

aspects will dissolve. The branches of the problem will dissolve with the root. I did not want to intervene in a debate on the Agricultural Estimates, but I think I was justified on this occasion in pointing out what the people in the metropolitan area are suffering as a result of the high prices of perishable goods.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.20 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 26th November, 1942.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

MOTION—RAILWAY FREIGHTS AND FARES.

As to Suggested Increase.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [2.18]:
I move—

That in the opinion of this House, the all-round increase of 12½ per cent. in railway fares and freights—as suggested by Mr. Raynor, Deputy Secretary of the Railway Department—would be an unfair tax on mining, agricultural and pastoral producers; and further, that no increase in railway charges should be imposed without submission to Parliament.

That this resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly with a request for its concurrence therein.

It is three or four years now since this House discussed a similar question, and, by a majority—certainly of only one vote—it disallowed proposed increased freights. The then Government, which is the present one, discovered another way to get around the difficulty. After having dealt with the increasing of freights in Parliament by laying regulations on the Table for many years, it suddenly found there was no need

to do that. After all, the Government, whatever its political brand, consists of only a few members, supported by a majority of men in another place, and those men are responsible to their electors. Any increases in freights and charges that have to be met by the people have to be justified by members of Parliament, no matter whether they are or are not members of the Government for the time being.

In 1939 this House disallowed any increases, and it did that also in a previous session, but still they continued to be imposed. I will read a letter which has brought the matter to a head, so far as I am concerned. Most country members have received a similar communication from the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council. We are guided, more or less, by our electors, and we realise the Government must raise money to carry on the different activities for which it is responsible. But still, when increases in railway freights are being mooted, the interests of people in the outback districts and of producers generally should be considered. This letter is addressed from the Municipal Chambers, Kalgoorlie, and is signed by the Town Clerk—

At a meeting of the council held on the 16th inst., the question of the proposed increase in railway freights and fares came up for discussion.

The news that the change is seriously contemplated was contained in a statement made before the Commonwealth Grants Commission, when sitting in Perth on the 6th November, by the Deputy Secretary of the Railway Department, Mr. P. C. Raynor. He is reported to have said that all-round rises in railway charges of 12½ per cent. were proposed.

The people of the Goldfields desire to be tolerant and co-operate with the Government in any move which is found necessary on account of war-time exigencies, but they cannot contemplate with complacency so great an increase in charges as that suggested.

The people in the outposts of the State, more particularly the Eastern Goldfields, are dependent on the railways, and the charges made for the carriage of goods affect every resident. All the requirements of industry are conveyed by train and food, clothes, furniture and other necessities are influenced in price by transport costs.

In the year 1939, the question of increased railway freights received attention by Parliament, which disallowed a regulation to obtain additional revenue by this method of taxation. However, the expressed opinion of Parliament was flouted and high rates continued to be imposed to the detriment of the people of the Goldfields and other parts of the State. You can realise that there will be a lot of reaction from the people in the country and mining dis-

tricts of Western Australia, should the increase of 12½ per cent. in charge be inflicted, more particularly, as the last increase was imposed in actual defiance of the decision of Parliament.

My council unanimously carried a resolution emphatically protesting against the suggested 12½ per cent., or any increase, on railway charges, and I was directed to ask that you be good enough to voice your disapproval of any such impost being put into effect.

That letter comes from an influential body, representing a large outback town. We have received some undertaking, although not really an assurance, from another place, when the Minister for Railways said, in effect, that the Government would accept full responsibility if any increase in freights was proposed. The matter, however, has not yet been discussed by the Government. The Railway Department seems to do as it likes with all Governments. Probably on this occasion it will do the same, but I am going to ask the House to enter a protest and, at the same time, request that what I have said be taken into consideration before any increase in freights is allowed. The latest returns from the Railway Department show that in 1941 the revenue under this heading amounted to £3,800,000, and, as near as I can make it, 12½ per cent. of that sum is £361,000. That is the contemplated increase to be levied upon the taxpayers of this State outside the metropolitan area. We all know how the goldmining industry has gone down because of the war. We know that the Railway Department has cancelled, or proposes to cancel, all trains except one a fortnight, and two a week to Norseman. How is this 12½ per cent. increase to be applied in those districts? After all, the upkeep will be there just the same. The railway gangs will have to be maintained to keep the line in order.

I have been wondering whether the 12½ per cent. will be added, in the case of that district, to the earnings as they are at the moment, or what they were when the district was prosperous. This protest must be made. According to the figures in 1940, the Railway Department lost £440,000 odd, and in 1941 £397,000 odd. Mr. Raynor has estimated that the deficit for 1942-43 will be greater than it was in those two years. That such a loss should be contemplated is strange. A large number of men employed in the railway service have enlisted, and we understand that maintenance and repair work has been sadly neglected during the

last two or three years. To a large extent the Commonwealth Government seems to have taken over our railways, and I am wondering whether the department is being paid for its services as it should be paid and whether the whole of the people of Australia are bearing their share of that section of the war effort. I trust that they are paying a reasonable amount for the use of our railways in furtherance of the war effort.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Should not the estimated increase be £360,000, not £36,000?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I said it would be roughly £361,000.

Hon. J. Cornell: About £475,000.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I have merely given the rough figures that a 12½ per cent. increase would represent. When we travel about the country by the railways, we can see that some of the departments are over-worked and that some are overstuffed. Recently when we feared that the Japanese might put in an appearance overnight, the department moved the signposts from the stations, evidently under the assumption that if the enemy came here, he would not be able to tell where East Perth or Mt. Lawley was situated. Yet, I have noticed that thousands of pounds have been spent on the Mt. Lawley station during the same period. Gangs of men were employed there on the work of repairing and renovating. This station is located right alongside the East Perth Power House, which is one of the first places that would be bombed by an enemy. The only route for traffic to the Goldfields, apart from a circuitous route through the South-West, is via Mt. Lawley. Yet the department, with a huge deficit in its finances, can waste thousands of pounds renovating a station that any day may go up in smoke. To lay out money in that way is quite wrong. The station was painted and renovated and then men were sent along to take down the signboards. This shows that the department is employing a surplus of men.

I challenge any member to go to any of the stations from Midland Junction to Perth in the evening and say that one man could not carry out all the work necessary instead of the two or three men now being employed. There is only a little work to be done on those stations apart from collecting tickets. If there are no brains in the department capable of instituting economies, the Gov-

ernment should take action to ensure that some brains are put there. It is obvious to everyone that a surplus of labour is being employed; it is labour being wasted for no good purpose whatever.

We in the outback country must take action to ensure that this proposed increase in freights and fares is not put over us, as it may be if we do not enter a protest in good time. Everybody can appreciate what a tremendous cost this increase will impose upon the farmers. However, I will leave country members to present that side of the case. For years the farmers have been in difficulties and now it is proposed to increase railway freights by $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I am afraid that if this sort of thing continues, we shall soon have no farmers at all. I ask the House to approve of this protest and affirm that at the present time it is very wrong to endeavour to load consumers in the country with another increase in freights and fares such as has been suggested by Mr. Raynor.

