

We might have in a country town an agent conducting his agency in his own name. He is agent for half a dozen reputable firms, yet because he is conducting his business in his own name he is not insured by any of those firms; indeed, he has to insure any staff he may have in his office. Nevertheless in the head office of any of those reputable firms travellers drawing higher salaries than the income of the agent in the country town are all insured by the firm provided their incomes do not exceed £520. That is distinctly unfair. The position arises from the endeavour to make the Bill apply to people who really are working for themselves as contractors and canvassers. The Minister for Works, when moving the second reading in another place, was asked if the Bill covered commercial travellers. He said it did, so long as their income was not above £520 per annum. It is very difficult to justify compulsory insurance by employers of those who are drawing their remuneration in an indirect way, and over whom the employer has no direct control. I cannot regard canvassers as suitable people to come under a provision of this sort. I have gone carefully through the Bill with the utmost sympathy, but I cannot forget that there are certain principles to be laid down in legislation, and that all legislation should be capable of being fairly administered. In the Bill we are undermining the initiative and character of the people by putting a discount on individual effort and responsibility. I do not know how the Bill will affect Government employees, whether they will come under it, or whether the Government have their own insurance for their own employees. It is as well that we should know the position. Mr. Holmes instanced a wife clearing off with a handsome man. The husband, he said, might subsequently be killed, whereupon the insurance company would have to pay. Then we had the other extreme presented by Mr. Moore. However, it was significant that Mr. Moore did not give a concrete instance. When a member contributes to a debate, the Chamber judges the strength of his argument by the proof or lack of proof of his statements.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You can get concrete cases from the union secretaries.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: They are not infallible.

Hon. H. STEWART: Certainly they are not. We may yet have union secretaries coming in here to see whether we are working a 44-hour week. If the measure we have before us is put into operation, such things will be quite possible. Mr. Cornell, speaking of insurance companies' avoidance of liability, said that when there are no legal dependants those companies ought to pay into some fund and incur liability when a man is killed. If the Bill before us be passed in its present shape, there will be very high rates of insurance to meet. The

sider the position of canvassers and others. Minister for Works, on the second reading, indicated that he would seek a conference with the insurance companies in order to learn what the rates would be. I have been awaiting the result of that conference, but so far I have not heard that it has taken place. The Colonial Secretary might give us some information on the point. Although undoubtedly the rates in the first instance will be very heavy, yet, after all, insurance rates are based on statistics relating to what has been paid out over a number of years; and as soon as such statistics are available, no doubt the original rates will be adjusted one way or the other. If the provisions in the Bill respecting dependants remain as they are, it is certain that the premiums will be increased. In Committee we might well amend some of the provisions without in any way impairing the value of the Bill; indeed, with such amendments as I have in mind, the Bill will be more effective in its intended protection of the worker. I will support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Harris, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 11th November, 1934.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, STRONACH DUTTON SYSTEM.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Works: 1, In view of the large number of outback areas requiring transport facilities, will he, when the Government are con-

sidering this problem, bring forward the Stronach Dutton railroad system for investigation? 2, Is he aware of the successful application of this system in South Africa, South America, and Morocco? 3, Is he aware of the great disparity between the costs of the Stronach Dutton system of £1,250 per mile as against cost of light railways, 2ft. 3in., of £4,910, 3ft., £3,333, and 4ft. 8½in., £6,367 per mile? 4, As the system is in vogue at Wembley would it not be wise to cable the Agent General for full report of its success?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes, under favourable conditions for isolated lines. 3, No; any basis of comparison would be the cost of Stronach Dutton system as against 3ft. 6in. gauge light lines as constructed in this State. 4, The Agent General will be communicated with.

QUESTION—STATE SAWMILLS, MOTOR TRUCKS.

Mr. J. H. SMITH asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is Mr. Humphries, of the State Sawmills Department, a shareholder in the Associated Motors, Limited, and a director in the company? 2, If so, is it a fact that since the Brockway trucks were introduced into W.A. by this company quite a number have been supplied to various branches of the State Sawmills Department? 3, Is there a Brockway truck driven, either by the Nedlands or Claremont branch, that has "State Sawmills Department" painted on the side and "Brockway Trucks" in big letters painted on the valance, that near the footboard, advertising Brockway trucks and the State Sawmills Department? 4, How many Brockway trucks have been supplied to the State Sawmills Department? Were outside firms given the opportunity of quoting in the usual manner, that is, per medium of the Tender Board?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, An examination of the records shows that Mr. Humphries is not a shareholder of the company mentioned, but that Mrs. Humphries is. 2, Two Brockway trucks have been purchased by the State Sawmills, under the authority of the late Minister for Works. 3, The Brockway truck referred to bears a plate on each side of the bonnet and one on the front of the radiator bearing the name "Brockway." This is part of the assembled truck as delivered to all purchasers, and this procedure is adopted with all makes of trucks sold in this State. 4, Two Brockway trucks were purchased as indicated in answer to No. 2. No Tender Board's approval was obtained.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Main Roads.

2, Traffic Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Roads Closure.

2, Permanent Reserves.

Transmitted to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1924-25.

Report of Committee of Supply adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

The House having resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Lutey in the Chair,

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder): I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, a sum not exceeding £5,013,421 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Western Australia, and a sum not exceeding £34,186 from the Sale of Government Property Trust Account.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1924-25.

Report of Committee of Supply adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

The House having resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Lutey in the Chair,

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder): I move—

That towards making good the further Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending 30th June, 1925, an additional sum of £7,108 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Western Australia.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported.

BILL—ALBANY LOAN VALIDATION.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.43] in moving the second reading said: This is a short Bill to validate a loan raised by the municipality of Albany. Trouble has occurred owing to some work being put in hand prior to the loan being floated. The existing law provides that loans may be raised only for proposed works. Some work had been put in hand prior to the loan being floated and the debentures issued. The bank that took up the loan refused to make payment, as the officials doubted the validity of the position. Part of the work had been carried out prior

to the loan being placed on the market. This is merely a technical error, and in order to give security to the bank it was necessary to bring down this Bill.

Mr. Thomson: What was the work in question?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know.

Mr. Taylor: Some ordinary municipal anthorisation, I suppose.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Everything is in order except that the work was put in hand a little too early. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Validation of loan:

Mr. TAYLOR: Perhaps the member for Albany can enlighten the Committee as to the nature of the work over which the technical error occurred.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: The Albany Municipal Council advertised a loan, and, through some technical error in the Press, the bank refused to pay up. The work was in connection with repairing a road near the post office, a quantity of the road material having been washed away by heavy rains. The matter was an urgent one.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 6th November.

Mr. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [4.50]: I oppose the Bill. The Premier has been misinformed by the board. The board say that the money is required in the interests of economy, both for the community and the employees in fire brigades. If this were so the employees would be behind the Bill heart and soul, but they are against it. They say it will not mean any economy. It is proposed to erect barracks in Fremantle and Perth for the housing of firemen in the metropolitan area. A large proportion of the money that it is proposed to borrow will be used for that purpose. I am with the men in their opposition to this proposal. In a country like this there is no necessity for barracks to be erected, or for men to be housed in this fashion. The board say they

want quarters for the staff; this is the only means by which they can defeat the introduction of the two-platoon system. I hope that system will not be defeated. Employees in fire brigades should have just as much freedom and time to themselves as people engaged in any other industry. The firemen are, in fact, prisoners while they are employed. There is no more reason why firemen should be on duty all the time, as is proposed, than that policemen should be on duty all the time. It is not proposed that policemen should be at work for 24 hours on end.

Mr. Sampson: You cannot put the fire fiend on a time table.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I stand for volunteers in certain towns, but, where it is necessary that permanent men should be employed, they should be permitted to work under the best possible conditions. The firemen are not working under such conditions now. They should be worked in shifts. They want a 14-hour and a 10-hour shift. A little while ago we were talking about a 44-hour week, and yet we find that these men are working practically 24 hours for five days a week. They have one day off in eight, and get special leave during the week; practically all the rest of the time they are on duty. Although they are allowed to go to their homes, they cannot leave them without special permission from the officer in charge. Any hour of the day or night they are at home they must turn out and report at the station if only a false alarm has been given. I am sure the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) will be with me when I quote the Queensland legislation.

Mr. Sampson: I can swallow some of it, but too much is nauseating.

Mr. SLEEMAN: He wanted the Queensland fruit marketing scheme. If that is good for this State the two-platoon system for firemen must also be good. The board say that this would mean an additional outlay of £13,000. I doubt the accuracy of those figures. I believe the system could be inaugurated for much less than that. On that estimate, however, the Government quota would be £3,250. If the Bill is not defeated on the second reading, I intend in Committee to amend it if possible. The board desire to borrow money in order to defeat the ends of the employees, by housing them at the stations and preventing them from getting the two-platoon system. The board want their men to be kept under the eyes of the officers all the time. I oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.55]: I am surprised at the opposition of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman). Clause 2 of the Bill is merely designed to give greater borrowing powers to the board. The hon. member would have us believe that the work the officers and men in fire brigades

have to carry out is comparable with that of others engaged in a laborious calling. That is not the case. A fireman requires to be agile and to move with rapidity, but I know his work is not laborious. To suggest that they are on the same plane as to concentration and industry as those engaged in a trade or ordinary calling is fallacious.

Mr. Latham: It is not the object of the Bill to deal with that question.

Mr. SAMPSON: The object of the Bill is to enable accommodation to be provided at the different fire stations, so that the men should not be compelled to journey a distance to other homes. This is necessary in the interests of the safety of the public.

Mr. Marshall: Principally in the interests of the insurance company.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is a monetary matter, but the other aspect of the question deals with the lives and property of our citizens. For that reason it is necessary that the staff should be domiciled at the stations. I shall support the Bill, and feel sure that most members will do so.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [4.58]: I have read the Bill, and can see in it none of those things referred to by the member for Fremantle. It deals merely with allowing the board to borrow at $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. instead of 6 per cent.

Mr. Sleeman: If you had heard what the Minister said you would have understood.

On motion by Mr. Millington, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—Discharged.

Debate resumed from the 5th November.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [5.0]: This is a short amendment to give road boards power to control certain properties where material is obtained for road construction. It is another attempt to bite at the cherry and I hope the member for Swan will not press the Bill. I had hoped to bring down a complete amendment to the Road Districts Act this session, but we have been overwhelmed with work, and judging by the appearance of the business sheet in another place, it would be useless to bring down the measure this session. I am hopeful of being able to bring it down early next session and, as there is no urgency, I suggest the hon. member allow this matter to stand over until next year, when the whole scheme of local government as regards both municipalities and road boards will be dealt with. I wish to deal completely with the jurisdiction and authority of road boards, to increase their powers, and define their authority more clearly than is done at present.

Mr. Sampson: I thought you had a special regard for small Bills.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is the Minister for Lands who likes little Bills.

The Minister for Lands: I am opposed to this one, at any rate.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: As we propose to deal with this matter next session, I hope the hon. member will not press the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan—in reply) [5.2]: In view of the statement of the Minister I do not propose to proceed further with the Bill. I realise that the Act requires amending in many parts, and I am glad the Government intend to bring down a comprehensive measure next session. I move—

That the Order be discharged.

Question put and passed; the Order discharged.

MOTION—REVENUE.

Protecting the State's Interests.

Debate resumed from the 2nd October on the following motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson—

That in the opinion of this House it is urgently necessary that an organisation should be created to protect the State's interests from a revenue point of view.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford—in reply) [5.3]: The only speech delivered was that by the Minister for Lands, who dealt with quite a lot that had no bearing on the motion and with quite a little that had a bearing upon it. I did not set out to cast any reflection upon the collecting capacity of the officers of the various departments. I know that we have in every department officers whose special duty it is to attend to the revenue that is in sight. All revenue that is known to be collectable is collected, but the revenue about which I am concerned is that which is not known to those officers. There is a considerable amount of revenue due to the State that is not collected, and upon which no officers of the department can be expected to be authorities. We have no one whose special duty it is to look after all the avenues of revenue. It is true we have officers in special departments looking after the known revenue of those departments, but it is the function of no one to take a general view of the whole ramifications of State and closely investigate all the possible earnings and all the activities of the State. It is because of that I moved the motion. I want someone appointed to investigate the revenue of the State in a comprehensive way and not from a purely departmental standpoint. The Minister quoted a lot of figures. He

said we had an accountant in the Lands Department to collect the lands accounts. There is no difficulty there.

