of minor importance as two justices are required for many hearings.

Mr. LATHAM: We find that in many towns only one justice is available.

The Premier: There are justices of the peace all over the country.

Mr. LATHAM: Would the Premier, if he were sitting on his binder or reaper, get off the machine and go to a neighbouring town to sit on the bench?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. LATHAM: Men in the outback areas are workers and will not get off their machines to attend courts.

Hon. P. Collier: Why reflect upon the Premier now?

Mr. LATHAM: The Premier should have the list of justices revised. Any man who refuses to sit on the bench when called upon by the police to do so should be struck off, unless he has some valid excuse. There are too many ornamental justices and not enough utility justices. Justices should carry out the duties they are expected to undertake. There are between 30 and 40 justices of the peace in York and only a few do the work. There are too many of the ornamental type.

Hon. T. Walker: They are all the same, but you must have a more lazy crowd.

Mr. LATHAM: That shows that the list should be revised.

Hon. T. Walker: I agree with that, but it does not affect the question of policy.

Mr. LATHAM: When applications are made for appointments, due consideration should be given to the requests within a reasonable time.

The Premier: Some inquiry is needed. I can give a prompt reply by point blank refusing to make the appointment.

Mr. LATHAM: Then let us have that refusal, but do not let us wait for months before we can get a reply. Applications are sent to the Premier's Department and no acknowledgments are received. The House should lay it down definitely that a proper system should be followed. A reply should be received so that any hon. member forwarding such an application will be in a position to say that it has been refused or accepted.

The Premier: Very well. I will see to it that an answer is sent next day, "yes" or "no." In such circumstances, it could only be "no," because inquiries have to be made.

Mr. LATHAM: I don't want the Premier to make any such stupid statement. No one wants to have any one appointed a justice of the peace who is not a fit and proper person. Some justices of the peace are not fit to hold that position. In one instance I know of, a justice of the peace fined a man 5s. and then himself went to a State hotel and got hopelessly drunk.

The Premier: Not on the 5s.!

Mr. LATHAM: No, he had more money than that.

Hon. T. Walker: Did you say he got drunk at a State hotel?

Mr. LATHAM: Yes.

Hon. T. Walker: That shows we want prohibition.

Mr. LATHAM: Of course the hon. member knows that he will not get as good grog at a State hotel as elsewhere. I am pleased that this matter has been introduced so that the Premier may look into it.

Hon. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [5.43]: I do not know what the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) is aiming at by his motion. What does he suggest? That is what we want to know.

Hon. P. Collier: It is to serve the purpose of getting the matter ventilated.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I hope to hear some definite proposal from the member for Sussex. I am prepared to agree that the present system is not satisfactory, inasmuch as some justices of the peace are appointed because of pressure from the individual.

The Premier: Are you referring to ladies?

Hon. M. F. TROY: Some are appointed because of other considerations and some because it is thought that the person to be appointed is a good man. In my opinion justices of the peace are essential in this country where so much honorary work is done for the Police Department

and for the Crown Law Department. There is only one basis on which people should be appointed to the commission of the peace, and that is character. Moreover, a man should have reasonable intelligence and common sense. A justice of the peace has a great deal of responsibility. He does a lot of honorary work, and if he be not a man of good character he may do those things which may not be in the best interests of the community. On occasions in the past when it has been desired to appoint a justice in the district I represent, the matter has been referred to me confidentially. I have been asked to speak as to the character of the individual, and recognising that my opinion was being given in confidence, I have given it to the best of my ability. The three essentials I have mentioned are those which should guide the Government in making these appointments. I know of no other standards.

Mr. Money: The requirements of the districts.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I regret that in some instances justices of the peace have been appointed whose intelligence has not been of a high order. In the main, however, and considering the weakness of human nature, and the general characteristics that mark our people, the Government have done very well in the appointments they have made. The hon. member who submitted the motion set up no standard upon which this House can give a vote. The appointments that have already been made have given very fair satisfaction.

Mr. RICHARDSON (Subiaco) [5.48]: I agree with the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, that the motion does not go far enough. We do not know exactly what the mover requires. I am aware of the fact that in some districts too many justices have been appointed. When I say too many, I mean that they are not available when their services are required. It would be a disaster if the Premier were now to attempt to cancel the commissions held by some of these people, he would have to make all sorts of inquiries, and the greatest difficulty would be experienced in proving that these men were not capable or were not sufficiently intelligent to hold the position, and probably he would put the onus of striking them off the roll of justices, on the member for the particular district.

Hon. T. Walker: That would be terrible.

Mr. RICHARDSON: It would be terrible. It would not do to attempt it just now before the general elections. When making that suggestion the member for York (Mr. Latham) could not have given it sufficient consideration. If there is any fault in the method of appointing justices, it would not be that of the present or even former Premiers. I have always held the belief that justices were recommended by the member for the district, and that being so, we must put the blame on his shoulders where too many have been appointed or where they do not carry out the duty that is expected of them.

I know a number of justices in the electorate I represent who do a great amount of honorary work. They are for ever being assailed by people to witness signatures and do all kinds of things. I do not know that in my district there are too many justices. There are, however, some who might come under the category of those whom the Premier might like to strike off. On the outskirts of the district there are one or two justices who are doing considerable work, but that is not generally known. If an officer of the department were asked to make inquiries, in all probability he would recommend that the names of those justices should be struck off, notwithstanding the fact that they are carrying out the duties they were appointed to perform, though their duties would not be so numerous as those that justices in bigger districts would be required to discharge. I do not know that any definite policy can be laid down regarding the qualification for appointment, except that it be good character. I have been on the commission of the peace for about 20 years and I know that there are duties that a person might be asked to discharge that he might fail to properly carry out unless his character were above reproach. Character, then, should be the main essential. I believe in the policy laid down by the Premier, that recommendations should first be made by the member for the district in which it is desired that the appointment be made. If the member be conscientious he will not recommend any person for appointment unless he knows that that person is of good character and is intelligent enough to be able to properly discharge his duties should he be required to sit on the bench. If the member for Sussex had outlined a definite policy, I would have been prepared to support his motion. The Premier has told us that there is a definite policy in existence, and that when a recommendation comes forward inquiries are made into the character of the person recommended and that these inquiries are made of the member for the district as well as through the police. Therefore, unless the member for Sussex has something more definite to suggest, I shall not vote for the motion.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex—in reply) [5.54]: I regret it is not within my province to enunciate a policy for the appointment of justices. It should be the function of the Government to lay down a definite policy in that regard. I endeavoured to set out briefly what I thought were the main essentials in connection with the selection of justices of the peace, and members may not have realised that the making of appointments rests entirely with the Premier. He is the deciding factor and he may make appointments as he likes and when he likes.

Hon. T. Walker: That is a privilege you will enjoy when you are Premier.

Mr. PICKERING: That is so, and if that time ever arrives, I trust I shall be able to lay down a policy that will be acceptable to the House. The Premier does make appointments in the face of recommendations of members of Parliament. It is generally recognised that the matter is one that should be referred to the member for the district. That, however, does not happen. Appointments are frequently made by the Premier without reference to the member concerned. The appointment of justices of the peace is a big responsibility and no appointment should be made at the whim of any one man. In my opinion a person recommended for appointment should be one who has displayed an intelligent interest in local affairs, and should be known to the community amongst whom he lives. When we find amongst those appointed men who have never taken an active interest in public life and who have not given evidence of impartiality, that is wrong. Above everything a justice of the peace should be impartial. He should be a man of integrity as well. I have known appointments to be made the only explanation of which has been political. That is not desirable. I am at one with the member for Mount Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) when he declares that the question is not one regarding the political view the man may hold, but that he should be honest and intelligent and should be able to hold the scales of justice impartially. It is a good principle to adopt to submit recommendations to the member for the district in association with local governing bodies. It has been said that there are many justices of the peace who are not at the present time carrying out the duties they were appointed to perform. We know also that there are names on the roll of persons who are no longer living. It is time, therefore, that steps were taken to remove those names from the roll.

The Premier: That is done periodically.

Mr. PICKERING: At the present time we may make recommendations to the Premier, but he is not obliged to pay any regard to them.

Hon. P. Collier: If you were to bring the matter under the notice of the Premier he might remove the name of that fellow down in your electorate.

Mr. PICKERING: I regret that the hon. member should impute ulterior motives to me.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in accusing the member for Boulder of ulterior motives.

Mr. PICKERING: I did not impute motives to him. I said I regretted that he should impute motives to me.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member complained of some appointment in his electorate. I suggested that the Premier might remove the name of the appointee.

Mr. PICKERING: The position of justice of the peace is recognised by all authori-

ties, ancient and modern, to be a very important one.

Hon. P. Collier: But the motion does not get us anywhere, since it lays down no definite policy.

Mr. PICKERING: I am endeavouring to show what the policy should be.

The Premier: The hon. member cannot introduce anything new in his reply.

Mr. PICKERING: No, but I can endeavour to answer the remarks the Premier did not make.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member can do that.

Mr. PICKERING: I trust the discussion has served to awaken members to the importance of the office of justice of the peace. I impress upon the Premier the desirability of using the utmost care in appointing justices. I am afraid that in the past it has been more or less a question of personal favour. It is only right that before such appointments are made they should be referred to the sitting member.

The Premier: An appointment might be made against the wishes of the sitting member.

Mr. PICKERING: That is so, but the Premier has no reason to anticipate any objection to his own carefully made appointments. From my electorate I have had complaints against justices on the score of their partiality. I hope that in future the Premier will see to it that only persons worthy of the distinction shall be appointed justices. I will withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

MOTION—LONG SERVICE LEAVE.