HON. J. CORNELL (South): I second the motion. Mr. Williams, I and other Goldfields members, in taking up the matter at this stage, may be considered to be a little premature, but it is well to get in early and, as a guide to what might happen, make a retrospect of the past. When the Minister for Railways was asked whether there was any substance in Mr. Raynor's statement to the Commonwealth Grants Commission about a $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. increase in railway freights and fares, he said that the statement had been made without reference to the Government and that the matter had not been considered by the Government, in consequence of which no declaration would be made until the proposal had been considered by Cabinet. "Where there is smoke there is fire" is a very sound axiom.

Let us look back and ascertain what happened on a previous occasion. Mr. Williams has told us that when the rate book was altered in 1939 to provide for an increase in freights and fares to the extent of about £50,000 annually, the by-law was disallowed. Mr. Thomson moved on the 11th October, 1939, as follows:—

That Railway By-law No. 55—Goods Rates Book—dated the 1st March, 1935, made under the heading of the Western Australian Government Railways, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 29th September, 1939, and laid on the Table of the House on the 3rd October, 1939, be and is hereby disallowed.

If members consult "Hansard" they will find that a lengthy debate took place and that on the 24th October the by-law was disallowed by 10 votes to eight, while 10 other members paired. I suppose Mr. Thomson thought he had added another to the numerous scalps he had been successful in obtaining in the way of disallowed regulations. But the resolution of the House was ignored. If members turn to "Hansard" of 1939, page 1608, they will find a question addressed to the Chief Secretary and answered as follows:—

Hon. A. Thomson asked the Chief Secretary: If it is not necessary under the Government Railways Act, 1904, to lay before Parliament any regulation or by-law made under the said Act increasing or decreasing fares or freight charges, why was by-law No. 55 laid on the Table of the Legislative Council on the 3rd October?

The Chief Secretary replied: It is not necessary to make increase or decrease railway fares or freights by means of by-laws. They have always been made by way of by-law purely as a matter of convenience and for the sake of uniformity.

According to "Hansard" I interjected, "That is no answer to the question why the by-law was tabled." That is the position. By-laws are tabled and disallowed, and then the decision of this House is ignored. That being so, there is nothing to prevent the Commissioner of Railways from making the contemplated increase of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in railway freights and fares. This House has no say in the matter. We have had a say on previous occasions—and the say has evidently proved worthless—after by-laws have been tabled; so it is just as well on this occasion to enter a protest before the increase is actually made. On studying Mr. Williams's figures, I find he is £100,000 out.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Just £100,000!

Hon. J. CORNELL: The loss last year was £3,800,000, and Mr. Raynor in his evidence said that he expected a much bigger loss this year. Assuming, however, that the loss this year will be the same as that of last year, then a $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. increase would amount to £475,000. We will assume that the metropolitan district will carry one-third of that increase. I do not think that it will carry any more—in fact, I am being generous.

Hon. A. Thomson: More than generous.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That would amount to £158,000. Half the population would pay £158,000; the other half of the popu-

lation in the remote outback districts, even in the far North-West, would have to find £370,000, so one can see who will have to nurse the baby. It has been said, and country members are well aware of this, that the removal of wheat from this harvest will be a problem. Much of it will not be removed; it will be stored in the locality where it has been grown. That must spell a decrease in the revenue to be derived from haulage of wheat from country districts. Is there any guarantee that this 12½ per cent. increase will be a flat rate? Will the impost be greater on the commodities that are essential to the lives of the people in the far back districts? Are these people to be called upon to bear a greater proportion than will the people living in the more favoured parts of the State?

It may be argued that the increase in the basic wage—I think it costs the Government roughly £500,000 per annum—does not as yet affect the Goldfields. I fail to understand how a figure can be arrived at to provide an increase in the basic wage in the South-West Land Division and in the metropolitan district to the extent of more than 7s. a week in the last six or eight months, while at the same time there has been no increase in the basic wage for the Goldfields, not even at Marble Bar. I know, as do others who are in touch with those districts, that the cost of living there has increased considerably. Not only have people in those districts not received an increase in the basic wage, but they are unable to obtain many of the commodities that are available on the coast.

Our goldmining industry has been partially depleted of its manpower; goldfields towns have disappeared; patriotic mine managers are now saying to the Civil Construction Corps and Armed Services, "If you want any more of our men, take them all, because we are honest with our directors, but we will have to say to them that the best thing for them to do is to close down the industry. If things turn our way when the war ends, we will talk about starting again." The position today is that the goldmining industry is carrying on at great financial loss and sacrifice. The tonnage treated by the Lake View and Star has been reduced from 50,000 tons to 25,000 tons per month. That will give members a fair idea of what is happening in the industry. Now there is a possibility of that section of the

community being asked to shoulder a further burden by way of an increase in railway freights and fares, and this on top of their present disabilities. It may not happen, but I have a vague idea that it will.

If we are in such financial straits that we find we must further load up the two sections of the community that already have got it well and truly in the neck as the result of the war and their contributions to the war effort—I refer to the primary producers—then I say that the Commonwealth and State Governments should have sense enough not to hurry on the day that is fast approaching when both our major primary industries will collapse. If that happens there will be no question of a further increase in railway fares and freights on the commodities which those industries use and produce. The sensible way to approach the matter is to say to the Commonwealth Government that these industries cannot carry any additional burdens and that if they are to be kept going, then it must find the money to make up the difference. If the Commonwealth Government is offering to subsidise universities for the training of post-war scientific men, then it is up to the Commonwealth and State Governments to reach some agreement whereby those people who have, as I previously remarked, already got it in the neck, shall be able to continue to carry on. Failing this, then there will be little if any avenue of employment or scope for the scientifically trained men.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East): I support the motion but shall not have much to say concerning it because Mr. Williams and Mr. Cornell have covered the ground fairly comprehensively. When I confine my remarks on this question to the Goldfields I hope that members representing country districts will not think I am unsympathetic to their point of view. One can sympathise with the Railway Department in the position it has to meet; at the same time one is forced to realise what a really drastic remedy it proposes to adopt.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The increase in the basic wage will be responsible.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I notice that the proposal has not yet been the subject of a decision by the Government, which I am sure, will weigh the pros and cons very seriously before agreeing to the proposal made by Mr. Raynor. It seems to me that unless

the Commonwealth Government makes some big decision in matters such as this, as time goes on we are going to reach the breaking point. Costs on the Goldfields have already gone up by leaps and bounds.

I am in agreement with the point of view expressed by Mr. Cornell, and fail to see how it is the Government Statistician was unable to find that an increase in the cost of living had occurred on the Goldfields. The position is undoubtedly very serious. Mr. Williams has read a letter setting forth a resolution carried by the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council. Just before I left to come to Perth this week, I had an urgent call from the secretary of the Chamber of Mines, Mr. Anderton, and he added his point of view to that expressed by the council. Many mining men and others are greatly agitated about this proposal. Their attitude, I think, is revealed in two paragraphs from a letter written by the town clerk as follows:—

The people of the Goldfields desire to be tolerant and co-operate with the Government in any move which is found necessary on account of war-time exigencies, but they cannot contemplate with complacency so great an increase in charges as that suggested.