The Minister for Lands: There is a difficulty to collect.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I admit that. We sell a piece of land at a given price; the sale is recorded, and we have an officer whose duty it is to collect the money. It is difficult to get all the amounts paid to time, but particulars are recorded in the books and there are officers fully cognisant of the amount of revenue due. It is exactly the same regarding loans from the Agricultural Bank. These are properly recorded and are collectable when the money is available from the farmers. However, I did not touch upon that point. I emphasised that the investigation I desired is not the function of any officer of the service. True, the Treasurer is charged with the responsibility of looking after revenue, just as he is responsible for looking after expenditure, but the information he receives is that supplied him by the accountants of the various departments. That is not the matter I wish the House to consider. The "West Australian" stated that it could not be expected the House would take my motion very seriously, but it then proceeded to give special instances where expert investigation should be made. The only difference between the "West Australian" and me is, it admits that some investigation is necessary but maintains that the investigation should be the responsibility of an expert. The newspaper proceeded to say that we could with advantage closely investigate the probate duty and see whether we were getting all we were entitled to, and whether something could not be done by way of amending the Act to collect more than we are getting to-day. The amount collectable in Western Australia, comparatively speaking, is very low indeed. The "West Australian" also dealt with the Stamp Act, and pointed out there was room for investigation in that direction. Special instances were quoted to show how Western Australia is suffering, but the newspaper wished the investigation to be made the responsibility of an expert officer. Such special and temporary investigations are of no value. We want someone charged with the responsibility to perpetually look after the interests of the State from a revenue point of view, an officer responsible to this Chamber, just as we have an Auditor General always investigating items of expenditure. The Minister for Lands made an apt statement when he said that if revenue continued to be short, the expenditure must be curtailed accordingly. Those words clearly indicate what I wish to convey. So long as we continue to allow revenue to drift out of the State and so long as the State fails to receive the full result of its

assets, so long shall we be compelled to gradually reduce our expenditure. The "West Australian," in its leading article, admitted that the State was gradually but surely getting poorer, that no new capital was being introduced into the State, and that capital earned in Western Australia was being invested in other States. When that sort of thing is happening, surely it is time something was done to protect the State. Let us review the position of Western Australia. At the outset it progressed with a bound, and out of all proportion to its commercial organisation. When the gold-fields broke out we had a large influx of population, and a large increase of revenue, but we had not the organisation of State to cope with requirements. If we did not invite, we certainly welcomed to the State, organisations from Eastern Australia to assist us to cope with the enormous increase that occurred so suddenly. The organisation was created; Eastern States firms established branches in Western Australia, and just as the State has increased and grown, so have those branches expanded. The growth of the commercial activity of Eastern Australia in this State has been such as to cause capital to go outside the State, instead of the earnings of those organisations within the State being employed for the purposes of the State. We can see that if this goes on, and if the Eastern States organisations continue to increase as we increase in population and as our development proceeds, then gradually but surely the amount of capital that will go from Western Australia must increase in like proportion. In other words, we shall not grow richer as the result of our development; but we shall, as the "West Australian" leading article points out, gradually become poorer. When one sees that position arising, surely one is lacking in one's duty if one does not bring the facts before Parliament. I admit that I did not have all the data I should have liked when moving the motion; but it is particularly difficult to get such data. One needs the avenues through which the data are procurable. No private member can collect such data. As a fact, it is not even the duty of any particular Minister of the Crown to look after the matter. For that reason I want some organisation created whose duty it shall be to investigate these matters and obtain all the details necessary to enable us to appreciate our position exactly, so that we may know it in pounds, shillings, and pence from a revenue point of view, just as we know it in pounds, shillings, and pence from an expenditure point of view. Again, when Western Australia had its large influx of population and a consequent increase in revenue, we did out of State revenue much work that in the ordinary course would have been done out of loan funds. The increase of revenue due to increase of population enabled us to spend from revenue considerably larger amounts, proportionately, than the other

States. In fact, our revenue expenditure was out of all proportion to Western Australia's population. The revenue all of a sudden became enormous, and the State actually built railways out of revenue. Moreover, other public works, which for some years now have been constructed out of loan funds, were then built out of revenue. We have to admit that while at one time we were large spenders of revenue on what is ordinarily considered loan account, we have now turned round and become big spenders of loan money on what should be revenue account. In short, we have reversed the position. That position of affairs has been growing for the last 15 or 16 years, and possibly longer. Just as the difficulties of finance became pronounced to the Treasurer, every Treasurer began to pick out items previously paid out of revenue and make them charges to loan funds. That has continued until to-day we have an enormous expenditure of loan funds on what should be, from a sound economic point of view, revenue account. As the Minister for Lands pointed out, just as the revenue decreases, so the expenditure must be curtailed. Proportionately to our increased population, our revenue has been decreasing; and as a consequence our expenditure has been decreasing likewise. In order to put the matter right, we have been increasing our expenditure from loan by way of keeping affairs of State going. Just let us analyse the Estimates which the Chamber passed last week. If one goes into them closely, one must realise that it is strictly reduction of expenditure that has brought about the better state of affairs. There are, I admit, certain increases in revenue; but the actual accomplishment has been reduction in expenditure. Analysing that, one arrives at the conclusion that we are slowly but surely sacrificing our assets. Public works, some of them built out of revenue, others out of loan, are being allowed to depreciate for want of repairs. One can reduce expenditure by cutting out repairs to schools, for instance; but then the schools become a depreciating asset. One has to analyse the matter closely to find out whether the depreciation of the asset is not greater than the actual saving in pounds, shillings, and pence by way of reduced expenditure. And so it is with jetties and other public works requiring attention from the State. The Treasurer, pressed by the need for economy from an expenditure point of view, because of the small amount of revenue received by him, reduces his expenditure by cutting down votes for maintenance of bridges, jetties, schools, and public works generally. And so it goes on. But there must be an end to it. We cannot continue year after year cutting here and cutting there. Anyone must be blind if he can travel through this State without seeing that the assets of the State are depreciating, that they are not being maintained at that standard which will give them the life originally intended

for them, subject to adequate maintenance. I am not blaming the Treasurer for this. It is the needs of the occasion that compel it, and it is not confined to the present Treasurer. Every Treasurer of recent years has had to adopt the same course. In fact, to-day a Treasurer's ability is judged by the reduction he can show in expenditure. Everything is a question of expenditure. But we must realise that there is an end to that kind of administration, that one cannot go on depreciating one's assets perpetually. A time must come when the whole thing will collapse. Therefore I want to see whether we cannot deal with the difficulty from the other end. In order to be able to increase our expenditure to such an extent as will maintain the State's assets, we must get more revenue. It is the revenue that we are entitled to but are not receiving that is causing me some concern. I cannot do more than bring the matter under the notice of the Chamber. I stated as much when I moved the motion. The Minister for Lands was not backward in gripping the point. However, I was honest enough to say that the moving of a motion of this kind is a very difficult matter indeed. If one asks for somebody to be appointed to protect something, and then if one shows that one knows too much about the matter, one is really demonstrating that there is no need for special investigation. The fact of an hon. member knowing all about the subject is regarded as clear evidence that there is no need to investigate. One cannot make a case from that point of view. On the other hand, if in moving the motion one does not give some information, it is stated that one has no case at all. Therefore one is between the devil and the deep sea in a matter of this kind. The "West Australian" newspaper gripped the situation as the Minister for Lands did. The Minister said there was nothing in the motion because in the first place I did not give enough information. However, if I had given enough information, it would have been said that I had given too much information, and that there was no need to do anything. I shall therefore simply say that we have in this State a considerable amount of Eastern States activity. I do not wish to deal at length with the return which has been laid on the Table by the Treasurer. From that return hon. members can see the huge list of firms and companies operating in Western Australia whose head offices or principal places of business are in Eastern Australia. It is very simple for Eastern States manufacturers who distribute in Western Australia so to arrange their manufacturing cost that the distributing profits in Western Australia will be very small indeed. Thus the earnings of the firm or company are made in the States where taxation is lightest. For instance, it would not be business for a firm to make a maximum profit at the other end, where taxation distribution of their goods, since taxation

on large incomes is high here. The firm would naturally prefer to make their maximum profit at the other end, where taxation on large incomes is low. So they would pay the minimum rate of taxation on the great bulk of their profits, while paying maximum taxation here on small profits. That is business, that is commercialism, which consists of taking advantage of every opportunity to save money. Of course I cannot give detailed information. I cannot say that Foy & Gibson, who manufacture Gibsonia tweed, adopt that line of action. I have no means of investigating the matter. But surely we have a right to investigate it. Surely somebody has a right to see whether the manufacturing cost charged up to Victoria or another Eastern State bears comparison with the manufacturing cost charged up to Western Australia, to see that justice is being done to Western Australia.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not wish to interrupt the hon. member, but I hope he will recollect that he is replying, and not moving the motion. I have allowed considerable latitude, but no new matter, strictly speaking, can be introduced when a member is replying.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I did not know that I was introducing new matter, Sir. Possibly I was talking around the remarks of the Minister for Lands, but I am keeping as close to them as I possibly can. Certainly I am not introducing new matter.

MR. SPEAKER: They are certainly new arguments, building up a speech which the hon. member should have delivered when he was moving the motion.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Perhaps I am emphasising those things which were not grasped by the Minister for Lands. Surely it is necessary, when replying, to emphasise those points which were not grasped, so that the Minister for Lands may realise that he has not gripped the actual matter which I placed before the House, and which is reported in "Hansard." I dealt with the question of shipping. I did not give concrete instances, because I had not the details. However, let me give one illustration from shipping. There is in Western Australia a firm dealing with shipping matters, acting as shipping agents, selling coal, and owning coal hulks for the supply of bunkers to ships calling at Fremantle. They are a Western Australian firm, and the whole of their profits are taxable under our law. Competing with them are Messrs. McIlwraith, McEacharn & Co., whose head office is situated in Eastern Australia. They bring Newcastle coal to Fremantle, in the same way as the Western Australian firm do. But, while all the activities of the Western Australian firm are taxable under Western Australian conditions, such is not the case with McIlwraith, McEacharn & Co. They can bring Newcastle coal over in their own boats, charging against the coal the maximum rate of freight, upon which they will pay

taxation in Eastern Australia. They can arrange so that the bulk of their profits are made in Eastern Australia, where taxation is at the minimum, and that the smallest portion of their profits shall be made in Western Australia, where taxation is at the maximum. I want some officer to go into the books and the turnover of the Western Australian firm and ascertain what is their business practice with regard to, say, coal. Having found that out, the officer should similarly investigate McIlwraith, McEacharn & Co.'s business practice with respect to coal, and find out whether they are paying in proportion to the volume of the business they are doing in this State. That needs to be investigated. It may be said that we have a Taxation Department. But the difficulty under which we labour is that the officer attending to our taxation matters is a Federal officer. It is true that he is a very loyal and exceedingly capable Western Australian, and would not willingly see the State deprived of a shilling. But we have to bear in mind that he is a Federal officer, and that the big firms registered in Eastern Australia and doing business all over the Commonwealth become Federal concerns attended to by the Federal Taxation Department, and the amount of revenue received from them by the Federal people is just the same whether it be paid in Victoria or in Western Australia. From a Federal point of view it makes no difference, but from the State point of view it makes a mighty big difference. And, whilst it is true we have an officer who might be relied upon to attend to the State's interests, by concentrating on the big Eastern firms and paying special attention to them, he would incur their serious displeasure—and we know the influence those firms exercise on the Federal authorities in the Eastern States. So if that officer started to make complaints about those huge Eastern firms, he would certainly not make himself popular with the Federal authorities, and might be told to stick exclusively to those duties he is called upon to perform. If he were a State officer, the State Treasurer could encourage him, could bring under his notice all these possibilities, and ask him to investigate the details. But we cannot do that, since the officer is a Federal officer in the first place and a State officer only in the second place. I am not casting any reflection on that officer. Still, it is clear that we have not that protection from a taxation point of view that we would have had we maintained our State Taxation Department. Having combined, we have discounted the chances of our getting that information we are entitled to, and which is essential if we are to have fair consideration for the State. I say earnestly that the problem of this State is not expenditure, that we have all sorts of authorities on expenditure, that we have numbers of organisations to attend to expenditure, that indeed the Treasury officials and the Treasurer are

experts in cutting down expenditure regardless of the result on the assets of the State. But we have not that detailed information, those opportunities that, as members of Parliament, we should have to get information that is essential to us in order that we might protect the revenue of the State. Some investigation is necessary. I do not believe in temporary investigations. I want some officer, some organisation, appointed that will constantly watch the interests of the State from the revenue point of view, and see whether we cannot get that earning per head of population that we are justly entitled to. The assets of this State are not returning to the State that to which the State is entitled, and, consequently, the expenditure on the State's assets is being reduced every year until those assets are depreciated to such an extent that it must be causing concern to every Minister in charge of a department. I leave it to the judgment of the House to say whether the time has not arrived when some organisation should be created by which this question could be investigated, so that Parliament shall receive all the detailed information in respect of revenue that we now receive from the Auditor General in respect of expenditure.