Debate resumed from 19th September on the following motion by Mr. Willecock:—

That in the opinion of the House the long service conditions applying to the salaried staff of Government employees should apply also to the wages staff.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [6.5]: I candidly confess it is not easy to oppose the expression of opinion contained in the motion. If it were practicable, the wages staff, at all events that section permanently employed, would receive equal consideration with the salaried staff. I have never expressed any opinion contrary to that, nor do I propose to do so now. But I must draw attention to the position confronting us. In the Railways, necessarily, great dependence is placed on the development of our industries, while equally the development of our industries depends upon our railways. Without railway communication our principal industries could not exist, and equally the railways could not be run without those industries. For some time past we have had a pretty hard row to hoe in trying to make railway revenue balance the cost of operations and the interest on capital outlay.

We have endeavoured to do that without unduly burdening industry. The Railway Department has had to face what other departments have had to face in demands for increased payment to those engaged in the department, and has had to pass on a fair percentage of the increased charges. With our extensive mileage, small population and scattered industries, the cost of operating railways is very much heavier than in a small compact State, such as Victoria, or, for that matter, any other State in the Commonwealth. We have had to pass on a percentage, not merely of the increased wages paid, but of the increased cost of all commodities necessary to the operating of our railway system. And, as I said the other evening, those increased charges are not always levied against our railways on the basis of similar charges levied against other railway systems. For instance, I doubt if any other railway system in Australia has to pay for its coal as much as we pay, due to the facts that we have practically no competition in coal mining operations and, unfortunately, the very long haul from the one coal-mining centre to the more remote parts of our railway system. We are confronted with the problem how to reduce railway charges against the industries that mean so much to our railways, and at the same time meet the additional demands contemplated in the motion. I oppose the motion solely on the ground that, if it were carried, it would amount to a direction to the Government that it should be immediately put into operation. Since the railways have been carried on all these years without the imposition of the proposed additional burden, and seeing that we are faced with the demand that freights shall be reduced in favour of industries at present being conducted under great difficulties, I am unable to see how we can ask the general taxpayers to meet the additional charge that would be levied against them if the motion were carried and put into effect. It is only fair to consider how the workers in other industries are faring before we ask them to provide by increased taxation additional privileges for those already enjoying greater privileges than fall to the lot of men in other employments.

Mr. Willecock: We have no control over those other men.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have this responsibility, that until their conditions are made to approximate those prevailing in the Government service, it is not fair to ask them, as taxpayers, to carry the additional burden that would be entailed by the motion. It is one thing for a private member to suggest means by which we can spend money in providing additional privileges for a section of the community, and quite another thing for the Government to provide the necessary ways and means. I should be very ready to improve the conditions in the Government service if only I could see a way by which it could be done without unduly burdening the industries that mean so much to the Railway Department. At present I do not see how we can fairly ask those engaged in other em-

ployment to carry additional burdens with a view to adding to the privileges of those who already enjoy more privileges than do men in other walks of life. By agreeing to the motion we shall not provide for the men engaged in the railway system bread, butter, jam, or other necessary commodities at any cheaper rate or to greater extent than obtains to-day; as a matter of fact, we shall probably increase the prices of those commodities because the cost of complying with the motion would have to be passed on to the users of the railways. The men in whose interests the motion has been framed will not benefit by it to the slightest degree, save that periodically they will be able to remain idle for a definite time. This same proposition was submitted to the Government of which I had the honour to be head. My then colleague, the Minister for Railways, now the Leader of the Opposition, was confronted with the problem that I now have to face. It is an easy matter to accept something that, at the moment, appears to be satisfactory, but it may be very difficult to find the ways and means. On the occasion I allude to, both my colleague and I had to toe the carpet over our attitude. I remember going up to Boulder on a pleasant Sunday afternoon, and attending a meeting in the Workers' Hall. The hall was packed, so were the window sills, and indeed some of the vacant blocks around. Apparently all were there to hear me answer the charge that I had not acceded to the request made on behalf of the workers, the self-same privilege now asked for by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock). I was then representing a mining constituency, and I told them very plainly I could not fairly ask other workers, equally responsible with the railway workers for the election of a Labour Government, to pay the cost of the privilege demanded for the railway workers.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.10 p.m.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: In 1913 a similar request was made by the railway employees' organisation and the reply then given by me, as representing the Government, was that we could not concede the cost of granting long service leave to the wages staff. The financial position then would not warrant the cost, particularly in the early years of its operation, and the position has not changed materially since that time. At any rate, it has not changed to an extent that would permit me to say the request should be conceded now. There are over 6,000 men in the railway service and the estimated number with service already accrued for long service leave is about 3,079. The value of this leave would be £297,300. The same conditions would apply to the tramways and electricity supply and the cost there would be £5,600, making a total of £302,900. Then it is estimated that the cost of leave falling due in the following year would apply to 649 men, representing £39,350 in the railways and £1,600 in the tramway and elec-

tricity department, a total of £40,950. So it would continue each year until 1932 when the total would be £42,100 for the railways and £4,900 for the tramways, or a grand total, including what has accrued to date, of £641,760. These estimates are based on the number of men at present employed. What I am concerned about is the payment necessary to provide the leave to those whose service would entitle them to it at the end of the present financial year. It would be a heavy burden and I cannot see how it could possibly be borne; £300,000 is too large a sum to face at the present juncture. If we are going to apply long service leave to the wages staff—and I suppose there is justice in the claim—means will have to be found to spread the payments, or the conditions, under which this leave shall accrue. If a man has been 30 years in the service he would have three periods accrued, but another man who joined 10 years ago would be able to claim leave to the same extent. The hon. member does not intend that the man of 30 years' service should receive three periods of leave.

Mr. Willcock: That is so.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If this concession were applied at once, the men who had 30 years' service to their credit would be in no better position than the man with 10 years of service. Therefore it would be necessary to consider a basis upon which a proportionate amount of leave could be given for the service accrued. It might be possible this year and next year to give leave to the men of 20 to 30 years' service, after which the men of 10 to 20 years' service might receive theirs, and then those of 10 years' service. If that were done the cost to the community could be spread. It is the only means by which it would be possible to apply long service leave to the wages staff.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The railway period is longer than the public service period.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I am calculating it on the basis of the leave granted to the salaried staff.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In the public service the periods of service, I believe, are seven and 14 years.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The salaried staff receive three months' leave on full pay for each 10 years of service, and I understand the member for Geraldton desires the same conditions to apply to the wages staff. There should be no distinction. There is no reason why a man permanently engaged on the salaried staff should receive long service leave any more than a man engaged on the wages staff. But we have to face the facts and the costs, of which I have just given the details. I am not taking into account casual employees; I have considered only permanent employees. There are 3,079 employees who were due for long service leave on the 30th June last. The number of employees due for various terms would be: 68 due for nine months, 1,381 due for six months, 1,630 due for three months, making

a total of 1,149 years of accumulated leave due on the 30th June, 1923. The wages staff are to some extent on a different basis from the salaried staff. While it is possible to relieve a man on the salaried staff by distributing his work amongst other officers, this cannot be done with an engine-driver, guard or fireman. Consequently, the difficulties are greater. It is estimated that to provide relief would necessitate the employment of a greatly increased staff, as 100 men in 12 months would account for only 1,200 months of relief work out of a total of 13,788 months of accrued leave on the 30th June, 1923. The relief men, too, would be entitled to annual holidays and as time went on to long service leave, and this would reduce their effective relief utility. It can safely be said that a relief staff of at least 200 would have to be employed for full time. The cost of all this must be levied against someone, and someone, of course, is the wage-earning as well as other sections of taxpayers. I cannot see how it can be done. It is only fair, however, to consider the privileges enjoyed by men in the service. Not least amongst the privileges is that of permanency of employment. Of course there would be a limited number to whom long service leave would not apply, because they had only recently joined the service, and who might suffer reduction of work or retrenchment. Taking it in the gross, however, a man who joins the service has permanency of employment the whole year round, irrespective of the conditions prevailing in the different industries. A man in other employment is on a footing not much better than that of a casual employee. Many of the so-called casuals in the service are practically permanently engaged. This is a privilege of enormous value. I can mention other privileges, but they form part of industrial agreements that are taken into consideration when rates of pay are awarded by the court or by conciliation. Travelling and waiting time is paid for up to a maximum of 16 hours in any one day, except when a worker is provided with a sleeping berth, and then travelling time does not count between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. The men receive a transfer allowance; not less than £4 for a married man and 15s. for a single man is granted when transferred to another depot or station, plus any further reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. Free passes for the man and his family and free railway transport of furniture and effects are allowed. In addition to ordinary wages, district allowances are paid as follows:—Workers at Merredin and as far as Goongarrie, on the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe line, at Marne and as far as Mt. Magnet, Ajana or Yuna, 1s. 6d. per day for seven days a week; workers beyond Goongarrie or Mt. Magnet, 1s. 9d. per day for seven days a week; on the Port Hedland-Marble Bar line, 5s. per day for seven days a week; tradesmen receiving an additional allowance to make the amount up to 7s. a day over the minimum

for the trade, plus 5s. Water is delivered alongside the line gratis at stations where a public water supply is not available, 30 gallons a day being allowed to a married man and 10 gallons to a single man. Barracks equipped with bedding, cooking utensils, etc., are provided at nominal cost for use of workers on the running staff when lodging away from their home station. Fourteen days' notice of retirement is given and any leave due is paid for; in addition pro rata leave is granted to date of retirement. Two suits of uniform are supplied yearly to traffic workers; also oilskins, mackintoshes, dungaree suits, etc., to workers, according to the duties upon which they are engaged. One station-to-station (all lines) pass for annual holidays and two return destination passes are granted yearly for the worker and his family. When on leave in the Eastern States, free passes over the Eastern States and New Zealand railways and a privilege ticket at half single fare for the return journey over the trans-Australian line are granted. Further privileges are as follows:—

Privilege tickets, first or second class (without limit) for the worker and his family are issued at half the ordinary single fare for the return journey.