The people in the outposts of the State, more particularly the Eastern Goldfields are dependent on the railways, and the charges made for the carriage of goods affect every resident. All the requirements of industry are conveyed by train, and food, clothes, furniture and other necessities are influenced in price by transport costs.

I have today received a letter from the Minister for Railways in reply to a letter which we, that is Mr. Hall and Mr. Seddon, my two colleagues for the North-East Province, and I sent to him on this subject. The paragraph I am going to read in the Minister's letter indicates what conditions are like in one part of the district. The extract is as follows:—

The traffic has fallen off to such an extent that the present service could not be justified and its continuance would involve the department in considerable loss. The mining activities in the Laverton district have practically ceased and it is anticipated that by the end of this month the population of the town will have dwindled to 50 people, at Burtville to 25 and Lancefield and Gladiators to 21.

This indicates how war conditions have affected the district.

Hon. J. Cornell: This is the tragic story of that district.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: One of the greatest tragedies brought about by the

war in this State is undoubtedly the effect that current conditions have had on the Eastern Goldfields. I travel on the train every week. Mr. Seddon and other members will bear me out when I say that every Monday night the train is practically crowded. Nearly every week there is a call-up, and one wonders where the men are coming from. The district is being depleted. I am afraid that if the suggestion to increase railway charges is carried into effect, the people who are remaining at Burtville, Lancefield and Menzies will say, "This is the last straw; we might as well go to Perth or somewhere else where we do not have to put up with these hardships." We do not want that to happen. The district has remarkable potentialities. We look forward to the mining industry playing a very important part in the post-war period.

Any policy that will have the effect of further depleting the towns in the district should be very carefully considered. I have the greatest sympathy with the Minister for Railways and the Government who have to finance these big projects, but the situation—I wish to impress that upon the Minister—is regarded very seriously by bodies and people who are prone to take a dismal outlook regarding the position generally. I hope that in supporting this motion I shall be indicating that further consideration is needed before the proposed increases are carried into effect.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [2.55]: I think it may be said that the outstanding result of the discussion up to the present has been that there is need for a revision of the activities of the Lotteries Commission. I say that without in any way reflecting upon the attitude of that body towards the job it has in hand. Those of us who live in the country and have experience of country

hospitals know that the Commission is very concerned to do its best to assist in the provision of those hospitals by the best means in its power. The speech made by Dr. Hislop yesterday indicates that there is a weakness that could be remedied, and I intend to support the doctor in any step he may take to bring about that remedy. It is hard to understand why the Medical Department has not taken action concerning the incidents mentioned by the hon. member in the course of his speech.

The Chief Secretary: Those incidents have nothing to do with the Lotteries Commission or with this Bill.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The incidents have a lot to do with the administration of the Medical Department. That department and the Lotteries Commission work in close conjunction in regard to the provision of equipment for hospitals. The Minister for Health is particularly keen on the hospital side of the Medical Department, but when we hear of these and other matters referred to by Mr. Cornell we feel there is necessity for action being taken, and that the Government and Parliament should be at one in the desire to effect any possible improvements. It is for that reason I shall support any move that Dr. Hislop may make in that direction. Such matters as these require prompt attention, and I think that parliamentary action is definitely needed to bring that about.

HON. G. W. MILES (North): I repeat what I have said before that the commission paid on the sale of tickets is altogether too high. It should be possible to sell them for half the money, for 5 per cent. instead of 10 per cent. I have said this year after year, but no notice has been taken of the suggestion. I maintain that just as many tickets would be sold on the basis of 5 per cent. commission as on that of 10 per cent. The disposal of tickets is a side-line in the case of most of the sellers. The people buy their own tickets and it is not right that they should be asked to subscribe a sum of money that includes a selling commission of 10 per cent. I hope the Government will take this matter in hand.

Failing action by the Government, perhaps some member will bring down a Bill to alter the system at present in vogue. I agree with what Dr. Hislop said with regard to the distribution of money collected by

the Commission. I do not know whether he could bring the matter up in connection with this particular measure, but I do think that if the hon. member were to introduce a Bill for the creation of a board similar to that which exists in Victoria to look after the distribution of the money, it would be far better for all parties concerned. As for cutting out the lotteries altogether, that has been advocated for years. Personally, I have never taken a ticket in any lottery or sweep, or indulged in other forms of gambling.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Have you not taken out a ticket?

Hon. G. W. MILES: No.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Perhaps not in your own name.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I have not taken a ticket in my name or in the name of anyone else. It is impossible to make people moral by means of an Act of Parliament. If there were no State lotteries, those fools of people who do not know how to look after their money would merely dip deep into their pockets and pay it out to the book-makers in connection with the races. It is necessary to protect them from themselves if it is possible, and that is why some people advocate legislation. On the other hand, if the State lotteries were prohibited, it would merely mean that the money would go to lotteries conducted in other States. If we are to have the evil, let us control it. I hope the Government will reduce the commission paid to ticket-sellers. It is sheer daylight robbery to pay commission at the rate of 10 per cent. I do not know if it is allowed as a kind of bribery to secure the votes of these people, or what it is. I know they are getting altogether too much when they are allowed to take 10 per cent. for the sale of lottery tickets.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central): I was glad to hear Mr. Miles say that for years he has been suggesting a certain course of action and that no notice has been taken of his contentions. His statement reminded me of the old adage that "fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind." Mr. Miles has been a member of this House for a much longer period than I have been, and I have often thought I was the only member of whom no notice was taken. Mr. Miles is more influential and a much more prominent and bigger member—bigger in more senses than one—than I am, and therefore I can

take heart from his remarks, which will encourage me to keep pegging away. The Chief Secretary informed the House that the Bill has nothing to do with hospitals.

I do not think that is quite the position because a recent report of the Auditor General on the lotteries would indicate that the Commission has quite a lot to do with those institutions. That is why I consider Dr. Hislop was fully in order in speaking as he did yesterday during the debate on this measure. At long last we have amongst us a member of the medical profession, and most of us welcome him to our midst. We certainly pay due regard to the opinions of a man of Dr. Hislop's status, when he discusses hospital matters. Here is what the Auditor General had to say in his report—

The donations paid included an amount of £11,000 to the Treasury on behalf of the Perth Hospital Trust Fund, towards interest and sinking fund on loan moneys used for the erection of the new hospital. This makes a total amount of £86,000 made available for the period October, 1938, to the 14th September, 1942.

That is a fairly substantial amount made available by the Lotteries Commission to the Treasury, for what purpose? To meet current expenses in connection with the Perth Hospital? To enable comforts, prescribed by medical practitioners or others, to be provided for patients at that institution? Not at all! The allocations represent capital expenditure. I do not profess to be a chartered accountant, but I think that is wrong. I cannot understand why moneys at the disposal of the Lotteries Commission should be allocated as capital expenditure. Further on the Auditor General points out that among the amounts made available by the Commission was a sum of £2,085 for the erection of a building at the Carrolup native settlement. When the Department of Native Affairs asks Parliament for a vote of money, the amount provided should at least cover the capital expenditure on buildings. If there should be a sick or infirm native who wanted a blanket, some tobacco, or a tot of rum, and the Treasury happened to be a little short of funds, I quite understand it would be all right to call upon the Lotteries Commission to assist in making a small amount available to meet the requirements of the native. The Auditor General's report shows that it is not only the Perth Hospital that has received assistance under this heading. I do not desire to take a narrow view,

because we in the country are indebted to the Lotteries Commission for money made available from time to time. As secretary of the Geraldton hospital comforts fund I know I receive annually a cheque for £15 from the Commission to help in providing Christmas cheer for the patients.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Dedman will not let you have it this year!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That is all right. I merely wish to make a protest against the allocations of amounts by the Lotteries Commission for use as capital expenditure on various institutions.

