

now for the members of the House whether they will take the whole of the clauses or have amendments. I hope they will proceed very carefully in the matter.

HON. M. L. MOSS: I move that the debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the House.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. O. Sommers) moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until the next Tuesday. He did so because many members believed there would not be much work proceeded with this week, and they had expressed a desire to speak on this Bill, which concerned a large number of country members. On Tuesday next and right on, he would have business enough to keep the House thoroughly employed until the usual hour for adjournment.

Motion put and passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at five minutes past 6 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly, Wednesday, 28th August, 1901.

Paper presented—Question: Coin forwarded to Western Australia, Cost—Question: Customs Duties under Federation, how to Impose and Collect—Question: Wanneroo, Use of Reserve—Question: Military Contingents, Lack of Information—Question: Leonora Railway Works, Reasons for Stoppage—Question: Public Works, Financial Arrangements—Question: Eastern Goldfields Railway, Refreshment Rooms—Question: Kalgoorlie Telegraph Office—Question: Circuit Courts on Goldfields, to Establish—Question: Railway Employees' Association, and Legal Liability for Losses caused by Strike—Question: Old Age Pensions, as to Legislation—Questions (4): Railway Administration—Question: Greenmount Railway Platform—Railway Administration: Personal Explanations, Mr. W. J. George, Mr. Teesdale Smith—First Readings (6): Police Act Amendment Bill, Trade Unions Bill, Workmen's Compensation Bill, Newspaper Libel and Registration Amendment Bill, Municipal Institutions Amendment Bill, Coal Mines Regulation Bill—Private Bill: Hampton Plains Railway Bill, first reading (debate), referred to a Committee—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment Bill, statement, Postponement—Return ordered, Ministerial and Parliamentary Trips, Cost—Motion: Bushmen Contingent, Extra Pay, etc.—Return ordered; Revenue to end of Financial Year 1900—Motion: Aborigines, to Inquire into Treatment (adjourned)—Papers ordered: Kalgoorlie Residence Areas, Mrs. Macham—Return ordered: Dividend Duty, Amount Collected—Menzies-Leonora Railway: Motion lapsed—Railway Workshops: Midland Junction Site, to Inquire; Notice withdrawn—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Return (moved for by Mr. A. E. Thomas) showing freight received for the conveyance of Collie coal from 1st March, 1899, to 30th June, 1901.

QUESTION—COIN FORWARDED TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA, COST.

MR. C. H. RASON asked the Colonial Treasurer: 1, Whether he could explain the following items in the cash statement of the Agent-General for the year ended 31st December, 1900:—Payments: Cost of silver and bronze coin forwarded to W.A., £4,039 10s. 6d. Receipts: Proportion of cost of silver and bronze coin recovered from W.A. Banks, £2,789 10s. 6d. 2, How the difference of £1,250 was accounted for.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER replied: 1, Difference of £1,250 paid into Treasury on 31st May with interest while *in transitu*. 2, By the Associated Banks, on whose behalf the coin was ordered.

QUESTION—CUSTOMS DUTIES UNDER FEDERATION, HOW TO IMPOSE AND COLLECT.

MR. C. H. RASON asked the Premier: What steps the Government intended taking to secure the imposing and collection of duties of customs in force in Western Australia at the date of the imposition of the uniform duties of customs under the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act.

THE PREMIER replied: A Bill has been drafted.

QUESTION—WANNEROO, USE OF RESERVE.

MR. M. H. JACOBY asked the Premier: 1, Whether a portion of reserve No. 1490, in the Wanneroo district, had been fenced, and was used exclusively by a private individual. 2, If so, whether he would take action to secure the full benefit of the reserve for the public.

THE PREMIER replied: The Government was not aware that portion of this reserve was fenced and used exclusively by a private individual, but inquiries would be made into the matter.

QUESTION—MILITARY CONTINGENTS, LACK OF INFORMATION.

MR. J. L. NANSON asked the Premier: Whether he had received a reply to his cablegram of 1st July, 1901, to the Governor of Cape Colony, relative to the lack of information in regard to West Australians killed, sick, or wounded in South Africa; and if so, what reply.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The following is a text of the cablegram:—

Referring to your telegram of 1st July, inquire and state by telegraph specific instances, when inquiry will be made as to neglect. All casualties, cases dangerous illness should be reported to this office by officers commanding contingents and medical officers, in accordance with instructions, and in every case names are cabled you same day. Any names not so cabled are not received at War Office, and fault lies with officers commanding.

(Signed) CHIEF OFFICER,
Capetown.

QUESTION—LEONORA RAILWAY WORKS, REASONS FOR STOPPAGE.

MR. W. J. GEORGE asked the Minister for Works: Whether it was true that the Leonora Railway Works had been discontinued, as reported in the public Press; if so, for what reason.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The Government having received notice that at an early date the House would be moved to express an opinion on the advisability of altering the proposed route of the Leonora Railway, it was deemed prudent to suspend the construction of earthworks beyond Mount Malcolm, pending a decision of Parliament on the question.

QUESTION—PUBLIC WORKS, FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. W. J. GEORGE asked the Colonial Treasurer: Whether satisfactory financial arrangements had been made to enable the Government to continue the construction of public works now in progress. If so, what were the details of same.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER replied: Yes; pending floating of loan next month. Overdraft, London and Westminster Bank.

QUESTION—EASTERN GOLDFIELDS RAILWAY, REFRESHMENT ROOMS.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (for Mr. R. Hastie) asked the Commissioner of Railways: Whether the Railway Department intended at an early date to erect refreshment rooms on the Eastern Goldfields Railway at such stopping places as Southern Cross, Boorabbin, Kalgoorlie, and Menzies; also, whether the Railway Department had considered the question of having refreshment carriages attached to long-journey trains.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied: There is a refreshment stall at Southern Cross, which is considered sufficient to meet requirements. At Boorabbin there is a refreshment room built by the proprietor on land leased to him by the Railway Department; but the question of providing better accommodation at Karalee, or some other more convenient station, is now under consideration. There is no accommodation at Kalgoorlie for a refreshment room, nor are there any funds available to provide such accommodation. The question of providing a refreshment room at Menzies will receive attention when the line to Leonora is completed: it is not considered necessary at present. It has not yet been decided to introduce restaurant

carriages, although the question has had consideration.

QUESTION—KALGOORLIE TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Commissioner of Railways: Whether the Railway Department would afford to the Postal Department the necessary accommodation to have a Telegraph Office at the Kalgoorlie Railway Station.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied: Instructions had been issued for the erection of this office.

QUESTION—CIRCUIT COURTS ON GOLDFIELDS, TO ESTABLISH.

MR. A. E. THOMAS asked the Attorney General: When the Government intended to establish Circuit Courts on the goldfields.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. Leake) replied: The matter was under consideration, and probably a Bill would have to be prepared to facilitate the establishment of these Courts.

QUESTION — RAILWAY EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION, AND LEGAL LIABILITY FOR LOSSES CAUSED BY STRIKE.

MR. C. HARPER asked the Premier: Whether his attention had been drawn to the judgment given by the House of Lords in the case of "The Taff Valley Railway Company v. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and others," in which the law was defined to the effect that "a thing which can own property, which can employ servants, which can inflict injury" is "suable in a Court of Law for injuries purposely done by its authority and procurement;" and whether, in view of this final judgment, the Government would take legal action against the Western Australian Government Railway Association to recover losses occasioned by the late strike "procured" by the authority of the said Association.—He said: This decision, given by the House of Lords just lately, appears to me to be an extremely important one; and the sooner it becomes thoroughly well known to the community, the better. I thought I would simplify matters by asking this question.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The Government have no intention of taking legal action as suggested by the hon. member. When the strike terminated the Government declared publicly that none of the strikers should be made to suffer or be "marked," and the Government are fully determined to keep their word.

MR. HARPER: I beg to point out that there is no reply to the first part of my question.

THE PREMIER: Oh, yes; there is.

QUESTION—OLD AGE PENSIONS, AS TO LEGISLATION.

MR. H. DAGLISH asked the Premier: Whether, in view of the time which must elapse before the Federal Parliament could establish an Old Age Pension Fund, the Ministry would, during this session, introduce an Old Age Pension Scheme for this State.

THE PREMIER replied: The question had yet to be debated in Parliament.

QUESTIONS—RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION.

SUSPENSIONS OF MR. JOHN DAVIES AND MR. G. W. DAVIES.

HON. F. H. PIESSE asked the Premier: 1, What were the reasons of the appointment of Mr. Geo. Williams Davies as Secretary to the Commissioner of Railways. 2, What is the charge against him for which he is suspended. 3, What is the charge against Mr. John Davies for which he is suspended. 4, Whether these officers had been furnished with the nature of the charges, as provided for by Statute; and if not, why not.

THE PREMIER replied: These questions were answered during last night's debate.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Is that sufficient, "answered during last night's debate?"

THE PREMIER: That is my answer. You cannot force another answer out of me. I answered specifically.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I can ask. I might not have been here, and might therefore not have heard.

THE PREMIER: Well, I can't help that. As a matter of fact, you were here.

QUESTION—GREENMOUNT RAILWAY PLATFORM, Etc.

MR. M. H. JACOBY asked the Commissioner of Railways : 1, Whether steps were to be taken to provide a platform and shelter shed for the better accommodation of passengers and goods at Greenmount. 2, If not, why not.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied : 1 and 2, Yes ; this work will shortly be put in hand.

RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION—PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

MR. W. J. GEORGE'S EXPLANATION.

MR. W. J. GEORGE : I have to ask the indulgence of hon. members. By the permission of the House, I desire to make a personal explanation with regard to a matter which occurred last evening. If I have your permission, Mr. Speaker, and the permission of the House, I will do so.

THE SPEAKER : If the House does not object, you may make your explanation ; but you must confine your observations to what was said last night, and there can be no debate on the matter. It must be a simple explanation.