That is ordinary travelling.

Privilege season tickets, second class, are granted to railway employees at half the ordinary season ticket rates for adults and one quarter the ordinary rates for juniors to enable them to travel to and from work.

Market passes: Workers outside suburban areas are granted a market pass for themselves and families, and to the workers' wife or housekeeper once a fortnight, to the nearest market town for convenience in procuring supplies.

Free freight: Workers outside suburban areas are allowed free carriage of domestic supplies from market towns up to a maximum weight fortnightly of two hundred-weight for married men and one hundred-weight for single men, in addition meat, bread, vegetables when not procurable locally are carried free from market town to home station.

Holidays: Workers are allowed 12 paid holidays per annum. For drivers, firemen, cleaners, washout men and their assistants, Christmas Day and Good Friday are paid holidays. In addition, four good conduct holidays are allowed to certain sections of the staff, such as drivers, firemen, cleaners, guards, signalmen and shunters. Two extra days' paid leave is also granted annually to workers stationed at Yaloo and Goongarrie and beyond and on the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe railway, and an extra 12 days' leave to workers on the Port Hedland-Marble Bar line. Sunday and holiday pay: Time worked on Sundays, Christmas Day, Good Friday, and Labour day, is paid for at the rate of time and a half.

That applies generally to men outside the service.

Accumulated leave: Wherever possible and when desired annual leave is allowed to accumulate for two years to enable workers to visit the Eastern States, etc., without loss of pay.

Extended leave: Drivers, firemen, cleaners, washout men and their assistants are allowed extended leave without pay, up to 12 months.

Railway institutes: Institutes subsidised by the department are provided at main centres, affording facilities for both study and recreation. The fees of instructors are paid by the department, and free passes issued to students attending the classes.

Death benefit fund: A voluntary fund providing for an allowance at the death of a member by means of levies collected through the medium of the pay sheets. An amount of 56s. per annum is deducted from members spread over 26 payments per annum (roughly 2s. 1d. a pay period). The whole of the working costs are borne by the department.

Provident fund: A voluntarily fund providing for payment of an allowance to members when off duty sick; fortnightly levies are collected through the pay-sheets, 1s. per pay being deducted. The whole of the working costs are borne by the department.

Appeal board: Constituted under the Railway Act—Chairman a magistrate, a representative of the department and an elected representative of the workers. This board deals with cases of workers punished for misconduct who appeal against the decision of the department. The finding of the board is final.

These are some of the privileges enjoyed by the railway men. No doubt they have been taken into account in conjunction with the wages. They are privileges which have a definite value as compared with the lack of privileges applying to those working in other industries. If we are going to approve of the suggestion contained in the motion, we shall have to ask workers in other industries, who are not enjoying anything like similar privileges to these, either to produce more to enable them to continue to find employment in those industries, or by means of a reduction in wages or salaries increase the privileges at present enjoyed by the wages staff. For the moment I do not see how we can agree to an extension of the privileges desired by the hon. member. I agree that it is causing a good deal of friction, particularly in the railway service. I also agree that drivers, firemen, cleaners, washout men, guards and so forth are as essential to the operations of the railway system as are the heads of the departments. Where privileges are accorded to one section of employees and not to another, there is bound to be some heartburning, and discontent. Whilst it is desirable to have uniformity in this matter, it should be

approached carefully. The organisations that are desirous of introducing this system as applied to the railway men generally ought to form a committee representative of the different sections affected, that is the wages staff, the union, the Commissioner and probably the Government. This committee could carefully consider the means by which, without imposing too heavy a burden immediately upon the taxpayers, such a system could be introduced that would eventually lead to what is desired, that is placing the wages men on the same basis as the salaried staff. Something of this nature was suggested before, but we are as far off a solution of the matter as we were in 1913. Under the system I have suggested some benefits would accrue immediately, and everybody would gradually come into line. The cost, too, would be lighter, as compared with a system that would bring these things about immediately. In the present circumstances prospects are not good. I am sure the Commissioner would be willing to discuss the matter on the basis of endeavouring to find a system that would bring into operation what is desired in a gradual way without placing too heavy a burden on the community, that it is unable to carry.

Mr. Harrison: How are market towns defined?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Local traders sometimes consider it is against their interests that railway men should be allowed to travel past their towns to what is known as a market town. There are conditions of employment connected with the award. There are also these additional privileges for which the award does not make provision. They have to be granted by the representatives of the general taxpayers, and not by the Arbitration Court or the Conciliation Board. The responsibility is, therefore, cast upon the Government. I want the matter to be viewed from the standpoint of equity, as well as from the standpoint as it affects the general taxpayer. I believe a method could be found by which the system desired could be applied without causing undue friction, and that such a method would eventually give entire satisfaction, without at once placing such a heavy burden upon the community that it could not tolerate. I ask the hon. member to see whether some progress could not now be made along these lines. Although the result may not be as rapid as he would wish, it will be a step in the direction of securing uniformity of privileges as applied to the wages staff as well as the salaried staff.

Mr. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [7.53]: The Minister has confined his remarks to the railway men. The motion, however, does not limit the principle in that direction, and it is desired that it should apply to all Government employees. I do not take the stand that it shall be limited only to railway men. It is over 20 years since I took part in an agitation to have this principle extended to employees in the Government Printing Office. I see no reason why it should be

limited to one section of Government employees.

The Minister for Mines: I was asked to deal only with railway men.

Mr. McCALLUM: I worked for over 12 years in the Government Printing Office as a wages man. The salaried staff in that office enjoyed all the privileges the Public Service Act provided, namely, long service leave, shorter hours, annual leave, sick pay, and others that the wages staff were denied. Those who came under the Public Service Act worked $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours a day less than we did. They had a fortnight's annual leave, and if they were away sick they were paid, whereas if we were five minutes late we lost an hour's pay, and we did not get 6d. for sick leave, or any pay for holidays until comparatively recently. Fully 90 per cent. of the tradesmen could take the place of any of the clerks, but not one of the clerks could take the place of the tradesmen. It cannot be argued that the work of one calls for more consideration than the work of another. I have never understood why one section of employees should get all these privileges and another section be denied them. The Minister argued against the immediate application of the principle on the ground of expense. That argument is applied to every reform that is advocated. It is always a question of cost. This is thrown out as an insurmountable obstacle and as the reason why the principle should not be applied. I am pleased at the attitude of the Minister. He is prepared to have the principle extended to a certain degree, but cannot see his way to applying it immediately. I hope he will reconsider that decision. The declaration has been made on more than one occasion by Mr. Justice Burnside from the bench that the application of leave to the staff, even when it comes to a boilerman's work, is a paying proposition in any big concern. The figures quoted by the Minister will, I think, certainly prove to be far from the mark. It cannot be ascertained by calculation how much this will cost, and how it will all work out. Consideration must be given to the effect it will have upon the staff if they are able to look forward to a certain amount of leave. They will want to get away from their daily toil, and have an opportunity of recuperating, and returning to their work renewed in vigour and interest. If there is one thing more than another that tends to inefficiency in industrial work it is the monotony of the job. Nothing kills more than monotony. Men in factories are shut up between four walls, and are at work from eight o'clock in the morning until 5.30 at night. Some of them do not even get away for lunch. They are performing the same operations every hour of the day, every week in the month, and every month in the year. It is nothing but repetition to them, and the monotony is killing. A man's interest in his work must wane. If he is given a spell, and allowed to get away and recuperate, it has a wonderful effect upon his work. It is impossible to calculate in figures what the cost will be or how it would pan out finan-

cially. I have frequently watched the effect of this monotony upon work, this repetition of the daily task. It has a great effect upon individuals. It makes them dull, stunts their imagination, and causes them to be disinterested in their task. If they can look forward to a little recreation it has a wonderful effect upon them. The Minister has spoken of the privileges enjoyed by the workers in the railways. It is hardly fair to suggest that these are privileges given to railway men and not to others employed in other industries. Every industry has its own particular class of privileges which the men in the industry enjoy. Certain privileges granted in other classes of work are not granted to men in the Railway Department. Very few farmers will refuse the farm labourer a horse or a turn-out to go into town for shopping, marketing, or recreation. Similarly, a railway employee naturally gets the advantage of his particular industry in point of transportation. Again, men working in a brewery are supplied with free beer—whether that is an advantage or not. Something of the same kind applies in every industry. I agree with the Minister that so long as there is discrimination between various sections of employees, there is bound to be dissatisfaction, grumbling, and unrest. Men will not be contented if they see other men alongside them, men engaged in no more difficult or responsible tasks, enjoying advantages denied to the wages men simply because they are wages men. No logical argument can be put forward why railway men or tramway men should get the benefit here in view whilst it is denied to other employees. Getting a spell makes a man give better service, and renders him more contented. The figures quoted by the Minister will certainly not prove correct when the system is put into force. One of my last actions at the Government Printing Office was to sign an agreement with the Government Printer extending the privilege of a fortnight's annual leave to the wages employees. Up to that time they had enjoyed no annual leave, but they have had it ever since. Anyone in authority at the Government Printing Office will testify to the beneficial effect of that annual leave on the employees. They come back from their holiday refreshed, and throughout the year they look forward to the holiday. I have heard it stated that this House has become somewhat sluggish in its work. It has been suggested that if we have the break proposed for next week and go to the goldfields area, we shall return to our task with renewed vigour and soon pick up that week's lost work.

The Premier: That is all right.