Question put and negatived.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Order discharged.

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, Order of the Day discharged from the Notice Paper.

MOTION—ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTRAL MARKETS.

Mr. MANN (Perth) [5.37]: I move—

That in the opinion of the House it is advisable that legislation should be introduced this session empowering the Perth City Council to establish markets for the wholesale disposal of vegetables, fruit, produce—other than grain and chaff—meat, fish, poultry and game under the conditions recommended by the select committee for the establishment of markets in the metropolitan area.

In this I am influenced by the evidence given before the select committee that inquired into the establishment of metropolitan markets. It was proved beyond doubt that an excessive cost is being added to produce between its leaving the producer and reaching the consumer. Most of this added cost is incurred between the wholesale market and the consumer. The select committee ascertained that no very excessive cost is added between the time the produce leaves the grower and its sale at the wholesale market. The grower himself is a good deal to blame for some of the cost added to the price of the goods. For instance, it was ascertained

that inferior fruit and produce, badly packed by inexperienced people is frequently sent in, and that when the market is glutted with second-class and third-class produce the market for prime produce is seriously affected. Several witnesses emphasised that vegetables were packed wet and sent forward over long train journeys, and that on reaching the market they were found to be in a badly sweated condition, with the result that they brought very low prices. Some growers seemed inclined to blame the railway system for an unsatisfactory state of affairs. However, the committee ascertained that there is not much blame to be attached to the railways, that, in fact, the Railway Commissioner has done his utmost to assist the growers in getting expeditious carriage of their goods and under the very best conditions. Louvre vans are attached to certain trains timed to reach Perth on the evening before market day, notwithstanding which a number of growers consign their stuff on other days, with the result that it reaches Perth when there is no market and nobody to attend to it. The committee had evidence that agents and market proprietors had drawn the attention of growers to the provision of the louvre vans on certain days, despite which the growers insisted on consigning their produce on off days, when there was no special provision either for its carriage or for its handling at this end. Frequently, too, the market proprietors have gone out of their way to advise growers of a better system of packing and consigning. One auctioneer said it sometimes had a good effect, but at others had no effect at all. A good deal of complaint was made about produce from the Geraldton district. It seems that frequently the Geraldton trains are late, and so the produce arrives after the sales are over. Then, in many instances it is very badly packed, and because of this, and of the fact that, having missed the sale, it has to stand over from, say, Monday until Wednesday, it is not infrequently sold as pig feed. There is no great loading of the cost between the grower and the wholesale markets, but there is considerable loading between the markets and the consumer. The committee found that while the cost of the produce would be loaded by probably 10 or 12 per cent. by the time it left the wholesale market, the loading between that stage and the purchase by the consumer represented another 33 or 35 per cent. That is brought about in several ways: Firstly, owing to the existing bad conditions of marketing. The markets are scattered all over the city without any central control, and so it takes the retailer from five to six hours daily on three days in the week to make his purchases, leaving him practically three days to conduct his business or to sell his produce. The result is that he has to load up his profits. We found also that many

retailers are men whose business does not exceed £25 or £30 a week, and that their living costs would be upwards of £7 a week. In such circumstances it can easily be seen to what extent the produce has to be loaded to enable the retailer to pay his way. I think it was Mr. Harper who told the committee that he had travelled round the world inquiring into the marketing and disposal of fruit and produce, and that he had come to the conclusion that the best fruit shops were in Perth, but that the highest prices were charged in those shops that retailed the fruit. The reason he gave was confirmed, and it was that the rents were very high, in some cases up to £10 a week having to be paid in addition to rates and taxes. That, on a small turnover, was crippling, especially when it was in respect of produce that could not carry excessive profits. By the time the produce reached the consumer the price became exorbitant.

Mr. Angelo: It is dearer in the suburbs than in the city.

Mr. MANN: That is so. The man from the suburbs who has to attend the markets is obliged to leave his shop at six or seven o'clock in the morning, and he does not get away from the markets on sale days until perhaps three o'clock in the afternoon. Therefore on the three buying days he is away from his business the greater part of the day purchasing his supplies.

Mr. Davy: But his shop is not shut all that time.

Mr. MANN: The bulk of this buyer's trade is done by hawking from door to door.

Mr. Angelo: Then he has no rent to pay.

Mr. MANN: But he is obliged to keep a horse and cart. The committee ascertained that the cost of a horse and cart and the living expenses came to upwards of £7 a week, and that the turnover would not be more than £25 or £30. The committee also learned that in the States where markets are under the one roof, the sales are over by eight o'clock in the morning. The purchaser can secure his supplies in the space of an hour, or two hours at the most, and he has the remainder of the day in which to carry on his business.

Mr. Thomson: Why cannot we do that?

Mr. MANN: Because there are eight different markets distributed over various parts of the city, and a buyer may find that certain lines are dearer in one market and cheaper in another, perhaps half a mile away. Buyers almost invariably travel from market to market for the purpose of buying as cheaply as possible. There was overwhelming evidence of the necessity for concentrating the markets. All were of the opinion that if markets were established in a central position with easy access to the railway by means of a siding, or were in a good position in respect of transport, the result would be a reduction

of prices to the consumer and an increase for the grower. There was, however, some diversity of opinion as to how produce should be sold. Some witnesses stated that the best practice was that which existed at the wholesale markets in the Eastern States where produce was sold by the grower to the consumer by treaty. Others thought that it did not pay the grower to waste a day of his time selling the produce, and that it would be more economical for him to dispose of it through an agent so as to be able to attend to his own affairs on his property. Some witnesses thought too, that the conditions governing the growing of produce in this State, where a grower perhaps would send to the market half-a-dozen cases of one kind of fruit, and three or four cases of another, did not bring about the best results. It was considered that the disposal of a variety of produce by treaty was much more difficult and not so economical as the selling of one class only. It was pointed out that in the Eastern States certain growers specialised say in potatoes, whilst others produced and despatched to the market only cabbages. Those who specialised in one line had a greater success selling by treaty than those who went in for a variety of lines. In Western Australia there are not many growers who are able to specialise in a particular line; they send to the market cases of varied products. It was suggested that these growers would get better results through the auctioneer than by private treaty, unless they were able to handle one line only. For that reason the select committee in their recommendation thought it wise to suggest that both systems should continue. Those who desire to sell by treaty should be able to continue to do so, and those who wish to sell through an auctioneer or agent should also be permitted to carry on their sales in that way. Evidence was also tendered regarding the benefit that accrued from the kerbstone markets, and it was shown that although those markets carried on in merely a small way, their existence had resulted in a benefit to those growers who could take advantage of them, that is to say, the growers who were producing at no great distance from the metropolis. It is considered wise to permit auctioneers to continue to dispose of produce grown a long distance away from the city, produce that could not be accompanied by the grower to the market. The select committee discovered another trader, in the person of the packer. This trader buys through the auctioneer and he frequently buys by treaty. He buys on commission for traders in the distant parts of the State. He has a commission to buy and to repack the produce and forward it on. It was suggested that sometimes packers put their heads to-

gether, and that one bought for the whole lot. While that does exist in some instances, there was no evidence of any attempted combination of buyers, or any attempt to form a ring. It was suggested that the buyers attending auctions on Friday formed a combination to buy on that day and to sell on Saturday in competition with the growers. The statement, however, was not confirmed. The select committee did learn, however, that some time ago poultry keepers formed a pool to control the sale of eggs and decided to place only a limited number on the market, and to put a reserve on that number. When that occurred the big buyers—chiefly the pastrycooks—formed a buying pool in opposition to the producers' pool, and decided that they would give only a certain price. So it occurs to me that these pools are very dangerous, that they are two-edged swords.

Mr. Thomson: The producers can export eggs.

Mr. MANN: The select committee went into that aspect and had the privilege of examining a marketing expert from England, who said that there was a market for eggs in Manchester. It occurred to me as chairman of the committee that it would be very well to export if we had a surplus, but we get a better price locally when eggs are plentiful than we could hope to get in Manchester. The suggestion might be all right when we have a surplus of eggs. To-day we are still importing eggs from South Australia.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member resume his seat for a moment. I do not desire to reflect upon the House, but I would like each member to read Standing Order 148, which is as follows:—

No member shall converse aloud or interrupt or make any noise or disturbance whilst any member is orderly debating, or whilst any Bill, Order, or other matter is being read or opened . . . It is not alone that the speaker is interrupted and perhaps inconvenienced, but I have had complaints from "Hansard" that they have been obliged to omit portions of hon. members' speeches in consequence of the talking aloud in the Chamber, sometimes from one bench across to another. This has resulted in speakers' remarks being lost. I am sure no hon. member wishes to place any other hon. member at a disadvantage in this respect. Therefore I hope I shall not have to draw attention to this Standing Order again.

Mr. MANN: I was on the point of explaining that the select committee received a good deal of evidence with regard to cool chambers, but that the evidence was somewhat contradictory. There were those who thought that cool chambers were

essential in connection with the marketing scheme, while there were others who thought that it was of little or no use having cool chambers except for apples, and that there was existing at the present time sufficient storage accommodation for that fruit. I think it was Mr. Harper who said that if we put fruit into cool chambers, it would be putting off the evil hour. Apricots would be the first fruit to go in. There would be a glut and that would be followed by a glut of plums and a week or two later, perhaps, other gluts, and the position would be worse at the finish than it was at the beginning. For that reason it was considered that cool chambers for fruit were not essential, except for apples.

Mr. Sampson: Moreover, cold-stored fruits affects the following days' supplies.

Mr. MANN: That is so. The committee found that the buildings in which markets are conducted here are far from satisfactory. We found that veal, pork, and other similar foodstuffs were being sold in buildings that were not provided with adequate protection from flies, and under conditions far from hygienic. We found that the fruit and vegetable markets require great alterations. If they are to be continued, it is essential that the Health Act shall be amended to deal with the position. We found produce on the floors and buyers and sellers trampling over it. It will be understood, therefore, that sales are not affected at present under satisfactory conditions. The committee arrived at the conclusion that a wholesale market is absolutely necessary, and further that a scheme should be formulated making provision for retail markets as well. For the retail markets we suggest that the rentals should be nominal, thus enabling the retailer and distributor to dispose of produce purchased from the wholesale end of the market to the consumer at the retail end at lowest price possible. It may be asked what safeguard there would be against the overloading of prices to the consumers. If those engaged in the one class of trade were under one roof, and thus were brought into direct competition with each other, the business should be conducted in the interests of the consumer who would be able to get produce at more satisfactory prices to himself than if one trader conducted his business in one part of the city, and a competitor traded elsewhere. If retail traders had to compete under the one roof, it would benefit the producer. We found that in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide the markets are controlled by the municipal authorities. In Sydney the municipal authorities control both the wholesale and the retail markets, and the business is being conducted satisfactorily. In Melbourne similar conditions prevail. The business is conducted both by private treaty and by auction. Goods sold by private treaty are grown within 30 or 40