MR. GEORGE : In the course of the remarks which it pleased the Commissioner for Railways (Hon. J. J. Holmes) to make last evening, he stated as his reason for dealing with the Black Swan Foundry that he thought it unfair when dealing with a number of cases to omit any one particular case. With that I agree, but I do not agree with the Commissioner's impression. I give him my assurance that it is an entirely mistaken one. I did not come to the House last night with an intention in any shape or form of attacking him or dealing with him. My friends on this side can confirm my statement that it was an agreement amongst us that the only speaker on this side should be my friend the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piessé), as we considered that so far as this question was concerned, while it was practically *sub judice* it was not for us to enter into a lot of details. Personally I scrupulously kept myself within those bounds, and I did not utter those last few words of mine yesterday evening until I had sought and obtained the permission of my chief. I do not claim for myself, either as a member of Parliament

or in my personal capacity, that I should receive anything more than justice. I will not ask for mercy, and I do not claim that I should receive any more justice than the meanest man who treads the soil of Western Australia ; and my object this evening is to state quietly, and as far as I can if permitted to do so, the actual facts so far as these three accusations brought against me are concerned. The first statement made by the Commissioner of Railways was that the firm which bears my name—which comprises myself and my partner, William Smith, a man whose name I believe is honourably known throughout the whole of the colonies, and I have no reason to suppose that mine is otherwise—has presumably used my position as a member of Parliament to obtain concessions with regard to the freightage of goods, which were not available to anyone else in the colony.

THE PREMIER : I desire, Mr. Speaker, to draw your attention to the fact that no personal accusation was made by the Commissioner of Railways against the hon. member.

MR. DOHERTY : There was.

MR. F. CONNOR : Certainly there was.

THE PREMIER : I am addressing the Chair, and I wish therefore that the hon. member should not accuse, but should confine himself to a personal explanation.

THE SPEAKER : I have told the hon. member he has to do that.

MR. GEORGE : I have been endeavouring to do so.

THE SPEAKER : In one way the hon. member is, because I recollect his saying last night that he was the Black Swan Foundry Company.

MR. GEORGE : I have a partner, and his reputation is as much at stake as mine. If I am permitted, may I ask the Premier if it is his intention to interrupt me again, because I have no desire, in any shape or form, to refer to any matter outside of my business, and I want only to make a calm statement before the House, on which I am prepared to stand my trial as a man of honour. What are the facts in regard to this question ? There was a ship wrecked at Geraldton, on which there were a boiler and a steam-winch. How long it is since the ship was wrecked, I do not know. All I know is that by a Mr. Haselden, an auctioneer

at Geraldton, the attention of our firm was drawn to the fact that he proposed holding a sale, and he invited us to attend it. Our answer was that we could not spare the time to go to Geraldton. I could read the whole letter, but it would be too long for this purpose. We made him a sporting offer of a certain sum of £100 for the machinery. We never thought, or dreamt, or cared one bit about it. We heard nothing more from him, and before I go farther I will tell the reason I consigned it as contractors' plant. For something like 30 years in these colonies I have been more or less connected with contracts—public works, railways, and others—and it has been my experience in Tasmania, in Victoria, and in this State, that contractors' plant is recognised to be carried on railways at a lower rate than is charged for other goods. We consigned this machinery as contractors' plant. It is so specified in the Railway Rates book, which I have here, in paragraph 36, which will show to the Commissioner of Railways, if he turns to the Classification rate book published in June, 1898, that the Commissioner of Railways has power to vary rates, if he think fit, for certain purposes.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The Commissioner has power?

MR. GEORGE: No Commissioner of Railways in Western Australia has ever been asked by me, directly or indirectly, to make one single concession, in any shape or form. I have never asked, nor has my firm, from anyone connected with the railways, to have a concession made to us that would not be open to everybody who chose to go for it. I defy the Commissioner of Railways to go against that. The plant was knocked down to us at the auction. I am not a legal man, and I am perhaps not placing my case in correct legal form before hon. members. I am only placing it before them as a man of business who feels he has a reputation at stake. The plant was loaded up by Mr. Hazelden, and it was consigned by him as contractors' plant. He received from the Railway Department and he holds at the present time a receipt for contractors' plant, without a single word said about it. The machinery was sent on to Perth, and arrived here with a bill for £50 odd to pay. I was ill in bed at the time, and when my confidential man brought me

the bill and asked me what he should do, I said, "Refuse to receive the machinery." I also said I would not take it at the price, because I did not know whether it was worth that amount. We wired to Mr. Hazelden:—

Did you consign as contractors' plant, as instructed? Freight charged £50 instead of £8. Cannot take delivery such a charge.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Was it contractors' plant?

MR. GEORGE: Yes; and if the hon. member does not know what contractors' plant is, I will teach him, and I will not charge him 6s. 8d. for the information. Officers of the Railway Department were interviewed, and they made a statement which caused this farther telegram to be sent to Mr. Hazelden:—

Railway states informed you would not take as contractors' plant. Is this correct?

HON. W. H. JAMES: That varies from the file.

MR. GEORGE: I am not here to do otherwise than defend myself and my partner from an attack that was made on us last night; and I state at once that I do not desire, in clearing myself, to bring anyone else into the matter. If I have sinned, my shoulders are broad enough to bear the burden. If I am not in the wrong, I ask the Commissioner to make the *amende*. On the 27th September I wrote to Mr. Short, the Chief Traffic Manager, and I wrote from my house where I was ill in bed:—

Re contract plants ex Geraldton, received yesterday a wire from Mr. Hazelden stating that he holds a receipt for plant consigned as contractors' plant, and to-day we have his letter confirming the same. We notice the truck is being discharged in the station yard, and we shall be glad to have your decision as early as possible. We do not care to take delivery until the matter of the charge is decided.

Mr. Hazelden's letter is a confirmation of his telegram, and is here for anyone who likes to read it. On the 28th September I saw Mr. Short, and talked to him about the matter. I may here point out that there is such a thing in connection with the Government railways as port-to-port charges, by which goods can be carried from one port to another at a less rate than is given in the tariff rate book. Goods can be brought from Albany to Fremantle, for instance, at £1 per ton, whereas according to the rate in the rate

book it would cost several pounds. Geraldton to Fremantle has a port-to-port rate, and as a matter of fact if my firm had been communicated with by the Railway Department before sending the stuff, or before my agent Mr. Hazelden—for I can call him my agent, I suppose, as he was acting for me—sent the stuff, my answer would have been, "Send it by water;" and I could have brought the stuff down for a few shillings less per ton than it did cost to bring it by rail. We wanted to act fairly, and I am giving all my letters. On the 28th September I wrote as follows:—

On consideration we will take delivery of the plant on the understanding arrived at to-day, viz.:—Item of charges to stand over pending settlement as to whether sender instructed your agents to forward as machinery, or, as he asserts, as contractors' plant, the rate to be charged to be accordingly.

That, I think, is a fair business proposition, and indicating that we were prepared to deal one way or another. The question whether the plant came within the scope of contractors' plant—I am speaking from memory, and so far as my memory serves me—never came up in any shape or form, and I know of no reason why it should do so. Mr. Short will no doubt be able to explain the matter in a manner which will be satisfactory to the Commissioner. On the 28th September, the day I saw Mr. Short, we wrote Mr. Haselden, the man we bought the plant from, and I may here remark it did not matter a button to me whether I paid £50 or £9—George and Co. had no advantage to gain, George and Co. had no loss to face. The letter is as follows:—

Re the plant sent along, Railway states that before despatching they informed you they could not carry at "Contractors' plant" rates, but as machinery. If that is so, then we must look to you for difference charged. The freight as contractors' plant would be £9 10s.; they have charged amended account, £28 14s. 11d., including 7s. 7d. loading. If you did not agree for it to be sent at the higher rate, then Railway Commissioner will have to reduce to £9 10s. If you did agree, it is unfortunate, for you should have wired us first for instructions. However, we enclose cheque, £75, on account. As soon as the freight question is settled we will remit balance. If you are right it will be £25; if not, it must be less the difference named above.

That is clear enough, and shows that it did not matter to me how the thing was settled, we were not going to be the losers,

and should not be. On the same day I wrote the goods agent at Perth as follows:—

Mr. Short has arranged to give delivery of same, pending final adjustment of same, and the item of charges to stand over without prejudice to us. Therefore, please let our carts have delivery accordingly.

I may here tell the House the way in which we conduct our freight arrangements. We always let the Railway Department hold a fairly substantial credit balance of our money; and when the department feel that this amount is getting nearly exhausted, they ask for a cheque, and the Commissioner will find that he always gets it. Therefore, as far as the freight is concerned it was not a question of paying money, because the department had plenty of our money in hand and could have paid themselves; but we would not take delivery of the stuff. The next stage in connection with this matter is a letter sent by us on the 13th October to Mr. Haselden. The Commissioner can have a copy of the letters, if he likes, and can ascertain if they are true; and if the circumstances are not correct, he can deal with whoever is to blame in the matter. The letter we sent is as follows:—

We enclose cheque in payment of balance due on winch, less 7s. 7d. charged for loading. The writer has come to business to-day for first time since Monday week, or the matter would have been attended to earlier. But we can't avoid illness in Perth any more than anywhere else. On seeing the railway people and showing them that you intended taking up the position of sticking a writ into us, they capitulated and agreed to charge as contractors' plant. Their former contention was that you did not consign in that way—then that you were told it could not go at that rate, and you said they were to send it anyhow. However, it is all over now, and we regret very much that the unpleasantness has arisen, but we could not anti up with £50 railage which was first charged and then reduced to £30, which was out of the question.

Mr. Haselden acknowledged receipt, and said:—

The Railway Company tried hard to get hold of my receipt whilst I was away, but they did not succeed.

That is the position of George and Co. with regard to that matter. With reference to the charges—and I may be giving the hon. member something that will strengthen his case—

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The file shows an altogether different state of affairs.

MR. GEORGE: I do not care what the file shows, my papers show what I am stating. The first bill we got was for £50 8s. 3d.; that was on the 24th September. The machinery was charged at the third-class rate, for which there is no warrant in the classification book; and it was evidently a mistake, for on the 28th the Railway Department brought the charges down to £28 14s. 11d. I will ask the Commissioner, is not that so? But I am not permitted to ask the hon. gentleman questions in this way. I must conclude that there is nothing on the file. That deals with that aspect of the case.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I will show you the file.

MR. GEORGE: On the 18th October, in accordance with the arrangement made with Mr. Short, the following bill was sent to George and Co.:—

Quantity machinery, 7cwt. 11qr. 1lb.

	£	s.	d.
As 8 tons, at 23s. 9d. ...	9	10	0
Loading ...	0	7	7
Crane charge ...	0	2	6
	£10	0	1

Received payment by cheque, £10 0s. 1d., for W.A. Government Railways. (Signed) J. HANLAN.—19/10/98.

The department did not have long to wait for the money. That is my reply in regard to the Geraldton matter. The Commissioner of Railways also referred to some machinery which the firm of George & Co., of the celebrated Black Swan Foundry, which some hon. members may not have heard of before (a laugh), brought down from Northampton, and I may say that I have got an advertisement now which I would have given the hon. member nothing for, because I would have shown him all the papers if he had come to my office.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: But they do not correspond with the file.