Mr McCALLUM: If that argument applies to members of Parliament, it must apply to men working for wages at tasks far more monotonous than ours. We are not tied to the bench every second as the tradesman is, or as Government servants generally are tied

to their tasks. The little breaks we are able to enjoy are not permitted to them. I trust the Government will take the motion as applying not merely to one section of State employees, but to all sections. I care not what department the Government select for initiating the principle, but I hope they will bear in mind its general application. Discrimination obtains not only in the Railway Department, but in the Water Supply Department, the Public Works Department, the Harbour Works, and the Government Printing Office. The principle affirmed by the motion should apply to those departments as well as to the railways and tramways. I trust the Government will give the principle no limited application, but application all round.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [8.8]: In my opinion this motion should apply to all Government employees. Privileges accorded to the salaried staff should undoubtedly be extended to the wages employees. If salaried officers are entitled to long service leave, so are the general workers. In connection with the running of trains the principal men are engine-drivers, firemen, guards, and signalmen. We know that the fact of being employed in all weathers on the foot-plate of an engine renders it necessary for a man to have respite from time to time. If salaried employees of the Railway Department have the privilege of annual leave, that privilege should certainly be extended to train staffs. And so throughout the Government service. The Minister says that the principal objection to the proposal is its cost. He points out that the cost would have to be passed on. Further, he states that such a privilege is not granted to the employees of private enterprise. Nevertheless, while certain privileges are conferred on men who work for the Government, they should be conferred generally. I understand that the Minister favours the motion provided a scheme can be devised for spreading the cost over a number of years. If the principle were to take effect in the case of every man who has been ten years in the Government service, and if in every case three months' leave had to be granted, the cost to the State would be very heavy. In my opinion, it is not necessary to make the principle operate retrospectively. The cost should be minimised, and should be spread over as long a period as possible.

On motion by Mr. Pickering, debate adjourned.

MOTION—ESPERANCE NORTHWARDS RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Debate resumed from the 19th September on the following motion by Hon. T. Walker—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should obtain the necessary authority this session to extend the Esperance Northwards railway line, now in course of

construction, so that it may junction with the existing railway lines of the State at Norseman.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [8.13]: We have heard from the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) from time to time about the Esperance district and about the Esperance railway. Now, having got the line built from Esperance to Salmon Gum, he of course wants something more done.

Hon. T. Walker: Something that ought to have been done long ago.

The PREMIER: There can be no question about the rainfall of the Esperance district. At Salmon Gum it is 13½ inches, at Lake View 12 inches, at Dundas 13 inches, and at Norseman 12¼ inches. Moreover, a good deal of the rain falls during the growing season. From April to October the rainfall at Salmon Gum is 11 inches, or only a little less than the corresponding rainfall at Bruce Rock. For the same period the rainfall at Lake View amounts to 843 points, as against 1,049 at Merredin. Again, for the period from April to October the rainfall at Dundas is 851 points, which is sufficient for wheat growing. At Norseman the rainfall during the same period amounts to 756 points, which is less. I mention these matters, I should explain, for information, and not because I want the House to carry the motion. I believe also that the Esperance land will be found suitable. However, it would be quite impossible to introduce a Bill during this session, as proposed by the motion, because we must first have information as to the quality of the land along the route surveyed.

Hon. T. Walker: The route is surveyed.

The PREMIER: But the land must be classified. I must be prepared to submit to the House a proper classification of the land, and to tell the House how many people can be settled along the route of the proposed extension. I believe that in the Esperance district there will be found a great deal of land suitable for wheat growing—further east, of course, than the Esperance line, and probably extending to the northern and eastern belts. Hon. members will recollect that some time ago an inspection was made of the salmon gum country east of Esperance, starting at Israelite Bay. We know that the land through which the road from Norseman to Salmon Gum runs is of excellent quality, very similar to the land at Merredin. We know that, the Esperance rainfall being what it is and the land what we know it to be, that country must eventually be served by a railway. Just now there is a demand for our wheat lands on the part of people coming from the Eastern States. Our land is so much cheaper than land in the East that people are willing to come here to settle. When it comes to a question of selecting Crown lands, our prices are merely nominal, and from an Eastern States point of view the position has become most attractive. It is no longer a matter of getting settlers for our wheat lands, but of getting sufficient wheat lands here to

satisfy intending settlers. What we do want is men with money, in order that the work of developing our lands may become a lighter burden upon the finances of this State. If the Esperance country proves to be what we believe it to be, we shall probably attract from the Eastern States many sons of farmers who are fairly wealthy. But I want the House to realise that we have still various lines to build which were authorised at the instance of the Government in which the member for Kanowna was Attorney General. That Government said that the lines I refer to were justified and ought to be built. In my opinion, they should be built before we engage in further railway enterprises.

Hon. T. Walker: But the railway which the motion proposes represents the completion of a line which is in course of construction. You have the whole of the plant and machinery on the spot.

The PREMIER: Every line that is proposed represents the completion of some part of this State's railway programme. That is so whether it be a line from Salmon Gum to Norseman, or a line from Pithara eastwards, or a line from Dwarda to Narrogin, or a line to Newdegate.

Hon. T. Walker: We have already had the precedent established in connection with this very line, which has been taken further on to the extent of six or seven miles.

The PREMIER: Surely the hon. member does not complain about that?

Hon. T. Walker: I am only rejoicing. I congratulate you on it, and I say, "Follow your own precedent."

The PREMIER: But there is prohibition about six miles east of the terminus of the line. The terminus is in wet country. I hope the hon. member will realise that promises made by the Government in which he was Attorney General have still to be carried out. We must not forget that a line is required to serve the Yorkrakine people, who have been waiting a very long time for railway communication. They were promised it in my friend's time as Attorney General. They have been promised it by every Government since. I hope it will be provided in the near future. There is the line from Narrogin, which is now under construction and which has to be finished. There is also the Newdegate line, which has been promised, and which I hope we shall be able to build before long. The mover urged that the work he proposes might be done whilst the necessary plant is in the district. I do not think that argument is very sound, because the remaining section, when constructed, must of course be completed from Norseman. The rails and sleepers will be sent by boat to Esperance, and then to this point.

Hon. T. Walker: You have all the accessories there to-day to do it.

The PREMIER: We have the railway engine, and that is the main thing.

Hon. T. Walker: You have everything else, the line and so on. You have all the implements necessary for the construction.

The PREMIER: The hon. member must not be impatient!

Hon. T. Walker: We have waited for 20 years for the fulfilment of this promise. That is not evidence of impatience. The line was promised by Lord Forrest when he was Premier, at the time when he built those magnificent public buildings at Esperance. The plans were drawn then and we have been waiting ever since for the promise to be carried out. Surely that is not evidence of impatience!

The PREMIER: I do not know about that. It is more than 20 years since Lord Forrest first assumed office.

Hon. T. Walker: And we have been waiting ever since.

The PREMIER: Wherever I go they tell me that the work they require must be done because Sir John Forrest, as he was then, had promised that the work would be attended to. We have endeavoured to carry on the many things he suggested, and they were nearly all wise proposals.

Hon. T. Walker: I wish you had recognised that when the Bill dealing with this line was first before the House.

The PREMIER: I said that nearly all were wise proposals.

Hon. T. Walker: Do you say this one was not?

The PREMIER: I did not say so. The hon. member said that when the Bill was first before the House I should have thought about Lord Forrest and supported the measure. At that time, I did not think the land justified the railway, and I said so. To-day the proposition is different, because, meanwhile quicker maturing varieties of wheat have been introduced. I do not think the hon. member would have said ten years ago that we could grow wheat at Southern Cross.

The Minister for Agriculture: He would not have selected his farm at Tambellup in those days.

Hon. T. Walker: What nonsense!

The PREMIER: I do not say that.

Hon. T. Walker: I went out far enough. I was one of the pioneers in that district.

The PREMIER: And a very good pioneer, too! I wish he would stay on his farm during the session! Nowadays we know the value of the salmon gum country. We know that it responds and grows wonderful crops. The land, so far as we know, between the two points concerned is equal to the Merredin country. The hon. member referred to the fact that I opposed the railway originally. By a strange irony of fate, while I have been in office we have had to complete the building of the line. I have done the best possible to encourage the development of the district while I have been in power. It must be realised that the railway cannot be made use of unless the district is developed and the land there utilised. We have 600,000 acres of land adjacent to the railway, and 400,000 acres have been surveyed since I came into office. Some 489,000 acres have been selected, and 189,000 acres have been occupied by selectors,

a good deal of work having been done and a lot of money spent. I would like to remind hon. members that all the people who selected land there are not on their holdings. Unless they go on their land and do something with it—the land was practically given to them—they will lose their holdings. That, however, is not the point under discussion. We are satisfied we have 600,000 acres of good land adjacent to the line, all of which will be brought into use in due course. But it will take some time before we can do that. It is an easier proposition to develop the salmon gum country than the land in the mallee belt. Men can go on the land in the former area without any money and, by means of clearing operations, can earn enough to keep themselves and their families going. It is more difficult in the mallee country. I have no objection to the line, which will tend to develop the country to the eastward as well. We shall endeavour to open up all the area I refer to, for we cannot afford to have the land lying idle. At the moment we depend on agriculture to absorb the people who are coming to Western Australia and to provide employment for the people we have in the State. I regret that is the position, in one sense, because it makes the task more difficult when the Government have to depend largely upon a single industry to provide work for the people and to establish an increasing population.

Hon. T. Walker: Others are bound to come in if this proves successful.

The PREMIER: I hope there will be a revival in gold mining and that the industry will once more be something like what it was in the past. If the industry should not prove capable of reaching the gold production of past years, it should materially increase the present output. Should that be the experience, it will be a happy day for the State.

Hon. T. Walker: We shall create markets for all the other industries.