The Chief Secretary: Then you disagree with the views of Dr. Hislop.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am stating my opinion.

The Chief Secretary: But you disagree with Dr. Hislop.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I do not know that I do. If Dr. Hislop were prepared to depart from the Standing Orders, he might at this stage reply, by way of interjection, indicating whether my interpretation is correct that he merely wishes some other authority to be set up to take charge of the disbursement of funds and that that body should comprise members knowing something about hospital administration.

The Honorary Minister: There are men on the Lotteries Commission who have had very lengthy experience in hospital administration.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I always take notice of what the Honorary Minister says, because I have found him to be very fair-minded. I did not know that that was the position, and I am glad to be acquainted with the fact that there are on the Commission men experienced in hospital administration, but is there a man possessing medical knowledge associated with the Commission?

The Honorary Minister: Medical men make very bad hospital administrators.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I do not wish to deal with the Medical Department, but again to protest against the Lotteries Commission making donations towards capital expenditure. I agree with Mr. Miles in his objection to the amount of commission paid to ticket-sellers. The Chief Secretary suggested that if the commission were reduced, the required volume of tickets would not be sold, but I cannot agree with that contention. There is one aspect for which members of this House can take some credit, and that

relates to the auditing of the Commission's accounts. At the outset the work was given to a private firm of accountants, and at the time I objected strongly to that procedure. I wanted to know why the Auditor General could not undertake the duty. I was very pleased to notice that a few years later the Auditor General was appointed to audit the Commission's books. Naturally I had nothing against the private firm, but I thought it was wrong for the representatives of that concern to audit the books of the Lotteries Commission in the special circumstances. I am very glad that the change has been made.

I do not wish it to be supposed that I agree with all that Mr. Miles stated. I do not think the Government would be so debased as to descend to the level indicated by that hon. member when he referred to the possibility of—I shall not repeat the word! I am sure there is no such unworthy motive associated with the Government's actions. I repeat the contention I advanced in past years that a body of public-spirited men with all the necessary experience could be obtained to administer the business of the Lotteries Commission and the distribution of its funds in a purely honorary capacity. That could be done as it was with the Perth Hospital for so many years. When the honorary board of management found that they could not secure funds necessary to carry on the institution properly, they resigned. One of those members was the present Minister for Health. I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill, in order to emphasise my protest against the features to which I have alluded.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East): In my opinion, and with all due respect to some members who have spoken during the debate, they wandered a long way from the Bill in their remarks.

The Chief Secretary: Hear, hear!

HON. G. B. WOOD: The object of the Bill is to achieve one end, and that is to extend the life of the Lotteries Commission for another year. As far as I am concerned, that extension of life will be granted. In the country districts we would find ourselves in a hopeless position were an end to be put to the operations of the Commission. I have no fault to find with it, and I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROAD CLOSURE.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER [3.13] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is another of our hardy annuals. There are six proposals in the Bill dealing with road matters in Norseman, Katanning, East Perth, North Perth, South Fremantle, and North Fremantle respectively. Plans of the localities with which these proposals are concerned have been supplied to me, and I will place these on the Table of the House so that members may have a full knowledge of what is embodied in the Bill.

Clause 2 deals with the closure of a road at Norseman, and this arises out of a desire by the Mines Departments to obtain a more convenient site for its School of Mines reserve. The new site chosen encroached upon portion of a roadway, and as there is no provision in the Road Districts Act for closures required by the Crown, the necessary provision has had to be made in this Bill.

The easternmost portion of Kensington-street, East Perth, which has been closed for some years is referred to in Clause 3. The area is now crown land and adjoins the northern boundary of the Gasworks block at East Perth. The Perth City Council, in a desire to extend the Gasworks, purchased from the Railway Department an area of land to the north of the existing site, and this is severed from the area comprising the old works by the closed road. The council desires to acquire the closed road, and an agreement has been reached for the sale at £700. There is, however, no provision in the Land Act for the direct sale of townsite Crown land unless such land is submitted to auction. Obviously it would be impracticable to submit to auction such a narrow strip of land, having in mind that the land on both sides of it is owned by the one party, namely, the Perth City Council. Parliamentary approval is therefore desired for the direct sale to the council at the price indicated.

The closure of portion of Holland-street, South Fremantle is dealt with in Clause 4. The State Wool Committee has requisitioned the use of two large areas, namely, Fremantle lots 1379 and 1523, which are held by the Fremantle Municipal Council for recreational purposes. The State Wool Committee has agreed to lease these reserved lots from

the council for the duration of the war and two years thereafter, but it is necessary that that portion of Holland-street which passes through the lots be covered by the lease also. It is first of all necessary to close the road, and this is provided for in the Bill.

Clause 5 deals with the closure of a small portion of Farr-avenue, North Perth. This has been requested by the Perth City Council. The area of the roadway which it is proposed to close is not required as such, as lots abutting on it have other road frontages. A reference to the plan will indicate the proposal more fully. The clause provides that after closure has been effected, the land shall revert in the Crown and may be granted to the City of Perth in fee simple, with power to sell such land to the adjoining owner.

The next proposal will be found in Clause 6, which provides for the closure of portion of Arnold-street, Katanning. On both sides of the portion of Arnold-street concerned are areas of land which have been acquired by the Katanning Road Board for the establishment of stock saleyards and the disposal therefrom of liquid wastes. The board wishes to carry out certain improvements and desires that portion of Arnold-street be closed for addition to the saleyards reserve. The Solicitor General advises that this is another case which cannot be dealt with under the procedure laid down in the Road Districts Act. Accordingly, the necessary provision is being made in this Bill.

Provided for in Clause 7 is the closure of two portions of Ocean-parade, North Fremantle. In the construction of wheat bins Nos. 4, 5 and 6 at North Fremantle, an encroachment was made on certain parts of this roadway. These sites are to be leased to the Commonwealth Government, but before the leases can be issued it will be necessary to close the parts of the roads concerned. The Bill provides for this, and reverts the land in the Crown. If at some future date these areas are not required for wheat bins and it is desired to reopen the portions of roadways, power to do so is included in the Bill so that further reference to Parliament will be unnecessary. It is, however, pointed out that although this roadway has been surveyed, it has never been used as such.

I have given an outline of the provisions in this measure, all of which have been fully considered and approved by the department concerned. The Town Planning Commissioner is in agreement, likewise are the various local authorities; and I trust that Parliament will also approve of the proposals. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—RESERVES.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER [3.18] in moving the second reading said: This is the usual Bill brought forward each session for the approval of Parliament to alter the purposes of, and to take any other necessary action in connection with, reserves held by the Crown and by public authorities. There are three proposals in the Bill, the first of which deals with the show-ground reserve at Balingup, the Crown grant of which reserve was issued in 1911 in the names of three trustees for the Balingup Agricultural Society.