MR. GEORGE: Never mind; you could have had the papers, and you ought to know me better than that by now. I brought down from Northampton about 15 tons of machinery, which was made—I do not know whether it was about the year one, but I believe the member for Geraldton (Mr. Hutchinson) could satisfy

the House that it was something like 40 years ago, and has been lying in the sun there and never been erected. The machinery consisted of a portion of an old Cornish pump that belonged to or had to be dealt with by Mr. Mitchell formerly a member of this House. The transaction arose in this way. Mr. Mitchell came to me at my office—I think he had spoken to me in the Refreshment Room of this House first of all—and asked if I would take a lot of old iron which he had at Northampton. I said, "Yes; I will take it, but the price will depend on what I have to pay for freight." I went to the Railway Department, for I was not going to be "had" again with regard to freight—I cannot afford to have trouble in my business, which runs rather more smoothly than some of the debates in the House—and I inquired of the department what price I should have to pay for this cast scrap-iron, which had to be broken up and melted, and which, excepting about half-a-dozen pounds, has been broken up; the remainder being now in the breaking-up yard, waiting until we want scrap. I was told that the department would bring the stuff down, as they had brought plenty of stuff for me before from Menzies, from Coolgardie, and Southern Cross, at a halfpenny per ton per mile; and on that ground I made my bargain with Mr. Mitchell. Machinery is a very valuable asset; it runs into a lot of money, especially when you have it made at the Black Swan Foundry. We know our trade, and we will not work unless we get good wages. On the 1st October, 1900, I agreed with Mr. Samuel Mitchell that all the cast-iron in the pumps and the castings should be sold to us at 30s. per ton, delivered on rails at Northampton; cheque to be sent on receipt. That is the machinery I bought, which was brought to Perth, and those hon. members who know something of mining or who belong to the saw-milling industry can tell the House how much machinery can be bought at other establishments, as well as at the Black Swan Foundry, at 30s. a ton.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: That is not the point.

MR. GEORGE: That is my point.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The point is, had the officers the right to make that rate?

MR. GEORGE: It is in your own classification book, man.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Thirty—

MR. GEORGE: I am not here to debate that. I am stating facts. On the 17th December, Mr. Samuel Mitchell—and here is his letter—wrote as follows:—

By to-day's train I am forwarding a truck containing about five tons old scrap cast-iron. I do not know the exact weight. I have not been able to get any more of the heavy pieces in, and have no more of the light ones at hand.

That is what he sent down on the 5th December, and he advised me:—

I have sent forward by to-day's train about 130lbs. of old brass.

On November 30th he wrote as follows:—

I have to advise you that I am forwarding by to-day's train 1 truck load, about 5 tons of old cast iron. Included in this you will find a pair of engine cylinders, and as I have thought that perhaps you may make some better use of them (as you will of some of the other articles), I have sent on two pistons to match these cylinders. Attached to some of the castings you will find some wrought iron; this I spoke to you about.

The heavy castings I have not been able to get carted in in time to go forward by to-day's train; a truck of them however will go on on Monday next. I hope everything will be satisfactory to you.

The first use we made of the cylinders was to put the hammer through them when they came to hand. These were engine cylinders, which had been lying in the sand exposed to the sea air for something like 30 years, and everybody knows they would be useless for the purpose of cylinders. I have here Mr. Samuel Mitchell's receipt for the money. On 29th December I wrote him:—

Yours 17th inst. The writer has been away unwell and on his return Mr. Smith had to stay away. Enclosed is cheque £15 9s. 5d., paying:—

Truck No. 51 ...	4	5	1-14	
Dec. 10th, Truck	4	15	0-17	
	9	0	2-3	@ 30s. 13 10 9
Brass, 116lbs. @ 4d. ...				1 18 8
				£15 9 5

On 5th December I paid Mr. Samuel Mitchell, in the writing-room of this building, for the balance of the stuff, and I have his receipt here—£6 18s. for four

tons of lead. There is your "machinery!" That is my answer.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The contract was for 30 tons of machinery.

MR. GEORGE: I beg your pardon; I did not contract for any machinery whatever. I did not contract for any quantity of scrap-iron, either. What I told the railway people, when I asked for the rate, was that I understood from Mr. Mitchell he had about 30 tons of the stuff. My regret is that Mr. Mitchell only sent me 15 tons instead of 30. I never had a single ounce over 15 tons. As a matter of fact, I did not get quite 15 tons—the quantity was a little under; but I paid the Railway Department for 15 tons carriage. I have not yet been able to get a reply from Mr. Mitchell, but I shall have it in a day or so. The reason, I suppose, why he has not sent it is this. He told me that a lot of these old castings, or "machinery" if you like, to be broken up consisted of very heavy pieces, and that he could only load up such as he had power to lift into the truck. I conclude the balance is at Northampton now. I shall know in a day or two, and I shall inform the House. At any rate, I have not had it.

A MEMBER: He says so in one of the letters you have read.

MR. GEORGE: Yes. The Commissioner asks where is the other 15 tons?—and says there is nothing to show where it has gone to. That is an insinuation which he might have omitted. The next thing that the Commissioner has taken up is the question of coke, and he states what is a very serious thing to say in this House and a very serious thing to say about a man of business. I am older than the hon. gentleman; I have occupied positions (and I am not boasting) in this State, in the other States, and in Great Britain, which I think may perhaps have given me as much business training as the hon. gentleman can claim. At any rate, I may tell the House that in the whole of my life I have had only three bosses, and of course myself. My services have been for terms of seven and 11½ years. There is in this State one gentleman whose money has passed through my hands to the extent of over a million pounds, and I have never, from start to finish, to this day been

asked to do such a thing as give a receipt. Now, what is it about this coke? Is it that George & Co. managed to manipulate the department? That is about the size of what the Commissioner states. He implies that if a truck of coke was loaded to George & Co., or their agents, and instead of containing four tons only contained 2 tons 10 cwt., George & Co. paid only for 2 tons 10 cwt. That, I believe, is the inference to be drawn from the hon. gentleman's remarks. What are the facts? The facts are as I shall state. Occasionally in a man's career, if he has a bit of spare cash, there comes along an opportunity for him to make a rise. There came in the last two years two opportunities for the firm of which I am a partner to make a rise. We had the money and we had the plant—we bought up all the pig-iron there was, and we bought up all the coke there was, and we asked the Railway Department to bring up from Fremantle between 300 and 400 tons of coke. If the Commissioner will call for the consignment notes that were handed in to the Railway Department, he will find they were not made by us but by Wigmore and Co., who sold us the coke. He will find there was a huge heap of it at Fremantle, and that the Railway Department were instructed to send at one time 50 tons, at another time 150 tons, and yet another time 100 tons, to George and Co. Who loaded it? Not George and Co. Who loaded the coke? Not Wigmore and Co. Who loaded the coke? The Railway Department down at Fremantle. And if they did not load the trucks to their full capacity, I ask, in the name of goodness, have they any right to charge George & Co. because the railway officials neglected their work?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Then the files are wrong.

MR. GEORGE: If the Commissioner's charges against me—

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I have made no charges.

MR. GEORGE: If the Commissioner's charges against me have been made for the purpose of "pulling my leg"—to take advantage of my temper, which is well known to be perhaps hasty, to cause me to make admissions—I present him with all that sort of thing. But I think that with men, at any rate the men I

have been accustomed to deal with, there is only one answer to that sort of thing. Let the hon. member turn to advice note No. 7/5/98, and he will find this: "Coke, 8 tons 16cwt., at 2s. 10d. per ton, £1 4s. 11d.; loading, 8s. 10d." The freight for coke from Fremantle is 2s. 10d. per ton, and for the sake of obtaining a rebate to the extent of 2s. 6d. the firm of George & Co. would have had to waste their time and get at the Railway Department. And yet that the firm of George & Co. did so is the inference to be drawn from the hon. gentleman's charges. Here are the other advice notes—first one, then the other: 3 tons 18cwt., 4 tons charged and paid for; 1 ton charged here, 2s. 10d. charged and paid. If the assumption which the hon. gentleman would wish the House to draw is to be that the one ton should have been charged as four tons, he is wrong. When it was pointed out, not by me but by my confidential man, Mr. Geddes, to the railway people down at Fremantle, and afterwards I presume to the District Superintendent, that a huge consignment of coke was being loaded by the railway people, who did not fill the trucks, an allowance was made to George & Co.; and I consider it was a just allowance. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] Here are the bills: let the Commissioner go through them all. I desire, however, to show how this matter comes about. We have fairly large consignments of pig-iron. The Railway Department, owing I presume to circumstances beyond their control—I do not carp at the department—load the stuff out of the ships into trucks, chuck it on to the "Farm," and then load it into other trucks and send it on to Perth. They charged us for that work in this instance, and we did not like it. No one likes to pay for an unnecessary expense. To show that George & Co. are not altogether devoid of business acumen and business ability, I may mention that we usually go down before the stuff is discharged from the ship, clear our goods, pay our freight, hand the consignment over to the Railway Department, and ask them to load the stuff into trucks and send it straight to Perth without this intermediate business of paying an extra shilling per ton on it. In May last I paid the freight and charges on something like £300 worth of pig-iron, ex a ship called the "Nor-

wood," and I had never received a single bit of that pig-iron until this last week. I have to pay for putting it on one truck, chucking it on the ground, loading it on to another truck and sending it to Perth. I want to show that this loading is undertaken by the Railway Department: if, therefore, the trucks are not full, it is the fault of the department. It is their fault, and whether it is a fault deserving of punishment, or a fault arising from circumstances, it affords no reason whatever for pillorying a firm which has done its honest duty to Western Australia and the people here.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Hear, hear.

MR. GEORGE: I may say, in farther reference to the machinery from Geraldton—the information has just been handed me by a friend here—that the following is what I should have had to pay per steamer: Wharfage at Geraldton, 2s. per ton, 16s.; freight, 10s. per ton, £4; wharfage at Fremantle, 2s. per ton, 16s.; railage to Perth, 4s. per ton, £1 12s.; £7 4s. in all.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: What about railage from Northampton to Geraldton?