The PREMIER: I think so, too. The railway will open up some good country, but it is not possible at present to place before the House the information that it is essential to have before members can be asked to authorise the proposed extension. The fact that we cannot bring in the necessary Bill until next session will not delay the construction of the line. At present we have our hands fully occupied with railway construction. There is a limit to the money we can borrow for this purpose, and to the amount of work we can do with the material and labour available. I suggest to the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) that he accept the assurances of the Government that this classification will be made, that we are satisfied with the rainfall in the districts affected, and that it is desirable to open up this part of the State. Without being able to give the House any details of the classification, I am satisfied that sufficient good land will be found to justify the construction of this railway and enable it to become a payable proposition. The land will be inspected. Much of

the country east of Salmon Gum has been inspected, but that is not the area to be served by the line in question. We are all with the hon. member in his desire to open up the country. He will probably realise that the position will not be helped by the passing of the motion.

Hon. T. Walker: Will it be worsened?

The PREMIER: It will not be bettered?

Hon. T. Walker: I would like the House to express an opinion.

The PREMIER: If the House takes the hon. member's speech, no opinion can be expressed.

Hon. T. Walker: Why not?

The PREMIER: If the House takes my speech it cannot do so.

Hon. T. Walker: What do you mean?

The PREMIER: The House could not do so, because the hon. member could not, and would not, assure the House that the area of good land is sufficient to justify the railway, nor would I attempt to do so either. I believe good land is there, but before we can assure the House on the point, we must have detailed information.

Hon. T. Walker: You have detailed information regarding this matter.

The PREMIER: No.

Hon. T. Walker: You have better information about this than about any other railway.

The PREMIER: The hon. member cannot say definitely that he will find 80 chains on either side of the line. He knows, in a general way, but cannot give a definite assurance. Nobody has inspected it.

Hon. T. Walker: It has been inspected again and again. Mr. Middleton inspected it.

The PREMIER: No, it has never been inspected.

Hon. T. Walker: Never been classified, perhaps, but it has been inspected.

The PREMIER: No, not a close inspection.

Hon. T. Walker: Yes, we have Mr. Middleton's report, a detailed report.

The PREMIER: No, a general report.

Hon. T. Walker: I was there when Mr. Middleton was making his inspection. That was north-east of the Glue Pot.

The PREMIER: Why, that is down near the coast! The hon. member's geography is weak.

Hon. T. Walker: No, it is up past Salmon Gum, close to Norseman.

The PREMIER: However, that does not mean that the hon. member can assure the House the land warrants the building of the railway.

Mr. Lambert: Is it not a scandalous thing to isolate 60 miles of railway from the main system? Of course it is scandalous!

The PREMIER: The hon. member really looks serious when he says it is scandalous. It would be a scandalous thing to spend a quarter of a million of money to link up this country that has not been developed and cannot be rapidly developed. However, that is

not the point. The point is that this line will open up further wheat lands.

Mr. Lambert: Why should 50,000 people have to pay railway freight on an additional 200 miles?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will have an opportunity to speak to the question.

The PREMIER: I hope the hon. member will visit the district before he makes his speech. He refers to the conditions that obtained 20 years ago. We are dealing with the present. The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) puts forward two reasons why this line should be built. The first is to link up 60 miles of isolated railway with the general railway system. I say we should not be justified in spending a quarter of a million for that purpose alone. I do not wish to produce the cropping figures of the district at this stage, for my purpose is to help my friend. However, the traffic will have to be created if the line is to be built to carry the production of the land. But that is not the point. All that we are considering to-night is the opening up of further wheat lands. It would be ridiculous to say that wheat grown at Salmon Gum is to be brought all the way round to Perth by rail, when there is a port at Esperance. Will my friend say that the port at Esperance is not capable of floating a wheat ship? Does he want to wipe out Esperance? Of course not. He knows it would be impracticable to haul wheat produced at Salmon Gum all the way round to Fremantle.

Mr. Lambert: The day will come when we shall have flour mills at Kalgoorlie, if only you will open up the country.

The PREMIER: I think the flour mill is more likely to be at Coolgardie. I regard this as a proposal to open up further wheat lands.

Hon. T. Walker: It has the double advantage of opening up new country and connecting the Esperance line with the rest of the railway system.

The PREMIER: There is no justification for connecting the Esperance line with the rest of the system, but there is justification for opening up new wheat lands.

Hon. T. Walker: Here you have the collateral advantages.

The PREMIER: Of course so, but we shall have to spend an enormous amount of money in Esperance to give this line something to carry.

Mr. Lambert: Again the centralisation that is ruining Australia.

The PREMIER: There is here no question of centralisation. This is decentralisation with a vengeance! Esperance is the only port in the district, yet my friend urges the building of the connecting link in order to bring everything round to Fremantle!

Hon. T. Walker: No.

The PREMIER: I am glad I can support the contention that the line ought to be constructed to open up new wheat country. How-

ever, the House is not yet in possession of information that would justify the carrying of the motion. All I urge is that we do as with other lines, get the necessary information.

Hon. T. Walker: You have it already.

The Minister for Agriculture: Don't be so impatient.

The PREMIER: We have not the information we need. I promise the hon. member I shall have this land classified, and that if the Government occupy these benches next year we will bring down a Bill for the construction of the railway.

Mr. Lambert: Will it be constructed as speedily as were the last 60 miles?

The PREMIER: Some men know not what they do. The hon. member belonged to a party that sat on these benches for five years.

Mr. Lambert: We got the necessary authority to build the line.

The PREMIER: But you did not build it.

Mr. Lambert: Because you prevented it.

The PREMIER: I have told hon. members what the Government are prepared to do in the matter. We do not question the wisdom of building the line, but we say we ought first to have full information as to the classification of the land and, further, that the land to the eastward of the railway ought to be inspected. The motion cannot help the construction of the line, because the House has not the information we must have before authorising the expenditure on the new line. I hope the hon. member will allow the motion to be withdrawn on the understanding that the necessary information be obtained in time to allow of the bringing down next session of a Bill to construct the line. The withdrawal of the motion will not delay the construction of the line for a single moment. I do not wish to discuss what is happening on the Esperance land already served, and how little the production will be for a year or two. My main wish is that the House shall understand we are already committed to the building of all the lines that can be built within the next 12 months, lines that at one time or another every party in the House has promised shall be constructed.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [8.40]: I am surprised at the attitude of the Premier. Surely if there be one line in Western Australia, respecting which we have sufficient knowledge of the quality of the land to be served, it is this proposed line between Norseman and the head of the Esperance railway. When, some time ago, we took a deputation to the Minister, the quality of the land was admitted, but the rainfall was questioned. Since then careful inquiries have been made and it is now found that the rainfall is quite satisfactory to even the Premier, notwithstanding which he is still halting. Years ago the objection was raised that the land was too porous to hold water. Now we find from actual experience that it is splendid holding country. To-night the Premier resuscitates the question of the quality of the land.

The Premier: No, I say it has not been classified.

Mr. LUTEY: We have had inquiries galore. For nine months a Royal Commission took evidence, examined the Esperance lands, even went to Victoria and inspected the mallee lands in that State. The Esperance lands were reported on many years ago. Still further back, 25 years ago, the late Lord Forrest promised that the railway would be built. A man of the calibre of the late Lord Forrest was not likely to promise the building of a railway from Esperance to Kalgoorlie without first having satisfactory information regarding the prospects. For the last 20 years we have had not only the official information of experts and Royal Commissioners, but information also from private agriculturists who have travelled through the district. I am distinctly disappointed at the attitude of the Premier to-night.

Capt Carter: He has promised to build the railway next year.

Mr. LUTEY: But he will not have the chance next year. We on this side are going to build the railway next year. I want hon. members to commit themselves to an expression of opinion as to what the Government ought to do. I hope the Country Party will support the motion. Members should realise that Western Australia is being over-run by Eastern States farmers.

The Premier: There are 100,000 acres of land surveyed at Esperance ready for them.

Mr. LUTEY: If this motion is passed and they have an assurance that something will be done in the near future, I am satisfied a large area of the Esperance country will be taken up within a few days. Last Monday I travelled to the coast with several Eastern States men, who expressed themselves highly satisfied with the Esperance country, but they wanted an assurance that the line would be linked up with Norseman before they took up land. No railway has been discussed so much as the Esperance railway. Every possible and impossible objection was raised to the land. In the early days it was said to be salt and porous, and the rainfall was said to be insufficient. An expert Royal Commission was appointed and made an investigation extending over nine months. They presented a satisfactory report six years ago, and still there is no guarantee that the line will be completed. I do not know whether the Premier is reserving the announcement for one of his pre-election speeches. Prior to each general election we have been told what the Government was going to do about the Esperance line. One would have thought the Premier would support the motion. A few months ago we were informed that the land was all right, and the only matter in doubt was the rainfall. Now the Premier has authentic information on that point and still he wishes to procrastinate. I hope the motion will be passed as an earnest that something definite will be done in the near future in fulfilment of the numerous promises given during the last six years.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [8.47]: We can trust to the good sense of the House to pass this motion.

Capt. Carter: Why not trust the promise of the Premier?

Mr. LAMBERT: The passage of the motion would put the hall mark upon it. The House would be well advised to accept the motion as an indication of its disapproval of centralisation that too long has militated against the progress of this State. It is scandalous that 60 or 70 miles of railway should be isolated from the main system. It is a greater scandal that 30,000 or 40,000 people should be cut off from their natural port. Every pound of foodstuffs, every bit of mining material and all the requisites of the 30,000 or 40,000 people of the goldfields have had to pay toll on 200 miles of extra haulage for a quarter of a century. Members should not tolerate further procrastination. The Premier says the amount involved cannot be expended without further investigations first being made as to the agricultural possibilities of the intervening stretch of country. I venture to say the extra cost of operating the 60 miles of isolated railway would exceed the interest charges on the capital necessary to link up the Esperance line with Norseman.

The Premier: How much would be produced along this line in a year or two?