In 1928 the trustees requested that the trust be transferred to the Balingup Road Board. This was agreed to, and under Section 13 of the Reserves Act, 1928, authority was given for the required transfer to the board. The transfer was not given effect to, and one of the trustees has since died. Recently the agricultural society again brought the matter forward and requested that the existing Crown grant be cancelled and the reserve vested in the Balingup Road Board, the board being quite willing to accept control. Accordingly the Bill provides for the revesting of the land in the Crown so that a new grant may be issued to the road board for the same purpose.

The second proposal in the Bill concerns a Class A reserve at Hollywood, which it is proposed to set aside for education requirements. At present a reserve of four acres is held in the district for this purpose. It is situated near the corner of Government-road and Smyth-road, Hollywood. In accordance with its long-range policy the Education Department has expressed a desire to acquire more land at Hollywood for central post-primary school purposes, it having been found that the existing education reserve is not sufficient in

extent. An inspection has been made of the available land in the district, and this has disclosed that a suitable area of 10 acres of land would be that comprised in Reserve A19574 situated on the corner of Aberdare-road and Smyth-road. The area is vested in the Nedlands Road Board for recreational purposes. The board is quite willing to relinquish the reserve for education purposes, subject to the vesting in the board of an adjoining area in lieu for park and recreational purposes. The whole matter has been submitted to the Town Planning Commissioner, and he agrees that the proposal is a good one. The Bill therefore seeks the necessary authority for the excision of 10 acres from the Class A reserve, the area to be set aside for education requirements.

The only other proposal in the Bill deals with an area of reserved land at Carey Brook, near Nannup. This area is set apart for a national park, and it is surrounded by a State forest. The Bill provides for the excision of the western part of the park lands reserve, so that the area concerned may be included in the State forest. An exchange will be made by excising an area from the State forest and adding it to the park reserve. It is considered by the Conservator of Forests and the Surveyor General that this alteration will have the effect of improving the value of the national park and will also enable the more economical handling of the marketable timber in the State forest. The effect of the alteration will be that the area of the national park will be increased from 3,360 acres to 4,107 acres. Plans of the areas concerned will be laid on the Table of the House, and I trust that members will approve of the proposals in the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [3.26]: I secured the adjournment of the debate because I was not quite clear as to the thoroughness of the records that were to be produced in order to identify in our courts of law a prisoner with a record in

another State. However, on examining the Bill I became satisfied that it provides for all that might reasonably be expected. The finger-print cards and the record of the person concerned are brought under investigation, and there can be no objection on that score. As regards evidence by bank officers, I am of opinion that the Bill makes all needful provisions. We have known many instances where witnesses who were merely required to enter the box for a few minutes had been brought at great expense of money and time and much inconvenience, whereas an affidavit of the kind suggested in the Bill would have filled the purpose completely. After all, it may be a mere question of deciding whether a man had an account in a certain bank, and a properly-drawn affidavit would in all respects be equal to personal appearance. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, debate adjourned.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [3.28] in moving the second reading said: I consider this to be one of the most important measures introduced during this session. It deals with what has become a very vexed question—the problem of venereal disease. Any one who has given attention to the ravages of venereal disease not only in this country but also in many other parts of the world will realise that we cannot be too particular or too careful, or even I may say too extreme, in the methods we adopt for stamping it out. I am not a medical man, but I have had the opportunity on various occasions to hear medical men, specialists in their line, detailing the very widespread effects of venereal disease, and more especially the very widespread effects of the disease in different countries after war.

It would appear that we in Western Australia are just encountering the same difficulties that have been experienced over the centuries in other countries. In years gone by we have felt that our legislation dealing with diseases of this nature was fairly satisfactory. Western Australia, in my opinion, can take pride in the fact that the incidence of venereal disease was gradually being reduced, or that, at any rate, the number of

cases notified has shown during the last few years considerable reduction. Not long after the commencement of the present war it appeared that the numbers reported were increasing. Within the last 12 months especially, the number of reports has increased very rapidly indeed. As a result of the somewhat alarming state of affairs that became apparent a few months ago it was considered necessary to bring this amending Bill before Parliament. The measure proposes to amend Sections 269, 279 and 281 dealing with venereal disease, Sections 288 and 292 which relate to another subject altogether, and to add a further section. The important matters dealt with in the amendments concerning venereal disease are as follows:—

1, The control of the sale of drugs in the sulphanilamide group to limit self-drugging in connection with venereal disease.

2, The power to prohibit private medical practitioners from attending or treating members of the Armed Forces suffering from venereal diseases.

3, The granting to the Commissioner of power to deal with individuals he has reason to suspect are suffering from venereal disease.

This means that such cases can be ordered under treatment or ordered into hospital for treatment.

4, The extension of the powers of the Commissioner in the matter of holding people in hospital for treatment.

At the present time he is limited to 14 days, after which the cumbersome method of securing a Governor's order has to be pursued.

5, The improvement of the legal position in regard to positive evidence of venereal disease in respect of cases which may come before a court.

The incidence of venereal disease has sharply risen in recent months. This, unfortunately, is the usual experience in war-time. The present Act provides for the notification of all venereal disease cases, and the following is the total number of new cases that have been notified in recent years—

1939	..	..	703
1940	..	..	630
1941	..	..	443
1942 (10 months)	..	..	815

Hon. F. E. Gibson: That would not include Army figures.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think it does. No doubt numbers of cases occur which are not notified, but when it became apparent that the incidence of venereal

disease was increasing to an alarming extent, particularly in the Armed Forces, action was taken without delay. A special squad of police was set aside to make inquiries into the origin of cases and associated problems, and it was mainly as a result of the squad's activities and experience that it became evident that the provisions of the Health Act were inadequate to deal with the position. Part 10 of the Health Act provides generally that persons suffering from venereal disease shall place themselves, and shall remain, under treatment until cured. Various penalties are provided for failure to do this, and heavier penalties are set out respecting those affected with the disease who expose other persons to infection.

The principal section on which the Commissioner of Public Health depends for specific powers to deal with the neglectful or recalcitrant case is Section 279, but before any power under that section can be put into operation, the Commissioner must have a signed statement in which is set forth the full name and address of the person giving information leading the Commissioner to believe that a certain individual is suffering from venereal disease. Reluctance on the part of many people to provide that statement has contributed to a very large extent to the spread of the disease. The limitations imposed by this section mean that, in a large proportion of cases where on general grounds it is almost certain infection exists, the Commissioner's hands are tied. In some cases the Commissioner may have knowledge that a certain person is probably the cause of spreading the disease, but his hands are tied because other people who are in a position to give information are not prepared to do so.

At the last meeting of the Federal Health Council the Commissioner of Public Health Dr. Atkinson, raised the matter, and amendments to the National Security Regulations were agreed upon which have given the Commissioner the necessary powers to take action otherwise denied him. It is, however, considered desirable that the State Act which has been found inadequate to deal with the matter, should be amended to provide the Commissioner with all the power necessary to deal with the question, and as a result these amendments are submitted in the Bill. It is understood that when our own Act contains the necessary power, the National Security Regulations will be withdrawn so far as this State is concerned.