MR. GEORGE: This stuff was at Geraldton. I paid the Railway Department £10, whilst I might have saved £2 16s. by sending the stuff by water. I do not wish to say any more. I regret very much having had to speak on this matter this evening. I assure the Commissioner that I did not come last night to judge him in any shape or form. Such comments as I might have made while he was speaking were not made with the idea of anything like "chawing up." When the question which the Commissioner has raised comes to be debated in this House, I shall have something to say. I may perhaps be allowed to refer the hon. member to the evidence—perhaps I may even advise him to get the evidence—which was taken by the Commission of which Mr. Speight, Mr. Roe, and myself were members. If he will look at the evidence taken on 24th October, 27th October, and 3rd December, 1899, I think he will find what will, at any rate, cause him to consider very much whether he has been wise or unwise in his actions in connection with the gentleman known as Mr. G. W. Davies. I thank you, Sir, and I thank the House.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH'S EXPLANATION. *

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: I should like also, with the indulgence of the House, to make a few observations with reference to the Commissioner's remarks about the Kurrawang Firewood Company. I will not detain the House very long. I desire to give a short *résumé* of the whole transaction. At the end of 1899 the Kurrawang Syndicate decided to purchase a siding on the Kalgoorlie-Coolgardie railway, which siding was then owned by a man named Sutherland. This man had a siding, he had a weigh-bridge, horses and drays, and was carting in wood to the railway. The Kurrawang Syndicate bought this man right out, and commenced operations. This siding was about 31½ miles due south of the 42-Mile Dam. This dam had been leased to us by the Public Works Department—not by the Railway Department at all, but by the Public Works Department. On the 25th January, 1900, an agreement was made between the Commissioner of Railways and myself on behalf of the Kurrawang people, to supply water from this dam to the Railway Department in consideration of the Railway Department supplying us with the necessary rails and fastenings, such sleepers as they could obtain, and a locomotive, payment to be taken in water. We obtained from the department something like 7,000 sleepers, which number represented all they could supply; and we conveyed to that railway over 100,000 sleepers of our own, paying the Railway Department something like £6,900 in freight on these sleepers alone. The delivery of water from the dam was to be commenced by 1st March, but on account of the department not supplying the necessary material quite as soon as they should have done, it was fourteen days later when we commenced delivery of this water. And I state here that the files will show that on that date, 14th March, the Railway Department had not, in any one of their dams from Boorabbin to Bardoc, a single drop of water, nor could they get one gallon of water in Coolgardie from Gray and Price or anyone else.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The dam that you got was not under the control of the same Minister?

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: Outside his control altogether.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It was the same Minister.

MR. MOORHEAD: One Minister is Davies, and the other is O'Connor.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: This dam was altogether outside the control of the General Manager of Railways: it was under the control of the Works Department. It has been contended that both departments were under the one Minister. That may be; but even if it is so, will any one hold the General Manager of Railways responsible for the fact that there is a dam within five, or ten, or fifteen, or twenty, or thirty miles of the railway—will anyone maintain that he ought to have known about it? I say that if there is blame attaching to anyone for the fact of this dam not being used by the Railway Department, it should be and will be found attaching to the Engineer-in-Chief, and not to the General Manager of Railways. The Engineer-in-Chief ought to have known about this dam. If he had this dam full of water and wanted to lease it, why did he not say to the railways management, "Here is a dam which you can have; we want to lease it; you can take it over." As far as I can see, the dam was simply advertised, and we tendered for it and obtained it.

MR. MOORHEAD: Was it advertised?

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: It was advertised by the Public Works Department; we put in a tender among three or four others, and ours being the highest we got the dam. So far as concerns the question of truck supply, I can assure hon. members that we did not get a single concession beyond what is made to other private concerns in this State in regard to the free use of trucks. Every mill and every siding in this State is allowed to have the Government trucks in its possession for 12 hours. If those trucks are conveyed by privately-owned locomotives to and fro, the Government do not charge for the use of the wagons during that period. If we—the Kurrawang people—load a truck with lewt. or llb., or 5 tons, that truck is marked off and charged for by an officer specially appointed by the department for the purpose: that officer stands at the Kurrawang Company's weighbridge and marks those trucks as they go out; and if there is only half a hundredweight in four or five trucks each of those trucks is

charged for the same as if it were full. Weighing is done at Kurrawang by an official of the Railway Department. These trucks on the mill sidings or other private sidings are returned loaded, and the freight is charged for, but no charge is made for these trucks provided they are returned within 12 hours. It is said that considerable favouritism has been shown to the Kurrawang Firewood Company in regard to the supply of trucks. I deny this totally. From August 7th to the 26th, 17 days, we asked for 168 trucks a day; namely, the Great Boulder 35, Boulder Perseverance 36, Lake View Consols 35, Associated 22, Ivanhoe 24, Hannans Star 5, Associated Southern 3, Southern Development 1, Great Boulder Pumping Station 2, T. Allen 5; these amounting to 168 trucks in all. What did we get on those days? We got 130 trucks in all, or 77½ per cent. of what we asked for. We were 651 short of what we required from August 7th to the 26th, as I have stated. Moreover the member who represents Mount Burges in this House (Mr. F. Reid) can tell the House we have from fifteen to twenty thousand tons of wood that has been paid for and carted to the railway, and is now lying there ready to be shipped, but we cannot get trucks. With reference to the remarks about Messrs. Smith & Timms' sale of trucks to the Government, I do not know where the Commissioner got his information from, but Messrs. Smith & Timms have never sold to the Government a single truck. The trucks he referred to were trucks bought from the Government by Smith & Timms for £80 a piece; they were afterwards sold to the Canning Jarrah Forests Limited, and afterwards they were sold to the Government for £65 a piece. These were hopper trucks, of no use for loading timber, or the Government would not have got them for anything like that price. The trucks which Mr. Hedges got, and in which I was interested at that time but am not interested now, were offered to the M.C. Davies Company before they were offered to us, and in fact it was Davies who put us on to that line of trucks. We made an offer, which was refused. After that refusal, Mr. Hedges entered into negotiations, and I know nothing more about the matter. A great point was made of this, that the

Engineer-in-Chief could not obtain trucks, and was forced to take these trucks from the Kurrawang Company. I say that the Engineer-in-Chief, having eyes and ears to use, might have seen or heard that there were 28 trucks standing idle in East Fremantle yards belonging to Messrs. Atkins & Law, and he could have got them. We bought them, after we had hired to him these trucks at 3s. a day; and after we had bought them, we hired them to him at another 3s. a day. (General laughter.) They talk about the rate of charge for hiring these trucks. Mr. Hedges charged the Government 3s. a day for a day of nine hours; but what do you find in a railway contract? The Government actually charge 4s. a day for eight hours. We charged 5s. a day for a ballast plough; the Government charge 12s. We paid on the Menzies Railway £1 a day at first, and then 10s. a day. On the Menzies line the Government charge £6 a day for an engine of eight hours, including fuel, engine-driver, fireman, and cleaner. Against that you have £3 a day charged by Hedges for nine hours, and 5s. an hour overtime. Then in regard to trucks, the Government charge 4s. a day for eight hours, as against a charge by Hedges' Company of 3s. a day for nine hours. For a ballast plough the Government charge 12s. a day of eight hours, and Hedges charges 5s. a day of nine hours. For a van the Government charge £1 and 10s. a day of eight hours, according to class; Hedges charges 5s. a day for nine hours. If members work out these prices, they will find the Government saved in this way fully 25 per cent. on the hire of trucks. I am not trying to defend the General Manager of Railways in any way, but I say it will be found, when the inquiry comes to be made as to the allegations with reference to the Kurrawang Tram Company, that the company will be able to disprove every charge the Commissioner has made against the company in connection with this business.

HON. W. H. JAMES: The Commissioner read from the file, and did not make charges.

[Explanations concluded.]

POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by Mr. MONGEE, and read a first time.

TRADE UNIONS BILL.

Introduced by Hon. W. H. JAMES, and read a first time.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL.

Introduced by Hon. W. H. JAMES, and read a first time.

NEWSPAPER LIBEL AND REGISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by Mr. F. CONNOR, and read a first time.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by Mr. DOHERTY, and read a first time.

COAL MINES REGULATION BILL.

Introduced by Mr. J. EWING, and read a first time.

HAMPTON PLAINS RAILWAY BILL (PRIVATE).

FIRST READING.

MR. MOORHEAD (North Murchison): The Bill, the first reading of which I now propose to move, is a measure which contains very few clauses, and has for its object the enabling of the Hampton Plains Estate Limited to construct a railway from Lakeside, on the Boulder line, through Wollubar to a point on the company's southern boundary, called Block 48. It will probably be within the recollection of members of this House that the company possess a large tract of land on the Eastern goldfields, and they have a considerable quantity of auriferous country, and the line will also pass through large belts of timber. The anxiety of the company to get this measure passed is principally for the development of their property, and the result will be the opening up of a large timber belt and the cheapening of fuel on the goldfields. The measure was before a previous House, and was carefully considered by a select committee, which consisted of gentlemen who have had experience of railways, and it is on the result of their deliberations that the measure is now before the House. The power of the company is set forth in Clause 2 of the Bill, giving permission to construct a line of railway of the usual

character, together with telephone and railway appliances. The clause contains a proviso that any land to be resumed shall not be of greater extent than three chains wide, except in such places where a greater quantity is required for station buildings, and purposes of that character. Provision is made in the Bill that the materials used in the construction of the railway shall be the same as those used in the construction of the Government railways, and the company, with the consent of the Commissioner, according to Clause 5, shall have the right and privileges exercised by the Commissioner on the Government railways, as to rates. Power is given under the clause, subject to the Commissioner, to the company to enforce by-laws and to regulate charges. Then in Clause 8 of the Bill, a most important provision is set out. This is the clause that gives the company the right to resume a certain portion of Crown land. I may point out that, intervening between Lakeside Station and Wollubar, the district which it is proposed to go through, there is a strip of Crown land, about nine miles in length. Over that strip the company propose to run their line, and to take for the purpose of its construction such land as may be necessary for the proper building of the railway. Of course, that clause must be read in conjunction with Clause 2, which limits the amount of the land to be resumed, as not exceeding three chains in width, except in such places where a greater quantity is required for the purpose of erecting station buildings, etcetera. Inasmuch as this is a line that may run through auriferous country, Clause 9 points out that the Commissioner of Railways shall be satisfied that the line shall not interfere with any mining that may be going on, or that any mining may not interfere with the line: the provision protects the interests of both parties. Clause 10 gives to the Commissioner the powers of running over this line; also for the conveyance, later on, of the mails. Then Clause 11 farther extends the power of the Commissioner by giving him the right to work this particular line in conjunction with the Government railways. And Clause 13 protects the public by giving the Commissioner the right to prohibit, at any time, traffic being carried over

the line by reason of the unsafe condition of the line. In fact, the Bill provides that the Commissioner, at all times, may inspect and protect the public by prohibiting traffic being carried over the line. Clause 13 is a farther protection to the public, inasmuch as it compels the company to keep the line ready and fit for public traffic. It binds them down to run at least two trains either way per week. The concluding portion of the clause farther guards the public interest, by preventing the company from giving an undue or unreasonable preference or advantage to any particular person. Clause 14 is in a similar strain as to the duties of the company, by compelling them to carry by all reasonable despatch, etcetera. Clause 15 gives the Government the right to purchase this line, after 25 years, should they deem fit. The price is set forth, or rather the clause sets out how the price is to be arrived at, namely:

The value of the railway for the purposes of this section shall not, under any circumstances, be taken to be more than one and one-tenth times the actual cost of construction of, and such additions as shall be approved by the Commissioner to, the railway, of which cost the certificate of the Commissioner, issued at the completion of the railway or the additions thereto, shall be conclusive evidence.