miles of Melbourne, but the produce auctioned comes from longer distances by rail. In Adelaide the conditions are somewhat different. The wholesale market is controlled by private companies who operate under an Act of Parliament, the first of which was passed in 1870, while other measures followed up to 1903. The retail market is owned and controlled successfully by the Adelaide City Council. The select committee found that conditions here are much the same as those existing in the States I have referred to, and for that reason it was recommended that Parliament should extend statutory powers to the Perth City Council to enable that body to establish the necessary markets. There is an outstanding difference between the conditions in Perth and those operating in Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney. The markets in those cities may be called terminal markets, because most of the produce handled is consumed in the cities themselves. In Perth produce sold in the city markets is sometimes repacked and large proportions of the supplies are transported to the goldfields or the outback parts of the State. In the Eastern States the country towns draw their supplies of fruit and vegetables from the neighbouring districts. In Western Australia the supplies for practically the whole State are drawn from the metropolitan area. That is to say, produce from the South-West is railed to Perth a distance of over 100 miles; it is sold, repacked and, in some instances, sent back to the very district where the produce was grown. At times it is railed to districts beyond the centre of production. The select committee also found that produce grown in the Geraldton area, for instance, is sold here and then railed to the Murchison. Thus it will be seen that Perth not only provides a terminal market, but a market for the exchange of produce to supply the greater part of the State. When we hear so much talk about people having to pay such high prices for their requirements in outback towns, it will readily be seen that this repeated handling adds to the cost of the commodity. While the establishment of a retail market may not tend towards greatly reduced prices in that direction, it should reduce prices to the consumer in the metropolitan area. The later portion of our inquiries related to meat supply. We learned prior to 1918 that the metropolitan area received from the Kimberleys between 25,000 and 35,000 bullocks during the North-West season. Since that year the population of the metropolitan area has increased by nearly 50,000 souls. Despite that fact, during the last six years we have received from the North only 12,000 to 14,000 bullocks. Apparently, that supplies the explanation for the great shortage of meat. When we were receiving 35,000 head of cattle from the Kimberley division, a great many of the bullocks were depastured, and these were brought into con-

sumption during the off season. During the last four or five years, however, we have received cattle from the North-West sufficient to supply the demand at the time only, and there has been no surplus stock available for depasturing. The result is that when the North-West season closes we have no surplus stock upon which to draw for our supplies, and we have to rely upon cattle from the Murchison and local districts. The explanation for the shortage is that the cattle from East Kimberley are being sold to the Wyndham Meat Works, and therefore are not shipped to the metropolitan area. The select committee did not recommend any interference with the present administration of the Wyndham Meat Works, because it was considered it would be unwise to interfere with the overseas trade. In a year or two, should the drought in the Murchison area break, frozen meat from Wyndham would be unsaleable in the metropolitan area, because fresh supplies would be available. Thus, if we interfered with the operations of the Wyndham Meat Works we might lose the overseas trade and yet not require the extra supplies, as I have indicated. At the same time, provision must be made for the equivalent of some 15,000 head of bullocks by way of frozen meat supplies, or locally grown stock, to carry us over the off season. We learned that in Victoria the dairying industry has had a great effect upon the meat supply problem. When the dairying industry grows, as we hope it will in Western Australia, there should be a steady supply of surplus stock for the metropolitan meat market. Mr. Copley gave in evidence that the greater proportion of the cattle consumed in the metropolitan area in Victoria came from the dairying industry, and not from Queensland and the back country areas, as formerly. As far as we could ascertain, the only sure supply we will have to draw upon locally when the Kimberley season closes, will be frozen meat until such time as the dairying industry is able to provide the market with surplus stock. Otherwise we shall have the recurring shortage between the months of December and March. If the evidence given before the committee be correct, there will be a shortage during the coming season of up to 40 per cent. The explanation is that we cannot draw supplies from the Murchison, and the only beef available will be drawn from cattle fattening on the Midland areas and about 2,000 head that may be collected in the agricultural districts. It is considered that not more than 5,000 or 6,000 head of cattle will be available for the present until the Kimberley season starts again. We were surprised to find that the cattle production of the West Kimberley district has not advanced during the past ten or twelve years. Some twelve years ago the Kimberley district was supplying 12,000 head of bullocks and that is all that comes from the district now. Last

season we did procure 14,000 head, but the consignments usually run from 11,000 to 12,000 head. This raises the question whether the graziers are properly utilising their pastoral holdings. Are those graziers giving the country a fair deal? Are they fully stocking up their holdings?

Mr. Thomson: Are they getting a reasonable price for what they do produce?

Mr. MANN: East Kimberley cattle are sold to the Wyndham Meat Works at from 10s. to 12s. per cwt. The growers would get a much better price if they shipped the cattle down here. If the present production is all we can look for from the West Kimberley division, it is a poor look-out. Those who control the shipping along the North-West coast told us in evidence that if more bullocks were available for shipment they would put on more ships or run their ships more frequently. This year the steamers brought down 15,500 head, and if additional stock had been available the shippers would have been prepared to run an extra trip. It appealed to us that there is scope for some inquiry in that direction. It was beyond our powers. It would seem as though the West Kimberley district is hardly worth while considering if that is all that can be produced in a year.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MANN: We were unable to ascertain what brought about the changed conditions. At one time a surplus of bullocks would be brought down from the Kimberleys during the shipping season, turned into the pastures, and then drawn upon during the off season. For some years this has not been done, and we have drawn from West Kimberley during its season only what was sufficient for the time being. When the season closed we were faced with a shortage. There is evidence that there will be a shortage during the coming year, in the months from now to when the Kimberley season opens again in April. So far as the select committee could learn the only supply of bullocks available was about 3,000 head in the Midland country, and about 2,000 head scattered in the agricultural districts.

Lient-Col. Denton: We can feed you from the Midlands.

Mr. MANN: I hope so. The normal weekly requirements for the supply of the Midland and Fremantle markets is 600 bullocks, between 8,000 and 10,000 sheep, and between 800 and 1,000 pigs. This year we shall be faced with a shortage, and in addition Kalgoorlie will be drawing on the Midland market. There are no fat cattle north of Kalgoorlie, nor are there any around Kalgoorlie.

The Minister for Lands: Do you think the establishment of markets in Perth will improve that position?

Mr. Taylor: Fremantle seems to be the place.

Mr. MANN: The Minister knows that in addition to an inquiry into markets, there was an inquiry into the meat supply.

The Minister for Lands: The distribution of meat within the metropolitan area.

Mr. MANN: The transport, sale and distribution of meat.

The Minister for Lands: But you are dealing with the shortage.

Mr. MANN: We are endeavouring to show how the shortage comes about, and hope to show how to alleviate the position. We recommend an inquiry to ascertain whether the squatters in West Kimberley are fully utilising their land.

The Minister for Lands: You could not do much during the drought.

Mr. MANN: There has been a bad season in the West Kimberley, but that has not to a great extent affected the supply of this year. It probably affected the cows and the calves that were born, and that will mean a shortage in about four years' time. That is the evidence of Mr. Copley and others.

Mr. Chesson: One can see hundreds of cattle dead in the North.

Mr. MANN: The season in West Kimberley has been dry.

Mr. Heron: This did not affect last season?

Mr. MANN: No, nor the supplies for this year.

Mr. Chesson: Of course it did.

Mr. MANN: We drew more cattle from West Kimberley this year than we have done for four years.

Mr. Taylor: That is news to you people interested in the North.

Mr. MANN: This year we drew 14,000 head of cattle from West Kimberley, and for some years before had not drawn over 12,000. These cattle were prime killable beasts, except the last shipment which was poor. The output is not sufficient. If we can rely on getting only 12,000 to 15,000 head of bullocks from West Kimberley during the season we shall have to go short during the off season. After the West Kimberley season is closed there will be no other definite supply. It becomes a spasmodic supply. If it were not for the agents endeavouring to get stock in when they know there is going to be a short market we should be worse off than we are.

The Minister for Lands: You say an inquiry should be made into the stocking conditions. How can you enforce it as things are at present?

Mr. MANN: There has not always been a drought in West Kimberley.

The Minister for Lands: There has not been one like this for many years.

Mr. MANN: That is so, but for the last eight or ten years the cattle men have not increased their output. Instead of getting 35,000 head during the season, we are not getting more than 12,000 to 13,000 head. The difference goes to the Wyndham Meat Works and thence overseas. Instead of the

Wyndham Meat Works being a benefit to the consumers, they have had the opposite effect. They may have been of benefit to the East Kimberley growers in taking more of their stock than could have been consumed in the metropolitan area, but they have not been of benefit to the consumers in the way of giving them a permanent and cheap supply of meat. The works were established at heavy cost. The committee feel that the management know their business, and have secured, over the heads of other countries, an overseas market. We do not think that should be seriously interfered with. In the years to come, when we have a good supply of meat here, the works would be left with their meat on hand if they lost their present market. If we can get a supply of frozen meat, whether from Wyndham or elsewhere, we shall not care so long as that supply is guaranteed. The committee ascertained that there is a great economic loss in the transport of livestock from the Kimberleys, owing to the mortality and wastage on the boat. Mr. Glyde and Mr. Carter, controlling the shipping, emphasised that fact. Four chilled carcasses of beef or five frozen carcasses can be brought down from the Kimberleys to Fremantle at the cost of one live bullock.

The Minister for Lands: Is that correct?

Mr. MANN: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: I understand that half as much chilled meat can be carried as frozen.

Mr. MANN: Mr. Glyde confirms what I say.

The Minister for Lands: An engineer on the "Kangaroo" told me they could carry 300 tons of frozen meat but only 150 tons of chilled meat.

Mr. Taylor: It is the space, not the cost. You are dealing with the space.

Mr. MANN: It is a matter requiring consideration. We must eat frozen or chilled meat for some portion of the year. It is better to bring down good, clean, healthy frozen or chilled beef than to bring down bullocks that are liable to be badly knocked about. The committee visited the meat market on several occasions. We saw carcasses of beef which had been sold in the yards ex-Kimberley. Large portions had been cut from the carcasses by the instructions of the inspector, because of the bruises and evidence of knocking about on the ship. This, of course, adds to the price paid by the consumer.

Mr. Taylor: That is not to be compared with frozen meat.

Lieut.-Col. Denton: It is not a hardship to eat frozen meat.

Mr. MANN: It is beneficial from a health point of view, as well as from an economical point of view. The committee report the likelihood of a shortage of mutton for some time to come. This is due to the fact that wool is bringing a high price, and that the

wheat growers are now beginning to stock sheep, and are competing with the butchers at the Midland markets. We had evidence of growers purchasing wethers up to 54s. a head against the butchers, with the object of using them for wool growing. Farkers are short on account of the high price of wheat. During the off season, between September and April, we shall have to rely, unless there are excellent seasons in the Midland and Murchison districts, on the frozen meat supply. We find from the evidence of agents and stock dealers that our railway conditions are equal to those existing in the other States. Two agents who have had experience of the other States said that we are given facilities equal to anything found at Newmarket, Victoria, and that our railways laid themselves out to carry stock as well as they could and under conditions that were of benefit to the growers. They put on fast trains, and in every way did their best for the trade. The conditions at the sales were all right. The small man had the option of buying with the big man, except that the big man sometimes buys stock put by himself in the yards for sale. In such cases the small man has to stand out, or pay a false price, but when there is a full market of general lines the small man can buy as well as any other. After he has bought, his troubles begin. He has no pasture on which to turn his stock. If he hands his stock to the abattoirs to be killed, he is at the mercy of the contract slaughtermen; otherwise he has to ask a favour of some wholesale butcher to kill for him. When his stock is killed there is no freezing space in which to put it. This will be remedied when the chambers at Midland are completed, but the select committee think the slaughtering and cooling should be in the hands of the controller of abattoirs. Every butcher, whether in a large or small way of business, should hand over his cattle to be killed and should take delivery of the meat on the landing. To-day the stock is killed in a haphazard way, two or three butchers have the right to kill and others have no such right. The small man to-day has to purchase off the hook. I asked the controller of abattoirs (Mr. Golding) what quantity of beef was purchased off the hook, whether it would amount to 90 per cent. He replied, "Not quite 90 per cent., but easily 80 per cent." That means the meat passes through at least two or three hands more than would be necessary if the small man could buy and kill for himself. In South Australia probably not more than 20 per cent. of the beef is purchased off the hook. The bulk of it is purchased on the hoof, killed at the abattoirs, and supplied to the butchers as required.

Mr. Taylor: In South Australia they have holding ground.

Mr. MANN: Yes. We recommend that legislation be introduced to prevent the sale of meat within a period of 24 hours after

being slaughtered. Some people think 24 hours is too long, but whether the period fixed be 24 hours or less, there should be some stated time that should elapse between the slaughtering of the stock and the placing of the meat in the shops for sale. At present the meat is hardly dressed before it is piled into motor lorries and taken to the shops for sale.

Mr. Angelo: It has all night to cool.

Lieut.-Col. Denton: When it is piled into lorries like that, it does not cool properly.