Briefly, the amendments provide that where the Commissioner has reason to suspect that a certain person is infected, he may require such a person to be medically examined, and, if found to be infected, to be placed under treatment.

The Commissioner's powers for compulsory treatment are improved and clarified. For instance, under the Act as it stands at present the Commissioner can detain a person in hospital for only 14 days. If it is necessary for a person to be detained for a longer period, the cumbersome method has to be resorted to of obtaining what is called a Governor's order to detain the patient for the longer period, and if a further 14 days expires we have to go through the same procedure again. This limitation is really unnecessary, as the section already provides that any person can at any time appeal either against a Commissioner's order or against a Governor's order to a judge of the Supreme Court, so that if any patient considers he is being wrongfully held or held under treatment for an unnecessarily lengthy period, he has that right of appeal.

The amendments also deal with certain minor legal matters of evidence which have produced difficulties in the past. For instance, where a prosecution is taken against a person for having ceased treatment or escaped from treatment under Section 279, we have to prove that that person is actually suffering from venereal disease at the time the summons is issued. It may be that the case was under treatment 14 days earlier, but in order actually to prove that the person is still suffering from venereal disease a further medical examination is necessary. If between the time a person has escaped and the time a summons has been issued that person has fully recovered, there can be no penalty although in the meantime that person may have been the cause of spreading further the disease from which he is suffering. The amendment provides that having been under treatment patients are presumed to be still suffering from venereal disease unless a certificate of cure is produced.

Clause 6 of the Bill amends Section 288 which deals with ordinary infectious diseases cases. Under the Act a local authority may please itself whether it assumes responsibility for the hospitalisation of infectious cases. In practice, most local authorities do that by signing agreements with the Perth Hospital, or other hospitals which deal with in-

fectious cases. There are, however, a small minority of local authorities that refuse to accept any responsibility, and as the Act stands they cannot be compelled to pay their share.

The amendment proposes to overcome this by giving the Commissioner power to order a local authority to make agreements or other arrangements by which infectious cases arising in its district may be provided with hospital care, and makes it clear that a local authority has responsibility in regard to all cases which are normally dealt with in an infectious diseases hospital. There are certain infectious diseases, like typhoid and tuberculosis, which are not dealt with in such a hospital. On the other hand, there are certain relatively minor infections which usually are not notifiable, such as measles and whooping cough, but where these cases are severe or complicated, they are usually sent into an infectious diseases hospital.

The Bill also deals with the payments to be made by local authorities in the case of indigent persons. For many years the Public Health Department provided 50 per cent. of the net cost. Some 12 years ago the then Government agreed to refund two-thirds of the cost. Later, however, during the controversy that arose regarding the constructional cost of the new Infectious Diseases Hospital, the two-thirds arrangement was cancelled, since when it has been on a 50 per cent. basis. It is now proposed to make it mandatory that the payment by the Government shall be on a two-thirds basis. Those arrangements have been made in the past by agreement between the Government and the local authorities, but by this amendment we are laying down in the Act itself that the Government shall be responsible for two-thirds of the cost and the local authorities for one-third insofar as indigent patients are concerned.

These amendments, which on the one hand give certain increased powers to the Commissioner of Public Health and clarify the position regarding which diseases the local authorities are responsible for, and on the other hand definitely fix the responsibility for payment as between the Government and local authorities, are the result of discussions and agreement with the Local Government Association. I feel sure that this House will agree with the Government that the time has arrived when amendments of

this kind should be given effect to in order that we may do all that is humanly possible to minimise the incidence of venereal disease in our midst, and also to lay down a definite arrangement whereby other infectious diseases may be dealt with. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

BILL—WEST AUSTRALIAN MEAT EXPORT WORKS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan) [347]: By this Bill we are confronted with something done. If members will look at the preamble they will see that it is to ratify an agreement that has been made; to ratify a purchase price that has been paid; to establish the West Australian Meat Export Works as a State trading concern. I venture to think that if a party of another political colour had done something of this kind without consulting or obtaining the consent of Parliament it would have heard a great deal about it from those who now occupy the Government benches. Although, apparently, there is nothing that we can do in the matter, I do not intend to allow this Bill to pass without drawing attention to the dangerous rapidity with which private enterprise is being strangled in all directions, and replaced by Governmental control.

I would like to refer members to a resolution carried at the A.L.P. conference held in Melbourne last week. It is evidently one to which a great deal of importance is attached because it appears at the head of the column containing the report of proceedings. The wording of this proposal is most significant. It is as follows:—

That the Federal Government should take advantage of the present position to endeavour to give effect to the objective of the A.L.P.—the socialisation of production, distribution and exchange as far as possible.

That was a deliberate motion to the effect that the Commonwealth Government should take advantage of the present position to apply, as quickly as possible, this policy of the A.L.P. It was a little bit too blatant and strong even for that conference. What was carried was something meaning exactly

the same, but couched in slightly less offensive language—

The conference congratulates the Federal Government in mobilising and controlling the resources of production, distribution, and exchange of the Commonwealth in order to achieve a maximum effort for the defence of Australia. We further urge a continuance of this policy in the post-war period so as to achieve in times of peace the greatest measure of economic security for the people.

In effect it is much the same as the original motion, but compliments the Government on having taken advantage of the present situation in order to destroy private enterprise and bring into effect this plank in Labour's platform. It is a great pity that we were not furnished with a balance sheet showing the operations of this company. I do not know why it should not have been able to carry on. I do not know why it should not have been a profitable enterprise for a private concern. If it was not profitable and the company was not able to carry on, but had to sell to the Government, why was that so? Was it because costs were too high?

We received a little information during the last few days about the position of the slaughtermen in different parts of the State. It was said that they had only to work about 15 hours a week in order to obtain their ordinary weekly wage of £6 odd. It was also said, and not effectively contradicted, that by working something like normal hours they could make as much as £20 a week. I would not object to that if it were in proper ratio to what other people make. Does the man who breeds the stock and the worker on the farm who takes care of it earn anything like that wage in those hours? I do not know that those conditions apply to the works now taken over by the Government. If they do, that fact would explain to a large extent the reason for the failure of this company.

We all know that at Wyndham there is a heavy annual loss. We all know, too, that the employees have always done far better out of the concern than do the people who supply the cattle. Is that a just position? What it means is this: In private enterprise a balance has to be struck between revenue and expenditure. In Government enterprise, unfortunately, that does not necessarily apply. We had a motion submitted this afternoon dealing with the railways. It was a protest against a contemplated in-

crease in fares and freights. I am sorry the mover did not set out the alternative that he thought should be adopted. If his alternative was that the loss should be passed on to the taxpayer in the shape of a further loss by the railways, then I certainly would not approve of it. To my mind there are two alternatives in the case of railways. I am sure that many economies could be introduced into the running of the system. A healthier discipline would go a long way towards achieving that end. I am equally certain that the introduction of labour-saving and modern appliances in the mining of coal at Collie would again reduce costs.

The Chief Secretary: Is not that a private enterprise at Collie?