Mr. LAMBERT: How much is produced along any agricultural railway in a year or two? The Premier has often spoken of his interest in the development of mining. Surely the matter of getting supplies to the mines, opening up new mineral deposits, and cheapening the cost of production are factors that should weigh with him in considering the advisableness of opening up the natural port to a big consuming community like that of the Eastern goldfields.

The Premier: They get their food in this State. The position is quite different from that of 20 years ago.

Mr. LAMBERT: And they still wish to get it in this State. Why not develop the Esperance lands and enable the people of the goldfields to draw their food supplies from those lands? I believe the statement of the Minister for Agriculture that in the Esperance district there are probably millions of acres of land that can be utilised for cereal growing. I should like the Premier to be inspired by a loftier ideal. Until we take a broader view of such questions, the State will never go ahead. It is not possible to isolate 50 or 60 miles of railway here and there and prosper. In Chili a start was made by building 1,500 miles of railway to open up all the ports. The Premier has nothing to fear from an expression of opinion by this House. He told us that if the report he desires to get are favourable, he will bring down an enabling Bill next session. But it will mean much to the settlers if they know they have the support of Parliament. It will be a stimulus to them to know that, though this country has been neglected in the past, they will not be allowed to remain isolated from their natural market indefinitely.

Probably the hesitation of previous administrations to build this railway was due to the fact that our agricultural and fruit industries were in their infancy and required nursing, if not coddling.

The Premier: You have the Trans-Australian line now.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, and I do not think our own producers have any great competitors. The mining industry requires assistance. The people in Leonora, Wiluna and the surrounding districts should receive the benefit of reduced railway haulage. Our right to control this country involves an obligation to have regard for the people far removed from the seat of government. The Minister for Agriculture has told us that in the Esperance district we have a new agricultural territory that requires only the ingenuity of man to bring it into production. I hope that members seized with the importance of peopling and developing this State will insist that no considerable area of cultivable land shall continue to remain isolated. I claim the support of those members who believe that the whole of the trade of the State should not gravitate to Fremantle. Those who believe that centralisation is bad should support the motion. Members may feel satisfied with the promise of the Premier and we certainly have no reason to doubt his genuineness, but we wish to dispel the doubt of the goldfields people that the claims of the Esperance district fall upon deaf ears. Any matter affecting the metropolitan area receives the fullest possible consideration from the goldfields members.

Mr. Mann: Do you favour more tramway extensions?

Mr. LAMBERT: We were unanimous in supporting tramway extensions, and think the metropolitan area should control its own tramways and extend them whenever and wherever it likes.

Capt. Carter: We have to pay for them.

Mr. LAMBERT: Most people have to pay for what they get. That is not a great virtue.

The Minister for Mines: It is a virtue to get out of paying.

Mr. LAMBERT: Sometimes. If the reports are favourable; we are told the Premier will bring down a Bill next session for the construction of this line, but if they are not favourable, he will be in the same position as he is in to-day.

Mr. Mann: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am pleased that members are so sanguine. Many members would like to have the claims of Esperance heard for the linking up of that port with the goldfields.

Lieut.-Col. Denton: We would like the claims of the Midland people heard.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Midland railway should be owned by the Government if they can get it on reasonable and not exorbitant terms. When we get down to taintacks we can talk. I am not going into the past history of the Esperance railway. It will always stand to the credit of the present Minister for Mines that he never ceased in his en-

deavours on behalf of Esperance until portion of the railway was built. It is a great pity it was not constructed right through, for it is one of the most pressing needs of the Eastern goldfields.

The Premier: I hope with all my heart that we are only just making a start to develop that part of the State. It is an enormous area.

Mr. LAMBERT: We are only tickling it to-day.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are impatient.

Mr. LAMBERT: The needs of this country make for impetuosity. It is impetuosity that makes industries go ahead. Unless we desire to do things to-day instead of putting them off until to-morrow we shall never get anywhere. We are impatient because we look upon this as a national work. If we hesitate we shall never get anywhere. A spirit of impetuosity will enable us to get over hurdles and almost insurmountable difficulties. Without it we cannot overcome our financial troubles. The spirit inebriating Parliament should be one of impetuosity, one of recognising the pressing needs of Western Australia. If the Esperance lands are, as we think they are, a valuable national asset, the expenditure of a few thousand pounds on a railway is a mere bagatelle. The line would serve a three-fold purpose. It would greatly reduce the cost of maintaining 60 miles of isolated railway. It would open up a big agricultural area and give a stimulus to the pioneers who are already settled in that district. It would also open up to the eastern goldfields their natural port, and chop off from the goldfields railway system 200 miles of line.

The Premier: It would not delay the construction a minute if this motion were defeated.

Mr. LAMBERT: Why defeat the motion? If the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) feels that his appeal is falling upon deaf ears I would prefer to see the motion withdrawn. Its defeat would imply that Parliament could remain deaf to the appeal of goldfields members to give justice to the Esperance district.

The Premier: That is not so at all.

Mr. LAMBERT: That would be the inference. Let us encourage the people in that district. There is no reason to doubt that the Minister for Agriculture is right in his belief that we have another province there almost unknown and untouched. Let us do something to overcome the obstacles confronting us to-day.

The Minister for Agriculture: We are doing our best, are we not?

Mr. LAMBERT: We are not doing it. I do not wish to growl.

The Premier: If you strike out "this session" we will agree to the motion.

Hon. T. Walker: I will tell you what I will do.

Mr. Monev: Youthful impetuosity.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am prepared to give way to the member for Kanowna. There is no need for me to fortify the case he has al-

ready presented to the House for the carrying of the motion.

Hon. T. Walker: I only want to explain something.

Mr. LAMBERT: Let us assure the people of the Eastern goldfields that if the Government do not consider they have sufficient evidence to-day to warrant them in constructing the line, they will at the first opportunity proceed with it. I hope members opposite will not follow the Premier in his desire to defeat this motion. That is calling for too great a display of loyalty to their leader. Supporters of the Government can remain loyal to him if they will say to him "We want you to give to Esperance what you are giving elsewhere." The money that it would be necessary to spend on the completion of the Esperance line would be a mere song compared with what the Government are spending elsewhere in opening up our bush country and draining our swamp lands. Why hesitate over a paltry £200,000 when it means opening up one of the finest agricultural centres in Australia?

Hon. M. F. Troy: What is a million or two?

Mr. LAMBERT: Nothing. We are in a backward state of development and have to spend money to get money. Good government rests upon good finance.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are dealing with the railway.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is sound finance to build the balance of the Esperance line. If it is the bad fortune of members on this side of the House to be administering the affairs of State next year, they will not hesitate to find the money for this railway.

Mr. Teesdale: Let the matter stand over until then.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member had better keep to the motion.

Mr. LAMBERT: I ask members to record it as their desire that Parliament should agree to the building of this all-important railway.

Hon. T. Walker: I accept the Premier's assurance, but I want it to go on the records of the House in a more emphatic manner. If I am permitted to do so, I should like to amend my motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Another member who has not spoken may move for the deletion of the words that it may be desired to strike out.

Hon. T. Walker: It will be my amendment after all. I should like to see omitted the words "this session," and the words "as early as possible," inserted in lieu thereof.

The Premier: That is all right.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot make a speech, now.

Hon. T. Walker: I am asking whether that is satisfactory.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (Kalgoorlie) [9.14]: I support the motion as it stands. The Premier is rather anxious to have the words "this session" struck out.

The Premier: It comes to the same thing.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Perhaps this Government will not be returned to power next session. The motion asks the Government to secure authority to construct this section of railway. What I desire is an expression of opinion from the House as to the advisability now of the construction of this line.

The Minister for Mines: Then you will not be committing the House for the next session. Why not commit the incoming House also?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I want to commit the present Parliament. I am quite prepared to run the risk to which the Minister for Mines draws attention. It is unnecessary to traverse the history of the construction, or proposed construction, of the Esperance-Norseman railway during the past 20 or 25 years. That history is well-known to the Premier, and to hon. members generally. In view of the statement, however, that there is a scarcity of wheat lands throughout Western Australia, and having regard to the fact that there is an abundance of good land in the vicinity of the Esperance-Norseman railway route, surely it is not asking too much that the House should signify its willingness to authorise the construction of the section of line referred to in the motion. If the Premier does not agree with the motion, he must have some good and valid reason for requesting the deletion of the words "this session."

The Premier: You were not here when I put the case.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I was not too far away; I heard the Premier's remarks. Those who have been induced to put their savings into selections in the Esperance district, and who are helping to build up a new agricultural area along the route of the Esperance-Norseman railway, desire to know their position. The carrying of this motion would mean greater encouragement to them. It will be quite competent for the House, on re-assembling next year, to carry a motion similar to this.

The Minister for Mines: Then Parliament will be carrying resolutions all the time, and doing nothing.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Surely the present Premier, or any other Premier to would gladly seize the opportunity to dispose, once and for all, of the vexed question of extending the Esperance northwards railway. I heard of the question years before I ever entered Parliament. It has been a hardy annual, brought up time and again just as it is brought up to-night.