Mr. MANN: That is so, and it is subject to bruising which causes waste. In the Eastern States meat cannot be sold within 24 hours of being slaughtered; it goes from the slaughter house to the cool chambers and is held there. Thus the meat is properly cooled off and is delivered in better condition. I think I have covered roughly the main points of the evidence. We regret that we were unable to make any recommendation as to the cost of markets. We could not get any evidence from the council officials, or from Mr. Hardwick, the Government architect. Mr. Hardwick told us the question of site had been considered, but not the question of cost. The City Council officials realise that ground in the city of Perth is too valuable for markets, and that the only way is to have shops along the street frontage, utilising the interior area for a market. Stalls could then be let at a nominal rent. In Victoria the grower is charged 1s. per day for his stand, that is 3s. a week, for a period of five hours; and the retailer is charged 2s. per day, or 6s. per week. Thus produce can be brought in by growers and sold under very cheap conditions, and the retailers have simply to take it from one end of the market to their stalls at the other end and distribute it to the consumers.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

To disallow Regulations.

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.53]: The motion of which I have given notice reads—

That the repeals, additions, and amendments to the traffic regulations and the schedule thereto, promulgated under the Traffic Act, 1919, as amended by the amending Act, 1922, approved by His Excellency the Administrator in Executive Council on the 3rd day of September, 1924, published in the "Government Gazette" of 5th September, 1924, and laid on the Table of the House on the 10th September, 1924, be and are hereby disallowed.

Notice was given some time ago and it refers to the incidence of the heavy traffic

tax. One portion of the regulations increases the charge made for two-wheeled vehicles engaged in heavy traffic from £4 to £5 a year. I regret that the Government have decided to increase the rate for two-wheeled vehicles, as they are least able to bear the increase.

Mr. Taylor: What sort of wear and tear do they cause to the roads?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is only fair to acknowledge that a majority of the associated road boards, particularly in the South-West, are of opinion that the increase is justified.

Mr. Latham: I think most of them are.

Mr. SAMPSON: I, however, think the increase should not have been made. The main reason for tabling the motion was owing to the exemption of the metropolitan area from the incidence of the heavy traffic tax. On the 9th October, in answer to a question, the Minister said, "It is recognised that the special heavy traffic tax should apply to vehicles in the metropolitan area." The exemption of heavy traffic vehicles in the metropolitan area has been a bone of contention for a long time, particularly in the outer suburban districts. There it is necessary that vehicles engaged in heavy traffic should be licensed and pay the heavy license fee. The fact that vehicles so engaged in the metropolitan area were not called upon to pay the heavy traffic tax created an anomaly distinctly unfair to the outer suburban districts. I was glad to hear from the Minister for Works that the exemption for vehicles in the metropolitan area would be removed. In view of that assurance there is no justification for proceeding with the motion.

Mr. Thomson: You are opposing the imposition of the £5 tax for two-wheeled vehicles.

Mr. SAMPSON: The notice of motion was given prior to the submission of the question to the Minister for Works, the answer to which was so satisfactory.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member intend to withdraw the motion?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then the hon. member must not continue the debate.

Mr. SAMPSON: I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Leave refused.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let me point out that the hon. member has not moved his motion and therefore it lapses.

Mr. Thomson: If the motion only requires seconding, I second it.

The Premier: It has not been moved.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would point out to the hon. member that it is highly disorderly to play with the rules of the House in this manner. I have no doubt that he has done it ignorantly, but I hope this method will not be repeated.

MOTION—CUSTOMS DUTY ON STATE LOCOMOTIVES.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.2]: 1 move—

That this House strongly protests against the Federal Government's action in enforcing the payment of £21,000 as duty on locomotive engines being imported from England by the Western Australian Government Railways Department, which engines could not be obtained in Australia when required.

There has been a good deal of illuminating correspondence and interview matter published in the metropolitan Press with regard to the cause of the moving of this motion. First there were strong protests from the late Premier and the late Minister for Railways against the imposition of duty on 10 locomotives absolutely needed to move this year's Western Australian harvest. Later, the present Premier and the present Minister for Railways likewise made strong representations to the Commonwealth authorities, urging the rebate of this amount of £21,000. In a Press telegram dated Melbourne, the 3rd November, I find the following:—

Asked did he have any comment to make in connection with the statement by the Western Australian Minister for Railways, Mr. Willcock, that the Federal Ministry had refused to remit the duty of £21,000 on 10 locomotives which had been built in England, and which were required for the haulage of the forthcoming harvest, the Minister for Trade and Customs, Mr. Pratten, said that he could not enter into a newspaper controversy with a State Minister. He had gone thoroughly into the matter, and on the facts before him had arrived at the decision referred to.

Now I desire to refer to a statement made by the Minister for Railways in the "West Australian," under the heading of "High Protection, Cost of Locomotives, Premier gets a Snub." I shall read only the section which is headed, "A Sop to Victoria"—

I would like to mention the question of Customs duty on these 10 class "P" locomotives for which Messrs. Thompson and Co., of Castlemaine, Victoria, quoted £12,500 apiece, delivered c.i.f. Fremantle in 16 to 24 months, i.e., 69 to 104 weeks (subject to very much delayed delivery in the event of the firm getting a contract from the Commonwealth Government for 14 3ft. 6in. locomotives for the Oodnadatta railway, for which they were then tendering). The best English tender was that of the North British Locomotive Company, Glasgow, Scotland, at £7,680 per locomotive, delivered c.i.f. Fremantle in 33 weeks. Necessarily the order was placed with the North British Company, approval being

cabled from Perth, and the whole of the ten machines being due on traffic, available to start moving our wheat by the middle of December, where the Victorian firm's ten locomotives would not have been similarly ready till March, 1926—not until long after that, in fact, because their tender was accepted by the Commonwealth Government for the 14 locomotives for the Oodnadatta railway at a price, delivered at Port Augusta, representing £53,000 more than those same locomotives could have been got from Great Britain, and of which £53,000 sop to Victorian industry we Western Australians are forced to bear our share in our capacity of Federal taxpayers. As soon as it was known that the Federal Government had accepted the Australian tender—which act in itself put the impossible date of delivery to our railway as quoted to us by Messrs. Thompson and Co. even further in the hereafter—the then Premier (Sir James Mitchell) in April last wrote the Prime Minister (Mr. S. M. Bruce), putting all the circumstances of the case, and asking that our 10 locomotives should be admitted free of Customs duty, which would almost amount to £21,000, and which would be payable to the Federal revenue from our loan funds. A curt reply, dated August 25, signed by Mr. Atkinson for the Prime Minister, was received by the Premier (Mr. P. Collier), baldly stating that "the request cannot be acceded to." The Premier at once sent a strong protest, but without avail, as a further letter, dated October 16, and signed by Mr. Crawford for the Prime Minister, has been received within the past few days, announcing again that "the request cannot be acceded to." The whole question would seem to border on the point of absurdity, were it not so serious. The Government of Western Australia, in anxiety to develop the State (which, of course, is a portion of the Commonwealth) raises loan money at a rate of over 6 per cent., and instead of developing the State, this money is paid into Commonwealth revenue.

Here we are, a sovereign State with sovereign rights, and yet our Premier and our Minister for Railways are informed by the Federal Minister for Trade and Customs that he has gone thoroughly into a matter, and that that ends it. Previously there was the reply from Mr. Atkinson that our Government's request could not be granted. Our ex-Premier and our ex-Minister for Railways, and our present Premier and our present Minister for Railways have not been able to secure proper consideration for this State, and therefore I think that it would do the Federal Minister for Trade and Customs a little good to realise that this House is solidly behind the Western Australian Government in the matter.

Mr. Taylor: It won't worry the Minister for Trade and Customs.

Mr. THOMSON: It is time that this Chamber, by passing the motion, gave the Commonwealth authorities to understand that Western Australia considers itself entitled to proper consideration. Let me draw the attention of the Chamber to the Federal Constitution. When we entered into Federation, no one dreamt for a moment that the requirements of the State would be taxed by the Commonwealth Parliament. I do not object to such taxation where the State embarks upon State enterprises and State trading concerns that compete with private business. But where we are borrowing huge sums of money to develop this great territory of Western Australia, it is a shame for the Commonwealth Government to impose Customs duty upon absolute necessities for the opening up of our vacant spaces. The Federal Constitution Act, by Section 114, provides—

A State shall not without the consent of the Parliament of the Commonwealth, raise or maintain any naval or military force, or impose any tax on property of any kind belonging to the Commonwealth; nor shall the Commonwealth impose any tax on property of any kind belonging to a State.

The Premier: That prohibition against the raising of naval or military forces is a good thing in the circumstances.

Mr. THOMSON: I feel so strongly on the matter that I really believe if the Premier were to call for volunteers to see that the locomotives got through the Customs, he would get plenty.

Mr. Taylor: Rebel! Redragger!

Mr. THOMSON: Possibly I am something of a redragger with regard to Federal administration. Western Australia has suffered great disabilities from the Federation. What earthly hope have we, with only five members in the House of Representatives, of getting any consideration? Take a recent appointment.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing other matters which are not relevant to the motion. This is a very specific motion—

That the House strongly protests against the action of the Federal Government in enforcing the payment of £21,000 as duty on the locomotive engines being imported from England by the Western Australian Government Railways Department, which engines could not be obtained in Australia when required.

The motion is simply a protest against that.

Mr. THOMSON: I am endeavouring to keep to my motion, Sir. The imposition of the duty is certainly not just, let alone generous, treatment. I wish to draw attention also to the action of the Prime Minister in appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into disabilities under which Western Australia, according to a view held in Commonwealth circles, suffers from Federation.

The Federal Government did not think it worth while to appoint one man from this State to a seat on that Commission. I merely wish to quote that fact as an illustration of the very scant consideration Western Australia receives from the Federal authorities. I do not wish to say it offensively, but the Commonwealth Government are practically robbing the people, inasmuch as during the past four months they have collected through the Customs, £1,253,740 more than the Federal Treasurer's estimate. Now I wish to draw the attention of the Chamber to another section of the Federal Constitution Act, one showing that it was never the intention of the framers of that Constitution that State requirements should be taxed. Certainly no such belief was ever entertained by those who advocated that we should enter Federation as being a wonderful thing for Western Australia. Section 51 of the Constitution Act provides that in taxation there shall be no discrimination between the States or between parts of a State. It must be remembered that only one Australian tender for these locomotives was received. That was by a Victorian firm that imposed conditions unsatisfactory to the State. The price was £12,000 per locomotive, whereas the tender received from Great Britain was £7,680 per locomotive, which meant a saving to this State of £48,000. An important point was that the Victorian firm could not deliver the locomotives within the specified time. On several occasions when it has favoured Victoria, the Federal Government have waived the Customs duties. Although perhaps strictly within the law, the Federal Government are discriminating between States when they impose on Western Australia taxation of £21,000; for the circumstances are peculiar. As I have said, only one firm tendered, and that firm could not deliver the locomotives when they were required. Moreover, the tender was £48,000 above the British tender. So, as I say, in imposing this duty of £21,000, the Commonwealth Government are undoubtedly discriminating in favour of Victoria. Section 29 of the Constitution Act reads as follows:—

The Commonwealth shall not by any law or regulation of trade, commerce or revenue give preference to one State or any part thereof over another State or any part thereof.

I maintain that in this the Commonwealth Government are giving preference to Victoria as against Western Australia. We in this State, being a primary producing community, have no manufacturing industries. We are paying more than 6 per cent. for money with which to open up and develop the country, notwithstanding which the Commonwealth Government through their Customs tariff, are giving preference to two other States of the Commonwealth, principally to Victoria. We in this House have no control over the tariff, but assuredly we ought to back up the Premier and the Minister for Railways in their protest against

this injustice. The House would be lacking in its duty to the State if it did not stand solidly behind the State Government in their demand for justice.

The Minister for Lands: In this instance we are suffering from judge-made law as against law made by legislators.

Mr. THOMSON: No member of the House will say it is either reasonable or just that Western Australia should have to pay this duty imposed by the Commonwealth Government. Recently Mr. James Gardiner, an ex-Treasurer of the State, wrote in the Press as follows:—

The £21,000 duty is a heavy tax. We are borrowing money at $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. with $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. sinking fund, or 7 per cent., for, say, 20 years, and that really will cost the State £50,000, for which we have no return.

Consider how the tariff is affecting the primary producer. This State is suffering more than any other State in the Commonwealth. Queensland has a well-established sugar industry, for which the rest of Australia is paying. Again, the people of Perth have to pay 2d. for a single banana, because it happens to have been grown in Queensland. Yet we could get equally good bananas down from Singapore and retail them at from 8d. to 9d. per dozen. This State is being fleeced in every direction. Even our railway requirements have to pay an intolerable duty. Why should the State have to pay this duty on rolling stock and locomotives and rails and fastenings, all instrumental in the development of the State? We are supposed to be in partnership with the other States and with the Commonwealth; but what would be the result of such treatment between partners in private life? We are a sovereign State, yet we find the king robbing the king. That is what it amounts to. The Commonwealth Government are robbing the people of Western Australia. We require to impress on the Federal Government that we are sincere in our protests against the action of Mr. Pratt in insisting upon the duty of £21,000 being paid in respect of the locomotives essential to the shifting of the harvest and the development of the State.