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: Yes, but conducted in a very extraordinary fashion! It is private enterprise of which the Government is the main supporter and in regard to which a Royal Commission some time ago submitted a very informative report. I have it on the authority of men who know, that the introduction of labour-saving machinery into the Collie coal mines is resisted, not by the proprietors, but by the miners and that the introduction of such machinery and modern methods generally, would make a substantial reduction in the cost of coal supplied to the Government. But no! The method to meet the railways loss is to charge the customer more, or to add it on to the annual deficit. Two Country Party members have given this measure their warmest approval. I would like to know why. Is it because they think that now it is in the hands of the Government it does not matter whether it pays or not: that the Government will be able to pay them the prices for their lambs even though the cost has to be passed on to the community by way of loss on these works? I do not know that there is more than one can say. It is high time that members and the public generally were made aware of the fact that private enterprise is being steadily strangled; that the Commonwealth Government and the party in power in Western Australia are not hesitating to use the present emergency for the purpose of strangling private enterprise and putting into operation their policy of nationalisation of the sources of production, distribution and exchange of Australia.

The Chief Secretary: Do you suggest that is what is being done by this Bill?

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: No, not in this instance, but I think it probable that the conditions of the times have placed the company in such a position that it has had to go to the Government in an endeavour to get out of its liabilities. I do not suggest that in this instance the Government has taken advantage of the present circumstances in order to establish a new trading concern. I do say, however, that both the Commonwealth Government and the State Government are taking advantage of the present circumstances in order to implement a plank of Labour's platform which I, for one, and I think the majority of members here, regard as highly dangerous to the future prosperity and development of Australia.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West): I, like Sir Hal Colebatch, am not enthusiastic about a concern such as this being taken over by the Government. These works were not taken over at the instigation of the Government, but at that of the directors of the company. It must be remembered that the people who floated this undertaking 22 years ago put their money into it to provide facilities to treat the surplus products of the farmers. We realised that if we were to develop the fat lamb industry it would be necessary to have treatment works, so some enterprising, public-spirited men—may I mention the name of Mr. Ernest Lee Steere, who is one of the most public-spirited men in this country, and who put a lot of money into this enterprise?—floated this concern to provide facilities to handle the products of the farmer. As the Minister has said, no dividends were paid from its inception until the concern was sold. For the first 14 years, no profits were made. For the last nine or ten years profits have been made, and very good ones in some years.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: A profit of 14s. 8d. was made in 1922!

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes. The nominal capital was £250,000. When it was floated, the promoters had difficulty in raising sufficient money to enable a start to be made. Altogether, there are 415 shareholders, but, as the Minister has also said, the guarantors had to take up a good many shares themselves. However, they did get 415 shareholders to subscribe £74,064. With that capital they started, after borrowing considerable sums from the Government. On the paid-up capital of the company, the

profit in 1937 was 9 per cent., and in 1938, 27 per cent. This was made after paying interest and providing for all depreciation. The debt to the Government was £169,000, and so the interest bill was considerable. The Government did not charge any fancy rate. I think it was 4 per cent. In 1939 the net profit was 26 per cent., which was very good. If any other concern made a profit of that sort, it might have been called profiteering. In 1940, the profit was 14 per cent., and in 1941, 11 per cent. So the company was making remarkable progress, but still it was unable to pay shareholders any dividends.

Hon. G. B. Wood: It depended on the production of lambs whether the works paid or did not pay.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The works provided a very necessary service without which there would have been a glut in the meat market of this State. It provided the service for which it was intended.

Hon. G. B. Wood: No lambs, no profit!

Hon. L. CRAIG: No industry, no treated lambs! So the object was being attained, namely, to treat all the lambs available. In addition, the works provided a large amount of cold storage. Over 300,000 cases of apples were stored there last year.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Do you think that the Government will be able to run the works at a profit?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do. This concern should work in very well with the Wyndham Meat Works in the matter of staff employed by the Government. At Wyndham, operations start in April and finish in August, and the works at Fremantle start their main operations in September and finish some time after Christmas. So the acquisition of the Fremantle works will facilitate the holding of the Wyndham Meat Works staff and provide employment more or less all the year round.

In the circumstances, the Government should be able to handle the business fairly well. All the profits made by the company were spent on the works. At the time of the sale, a valuation of the assets was made by Mr. Farrell, Mr. Brine, and Mr. Byfield, and, after allowing for the payment of all debts, including those due to the Government, assets to the value of something over £74,000 remained. This shows that the Government bought only the actual assets of the company, and paid nothing for good-

will. Therefore we cannot say the Government paid too much. I agree that the shareholders were fortunate in getting back 20s. in the pound. The shares were not quoted on the Stock Exchange, and so there was no real market value for them. In such an industry, shareholders do not, as a rule, expect large dividends. Anyhow, we can say the Government got full value. The amount written-off by way of depreciation over the period was £42,000, so it seems that the Government did not pay too much. I personally am delighted that the shareholders who have had their money in the concern for 20 years were able to get it back, although they received no dividends over the period.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: It looks as if they gave value for the money.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes, the works gave useful service to the State. In one year we had 340,000 lambs. Let members visualise what would have happened if there had been no works.

Hon. T. Moore: To build the works today would cost a lot of money.

Hon. L. CRAIG: As a result of experience gained, the directors established a different method of treatment. They changed from the ordinary killing method to the chain method, which is a tremendous advantage. Chain killing does not require very much skill. Women could undertake the work; there is nothing at all difficult about it. In the United States of America I went through the works of the Armour Meat Trust and saw working there a man who was stone blind. He was earning £1 per day. His job, which he did just as well as anyone else, was to take the caul-fat, which he could do by sense of touch, and he had been doing that work for 20 years.

At the time of the sale of these works, the company had an overdraft of £21,000, and the Commonwealth was almost demanding that additions be made. These additions, and also improvements, were very necessary. Taxation had reached such a colossal height that the directors could see no prospect of ever paying a dividend, and depreciation on the works was also high. This, as much as anything else, I believe, induced the directors to approach the Government and ask it to take over the works. The Government investigated the matter. The only request made was that

the shareholders should be paid 20s. in the pound for the reason that their money had been invested for 20 years and they had established the works on a good basis, and therefore it would be reasonable to pay par for the shares. Had the Government acted in Shylock fashion, it could have bought all the shares at the market value, and thus acquired the asset.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: That is not what the Government did.

Hon. L. CRAIG: No; I congratulate the Government on having acted in an entirely fair way by purchasing the assets at more or less the true value.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Now that the Government is free of taxation, it should be able to make a success of the works.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes. Provided the supply of lambs is maintained, there is no reason why the works should not show a substantial profit.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: We will supply the lambs if the Government will pay us a fair price.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am afraid some people will say that as the Government now owns the works, costs should be cut down and the loss passed on to the public. The question arises whether the Government acted rightly in taking over the works, and then asking the authority of Parliament for having done so. The works were taken over under powers conferred on the Premier by the National Security Regulations. I do not think the Government has made a bad deal. I am not enthusiastic about State trading concerns because, as a rule, they are so expensively run. I understand that Mr. Miles is not enthusiastic about some State trading concerns, but likes the Wyndham Meat Works and the State Shipping Service.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He does not like them at all. Speak for yourself, not for me! You are too much in the habit of trying to put words into the mouths of other people.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. L. CRAIG: I understand that legislation of this kind is required so that the works may be carried on under the State Trading Concerns Act. I do not see that the House can do other than pass the Bill. I hope that the works will be run as economically as possible, and that in future they will show profits equally good or even better than those obtained by the company. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. G. W. MILES (North): I do not know whether it was amusing or not to listen to the speech of Mr. Craig. The hon. member said the Government has done the right thing in taking over the works from the shareholders. He has put up a case for the shareholders. I contend that the Government has done something it had no business to do. Now, apparently, we have an unholy alliance between the Labour Party and the Country Party, the Country Party supporting the Government whole-heartedly in its acquisition of this new trading concern.