Therefore, when arriving at the cost, unless the company produce the certificates they are not entitled to have them taken into consideration. The House will see at once that in arriving at the price to be paid by the Government, should they deem fit to resume this line, protection is given, inasmuch as the Commissioner shall have the right, from time to time, to pass the work, and certify as to the amount of the work done and the price paid for it. The concluding clause refers to the deposit. In conclusion, I have only to say the entire line runs for something like 27 miles, and with the exception of nine miles, which runs over Government land, the line will run through the private property of the company. Their tract of country embraces auriferous land, and huge belts of forest country. If the Bill receives the approval of the House, it means an additional area of timber country brought in touch with the goldfields, the cost of timber will be reduced to the mining industry, and the cost of the production

of gold will be reduced also. I have every confidence in recommending the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a first time.

On farther motion by MR. MOORHEAD, Bill referred to a Select Committee, consisting of Mr. Sayer, Mr. Reside, Mr. Rason, Mr. Monger, with Mr. Moorhead as mover; with power to send for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of the House; to report this day fortnight.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING—POSTPONEMENT.

HON. W. H. JAMES (Minister): With the leave of the House, I desire to have this order of the day postponed, and I wish to state the reasons for asking for the postponement. In the early part of this year the Government of New South Wales commissioned Judge Backhouse, of that State, to proceed to New Zealand and to examine into the working and operation of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act in that State. Hon. members no doubt are aware that this legislation originated in New Zealand in the year 1894. Judge Backhouse remained in New Zealand for some months, and on his return made a report to the Government of New South Wales. This report was printed about the end of July last. Three days ago a copy of the report came to my hands. After reading it, I am satisfied that every member of this House will be glad to have a copy of that report before the discussion of the Bill comes on. The report deals with the whole question very fully. The Government have wired for 100 copies of the report. The message was despatched too late to allow of the copies catching the last mail, but we hope to have them here by Monday week. At the same time we have wired for copies of the new Arbitration Bill being introduced into New South Wales. We did that because in that Bill the conciliation board is eliminated. I think it very desirable that this information should be before hon. members, to enable them thoroughly to understand the issues raised by the Bill. I beg to move, therefore, that the second reading be postponed to this day fortnight.

Question put and passed, and the order postponed accordingly.

RETURN—MINISTERIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY TRIPS, COST.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison) moved:

That after the close of every financial year a return be presented to Parliament showing in detail the cost of each Ministerial and Parliamentary visit to the districts outside the capital during the preceding twelve months. The motion would not require many words to recommend it to the House. He had not the slightest desire that the motion should be regarded as in any sense a reflection on the Ministry now holding office. In the past, when the finances were in an exceedingly flourishing condition, a very considerable amount of money must have been spent in connection with lavish entertainments by the Government and on Parliamentary trips. Not so long ago, hardly a month went by in which there was not a Parliamentary or Government trip to Mundaring Weir. Some years ago, when the state of the finances was exceptionally good, a very large expenditure must have been incurred in conveying people from Perth to the goldfields at Government expense to take part in festivities, a greater portion or a considerable portion of these people being well able to pay their own fares.

A MEMBER: Ancient history!

MR. NANSON: It was only in order that we might learn to guard against dangers of a similar kind that he referred to what the hon. member described as "ancient history." This House was in a somewhat reforming mood, and it was not an extravagant or unreasonable assumption that we should begin by reforming ourselves; reforming in those little matters that attracted a large amount of notice outside, and often caused adverse comment which might well be avoided. Another reason why economy might be practised in regard to these matters was that although this State was enjoying a magnificent revenue, yet the calls upon it were larger than could be met out of that revenue. The other day it was stated the Treasurer found, when he came to make up the draft Estimates of expenditure for the current year, he had down something like four millions of money which was

proposed for expenditure, and to meet this he had a revenue of only three millions sterling. It stood to reason that where so much was required in the way of development, every pound we could save from useless, or ornamental, or luxurious expenditure was a pound gained for the development of the country. Speaking as one somewhat new to public political life, it had inspired him with a sense of regret, when going to a Minister to ask for something required for one's district—on one occasion the request was for something that would cost less than £50—to be told by the Minister, in his best constitutional manner, that the £50 must wait until the House first sanctioned the expenditure. In expending £25,000 on entertaining a royal duke and duchess there was no difficulty in getting thousands from the Treasury, while there was considerable difficulty in getting small sums for the necessary development of the country. He admitted that, as compared with previous Administrations, we had a worthy example shown by responsible Ministers; but seeing that we must look to what might happen in the future, it would be better to proceed in a more economical way, lest some future Government should come into power that might not be equally careful. In the existing parliamentary practice, more care might be taken in regard to the expending of public money. The time of Ministers was valuable, and it was not always possible to use the ordinary train service for making Ministerial trips; yet the use of special trains and other such luxuries should be restricted as far as possible by using the ordinary train service. As regarded the special royal carriage that was built for the Duke and Duchess, and was not used by them, if there was no better purpose for it at present, perhaps the Minister for Lands might put it to an ornamental if not useful service in travelling about and entertaining the ladies of the South-West district. Those members of the House who believed in democratic simplicity would agree with him in wishing that we had seen less of this ornamental expenditure on sumptuous cars, and that a better use should be made of public money. In other directions also it would be an advantage if, in regard to the refresh-

ments supplied on these parliamentary trips, some such course were followed as that practised in connection with this House, namely that whatever members required they should pay for themselves. No member would wish, in however small a way, to come on the country for expenses which he could well pay out of his own pocket. If members of this House were considered to be not sufficiently paid, it was not desirable that any such deficiency should be made up in indirect ways. The railway pass was one indirect way, and it had better stop there; and if a referendum were taken among the electors in the country as to increasing the amount of pay to members of Parliament, we should then know whether such increase was desired by the people. No member should do anything likely to cause the finger of scorn to be pointed by persons outside. Each member should be particular, and try to be beyond any suspicion of carelessness, not only with regard to every pound of public money, but every penny of it.

MR. HUTCHINSON and MR. DIAMOND rose to second the motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake): It was not the intention of the Government to oppose this motion, and he commended to the attention of members the few remarks made by the mover. He was glad the hon. member had taken so speedy an opportunity of applying in practice some lessons which might have been drawn from his experience in the recent Ministerial trip to the Collie. (Laughter.) The hon. member now, no doubt, spoke feelingly and as one having had great experience. He (the Premier) was not aware whether the hon. member was able to place his finger on any blot or transaction which would bring a blush to so fair a brow. If anything at all had happened, he trusted the hon. member and others would speak out fearlessly on this and kindred subjects. The less expenditure there was on these trips the better. He was not aware that there had been any extravagance during the last few months, nor would he say there ever had been extravagance; but he did think that a due regard should be had to economical considerations, and that Ministers and members, when they travelled, should be satisfied with perhaps the bare necessities of life in the shape

of sandwiches and sausage rolls, with whisky and water.

MR. DOHERTY: Especially the whisky.

THE PREMIER: Instructions had been given by him that on these trips there should be no necessity for excessive expenditure; and he thought members could travel in comfort on these Ministerial trips at a minimum of expense. But he did say that if Ministers, in the course of their duty, were supposed to travel about the country, it was only fair they should be allowed, in certain circumstances, special trains for their convenience, and a reasonable amount of refreshment, which they appeared always ready to share with others, as had been the case in the past, for Ministers liked to see that those who travelled with them, or the people in the districts they were visiting, should be treated with proper hospitality. He did not think any Minister would undertake these trips if he had to pay the expense out of his own pocket. If it was the wish of this House that the use of special trains should be discontinued, he would endeavour to comply with that wish; but he must confess that if he was going to travel with his colleagues, and if they were expected to make political visits, they should do so with such comfort and dignity as properly attached to the position, and without unnecessary expense. Otherwise, he as a Minister was not going to travel at all. He did not hesitate to say there was great force in the remark that the ordinary train service should be availed of, if it could be done; but it sometimes happened that, while the ordinary train service might serve to take Ministers and members to the place they were visiting, there might not be an ordinary train available for return, and it would then be necessary to have a special train. As far as he was concerned, he always asked the Commissioner of Railways if it was convenient to his department to grant a special train on such occasions; and, if not, he should never think of pressing for a special train. No doubt special trains might interfere with the public traffic on railways; and when that was the case, the convenience of Ministers should be put on one side for the public convenience. He was always ready to travel by the ordinary train, and in ordinary circumstances he was

satisfied with the use of a first-class carriage; but if he could get extra comfort in a special train or in a royal saloon carriage, he would take it. He proposed to continue the practice until he found it did not meet with the approval of this House. The motion had his support, and it was only right there should be some check kept on unnecessary extravagance, this being, as he understood, the object of the mover; and in that sense he accepted the motion. At the same time, he acknowledged it was his intention that, if for instance he had to visit agricultural shows in several districts, in his Ministerial capacity, it would be more convenient to himself, if not interfering with the public traffic, to get there or to come back by special train, as being quicker than by ordinary train. He intended to follow the practice as it had been in the past, and see that a reasonable amount of comfort was provided for himself and friends on these Ministerial trips. He did not desire there should be unnecessary expenditure or extravagance; and he did not wish to say in this House one thing, and do another thing out of the House. His intention was, in these matters, to have due regard to economy.