Mr. Davy: Send free trade representatives to the Federal Parliament.

Mr. THOMSON: We have no complaints against our representatives.

Mr. Wilson: They don't do much for us.

Mr. THOMSON: There are but five of them in a House of 75. Mr. E. A. Mann, the member for Perth in the House of Representatives, has done excellent service in fighting for a remission of the tariff and so, too, have Mr. Prowse and Mr. Gregory. I believe, also, they have been ably backed up by Mr. Green.

Mr. Davy: No, he is a protectionist.

Mr. THOMSON: Not in respect of tools of trade. I hope the motion will be unanimously agreed to, so that the people of the

Commonwealth may realise that the Parliament of Western Australia stands solidly behind the Premier and the Minister for Railways in their protest against this unjust imposition of duty.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [8.29]: It is as well that the House and the country should be in possession of the facts and correspondence respecting this imposition of duty. First of all let me read the original letter sent by the ex-Premier, Sir James Mitchell, to the Commonwealth Government. Sir James, addressing the Prime Minister on the 2nd April, wrote:—

The Government of this State has recently been under the necessity of obtaining new locomotives, in order to cope with the increasing traffic on its railways which has arisen from its vigorous policy of development. Tenders were invited in Australia and in Great Britain. One Australian tender only was received, viz., from Messrs. Thompson & Co., Castle-maine, Victoria, quoting delivery in 16 to 24 months' time. This delivery was subject to the non-acceptance by the Federal Government of a tender submitted by the firm for 14 locomotives for the Oodnadatta railway, in the event of the acceptance of which the firm would be unable to undertake the work except upon a greatly extended period of delivery, which put their tender altogether beyond further consideration. The most favourable British tender—that of the North British Locomotive Company, quoted delivery, f.o.b. in six months. It being essential, in order to meet the prospective demands of traffic, that this new locomotive power be made available to the Railway Department by the close of the present year, and Press reports having indicated that your Government had accepted Messrs. Thompson & Company's tender for the 14 locomotives referred to, I had no alternative but to accept the tender of the North British Company, and I now submit to you a request that, in view of the circumstances, your Government will direct that these locomotives be admitted free of Customs duty. Apart from the question of delivery dates, I put the following considerations:—(a) Our own locomotive workshops are, and will be for some time to come, fully occupied with a programme covering the construction of 20 new locomotives and the super-heating of many others. Demands for replacement of locomotive boilers are also abnormal, due to the large number of locomotives (107) placed in traffic over 20 years ago (1901-1903) which are now coming in for replacement. (b) My Government has incurred very considerable loan expenditure in plant and machinery to facilitate the local building of locomotives and boilers at our own shops, proof of which is found in our ability to undertake the building

of the 20 locomotives above mentioned, and to have increased our boiler production from six in the year ended 30th June, 1918, and four in the year 1918-19 to 26 during the present financial year and probably more than that next year. It has been necessary to import 32 boilers to make up the balance of our abnormal requirements for the two years 1st July, 1923, to 30th June, 1925, but the plant installed by the Government will be adequate for normal requirements for some years to come. (c) It is the policy of the State to avoid importing locomotives or boilers except as, in this case, in circumstances of absolute necessity. (d) In regard to the question of price, Messrs. Thompson & Co. quoted £12,500 per locomotive c.i.f. Fremantle, as against the North British Company's tender of £7,628 per locomotive c.i.f. Fremantle. That is to say, the acceptance of the Australian tender would, apart from the question of duty, have imposed a loan burden of £48,720 upon the people of this State, carrying an interest charge of nearly £3,000 per annum. It is suggested that it would be altogether inequitable to ask the people of this State to carry such a burden solely for the benefit of an industry carried on in Victoria, which, after a long period of protection through the tariff, is unable to meet our requirements as to the period of delivery, let alone as to price. (e) It is understood from Press reports that your Government is paying £136,400 for the 14 locomotives for the Oodnadatta railway. These locomotives are of much smaller type than those which my Government is ordering, and it may probably be assumed, on tonnage basis, that the lowest British tender would be about £6,000 apiece, or £84,000 for the lot, the place of delivery, as in our case, being probably the same in both tenders. This leads up to the consideration that the people of Western Australia will already be taxed in the Federal capacity on an expenditure of £52,000 by your acceptance of Messrs. Thompson & Co.'s Victorian tender as against the tender of a British firm. It is submitted that any further taxation through the Customs of Western Australian people in connection with the ten locomotives under consideration for the benefit of Victoria would be an outrage against common justice. (f) You will readily understand that the purchase of these ten locomotives for this State will be a charge to our loan funds. Duty, if charged—it is hardly conceivable that it should be—will amount to about £21,000. In view of the circumstances as to period of delivery alone, without regarding the enormous discrepancy in price, under which my Government has been constrained to place this order in Great Britain, I put it to you that it would be

almost to take this £21,000 from State loan money and credit it as Federal revenue. In the case of the 32 locomotive boilers above referred to, which abnormal pressure compelled this State to obtain from outside, being unable to undertake their manufacture in its own temporarily over-occupied shops, the best tendering (delivered c.i.f. Fremantle in both cases) was:—Australian: Thompson & Co., Castlemaine, £2,200 per boiler; British: North British Locomotive Co., and Yorkshire Engineering Co., average tender price, £1,559; duty charges, £374. Total, £1,733 per boiler.

Mr. Thomson: What! £370 duty on a boiler?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The letter continues—

Difference, duty paid in favour of British tender, £467 per boiler. On the 32 boilers, notwithstanding the Customs duty charges (about £11,960), there was still a benefit of £14,044 in accepting the British tender, in addition to the advantage of five months delivery from Great Britain as against practically a year from Victoria. In this instance the charges were payable from State revenue to Federal revenue (i.e., the £11,960 was added to the State deficit and increased the Federal surplus), and because it was a purely revenue transaction, unjust though such charges appear to be, no protest was made. Where State loan money is payable to Federal revenue, however, the case is of a different nature. In this matter a further phase of the question arises. As you are probably aware, there is no establishment on the western side of Australia (with the exception of our own State railway locomotive shops) capable of undertaking work of the class dealt with within this letter. So far as such work is concerned, therefore, we are penalised by:—(a) Freights on material to the works in Eastern States; (b) Rail freight on the manufactured article from such works to the port (for obviously through rail freight with many handlings at breaks of gauge is unthinkable); and (c) sea freight from an Eastern States port to Western Australia. This is always a penalty which the West pays to the East for its goods, altogether apart from the Customs duties which are so obviously designed to protect the established industries of the Eastern States, and against which there is very little prospect of our present comparatively small population and corresponding small consumption being able to compete. I invite your consideration for this part of Australia to this phase of the question with a view to some general special treatment of our requirements. I ask then—(a) for the admission of the ten locomotives referred to free of Customs duty. (b) For consideration as to the similar admission of the 32 boilers.

(c) For general consideration as to the disabilities of Western Australia in relation to obtaining goods from the Eastern States. Yours, etc. (Sgd.) J. Mitchell. No reply was received to that letter until the 25th August, and it was written on the 2nd April!

Mr. Thomson: From April to August! They are indeed very courteous.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In the meantime the Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Troy) went to Melbourne on business connected with the State and he was asked by the Premier to make verbal representations to the Federal Government on the question. Mr. Troy got no further, and in spite of his urgent representations, no reply came to hand for between four or five weeks after Mr. Troy had returned to the State. This is the reply that came—

With reference to your predecessor's letter of the 2nd April, in which it was requested that 10 new locomotives and 32 boilers being obtained for railways of your State be admitted free of Customs duty, I desire to inform you that the matter has been carefully considered by my colleague, the Minister for Trade and Customs, who regrets, however, that the request cannot be acceded to. In connection with the general representations contained in the letter under reply, I would refer you to the following extract from the Budget Speech delivered in the House of Representatives on the 31st July, 1924, by my colleague the Treasurer:—"The Tariff Board has recently presented a report which states that the position of Western Australia under Federation warrants consideration and special treatment. It also makes recommendations in regard to legislation to give the Minister power to prevent dumping in Western Australia of goods from the Eastern States, and suggests an expert investigation into the position of Western Australia, with a view to determining whether or not further financial assistance is justified. The Government has decided to appoint a Royal Commission to consider the points raised by the Tariff Board and to report thereon." (Sgd.) L. Atkinson, for the Prime Minister.

Mr. Taylor: You cannot beat Royal Commissions.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Within a week or two the matter was considered by the Railway Department and myself as Minister and further representations were made to the Federal Government. A letter was written to the Prime Minister by the present Premier on the 12th September as follows:—

I have your letter of the 25th August, No. D.508/2/132, replying to my predecessor's letter, dated 2nd April, in which you notify that the request for the admission, free of duty, of 10 new locomotives and the refund of about £12,000 al-

ready paid in duty on 32 boilers for our State railway system cannot be acceded to. Although your letter represents this decision as being that of your colleague the Minister for Trade and Customs, I have no option but to assume that your Government as a whole accepts the responsibility for it. The notification of refusal is in the barest possible terms, and, if the matter has been carefully considered by your colleague, the reasoning, if any, on which his decision is arrived at is omitted, or scrupulously withheld. This being so, and the decision being so grossly subversive of the interests of this part of Australia, I venture to suggest its reconsideration, at all events so far as the 10 locomotives are concerned. Sir James Mitchell's letter of the 2nd April sets forth the points affecting the question, which, although they should be fully re-examined, may be briefly repeated, namely:—(a) Western Australia is occupied to her fullest capacity in locomotive construction, and is doing everything reasonably possible to avoid future importation of locomotives or boilers; (b) It was impossible to obtain these 10 locomotives in Australia in time for our 1924-25 harvest traffic, for which traffic they are essential to meet demands created by the rapid progress of agricultural and other development in this State. (c) Under the Australian tender the 10 locomotives would not have been due for delivery until August-November, 1925; but this delivery even was subject to your Government not accepting the firm's tender for 14 locomotives (which tender was accepted at a cost, about £52,000 in excess of the lowest British tender). The British tender accepted by this State gives delivery on traffic in Western Australia a couple of months from now, and is £48,720 lower in price than the Australian tender.

Without regarding the enormous differences in prices and the interest bill involved thereby, if it had been possible for this State to have accepted the Australian tender (as your Government found it practicable to do), that tender might have been accepted. But my predecessors in office were not in a position, as your railway administration apparently was, to make arrangements which would not necessitate the purchase of other locomotives. The delivery quoted your Government by the Victorian firm—April-November, 1925—would have been too late for our pressing requirements. One can understand your policy of protection, but it appears to my Government that refusal of the free admission of the locomotives referred to herein is Protection run mad, unless, indeed, your Government seeks to use the tariff for increasing Federal revenue by depleting the Loan Funds required for the development of the State. It would have

been infinitely harmful to this part of Australia to have taken any action other than that which would secure this haulage power for our products in sufficient time to haul them to the coast for export. You will probably realise that it would have been unthinkable to let our products of wheat, timber, etc., lie at sidings in the country until Messrs. Thompson & Co., of Castlemaine, could build the locomotives to haul them to the ports. Thus the whole ground on which Protection is based vanishes; in fact, we in Western Australia are asking in effect for protection against Protection. The grant of free entry for these locomotives ought in itself be a useful lesson to the industry that, if after so many years of Protection it cannot or will not meet Australian requirements, it must no longer rely on protection by the Government against all competition. I have noted the extract from the Budget Speech by the Federal Treasurer, delivered on the 31st July last, nearly four months after my predecessor's letter. The proposal for a Royal Commission to consider points raised by the Tariff Board—a board on which this Government has no representation or influence—is indicative of an awakening to the special position of this portion of the Commonwealth, wherein secondary industries outside those carried on by the State, are struggling not only against the initial difficulties of establishment, but still more against the competition of the long-established and still heavily protected industries of Victoria and New South Wales. I trust that the result of this Royal Commission may, to some extent, ameliorate the increasing feeling amongst the electors of Western Australia of dissatisfaction with Federation generally, which feeling, decisions such as that against which I am now protesting do so much to stimulate.