Regarding the hon. member's statement that I am in favour of State trading concerns, I have never, during my 26 years in this House, supported a trading concern, not even the North-West shipping service. On the other hand, Mr. Craig and some people associated with him have foisted it upon the State. If that service had been left in the hands of private enterprise, we would have had better provision on the coast and the taxpayers would have been better off, while the people of the North would have been served more efficiently. We hear Mr. Craig posing as an authority on the North, not only today but in the course of other speeches. He will probably find that, with the liability on his stations, he will be unable to make any dividends, even in good seasons, after paying taxation, and, applying his line of argument on the Bill, he will ask the Government to take over his stations because, on account of having to pay out so much in taxation, he cannot make any money on them. That is the argument he has put up for the shareholders of this company. It is an outrage that the Government should have purchased these works and then have come along and asked Parliament to ratify the transaction. The next thing the Country Party, supported by Mr. Craig, will put up—

Hon. G. B. Wood: We did not put this up.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The hon. member's party strongly supports the transaction. I might suggest that the Government take over the woollen mills and freezing works at Albany, that is, if I were of the same kidney as some people I could mention. Mr. Craig would have us believe that the shareholders invested their money in the company as patriotic people acting for the good of the country and for no other purpose. He would have us believe that he and his co-directors

of companies do these things for patriotic purposes.

Hon. L. Craig: No fear!

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, the hon. member does, and when a Bill is brought in to provide for office boys licking stamps, he is too damned—I am sorry—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. W. MILES: I will be better able to maintain order if there are not so many interjections. I have been put off my argument. I was saying that Mr. Craig is asking that the poor taxpayer should come along to relieve the patriotic men who have put their money into these big concerns for the good of the State and not in order to make a profit. Mr. Craig has admitted that people cannot make money owing to increased taxation; and, under the new order, this increased taxation will go on for all time. Therefore, those men come along to this sympathetic Government, supported by Country Party members, including Mr. Craig, and say, "We cannot make a success of this venture now; will you please give us 20s. in the pound and let the taxpayer carry the burden?" The taxpayer has carried the burden too long.

As I have said before in this House, the Government does not care where it obtains the money so long as it can borrow it and carry on. Sir Hal Colebatch mentioned an instance of the worker who earned up to £20 a week. We have, too, the case put up by your colleague, Sir. What does it mean? The Premier, under National Security Regulations, despite the decision of the Arbitration Court, increased the basic wage by 4s. 6d. per week. The Railway Department will be forced to make up that increased charge and it is proposing to do so by increasing railway freights and fares by 12½ per cent. That extra cost will have to be borne by the people of the back country. The whole thing is a farce. Are we to allow it to continue? If so, where shall we end? As Sir Hal Colebatch pointed out, a resolution was passed by the A.L.P. in Adelaide to nationalise everything.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: Insurance was mentioned.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, and the directors of the insurance companies will be out on their ear, they will not have a job. That

will be the time! Step by step this House, supported by the Country Party, is allowing the Government to take charge of everything. When it suits themselves, the members of the Country Party say, "Yes, we will vote——"

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am quite sure the hon. member does not mean to be personal.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do not, Sir, want to cast reflections on anyone. I desire to enter my emphatic protest against our present method of government. I shall vote against the Bill.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central): We have heard much about the Country Party in this debate. I am but one member of that party and I have not urged the acceptance of this measure. I do not know what grounds Mr. Miles has for connecting the Country Party with the Bill. Even if two members of the party did support it, that is no justification for mentioning the party quite so frequently. If Mr. Craig feels that he should support the Bill, well and good; but that also is no justification for repeating the name of the Country Party so frequently in connection with it. I agree with the members who have taken the stand that parliamentary approval should first have been obtained to a proposal of this nature.

We frequently castigate the Government for spending public money on Government utilities without parliamentary approval; but when a private company is bought out, as this company was, without parliamentary approval, then I feel the Government is honouring its duty more in the breach than in the observance. Is it any wonder that people are asking whether Parliament has control over these matters? I know this House's position with respect to finance, but the Bill is brought down for our approval. If members take the stand which I think they should, they would be quite justified in registering an emphatic protest against this continued flouting of Parliament. I enter my protest, and I am in agreement with those who are also doing so, against the continual flouting of Parliament by the Government spending public money without obtaining parliamentary approval.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment.
 - 2, Death Duties (Taxing) Act Amendment.
- Received from the Assembly.

House adjourned at 1.23 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 26th November, 1912.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Minister for Industrial Development and Lake Campion Alunite Memorandum.

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, and with the indulgence of the House, I wish to make a personal explanation regarding a point raised by the member for Avon and the member for Greenough during the second reading debate on the State (Western Australian) Alunite Industry Partnership Bill. Both those members referred to a statement appearing in the memorandum submitted in connection with the Bill and questioned the claim in that memorandum to the effect that the first unit of the plant to be erected at Lake Campion would produce 130 tons of potash a day, and that when the three-unit plant was installed there would be an output of 390 tons of potash per day. They both suggested that that particular information

should have referred to the quantity of alunite to be treated, and not to the quantity of potash to be produced.

I had the matter checked up in the department and find that the suggestion made by those members was correct. The mistake occurred in the dictation to the typist, although she, of course, is not in any way to blame for it. As to the memorandum which has been placed before members of this House, I accept full responsibility. The correct position is that the one-unit plant will treat 130 tons of alunite per day producing 13 tons of potash. When the additional plant is erected each extra unit will treat a further 130 tons of alunite per day, and thus each produce an extra 13 tons of potash daily. I shall be pleased if members will make the necessary correction in their copies of the memorandum.

QUESTIONS (4).**PHOSPHATE SUPPLIES.**

Mr. WITHERS asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Owing to the acute shortage of and urgent need for supplies of rock phosphate, has the Department of Agriculture investigated the possibilities of obtaining same from the islands adjacent to Western Australia, such as the Abrolhos and the islands of the Recherche Archipelago? 2, If so, with what result, and if not, will he give early consideration to such an investigation in an endeavour to have an assured supply?

The MINISTER replied: 1 and 2, Reports of investigations made during 1900-1905 indicate that useful phosphatic deposits may exist in the Recherche Archipelago. The possibility of these islands, which are near the Great Australian Bight, and other deposits along the west and north-west coast were reported to the Commonwealth Government recently. The British Phosphate Commission is interested and arrangements are being made for an early survey to give reliable information regarding the value of these deposits.

TRAMWAYS.*Inglewood Extension and Fares.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that as a result of the Tramway Department's action in increasing the fares to be paid by patrons living be-