At 6-30 o'clock, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. W. J. GEORGE (Murray): The motion might have contained some provision by which at any rate parliamentary trips, such as the opening of a railway or a large public work, could be sanctioned by Parliament before the trips were undertaken. It might be said these trips occurred during recess; but Ministers knew months before what the progress of the works was likely to be, and in these matters Ministers might exercise a little foresight, take the House into their confidence, and get authority to undertake the trips. It was not necessary, for instance, to take a trip to the Mundaring dam every month or every two months, but there were events such as the completion of the main portion of the work at Mundaring, or the turning on of the water, or the opening of the engine sheds, on which occasions trips might be taken; but these

events could be foresighted, dates fixed, and sanction obtained for the trip to be taken. One or two remarks were made, no doubt in good nature, in reference to former Ministerial or parliamentary trips. Perhaps the opening of the Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, or Menzies railways was referred to. He was not going to contend that possibly these trips were conducted a little more extravagantly than we at the present time might think was fitting, but it had to be remembered that the people of this country at that time were suffering from what is called "swelled head." Many people were making money or thought they were, and found out afterwards they were mistaken. When the trips to Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie were made, the party counted not only members of Parliament and visitors to the country but also a number of residents of the colony. These trips had been the means of showing the people what Coolgardie was like, and the trip to Kalgoorlie and Menzies showed them what the possibilities of the country were. He believed these trips had paid the country "hands down." A number of men went on the trips to the goldfields who would not otherwise have visited the places, and they had been induced to invest capital on the fields. He did not know if the works now in hand by the Government were such as would require a repetition of such trips, because Western Australia now did not require any fictitious aid on the part of the State: the enterprise of the people would cause the country to go ahead. He was not prepared to grumble at the expense of the trips that had been made in the past, because, as far as the Premier or the Ministers were concerned, if they were visiting any portion of the State they should go in a style befitting their position. He would be sorry to see the Premier going to Kalgoorlie, for instance, to exercise his functions as Premier of the country, in an ordinary compartment of a first-class carriage. If the resources of Western Australia would not allow those who represented us as Ministers to go about the country in a dignified and comfortable manner, it was not good for Western Australia, and we were in a poor way. As to the trip of which the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) spoke, there were six or eight members of Par-

liament on that trip, and if one carriage had been used to convey them the haulage would have cost the country just as much as it did, but the comfort would have been considerably less. When a carriage like the one which had been referred to was taken through the country it saved Ministers a great deal of time, because when deputations waited on Ministers they could interview a Minister in semi-privacy, which was necessary. On the trip to which reference had been made, passing through the Murray district he (Mr. George) had the honour to introduce four deputations to Ministers, and the work was got through in a short time; but had the Ministers to see the deputations on the railway platform each time, and the train had to be kept waiting, the business would not have been gone through so comfortably to the deputation nor so easy to the Minister. In a matter of that sort there was nothing to grumble at. Some years ago there was a circumstance which caused members to grumble. A former Minister had a special car attached to an ordinary train so many times per week, and the carriage was practically used for that Minister alone. That sort of business was a mistake, but it was not likely to occur again. If the Premier or the Colonial Treasurer, or any member of the Ministry, had to visit his constituents, and took members of Parliament with him, this country could afford to let them travel in dignity and comfort. He would certainly follow the lead of the Premier of the country in this matter.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): The member for the Murray had somewhat mistaken the object of the motion. The member for the Murchison did not wish to restrict these trips, but only to have a return prepared at the end of the year of the cost of the trips, which was a very reasonable request. If the member for the Murchison had moved that these trips should be entirely done away with, or that the cost be restricted to a certain amount, members could reasonably say that an attempt was being made to restrict the liberty of action of Ministers of the Crown in travelling about the country. It was reasonable that there should be some restriction. Our worthy and hon. friend, the Colonial Treasurer, might be satisfied with the best of lemonade and

the jovial bun, whereas some other member might require the stimulus of a little whisky and soda; but the "boy with the long neck," as it was called in London, should be restricted as much as possible. The mover of the motion did not endeavour to impose a hard and fast restriction on the expenses—his intention apparently was to leave it to the good sense of Ministers. At the end of the year the country would be able to see exactly what the trips had cost. He thought it would be found at the end of twelve months that the idea that these trips were costing the country an enormous amount of money was a very respectable mare's nest. The public would probably be very agreeably surprised. He was quite willing to leave the matter of expenditure in the hands of the Ministry, knowing that at the end of the year the country would be informed exactly what the trips had cost.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): The motion should be so amended as to apply to the expenditure for last year. If this information was wanted by hon. members, he contended it should be got in respect of the year which had just closed, making that the starting point.

MR. DIAMOND: The hon. member could move an amendment.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas) moved an amendment to alter the wording of the motion as follows:—

[That] after the close of every financial year, a return be presented to Parliament, showing the cost of Ministerial and Parliamentary visits to districts outside the capital, during the preceding 12 months.

The effect would be to omit the words "in detail," "the," and "each," the word "visits" being altered to "visit." In the best interests of the country, not only Ministers but all members of Parliament should travel round and see as much as possible of Western Australia. He understood that quite recently some members of the Government had travelled in various districts and had footed the bill themselves. Such a tax on Ministers was not fair, and no member of the House would, for one moment, desire that a Minister travelling round the country on public business should be required to pay any ordinary travelling expenses.

A MEMBER: Ministers received travelling allowance.

MR. THOMAS: The motion of the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) could be read in only one way—that we wanted to know the full details of the expenses of each Ministerial and Parliamentary trip: for instance, how many whiskies each Minister had consumed. Members had sufficient confidence in the Ministry to believe that in going for a trip into other parts of the State, they would not take too much beer and whisky with them. He therefore opposed the motion in so far as it demanded that expenses should be stated in detail. If the motion were amended as proposed by him, it would be ample.

THE SPEAKER: An amendment had been proposed to strike out the words "in detail" in line two of the motion.

MR. NANSON: Had the mover the right to reply?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member could reply at the end. The question was that the words "in detail" be struck out.

Put and passed, and the words struck out.

THE SPEAKER: A farther amendment had been proposed to strike out the word "each" between "on" and "Ministerial."

MR. NANSON (the mover): Not being well acquainted with the forms of the House in matters relating to motions, he thought it advisable to take the opportunity of speaking in reply and dealing with the amendment, lest later he should find that he had lost the opportunity. The member for the Murray (Mr. W. J. George), judging from the tone of his remarks, seemed to misunderstand the object of the motion. There was no desire to cast any reflection on the actions of past Governments in this respect, and therefore all reference to past parliamentary trips had been omitted. He had referred to them in the course of his remarks simply to justify the motion, by showing that there had been a certain amount of extravagance or lavishness in the past, and that it was therefore reasonable to take the precautions suggested by him. The hon. member for the Murray had said a great deal about upholding the dignity of the country in those matters. The hon. member had said that the dignity of the country would suffer if the Ministry travelled about in a first-class compartment. On that point

he ventured to differ from the member for the Murray. One of the most famous men America had produced, one of the most famous Presidents of the United States, a man who would live in history for years after we were all forgotten, used to go down to open the Congress of the United States riding his old white horse, which he hitched up to a post while he performed the great ceremony of declaring the Congress open. That republican democratic simplicity had not yet brought the United States into contempt. On the contrary, it was one of the dearest traditions of the people of America to-day. If a President of the United States could set such an example of simplicity, then the Ministry of West Australia need not be afraid of suffering any loss of dignity, or of inflicting any loss of dignity on the country, by showing a wise simplicity and a wise economy.

MR. DOHERTY: The hon. member should remember that this is a hot country.

MR. NANSON: Since West Australia had indulged in the extravagance of building a royal car, and since some use must be made of the conveyance, it might just as well be used to hold ministerial tea parties as for any other purpose. It would at least serve as a warning not to permit similar silly waste of money in future. The amendment of the hon. member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) would be opposed by him. He did not oppose the first amendment in regard to striking out the words "in detail," and he regretted exceedingly not having done so. His object in inserting these words in the motion was, in the first place that the country might know what amount of money was expended on ministerial parties in this connection, in the providing of special trains and so on, and what amount of money was spent on eating and drinking and hospitalities connected with the trips. Although some hon. members might consider it an insult to demand a detailed statement of expenditure, he for his part utterly failed to follow them in their reasoning; because after all members of the House were but servants of the public, and why should members, if they had nothing to hide, object to having the details of expenditure published, down to the uttermost farthing if need be? It was certainly not in his mind that

it would be necessary to set down in black and white every single item of expenditure. [MR. DOHERTY: Every bottle.] Every bottle. He thanked the hon. member for that word. It was very important and necessary that we should know how much these trips were costing the Railway Department, and how much they were costing in other directions; and the excision of the two words "in detail" would deprive the return asked for, not of all its value but certainly of very much of its value. Now, an attempt was being made by the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) to exclude another word, the excision of which would render the return less valuable still. If the amendment were carried, the result would be that Parliament would be simply informed each year of the cost of these trips in one lump sum, and there would be nothing to show what any particular ministerial trip had cost. A mistake had been made by him (Mr. Nanson) in regard to the words "in detail," but he would not make a similar mistake in regard to the word "each"; and it was his intention to divide the House on the amendment, so as to give members an opportunity of showing the country whether they desired to give the public the fullest information on this matter, or only a return that would be of the very smallest benefit to the country.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): As one who had travelled a good deal round the country since joining the Ministry, he thought it was only fair that he should make a few statements, more especially as taunts had been thrown out in connection with the amounts said to have been expended on Ministerial trips. He had been on many trips, but he wished to refer more especially to the Murchison trip, on which Ministers were accompanied by members of Parliament. From the trip he had derived a very large amount of useful information, which had proved invaluable to him in his department. Apart from that view of the matter, however, he wished to remark that his teetotal friend, the Treasurer, had helped to pay for the whiskies of some members who accompanied Ministers. The Colonial Treasurer and himself had paid the whole of the expense of that trip, less the cost of the train. The same thing applied to his

trip to Greenbushes, on which several members had accompanied him. The rule was being adopted in all cases, except where Ministers entertained a large gathering, the cost of which it would not be fair to ask them to bear.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: Ministers paid what was extra, beyond the allowance.

MR. JACOBY: It was understood that Ministers received an allowance.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes; an allowance of 25s. a day. The principle he had stated was being adopted. He did not know if it was the principle of the past, but it would be the principle of the future. It would be manifestly unfair, however, to ask Ministers to bear the expense of a large party.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. F. Illingworth): The member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) was one of the party of members which he had had the pleasure of taking with him on his trip to the Murchison, and he had not heard any complaint from the hon. member on that occasion.