The Premier: I shall be very glad to help to develop every acre of land now served by the Esperance northwards railway.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I am surprised that the Premier does not support the motion. He knows that we have very little Crown land adjacent to the railways and fit for wheat growing available for selection. The amendment means pushing off to 1924 or 1925 something that ought to be done in 1923. The Premier's remarks do not, in my opinion, justify his opposition to the motion. Surely

he realises that to-day there are in Western Australia scores of men vainly seeking land on which to grow wheat. My contention is that the construction of line asked for by the motion would make available an immense acreage of good land and so add to the prosperity of the State.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [9.23]: I am rather sorry that I have to oppose the motion. I would not do so if the motion did not declare that what it proposes must be done this session. Already we have large areas of land waiting for railways authorised by Parliament. I refer more particularly to the Newdegate country, where a great deal of settlement has taken place, the Yorkrakine district, and Ravensthorpe, which I have just had the opportunity of visiting. It was all very well for people to grow wheat a long distance from the railway when the price of the commodity was at its maximum, but to-day wheat growing is a different proposition. We must furnish railway communication if wheat-growing is to be payable. I agree that at some time we must build a railway to link up the Esperance district with Norseman or another centre in that neighbourhood, but the House would not be justified in passing a motion which demands an authorising Bill this session. I quite agree that the line should be built at the earliest possible opportunity, but I cannot support the motion in its present form. There may be, and I believe there is, justification for building the proposed line; but until we get the information which the Premier has referred to, and which he has promised to obtain for Parliament, I fail to see any great benefit to be derived from pushing forward the subject as suggested by the mover.

Mr. Lutey: The line has been pushed forward for 25 years.

Mr. LATHAM: I believe the Esperance land is the slowest land the Government have on their hands to get rid of. It is not isolated, since it possesses a very decent port. The mover of the motion has shown his unbounded faith in the Esperance district by going to another portion of the State to select land for himself. I believe the Esperance land to be good, but I believe also that there is better land available in other parts of the State. Still, we cannot afford to let even the Esperance land lie idle. I believe it would pay the Government handsomely, with a view to opening up the land towards the west of the Esperance northwards railway, to build a line across to the Great Southern district, thus also opening up the country north of Ravensthorpe.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member had better keep to the motion.

Mr. LATHAM: I am merely endeavouring to show why Esperance should not have preference over other parts of the State, as suggested by the motion. I sincerely hope the House will not agree to the motion in its present form. If hon. members feel that something should be done, I hope an amendment will be moved suggesting that the line

be built at the earliest possible opportunity. Such a proposal I am quite willing to support.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9.26]: In accordance with the mover's suggestion, I move an amendment—

That the words "this session" be struck out, and "as early as possible" inserted in lieu.

The Premier and the mover have clearly demonstrated that the proposed section of line must be constructed within a short period. If anything were lacking in this regard, we have the definite assurance of the Minister for Agriculture, who has recently taken a trip through the Esperance country, that it is a wonderful territory. I think the Minister said that he had discovered a new territory of some millions of acres. Naturally we all welcome such a statement from a gentleman holding a highly responsible position. When the member for Kanowna has the support of such an important member of this House, he is emboldened to persist in the effort to secure a railway for which he has been fighting during a long term of years. In fact, although my association with Parliament dates back only to 1917, I can say that if there is one subject which has been more prominently before Parliament than any other during the last six years, it is the subject of the completion of the railway from Esperance to Norseman. It has been demonstrated by Ministers that if the railway is to be a payable proposition, it is necessary that the line shall be linked up with the general railway system of the State. It was pointed out by the Government last session that it would have been more economical to construct the railway from both ends. If that were so, it was evident that the Government had in mind that this should have been done. I have no personal acquaintance with the land between Esperance and Norseman, but, as has been frequently stated, it has been reported upon several times. A Royal Commission went through the area and, in order that they might be sure of the value of that type of country, they visited the Eastern States. I believe the members of that Commission were paid, and also that they were paid while they were in the Eastern States. There must have been some grave reason for the Commission visiting the Eastern States, but after investigating similar country and studying the ultimate results accruing from the proper development of similar lands in South Australia, they reported favourably. That fact should be some guarantee or justification for the construction of the railway. I agree with the Premier that the time is not opportune to introduce the necessary legislation to authorise the extension of the line. It is necessary to have full information to place before the House and I think members should agree to the motion with the amendment I have moved.

Mr. STUBBS (Wagin) [9.31]: I second the amendment. When the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) moved the motion originally, I was dubious regarding the wisdom of agreeing to the line being constructed. I recently visited the Lake Grace country, which is parallel to the belt to be served by the line under consideration, and while there I was told by men who had been through the country that recently some hundreds of thousands of acres of magnificent forest land, capable of growing immense quantities of wheat, are available there. In consequence of that information, I support the motion, with the proposed amendment. I am convinced that in the south-eastern portion of the State, where the rainfall is from 15 to 20 inches, there will be developed another grand province—I think that was the word used by the Minister for Agriculture, when referring to the area, in a speech he made in the Esperance district some little time back—from which large quantities of wheat will be exported in the course of a few years. That the land is capable of growing wheat is undoubted, for that has been proved by work done by a handful of people during the last few years. The State has a valuable asset in the Esperance district, and I hope before many years are over, the member for Kanowna will have the pleasure of seeing enormous quantities of wheat conveyed along the railway to the coast for export to other countries.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) can speak to the amendment if he desires and also reply to the motion.

Hon. T. Walker: I do not desire to speak to the amendment because, in fact, it is my amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.35]: I support the motion as amended. It must be very pleasing to hon. members who had something to do with the introduction of the Esperance Railway Bill many years ago to note the decided change of opinion regarding this district. If I am not mistaken, Bills to authorise the construction of the Esperance-Norseman line were defeated three times. They were not defeated in this Chamber but in another place. The Esperance line could be worked much cheaper as part of the general railway system. Dead-end lines are not satisfactory, because the cost of working is too high. The member for York (Mr. Latham) pointed out that other districts, where there is more settlement, require railway communication. There is not the least doubt that, had there not been so much humberging regarding the construction of the Esperance line, this district would have been as thickly settled as any other part of the State. The effect of it all was to frighten people away. Even to-day, farmers from the Eastern States have not received the consideration they were entitled to when they made inquiries regarding these lands.

The Premier: They did get consideration.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They say not.

Mr. Lutey: If they had got proper consideration, they would have rushed it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some Eastern States farmers who came here to make inquiries about the land in the Esperance district, have gone away because they could not get satisfaction.

The Premier: The land is surveyed and available, and information can be furnished.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That may be so, but the man who has goods to sell generally takes pains to show those goods.

The Premier: We are really doing more than you suggest.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some farmers came from the Eastern States for the express purpose of taking up land in the Esperance area. They had read about the land in the report furnished by the Royal Commission. They had been farming on similar land in South Australia and came here with the intention of transferring their stock and other farming requisites to holdings in the Esperance district. They found they could not get satisfaction when they made application to the Esperance office.

The Premier: The land is ready and surveyed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The line should be built as early as possible. I think the Premier should agree to the proposal.

The Premier: We want to get full information to bring before the House.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: You have that information now.

Mr. Lutey: Tons of it.

The Premier: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: All the information was available when the original Bill was introduced in 1911.

Hon. T. Walker: So it was.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I trust that the acceptance of the amendment by the Premier does not mean it is his desire to delay the proposition.

The Premier: No, it will not be delayed.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. K. Maley—Greenough) [9.38]: I will not withdraw one word I have said, nor one word I have been reported to have said regarding the quality of the land in this district. I want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the area of land served by the present Esperance northwards railway, comprises a mallee belt of some three-quarters of a million acres within a radius of 15 miles of the line and within a safe rainfall zone. Hon. members have, however, an altogether mistaken conception on one point. I heard the Leader of the Opposition state, by way of interjection, that he would like to have the contract for clearing in the mallee belt. I do not want members to be misled because the actual rolling down and clearing of the mallee country can be effected so easily at the outset. The development of the mallee belt itself will, perhaps, prove more expensive in the long run than

the actual clearing of first class forest country. As a general rule, the cost of clearing first class forest country ranges from 30s. to £2 per acre. When that country is cleared, the maximum crop can be secured from the first year's cultivation. With the mallee country it is entirely different. First-class mallee country may be rolled down and cleaned up from 10s. to 15s. per acre, but the first crop on that type of country is the poorest. It requires a period of from two to five years, during which the settler must get the mallee roots cleared out of the soil, before the maximum crop can be secured. This is because the mallee roots have—

Hon. T. Walker: A souring effect.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:—a souring or poisoning effect upon the soil. The problem the Government will be confronted with is that perhaps 80 per cent. of the settlers who will desire to go there, will have little or no capital. That means that the Government will have to carry those settlers for five years before they can secure a maximum return from their land.

Mr. Lutey: That does not apply to salmon gum country.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not want the hon. member to confuse my remarks. The development of the mallee country is not so inexpensive as some people imagine. It will be more expensive—

Mr. Lutey: More expensive than the clearing and developing of the salmon gum country?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, because the salmon gum country can be cleared outright and be made to produce crops from the first year.

Mr. Lutey: That is an argument in favour of the extension of the line to Norseman.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am putting it up that way. The line from Esperance northwards in the approved rainfall belt passes through mallee country, and that country extends for 40 miles west of Grass Patch and 100 miles or so eastwards.

Hon. T. Walker: Close up to Eucla.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: After 100 miles to the east, the first class belt of three million acres of salmon gum country, running down in a continuous line from Zanthus to Eyre, is tapped.

Hon. T. Walker: It extends right down to the bay.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is one unbroken stretch of first class country. We are a bit impatient in these days. We must remember that we are engaged upon fairly large development schemes in the South-West. We have quite a number of schemes for the development of the North-West, of our eastern wheat belt, and of our pastoral lands. There is no justification for an exhibition of impatience regarding the proper classification of the lands under discussion or a proper policy that the present, or any other Government, must undertake in order to develop this magnificent territory in the south-eastern corner of the State. That

development will come in time; it can only be delayed. Development there cannot be kept back, because we have land there to justify the Government in carrying out that work. In the meantime, we must recognise that the Government will have sufficient responsibility already to face, in the settlement of the areas under discussion. This is particularly so when we realise we will have to carry the settlers there for a period that will range from three to five years. It is essential that we should, if possible, get settlers to take up land in these parts, settlers who have had experience in farming this type of country and who have capital. We can get them quite easily, because prosperous farmers in the Eastern States, or their sons who are looking for an outlet, will readily come here providing we give them the necessary facilities for opening up the country; which must be, naturally, in the fulfilment of time the joining up of the Esperance railway at Norseman and the branching out of railways from Grass Patch eastwards and westwards to open up what, in my opinion, is the most uniform stretch of good quality land we possess.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna—in reply) [9.46]: I thank the Chamber for the attention that has been paid to this great question. It is great, because it means opening up a new division of the State. I would undoubtedly have opposed any postponement of the testing of the House on this motion, except that I must respect the assurance of the Premier that he intends to make further inquiries and that, having made those inquiries, he will bring down a Bill for the construction of the line. That assurance is definite and the Government are pledged to it. I want the House to endorse and back up the Government in this; I want something to be behind the Government; because it is within the possibilities that in the course of time, perhaps before the proposed inquiries are completed, another Government may be in possession of the Treasury benches.