The reply to that came a month later and was as follows:—

With reference to your letter of the 12th September, No. W.R. 1658/24, regarding the request for the admission, free of duty, of 10 new locomotives and for the refund of the amount already paid in duty on 32 boilers required for the railways in your State, I desire to inform you that this matter has formed the subject of a report by the Tariff Board to my colleague, the Minister for Trade and Customs, who, after careful consideration, has decided that the request cannot be acceded to, as he is not inclined to modify the tariff conditions imposed for the protection of an established Australian industry.

These protests, together with those that appeared in the Press, were so conclusive that the Melbourne correspondent of the "West Australian," telegraphing from Victoria on Friday last, sent the following statement:—

The most rabid Protectionists cannot find justification or excuse for the action of Mr. Pratten in extorting from Western Australia £21,000 in duty on the Scottish locomotives. Were Parliament in session there would be such an outcry that the Government would be forced to cancel the Ministerial or departmental order. The incident will bring to an issue a question which has been causing irritation for a long time. The point arises whether Mr. Bruce and all the Country Party Ministers have any control over the Minister for Customs, or whether they accept a share of responsibility for administrative acts which are damaging the prestige of the Government in several States. The last vestige of justification disappears when it is remembered that the Customs revenue soars higher and ever higher, breaking new records every month. Already a surplus of more than a million over the estimate has been collected from this source in the current year. The "Argus" vigorously attacks the offending Minister, and private Nationalists declare that unless Cabinet uses the curb on Mr. Pratten the party will be obliged to do so.

That is all very encouraging—

Mr. Taylor: But the £21,000 is going.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. The Federal Parliament is not in session and the Federal Minister seems to be able to go his own way, and apparently, although we have not paid the £21,000 yet, we have no authority for supposing we will not have to pay that amount to the Federal Government.

Mr. Thomson: Give the Federal Government an I.O.U.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I would do so if they would take it. The explanation of the necessity for the importation of these engines is such that neither the present nor the previous Government will be found blameworthy. On the occasion of the Parliamentary visit to the Midland Junction Workshops, on the 21st September, 1921, the then Minister for Railways, Mr. Scaddan, made the announcement that eight Garrett engines would be constructed at the works in order to cater for the increased traffic on the railways. Mr. Stead, who was appointed a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the administration of the State railway system, recommended in March, 1922, that the order for the construction of the engines should be cancelled. The Commissioner of Railways pointed out that Mr. Stead's calculations were obviously incorrect, and said, "The Government have given an approval which I think ought not to be interfered with." However, despite the contention of the Commissioner of Railways, Mr. Stead's recommendation was accepted, and the construction of the locomotives was not proceeded with. At the beginning of 1924, when the eight locomotives, had the work been proceeded with, would

have been in traffic, it was found essential to get more rolling stock. Mr. Stead was considered at that time to be a high authority in connection with railway working and he definitely reported against the construction of those engines, and, in the circumstances, the then Government could hardly be blamed for deferring the construction of the engines in the Midland workshops at that time. However, as I have indicated, at the beginning of 1924 it was found essential to procure more locomotives by the end of the year, in order to handle the anticipated harvest. Notwithstanding that our railway workshops are perhaps the most up-to-date in Australia, it was hardly possible for them to cope with the work. It was just as impossible for Thompson & Co., or any other Australian firm, to undertake the work in such circumstances. I might mention that Thompson & Co. were the only firm who tendered for the construction of the locomotives. Evidently that was the only firm in Australia who considered themselves capable of dealing with the work. Although we have such an up-to-date plant at Midland Junction, we have not arrived at the stage that our works can place 10 locomotives in traffic within seven or eight months. Not being able to do the work ourselves, and in view of the fact that it was found necessary to procure the locomotives, the question arose as to whether we should go on with the construction of the engines in our own workshops, notwithstanding the delay that would occur before the engines were put in traffic, or whether we should buy them in Victoria with even still more delay. Owing to the exigencies of the position, and the necessity for increased engine power to shift the harvest, it was decided that the necessary locomotives should be imported from the Old Country.

Mr. Davy: What would the engines have cost if they had been built in our own workshops?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not wish to anticipate any discussion we may have on the Loan Estimates but we are considering whether, if the Treasurer is able to make loan funds available, we could build the engines for at least £500 less than the tender received from Thompson & Co.

Mr. Sampson: It would cost nearly that amount to get the engines over here from the Eastern States.

Mr. Davy: We would still lose £20,000 if we constructed the engines here.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If we could get the remission of the £21,000 in respect of duty on the imported engines, it would pay practically half the cost of necessary increases in our plant, and we could go ahead with the work of providing for our own railway requirements.

Mr. Sampson: You could not construct engines at the same price as you would have to pay overseas firms.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There are other aspects to be considered. If the price of an engine constructed in our local workshops were, say, £12,000, it has to be remembered that, irrespective of whether the engines are imported or constructed locally, overhead charges in respect of administration and other items have to be debited against the capital cost of the engines. These charges amount to about £1,500, so that probably the cost to the State would be something like £10,000. A very liberal estimate has been made in connection with these items. We wanted to know exactly what they were going to cost and therefore a liberal allowance was made with respect to the quotation from our own workshops. I have no hesitation in saying that we will be able to construct such locomotives in our own workshops for £12,000, from which the £1,500 for overhead charges could well be deducted.

Mr. Thomson: This does not affect the motion under discussion.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It does to a certain extent, inasmuch as—I do not wish to say anything reflecting upon a previous Government—if we had not made the blunder in accepting the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner, the locomotives would have been constructed and would have been in traffic now.

Mr. Davy: If we had built the engines you would have had to pay £21,000 indirectly just the same, or at any rate the bulk of that amount.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We would have had to pay a considerable proportion of it but we would have the advantage of the money being spent here. We would get some advantage out of the employment of 100 workers for 12 or 18 months. Then we would have had plant debited to this job that would have enabled us to build other locomotives later on.

Mr. Taylor: Time has proved that the judgment of our Commissioner of Railways was sounder than that of the Royal Commissioner.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There is no doubt about that. The position regarding the construction of locomotives is that we have 10 "L" locomotives in course of construction at the workshops. Five are well in hand and five are being commenced at the present time. To emphasise the fact that there is no necessity for the imposition of heavy duties to prevent Western Australia from importing her requirements, I might mention that we have not imported any carriages, brake vans, or wagons for the last 20 years. During the last five years we have spent £65,000 on plant to enable us to provide for our own requirements. The importation of boilers was brought about by abnormal conditions. We imported about 100 engines between 1921 and 1923, all of which have to be renewed within two or three years. We have got to that stage regarding the construction of

locomotive boilers that we are turning out from 25 to 30 each year. In these circumstances our boiler construction will be sufficient to cope with our requirements. In addition we are making at the workshops all the necessary dogspikes, bolts and nuts, vacuum brake material, engines for motor trolleys, and so on. All these requirements were imported during previous regimes. We are thus assisting local industries in every legitimate way. We are supplying current from our electric power house to Hadfield's steel works, which were established because this cheap power was available. We are supplying it at .55d. per unit, or less than it costs to generate. We are generating current at .07d. per unit less than in Sydney. We have rendered considerable assistance to our local cement works. This question is bound up with another that will be raised in the near future regarding the extension of our electricity plant. Necessary importations to enable us to extend our operations will be subject to additional duty payments if the Commonwealth Government so desire. We have reached the stage in connection with our power house where the maximum current we can generate is being utilised every day. Should a generator break down, or be otherwise put out of commission, we would have to shut down upon industry. These additions to the electricity plant will cost about £280,000, and out of that about £52,000 will be represented by duty collected by the Federal Government. There is only one portion of the plant that was tendered for in Australia, notwithstanding the fact that we published in the Press the intimation that we intended to increase our plant. One comparatively small portion of the work was tendered for by Thompson & Co. They tendered for a turbo generator and condenser, their price being £94,000. Part of the plant was to be made in Australia, representing some £60,000, but some £26,000 worth of material would have to be imported from England into Victoria and the plant completed there.

Mr. Thomson: It would be a case of greasing the fat pig.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Dealing with that aspect alone, if we could give the work of providing the extension of our electricity plant to Australian manufacturers we would have to pay some £7,206 as duty on material that could not be manufactured in Australia, on top of which we have the fact that one firm only in Australia was prepared to give us a quote.

Mr. Thomson: Victoria would get the credit and we would do the paying.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. We are doing everything possible to encourage manufacturers in this State, and yet we are forced to pay this duty of £7,206.

Mr. Davy: The manufacturer wants more than encouragement.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: He wants a lot of cash, too. Even in connec-

tion with that portion of the plant it would cost us £94,000 if it were manufactured by Thompson & Co. in Australia, as against the lowest British tender of £10,800 plus 27½ per cent. duty of £11,220, a total of £22,020. I do not desire to say anything against Australian manufacturers. If the duty is remitted we propose to obtain this portion of the plant from Parsons & Co. of England. This firm enjoys a world-wide reputation. Recently they succeeded in obtaining an American order for a 50,000 kilowatt generating plant, to cost in the region of a quarter of a million pounds, against all the American firms. We are, therefore, on safe ground in dealing with Parsons & Co. for our requirements. They are the best manufacturers of this type of machinery in the world.

Mr. Teesdale: If we cannot cater for it in Australia there should be no question of where we should get it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In America they have all the big steel manufacturers and huge equipment, and yet they give an order for this type of electrical machinery to Parsons & Co. of England.

Mr. Teesdale: That is pleasing to hear.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner of Railways took up the question of remitting this duty to the Tariff Board, and they promised to consider it on their return to Melbourne. Our prospects of getting the duty remitted are not good. This is where we feel the pinch to such a great extent. Almost a similar plant was admitted free of duty to Victoria for the Morwell scheme.

Mr. Thomson: That was for Victoria.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The by-law or regulation was amended for a day, so that this plant could be imported into Victoria. The by-law ingeniously puts it thus, "Electrical machines and appliances for the production and distribution of electricity from brown coal."

The Premier: That makes it all the more reprehensible.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know why we should not call Collie coal brown coal.

Mr. Thomson: They had to import German workmen to show them how to operate it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We have to convert Collie coal into electrical power, just as in Victoria they convert brown coal into electrical power. We have to do that in order to get the highest efficiency out of our coal for industrial purposes.

Mr. Wilson: That has to be done with all coal.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Morwell coal is not an economically sound proposition for industrial purposes, at all events to the extent it is after conversion into electrical power.

Mr. Thomson: It is to be made into briquettes.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There should be some policy laid down that will give Western Australia a reasonable duty on imported plant when it is used for the establishment and development of industries in this State. We want the best the world can produce without paying an excessive price because of duty. We particularly object to our loan funds being diverted from legitimate development for the sake of Federal surplus revenue. We think it is an iniquitous proceeding that any Government should have so little consideration for a State that is endeavouring to the best of its ability to encourage not only production from primary industries, but to encourage its secondary industries. I do not know whether we have a case in connection with the matter. We would prefer rather to deal with the Commonwealth Government in a straight-forward, frank, and honest manner, than to act on the legal interpretation of a statute that was passed 20 years ago.

Mr. Thomson: That is one of the conditions under which we entered Federation.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The High Court has judicially interpreted Section 114 of the Constitution Act:

A State shall not, without the consent of the Parliament of the Commonwealth, raise or maintain any naval or military force, or impose any tax on property of any kind belonging to the Commonwealth, nor shall the Commonwealth impose any tax on property of any kind belonging to a State.

That was a case of the duty charged against New South Wales on the importation of railway rails. The New South Wales Government held that duty could not be charged on property of the Government, but the High Court determined otherwise. As however, under the constitution there is no appeal, the decision of the High Court was final. The duty is, therefore, payable unless the Commonwealth Government can be induced to remit it. I have no desire to criticise unduly what the High Court has done. Webster, the standard dictionary, defines what a tax is.

Mr. Thomson: If this duty is not a tax on State property, I do not know what is.

The Premier: Within the intentions of the section.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Webster defines "tax" as "a charge, especially a pecuniary burden, imposed by authority."

Mr. Latham: It hinges on the word "property."

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If the Commonwealth Government had no authority to collect the £21,000 I do not think they would have much chance of getting it. There is also this alternative meaning, "a charge or burden laid upon persons or property for the support of a Government." There is no doubt the duty goes to the Commonwealth revenue for the sup-

port of the Government in its administrative acts. Webster also says "a tax, toll, impost or customs." Webster was not consulted when the High Court gave its decision, which means so much to this State and New South Wales.