MR. DOHERTY: The hon. member did complain about the whisky.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: The member did not complain during the journey, but spoke in quite other terms. The expenses of the trip, as the Minister for Mines had already stated, were paid by Ministers out of their allowance. He did not think that hon. members could get nearer to the expenses than that. The expenses allowed by the State to Ministers travelling on public duty were the same as those allowed to officers in the Departments, namely 25s. per day; and if an extra bottle or two were obtained, members could pay for it themselves. One hon. member now suggested "lemonade," and in reference to it he would say that on this trip they did have some good tea. In the first trip taken by the Government since they came into office, there was not a bottle of champagne on the train, and he thought people on that occasion enjoyed themselves all the same. Perhaps in times past there had been a little excess, as he had thought and said occasionally; but the present Government were a reforming Administration, and Ministers were trying to reform in this as well as other directions. These trips were carried on at the expense of the Ministers, and if they

exceeded the 25s. a day allowance, the particular Ministers had to pay the extra. It should be remembered that when Ministers were on these trips, they obtained a good deal of information which would be of use in the interest of the country, and might save expense to the State. Speaking as Treasurer, something like £20,000 was saved to the country through that trip; and time was saved in dealing with various matters that came before them. Ministers saw for themselves the actual requirements of the districts they visited; and if on some future occasion the member for a district which had been visited came to Ministers with extensive requests, involving considerable sums of money, and if the wants of the district were not known to Ministers, it might happen that the Government would find themselves supplying even tanks to conserve rain-water. In regard to any expenditure incurred in Ministerial trips by the present Government, he would be glad to make a return without the necessity for a motion.

MR. A. E. THOMAS asked leave to withdraw his farther amendment.

Farther amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Motion as amended put and passed.

MOTION—BUSHMEN CONTINGENT, EXTRA PAY, &c.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable the undertakings entered into with the members of the West Australian Bushmen Contingent should be carried into effect without farther delay.

Hon. members would recollect that on the departure of the various military Contingents from this State to South Africa, popular feeling ran high and the men of these Contingents were assured that if they did their duty and behaved well, they would on returning to this country be treated most generously. He did not wish to draw invidious distinctions between the several Contingents, but would say generally that the officers and men behaved themselves remarkably well and were a credit to this State. This being so, he submitted to the House that these men deserved that any undertaking which had been made with them should be carried out. An undertaking was

entered into that the Bushmen Contingent should receive extra payment in addition to the ordinary pay allowed by this State. He understood this to be the case, and it was borne out somewhat by the facts, because when the Contingent reached South Africa they went into the country by way of Beira, marching through Portuguese territory to Rhodesia, and they must have been recognised as soldiers of the Rhodesian Company, as otherwise they would not have been allowed to march through Portuguese territory. Whether that undertaking was made or not, the fact should be easy to determine; and if the undertaking was made it certainly should be given effect to. Another undertaking was that the men should be allowed to retain the rifles supplied to them and with which they fought through the campaign. This also was borne out to some extent by the facts, because the rifles supplied by this State were, as he understood, condemned by the Imperial military authorities, or at all events the rifles supplied to them by this State were passed into store when the men reached South Africa, and new rifles were supplied to them by the Imperial authorities. If there had not been an understanding with the men that they should be allowed to retain possession of these rifles as individual property, surely they would have been compelled to give them up to the Imperial authorities before leaving South Africa. He understood that the men brought these rifles to this country, and when they landed here the military authorities of the State demanded that the Imperial rifles which the men had brought here should be passed into the State armoury. These rifles certainly did not belong to this State; and seeing that the Imperial authorities had allowed the men to bring them here, it did appear that the men had some claim to the rifles as their personal property. There might be a shadow of doubt on the point, but if so the Government were justified in satisfying themselves before they admitted the undertaking.

THE PREMIER : By whom was the undertaking given?

MR. RASON : That was not for him to say.

THE PREMIER : We could be bound only by our own obligations.

MR. RASON : The object of the motion was to induce the Government to ascertain whether the statements made by the men were correct, and whether the grievances which they alleged they were suffering under were borne out by the facts. Another undertaking was one on which there could be no doubt. When the Bushmen Contingent returned to this State, they were promised, as were the men of other Contingents, that they should receive 90 days' furlough pay. Members of the other Contingents did receive that pay, and some members of this Contingent who returned invalided or returned before the main body did also receive the 90 days' furlough pay; but the main body of the Bushmen Contingent had not received it, although they were promised, in the presence of His Excellency the Governor, that they should have it, for His Excellency said, in addressing the men, that he sincerely hoped they would enjoy their well-deserved holiday. If there was any doubt as to the other undertakings, there was not the slightest element of doubt as to the promise in regard to the 90 days' furlough pay. He submitted that, for the credit of the State, it was necessary the promises which had been made should be given effect to without farther delay.

MR. W. J. GEORGE seconded the motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake) : The Government had no objection to the motion, but were rather glad that it had been brought forward. There had been some misunderstanding about the question of the so-called Rhodesian pay. He believed that some soldiers claimed they were entitled not only to the pay received from this Government, but that they should receive in addition a farther payment from the Rhodesian authorities, making up their total pay to 10s. or 15s. a day. He thought there was a mistake, and he was advised that there was no undertaking to the effect which the hon. member suggested. He believed the arrangement actually was that soldiers travelling through Rhodesia should receive the Rhodesian rate of pay, which was a higher rate than they would otherwise receive; but it was not promised that they should receive this pay in addition to what they would receive from the State Government.

MR. RASON: If the Government would obtain a copy of the Rhodesian Field Force orders, they would at once see what was he Rhodesian rate of pay.

THE PREMIER: The Government here did not pay the Rhodesian allowance, but it was the Rhodesian authorities who paid that. The Government here were only too anxious to get the highest possible pay for our soldiers, and it would give him infinite pleasure if he could carry out the wish of the mover in this matter. The Government here had observed all their obligations, and would redeem any pledges given by the past Administration in this respect. There was already a correspondence with the Rhodesian Government on the subject of the pay, and he would do all he could to get the highest possible pay for our soldiers. With regard to the 90 days' furlough pay, which it seemed was offered to members of one of the returned Contingents, papers had been before him as a Minister, and the last minute he made on the subject was that, in his opinion, each Contingent should be treated like the rest; and he advised that a sum of money should be placed on the Estimates, in order that the men who had not received the 90 days' furlough pay should receive it.

MR. W. J. GEORGE (Murray): The facts in connection with the Rhodesian allowance, as he understood them, were that when the Bushmen Contingent arrived off the coast of South Africa, requests had been sent by the Rhodesian Government that these men should be landed at Beira. The Rhodesian Government were then paying for the same duty at the rate of 10s. per day, and they gave an undertaking that the difference between 4s. 6d. allowed to the Bushmen by the Government of this State and the rate of pay in Rhodesia should be made up to the 10s. per day. He understood also that the amount of money necessary to do this had been forwarded by the Rhodesian Government, and by them transmitted to Western Australia. A number of these Bushmen had received considerable advances in connection with this extra money while they were at Pretoria and other places of action in South Africa. Therefore, as these men were to return to this State, they did not want the money in South Africa, but here; and they left

the former country with the assurance that they would receive the money when they returned home. The existing impression amongst a number of the returned soldiers was that a sum representing 5s. 6d. per day per man had been forwarded to Western Australia, either to the military authorities or to the Government, and that out of this sum the Bushmen had been paid the 4s. 6d. per day which the West Australian Government, when the soldiers left, undertook to pay them. But this 4s. 6d. per day was an obligation on the part of the Western Australian Government, while the extra 5s. 6d. per day was a bonus offered by the Rhodesian Government and partly paid to some of the soldiers, while the balance was understood to have been sent here for distribution; and it was thought that such balance had been used to carry out the obligations of Western Australia. So the matter had been represented to him; but he was in no way trying to blame the Government, who, he believed, were anxious to see that the soldiers received strict justice, and perhaps a little more; for it would not hurt Western Australia to be even a little more than ordinarily generous to the men who went away to uphold the fair character of this country. On the 2nd July he had questioned the Premier on the matter, and had received a reply that no bonus had been provided by the Chartered Company. That reply was doubtless made in good faith, but probably the Premier would find on inquiry that he was not then in possession of full information. Consequently, he (Mr. George) had asked, had there been any funds received from the Chartered Company? and the Premier had replied, "I believe not." Probably it would be found on inquiry that funds had been received here by somebody. A farther question had been asked about the 90 days' furlough; and the answer was, it was considered inexpedient to grant that, owing to want of funds. The men considered that there was a sting in this. However, funds were now in hand.

THE PREMIER: A promise had been made to put the item on the Estimates.

MR. GEORGE: Well, it was pretty certain it would be passed. All knew the stringent obligations of military service; apparently the men had done as much as they could in a respectful manner; and

he believed they had the sympathy of the military commandant. All the motion asked for was a full inquiry, and justice.

MR. J. RESIDE (Hannans): Sometime ago he had been waited on by several members of what he believed was the Third Contingent, who stated that when they enlisted they had signed for 4s. 6d. a day, but that at Beira they were informed the Rhodesian Government would pay them 5s. a day if they went through Rhodesian territory, which was then threatened by a Matabele rising. The men did go through that territory, and it was understood the 5s. would be transmitted to Western Australia, where it would be payable on arrival. The men, who were much dissatisfied, considered if the money had been remitted to the W.A. Government, they were being done out of it. If the State had contracted to pay the men 4s. 6d., and the men entered into a farther contract with the Rhodesian Government, the men should have the full allowance of 9s. 6d. The men went to South Africa to carry out a certain work; and the State was in duty bound to keep faith with them by fulfilling its compact.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): Would the Government or hon. members kindly express an opinion as to whether soldiers under engagement with the Government of Western Australia were justified in making a farther contract with the Rhodesian Government on arrival in South Africa? From what had been said to-night, it appeared the men left here under contract for 4s. 6d. per day, and they farther treated for 5s. 6d. with the Government of another country. Was that allowable when a man went to war? It was not allowable in any other walk of life that he knew of; and it did not appear desirable there should be any premium offered to people who went away to shoot others, whether those others were Boers or not. Personally, he considered that kind of thing should not be tolerated. If the Government entered into a covenant with those soldiers that they should go away to uphold this country—though until the member for the Murray (Mr. W. J. George) had spoken he (Mr. Taylor) had not known it required upholding—then let the Government carry out their part of the contract and pay the men 4s. 6d. a

day. But was the House of opinion that the soldiers should enter into farther covenants with other people?—the idea apparently being that they would kill more people if they were paid higher wages.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie): The question should be made clear on the lines suggested by the last speaker. Evidently those soldiers left Western Australia with the distinct understanding that they were to receive 4s. 6d. a day; but now they claimed to be entitled to 10s. Their just due was 4s. 6d.; consequently, if the Rhodesian Government had forwarded a sum representing 5s. 6d. to our Government, our Government were entitled to the extra shilling. Pay the men 4s. 6d. out of the 5s. 6d. received, and retain a shilling.

Question put and passed.