The Premier: It is highly improbable.

Hon. T. WALKER: Still, it is possible. I am under the impression that we have ample information to warrant the continuation of this line without another moment's delay. The stopping of the line where it is is purely an accident of politics. We introduced a Bill for the construction of the line from Esperance to Norseman; but it was the Labour Party that introduced it, and at that time the Labour Party could do nothing right. So the Bill was opposed, and as an apologetic compromise members then on this side said, "If you take the railway for 60 miles northward of Esperance and make it purely an agricultural line we will let you have it." We took them at their word, with the result that the line ends nowhere. But we should never have introduced that Bill had we not known the character of the land throughout the distance of the railway. There is on the files abundant information, not only as to the character of

the land, its wheat growing capabilities, along the line, but eastward and westward, as is now confirmed by the Minister for Agriculture. Not only that, but we have full information as to the rainfall.

The Premier: You have not these later records.

Hon. T. WALKER: But they only confirm the earlier records. The Esperance Royal Commission clearly showed that this land, now described as some of the best in the Commonwealth, was wheat growing country, and that it could not be properly utilised until the line went right through to Norseman. So all the necessary information is available. I do not want any excuses for further delay. I am sorry the Minister for Agriculture has left his remarks open to the interpretation that he wishes us to delay. He says, "Don't be impatient."

The Minister for Agriculture: I say the impatience is shown everywhere.

Hon. T. WALKER: The cry is, "Don't be impatient." The Minister used these words, "It will come in time." Well, of course, we know it will come in time, for "in time" means just within the limit of the borders of eternity.

The Premier: We have told you we are going to act.

The Minister for Agriculture: We are going on with the classification. Why be impatient?

Hon. T. WALKER: The words the Minister used at Norseman were quite different from those he used to-night.

Mr. Angelo: Why stonewall it?

Hon. T. WALKER: I am not stonewalling it, but I want to make this more emphatic than the mere passing of a resolution. I want this recorded for future reference, because we have had a very long period of delays and excuses. This is what the Minister for Agriculture said at Norseman:—

I say without hesitation that agriculture will spread successfully east and south from Norseman over a vast tract of territory. I look forward with greater confidence to this development than to a similar growth east of Merredin. In the past this south-eastern corner of the State has had little chance of development.

The Minister for Agriculture: I stand by that.

Hon. T. WALKER: I know you do. This is a quotation from the speech of the hon. member at Norseman. He continued:—

But it cannot longer be kept back. Those were his words. Mark the difference! To-night he talks about, "In the fullness of time." "In the sweet by-and-bye." "Why be impatient?" "It will come in time." "All in the process of time." Those were the expressions he made use of just now.

The Minister for Agriculture: We cannot do everything at once.

Hon. T. WALKER: But this is what the Minister said at Norseman: "It has had little chance of development in the past."

Hon. P. Collier: But that was after a banquet.

Hon. T. WALKER: Never mind. The Minister said, "But it cannot longer be kept back." That is also what I say.

The Minister for Agriculture: And I say it now.

Hon. T. WALKER: At Norseman there was no advice as to patience, no reference to the process of time. There it was, "But it cannot longer be kept back. Its isolation must first be removed."

The Minister for Agriculture: Why did you select a farm down there?

Hon. T. WALKER: I selected that farm before the coming of the redistribution of seats that made Esperance part of my constituency.

Mr. Latham: If it was the best place, why not have gone down there on the farm?

Hon. T. WALKER: Why these inane, unbecoming and almost childish interjections?

The Premier: We are all helping you, but you are not grateful.

Hon. T. WALKER: I know the Premier is not making these stupid interjections. I only wish to curb the younger branch of his Ministry. The point is that the Minister for Agriculture is now making excuses. I am pointing out the evil of such statements, of such shaving off of the brilliance of his remarks at Norseman so as to make it appear that we can long long wait for this part of the country to be developed, the part we are dealing with to-night. That is the implication the Minister makes.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why, I am right with you!

Hon. T. WALKER: Then shut up and let me get along. I do not know whether the hon. member is afraid of his own remarks being quoted. He went on—

Its isolation must first be removed. That is the first thing we have to do—remove its isolation. The Minister proceeded—

And as settlement extends south from Norseman and north from Esperance, this part must inevitably be linked with Norseman.

The first thing to do is to remove its isolation. We cannot be too impatient in getting that done. For 20 odd years have we been waiting for it. We cannot be impatient now when we ask for the fulfilment of promises made time after time, year after year by successive Premiers.

The Minister for Agriculture: Originally to get a seaside resort at Esperance for Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie.

Hon. T. WALKER: Is that worthy of a dignified Minister of the Crown? It was never urged from that point. The Bill was introduced by the Labour Government as the first of their Bills. The Labour Ministry came into office at the end of 1911, and in 1912 had the Bill before the House. It was for the development of the agricultural areas behind Esperance. It is unworthy of the Minister to throw in those slurs. The Minister said, "It must inevitably be linked with

Norseman by the construction of the remaining 60 miles of railway." I wish to stress the urgency of that. The Minister said the burden of attending to the development of the South-West, the pastoral areas and the wheat belt must make it difficult to undertake another burden in this new district, and he was in hopes that people with capital would come here.

The Minister for Agriculture: We have to go on with it; there is no question about that.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Government want people with money.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, money and experience.

Hon. T. WALKER: But we are turning them away every day by stopping the construction of the through line.

The Premier: No, we are not.

Hon. T. WALKER: Consequently newcomers are made suspicious regarding the quality of the country and the intentions of the Government towards them. If we want this class of people, the surest and speediest way of getting them is to continue the construction of the line without delay. They will come when they have confidence, but these delays, this playing with a great problem and leaving the line with a dead end, make them think the Government are not in earnest. It would appear to an outsider that the Government purposely wanted to make a failure of that country, and therefore they constructed a line that could not pay. But it will pay the moment it is constructed through to Norseman. These people ask—"Why do not they construct it through? It is so obvious it will pay if it is completed."

The Premier: It will not pay.

Hon. T. WALKER: They ask—"Why do the Government hesitate to go on with it? For political reasons they conceded the 60 miles of line from Esperance, but they have no faith in the country or they would continue the line to Norseman." That is the natural inference to be drawn from the actions of the Government.

The Premier: Not at all.

Hon. T. WALKER: They ask—"If the Government have confidence in the country and intend to stand behind their Minister for Agriculture, why do they not immediately remove the isolation and link up the 60 miles with Norseman?"

The Premier: Have not you any responsibility for the lines authorised when you were in power?

Hon. T. WALKER: Undoubtedly.

The Premier: They are not built yet.

Hon. T. WALKER: But you threw us out when we were starting on them. We had a legacy of railway building from the Wilson Government that took every available penny from the coffers.

The Minister for Agriculture: All Governments have those legacies.

Hon. T. WALKER: But we had an especial burden of them. We completed those lines and undertook this very line, but the Liberal Government stopped it as soon as they came into office.

Hon. P. Collier: We were on the last lap of the railways when we were put out.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, and had commenced this one. The Premier has had the worst of that argument.

The Premier: The trouble is we have no chance to reply.

Hon. T. WALKER: If we wish to attract settlers with money, the way to do it is to show confidence by constructing the railway. If the Government show zeal, no section of the community will be terrified even by the warning of the Minister for Agriculture that mallee land in the long run is more expensive to bring into good crop than salmon gum country. It is certain that men can start with less money and work their way ahead in the mallee country better than in any other part of the State.

Mr. Harrison: I do not agree.

Hon. T. WALKER: True you do not get the best crop in the first year, and it is necessary to wait until the land is sweetened, but it sweetens rapidly when facilities are provided for settlers to get fertilisers, which they cannot do without a railway. Much longer will it be a burden to keep the settlers going than if we built the line and enabled them to sweeten their land with the necessary fertilisers.

The Premier interjected.

Hon. T. WALKER: I do not want the Premier to follow the Minister for Agriculture. I give him credit for possessing self-control.

The Premier: I was correcting you.

Hon. T. WALKER: I always know when I am touching the Premier on a sore point. He begins to move in his seat. I give him credit for great avidity; he sees the point coming and interrupts. The burden will be longer on the country if we delay building this line, because of the need for artificial manures to sweeten the land.

Mr. Mann: Victorians who understand mallee country are selecting down there.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes. I have spoken with some of them and they say the one thing needful is this railway to enable them to get fertilisers.

Mr. Mann: Quite a number of young Victorians are going down there.

Hon. T. WALKER: It has remained for outsiders to teach us what is a good thing. I shall be pleased if the House unanimously agrees upon the necessity for constructing the remaining portion of the line as early as possible, which means that if there is a conscience in politics, members will stand by the promise made by the Premier to-night and we shall have the continuance and completion of this railway.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

On motion by Hon. T. Walker, resolution forwarded by message to the Legislative Council, and its concurrence desired therein.

House adjourned at 10.11 p.m.