Mr. Thomson: The Act says "Property of any kind belonging to the State."

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: As there is no appeal from the High Court we cannot do anything in a legal way to enforce our rights. Our only hope is that the force of our case and the justice of it will cause the Federal Government to give it the attention and consideration it deserves. We are a part of the Commonwealth, and are entitled to consideration. To a fair-minded individual there is no doubt as to the clear meaning of the words although the High Court said they meant something else. Free trade between the States is one of the principles of Federation. We, therefore, expect to obtain from Victoria without the intervention of Customs duties all that we require of her just as Victoria would expect to do if getting things from us. We have no reason to expect that the Federal Government would use the constitution to force us to buy anything from Victoria, or fine us for buying, say, from Great Britain, when we cannot get the goods from the Eastern States to meet our requirements. We cannot get the material we require in order to shift our harvest and do the work that is necessary for the development of the Eastern States. In effect the Commonwealth Government say, "Because you cannot obtain these things in Australia we are going to inflict upon you a fine of £21,000." I would draw attention to the irritating tone of the replies we have received from the Commonwealth authorities. There is a tone of superior power assumed in connection with the whole thing. There is a cold atmosphere of hostility towards Western Australia throughout all the correspondence. The case was put up by us with the utmost courtesy. We went to inordinate trouble in order to ascertain the facts to support our application. We conducted our case in respectful language. We did everything that could be expected of us as a State. The sort of reply we got was "Your application will not receive any consideration, because the Minister does not feel inclined to alter the decision he gave to protect established Australian industries." After being established for 20 years or 30 years this Australian industry cannot make locomotives within two or three years of the time that the order was given. The Federal Government have three particular branches of administration to look after, namely defence, post office and customs. These three things do not justify them in saving to the Government of Western Australia, "We do not approve of your importing electrical plant from England rather than from Victoria. We must interfere with your discretion in the matter."

If you persist in protecting the interests of your State to the extent of £280,000, because you do not deal with Victoria or New South Wales, we will fine you £21,000 or £52,000." In the case of the electricity plant that we are thinking of importing, to assist in the development of secondary industries here, the duty is £52,000. The Federal Government say, "We will fine you because you do not give the work to Thompson & Co. of Castleknaine," although to do so would mean paying very much more for what we want.

The Premier: Lucky people, Thompson and Co.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I was informed two or three days ago that Mr. Thompson is about to take a trip to the Old Country. He will be passing through this State, and we may see the gentleman as a result of whom this State is to be burdened to the extent of £21,000 in order to keep his industry alive. He is doing well enough out of the industry to take a trip to England. I have no objection to that, but I do object to this protection-run-mad, as the Premier terms it, and its muleting the State to the extent of £21,000 out of our loan funds. We are carrying out a definite and responsible work in developing the State. The responsibilities of the State Government exceed by far those of the Federal Government in importance and magnitude and in their effect on the industry and happiness of the people. The Federal Government have three or four phases of administration to consider to any extent, but all the development work upon which the progress and prosperity of the State depends rests upon the State Government and upon the people of the State who have to bear the responsibility for the loans raised. We can let the Federal Government stick to the customs, defence, and post office; they leave us to look after the important factors such as railways, electricity supply, education, land settlement, and the many things that make the sum total of industry. There are not many people in this State who can be called little Australians. Certainly there is no member of the Government to whom that term could be applied, and I do not think we could successfully charge any member of the Opposition with being a little Australian.

Mr. Teesdale: Not any member of this House, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If locomotives or anything required for industrial development can be manufactured in Australia at a reasonable price, or even at a rate representing a fair excess on overseas prices, the order will be placed in Australia. The Government have laid it down as their policy that preference is to be given to State manufactures first of all, to Australian manufactures secondly, and to Empire goods thirdly. Even then we do not say that preference shall be given to Australian

goods if the excess represents only a small amount. If the difference is 10 per cent. the preference must be given to Australian made goods, and even that does not represent the extent to which we are prepared to go. Consideration is often given when a greater difference is apparent. I do not wish it to be thought that we are up against Victorian or Australian industries. If Victorian manufacturers can quote anywhere near the price, together with delivery within a reasonable time, they will get the order.

Mr. Thomson: Anything within reason.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. If their price represented a difference of the duty plus 10 per cent., or even a little more, the policy of the Government has been and will be to give them preference.

Mr. Thomson: They should be able to compete with 27½ per cent. duty preference.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: On top of that we are prepared to give 10 per cent. and even more. Western Australia differs entirely from the other States inasmuch as their development work and railway construction, their rolling stock and locomotive requirements were well under way before Federation was consummated. Practically 70 to 80 per cent. of the railway construction in New South Wales and Victoria was undertaken prior to Federation, so that the railway requirements for the development of those States were subject to no duty. We are only asking to be placed in an equally fair position. We ask to be permitted to advance on lines of development we think best, and we should be able to get our material without any differentiation being made and without additional imposts being piled upon us by the Federal Government. We are labouring under a serious disability at present. The prices of commodities have increased to an enormous extent. These locomotives, manufactured in Western Australia, would cost about £12,000, but our present express engines, which are not quite so good as those we propose to import and those we propose to manufacture here, when imported, cost only £5,000. There would not be £1,000 difference in the value of the two engines, and yet that is the additional cost we have to meet in these days of high prices. Consequently the railways, machinery, and plant of all descriptions needed to develop this State must not only be purchased at the enhanced prices, but must be paid for with dear money. Surely we are labouring under sufficient disabilities in having to pay the increased cost for all requirements and meet the higher interest charges without being burdened with duty imposts. On the £12,000 representing the cost of each of these locomotives, interest at the rate of 6 per cent. will amount to £720, compared with £480 when money was obtainable at 4 per cent. some years ago. On the duty charge of £21,000, 6 per cent. interest will represent £1,260 annually until the loan is redeemed.

Mr. Thomson: For the privilege of their taking the £21,000 from us.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. If we have to pay £52,000 duty on the electrical extension it will cost us in interest charges for all time £3,120 per annum. This is based on interest at the rate of 6 per cent., but it will probably cost us £6 7s. per cent. for the money. Without this extension our secondary industries cannot progress, and Western Australia will have to rely upon primary production alone. If we had not had our electricity plant Hadfield's would never have started their steel works at Bassendean. They are making steel there because we are able to supply electrical current at cheap rates. Thus we have an industry established here, and more industries will be established as time goes on. I am hoping that on the visit of Henry Ford's emissaries we shall be able to convince them of the advantages offered by Western Australia and show them that we can supply electrical current as cheaply as can any part of the world. We want to show the advantages to anyone who desires to establish secondary industries. If we can continue to generate current at the present price, we shall be able to compete with the other States and probably shall be able to secure our fair share of secondary industries. If I ask the Treasurer to find £280,000 of loan money for the extension of the plant, he may say he is able to afford only £220,000, and that it is the last £60,000 that breaks the camel's back. We do not want to have to refuse to supply current at the present cheap rate or to tell intending manufacturers to go elsewhere and establish their industries. We do not want to have to tell them to go to Melbourne where there is available cheap current generated by the Morwell plant, which was admitted free of duty. We do not want to have to tell them to go to Tasmania and take advantage of the hydro-electric power. But it may happen that we shall have to refuse such people cheap electrical current for the extension of secondary industries if this duty is imposed upon the locomotives and the precedent is adhered to by demanding of us £52,000 duty on the electrical plant we propose to import. The duty will probably make all the difference between our being able or unable to extend our electrical plant.

Mr. North: And yet the Federal Treasurer is always advocating cheap power schemes.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. The amount of the Customs duty may mean the difference between generating current at a rate which will permit of the establishment of manufactures in Western Australia, and not being able to generate it at a price sufficiently low.

Mr. Thomson: You will have to pay heavy duty on all your wires.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: So very much depends on electrification. For

road construction we use metal which has been obtained with the aid of electricity. Thus electric current cheapens road development. Current is being used extensively in the hills for quarrying purposes, and this all has its influence on the price of road metal, and so on the construction of roads. Road development is, therefore, affected by the price of electric current. As regards other secondary industries, the bearing of the price of electric current is apparent, but its incidence on road construction may not at the first glance strike the lay mind. Apparently, however, so far as the Commonwealth authorities are concerned, we Western Australians can remain, in the old phrase, hewers of wood and drawers of water. Industrial development will go where it can obtain cheap power, and such power will not be available in this State unless we receive proper consideration from the Federal Government. It seems as if our children must either go on the land or work in the mines or become timber hewers, or possibly remove to other States, where the advantages of cheap power are available. I have no hesitation in asking the House to support the motion. The Government have used every possible endeavour. I do not think we can be justly charged with having abused the Federal Government, though one's inclination might be to abuse an Administration which treats a portion of the Commonwealth so inconsiderately. All we did was to put up a frank request for that consideration which I think most of the people of Australia would say we are entitled to receive. I notice that in this morning's paper Senator Pearce makes reference to this matter. He is reported as saying—

As far as Western Australia's claim to exemption from payment of £21,000 duty on the imported locomotives is concerned, I haven't the facts of the case in my possession, because no representations have been made to me in regard to the matter, either by the State Government or anybody else in Western Australia. When the Mitchell Government made representations to the Prime Minister on matters affecting Western Australia, it usually recognised my position as a Western Australian, and supplied me with a copy of the representations, so that I could take the matter up with my colleagues. In the case of the imported locomotives, this has not been done.

Mr. North: That's a nasty remark!

Mr. Thomson: He evidently doesn't read the papers.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: He is not the Government of Australia.

Mr. Taylor: He is a Senator of this State.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. He seems to imply that because there is a Labour Government in power here and he does not happen to be a Labour member at

present, the Government of this State did not make representations to him. The request and the correspondence, however, were not initiated by the present Government of this State. Presumably, Senator Pearce was supplied with information regarding it by the Mitchell Government, who he says always supplied him with information on such matters. In any case I do not know that that is the right way to do things. I do not know that it is the proper constitutional method of doing things, and we hear much about constitutional matters in these days. The State Government adopted the invariable principle of the Premier writing to the Prime Minister, recognising his position as head of the Australian Government. This being a matter of extreme importance to the people of Western Australia, the Prime Minister should have brought it before the Federal Cabinet. That, however, does not appear to have been done. It seems that the duties of the Prime Minister are being administered by two non-portfolio Ministers. The correspondence seemingly implies that the decision of the Minister for Trade and Customs was quite sufficient, and did not call for review by the Federal Government in spite of the fact of representations having been made on behalf of the people of this State by two Treasurers.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: And two Ministers for Railways.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I did not make any direct representations. Everything was done in the proper constitutional way through the Premier. I do not consider that we would have been justified in using what might be termed backstairs influence to approach a member of the Government who happened to be a Western Australian. The case should be decided on its merits, and that is all we want. We do not ask for any special consideration. A Cabinet decision should have been given on our eminently fair and reasonable request. Evidently such a decision was not obtained. We want to be able to manufacture all our requirements in our own State. We are an integral part of the Commonwealth, and have right on our side. The Government are quite justified in asking the House to support them in what I repeat is a perfectly fair, just, and reasonable request. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Mr. Latham debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—STATE OF BUSINESS.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [9.39]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to 4.30 p.m., on Tuesday next.

I ask the House to adjourn over the week for the reason that our Notice Paper has been almost completely cleared off to-day.

Mr. Teesdale: That fact is due largely to the Opposition.

The PREMIER: Yes; I acknowledge at once that that very satisfactory state of affairs is due in a large measure to the fair and impartial manner in which the Opposition have met the Government in the conduct of business during the session. Usually the position has been the other way about, and another place has been compelled to adjourn over many weeks during the early part of the session, awaiting Bills from this House. The position here is not due to any such circumstance as that the programme for the session has been small. In point of fact, it has been rather heavier than usual, and yet we have been enabled to pass several very important Bills through this House, together with the whole of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, six weeks before the usual date of prorogation. Whilst there are still three or four Bills to come down, none of them will occupy hon. members at any great length. There are also the Loan Estimates, which are usually disposed of in one or two sittings. Therefore I feel that we shall not be in any way delaying the work of the session, or postponing the closing of the session, by adjourning as I propose. I am hopeful that by this day week we shall have some work returned to us from another place, and that we may then be able to proceed in the ordinary way until the work of the session is completed.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.42 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 12th November, 1924.

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

BILL—GENERAL LOAN AND INSCRIBED STOCK ACT CONTINUANCE.

Read a third time and passed.