RETURN—REVENUE TO END OF FINANCIAL YEAR.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford) moved:

That a return be laid upon the table of the House, showing:—1, The amount of revenue received by the Customs, Excise, Post, and Telegraph Departments of this State on the 29th June last. 2, The total amount of revenue (exclusive of above) outstanding or *in transitu*, i.e. collected or due, or in course of transmission to the Treasury by the same departments on the same date.

Not anticipating any objection to this motion, he moved it formally.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. F. Illingworth): The hon. member should understand that we might not get the necessary information from the Federal Customs.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—ABORIGINES, TO INQUIRE INTO TREATMENT.

DR. HICKS (Roebourne) moved:

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the treatment of the aborigines of this State.

He said: I did not at the present stage intend to introduce this subject, but I see Mr. Mahon has brought it forward in the Federal Senate, and I think it would be just as well if we debated it to some extent here. There have been very serious charges laid at different times against this State, and as I have lived in the North where native labour is largely

employed, and have personally employed natives, I feel that my honour has to a certain extent been challenged, and I wish on that account to make some statements. How these charges arise is very difficult to say. For my own part, I believe certain cases of ill-treatment have occurred in the past, but persons leaving the district exaggerate the circumstances, their statements get into the newspapers, the papers, probably to let the public know more about it, enlarge upon the circumstances, and, like a rolling snowball, the scandal increases as it goes on. In addition to this, we are at times favoured by visits from high dignitaries of the Church to such places as the district which I represent. Some five years ago, whilst I was there, I recollect the Right Rev. Bishop Riley was in the North-west, and he, I believe, visited several stations. While he was there, he did not, to my knowledge, say anything about the ill-treatment of natives; but as soon as he came back, we heard certain statements that were made. During my residence in the North, I met several ministers of the Church; and one or two of them, in talking over the treatment of natives, have told me that the treatment was perfect, but that they are afraid to say so lest they get into trouble with the head of the Church. I may say in passing that it was not the present incumbent who spoke to me on this matter. There are two ways in which natives are held. Firstly, there is the contract system, by which a native is engaged to a master for a term not exceeding twelve months. The native must be over 15 years of age, and must sign voluntarily. This works very well; and I do not see that we can substitute anything for such agreement. With regard to the indenture system, by which children of very early years are engaged till they are, say, 21 years of age, the term of engagement is to my mind altogether too long; and it would be well if, in continuing the indenture system, some legislation were passed to cause that system to cease at, say, 15 years of age, when the contract system could come into force. It is being constantly stated that black labour is the most economical form of labour possible. When the question is thoroughly investigated, I do not think it will be found the most economical. If one take a station

that employs, say, 150 natives, each native will cost the owner anything from £15 to £25 per annum—say £20 all round. That would mean something like £3,000 per year spent on the natives, in clothing and feeding them. Now a station which would employ, say, 150 natives could be worked by, at most, half a dozen more white men than it employs at the present time. This could easily be done for, say, £800 per year. In addition to that, one would have to pay for shearing; and that would amount to, say, about £700 or £800 per annum, making £1,600 altogether; whereas the natives cost £3,000, so that black labour is actually costing owners twice as much as white labour. In the early days, before the stations were fenced into paddocks, no doubt the natives were very useful, and black labour may have been a cheaper form of labour than white at that time; but that does not obtain now. The term most often applied against the employers of the aborigines in the North is that of "slavery." If under that term we mean chattel slavery, I give the assertion an emphatic denial, because the natives are free to do what they like. They may sign for any man they please, and I am sure anyone empowered to engage a native will not do so unless he has the native's full consent. As to the treatment the natives receive on a station, I think that if an unbiassed person were to go there he would see it was perfect. You have only to go to the natives and see the condition they are in. They are in the pink of condition, and as happy as the day is long. With regard to food they have more than enough, as is evidenced by going to their camp where one will see any amount of bread and meat. In reference to cruelty, one would almost assume from what one hears that everyone who employs a native is of the most callous disposition; but, for my part, I only recollect about three cases of cruelty during the whole time I lived in the Roebourne district, which was about $7\frac{1}{2}$ years. The first case proved to be nothing. It was simply that of a native who was knocked about by two policemen because they could not get the man to gaol without a struggle on his part. In the second case, there was an allegation against a squatter for ill-treatment, but upon examination I could find nothing

to substantiate the assertion. The third case was one where a teamster broke a man's arm, and as far as I remember he received 12 months' imprisonment. I think that is a very fair record for $7\frac{1}{2}$ years in the district. The quarrels and ill-treatment between whites are tenfold more numerous than among the natives. As to the treatment in gaol, as far as my experience goes the imprisonment of a native simply means that the native is thoroughly demoralised from that time on. He goes to gaol, and there mixes with men who are probably more cunning than himself, and he soon learns. He comes out of gaol, and for a week or a fortnight he is a fairly good boy ; but after that he lapses into his former condition and is constantly getting into gaol. With regard to the flogging about which we hear so much, what really happens or did happen in Roebourne in my time was this. A native was sentenced, if over 16 years of age, to a number of lashes up to 25 ; under 16, to 12. When he was sentenced he was first brought to me and medically examined to see whether he was fit to undergo the punishment. If he was fit, the punishment was administered ; and to be extremely careful of the native, I always was present myself. It was a very loathsome business, but at the same time to protect the native I went there, and although I have seen a fairly large number of floggings of natives, I have never seen any bad results accrue therefrom. I do not believe that, in five per cent. of the cases of flogging one sees, a drop of blood is drawn. When you consider the stamp of the cat-o'-nine-tails used, it is just what you would expect. There is a handle of about 14 inches, and there are about nine strands of very small schnapper line without any knots whatsoever. We hear, too, that natives are chained to each other and to a wheelbarrow. What is to be done to the natives ? Take a warder going out probably with 20 natives. How is he to keep them ? He has no firearms and has no protection whatever. For that reason the native has a chain round his neck. Natives are chained in pairs or singly to wheelbarrows, but all friction is prevented by having the chains well covered with leather. I do not see how one could alter that in any possible way,

inasmuch as to my mind imprisonment is demoralising to a native. The next thing is how can we deal with a native in the best way for him ; and in my opinion the only way is by some form of corporal punishment. The natives are like children, and they must be taught through their skins, if necessary. I see no other way. With regard to immoral practices in the North, they do occur in isolated places, but I do not think we should convict the whole of society of immorality for the reason that there are individual exceptions. With regard to the suggestion made, I do not see that anything can be done. We cannot take a native off his run, for that would be cruel. The only thing is to let him stay there as he is, under the contract system. With regard to the squatters, I am sure anyone who has been with them must say they are one of the finest sets of men you will meet anywhere. They are most law-abiding, and are not afraid to go anywhere at all. They are most courageous, and I would ask the House if a class of men of that stamp is one you would expect to find guilty of cruelty. Cruelty is practised by cowards, and I am sure there are no cowards among these. I therefore move that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the treatment of the aborigines of this State.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) : I rise to second the motion. I think it absolutely necessary, in face of statements made in the Commonwealth Parliament with reference to the treatment of aborigines in this State. This House would be lacking in its duty if it did not cause a most rigid inquiry into the condition of the aborigines. I certainly disagree with the member for Roebourne with reference to the power placed in the hands of the people up North. We should take away from any employer the power of flogging his servant, whether that servant be black or white. (Several MEMBERS : Hear, hear.)

A MEMBER : That does not exist.

MR. TAYLOR : The member for Roebourne says the aborigines are employed at a cost of £3,000 per annum to do work which, if carried out by white labour, could be done for about £1,600, white labour being therefore about £1,400 cheaper than black labour. I cannot say what squatters are in Western Australia,

for I have never been amongst them, but I can speak with some force and knowledge of the squatocracy of the other States of the Commonwealth. I have been with them from my boyhood, and I say there is no danger of their employing black labour in place of white at a bigger cost, nor would they give more than they are compelled to give their workmen, whether black or white. It is of no use for anyone to come here and say the squatters are philanthropists; for I know differently. I am sorry to say they are not, and from my experience of these people in the Eastern States, they are the very first from whom the power of lashing should be taken away. It is degrading for one to find a member stand up in this House and describe the loathsome form of weapon used—an instrument with a handle 14 inches long, with nine strands of snapper line, and no knots.

A MEMBER: Quite a pleasure.

MR. TAYLOR: Quite a pleasure. I do not say the member for Roebourne is hard-hearted, and that he would approve of a native being flogged in such a way as to produce a bad effect on him, for I am certain there is no man in this House who would resent such treatment more than the hon. member. At the same time, this House should remove that power of flogging, and also remove the indenture system. I have in my possession a receipt from a squatter in one portion of this State, showing he charged another man so much a day for the hire of a black fellow and so much a day for the hire of a black woman, and I am given to understand that squatter receives rations from the Government to support these aborigines. If that kind of thing obtains, it is the duty of this House to remove it. I have that in my possession at the hotel where I am staying, and I dare say it will be forthcoming when the inquiry takes place. I repeat, there should be a most rigid form of inquiry on this aborigines question.

MR. J. GARDINER (Albany): I have pleasure in supporting the motion of the member for Roebourne for the appointment of a select committee. I do so from rather other motives than those suggested by that hon. member. This State should show to the other States it is not afraid of investigation on this

particular question. Judging from the reports of the Commonwealth Parliament and by the criticisms of the Eastern Press, they think that the legislators of Western Australia are very callous indeed with regard to the treatment of the aborigines here, and it rests with this Parliament to vindicate the honour of the State in this particular. If it be shown there is no real ground for the allegations made, no one will be more pleased than myself, for I am sure we want to think we are not encouraging what people in the other States have been pleased to call black slavery. I have no sympathy with the indenture system which is pursued under our Act, neither have I any sympathy with that section of the Act which places it in the power of any lawful magistrate to give punishment by the lash to those blackfellows. We know perfectly well that these men are not always cultured as to what is right and what is wrong. We do a great many acts by the force of might, and, if we act on that principle, is it wrong that these men should in return think they have the power to do such things? I honestly believe there are men in the northern portion of our State who treat those blackfellows with every possible consideration, but I also believe there are men who treat them much as some of the *Tegrees* treated slaves in the olden time. It is for us to have such a committee here that no taint can be attached to the justice of its decisions, in order to show not only the people of this country or the people of Australia, but the people of the old world who are making comments on this question, that if such a thing does exist, this Parliament will be the first to see that steps are taken to remove it, and also to remove the evil. I hope we shall take rather a broad view of the question. Personally I should like to see a reservation provided for the blackfellows.

MR. F. CONNOR: "Where ignorance is bliss"!

MR. GARDINER: That will come home to the hon. member when I say that in America they have reservations, and, while his knowledge is local, mine may extend farther. In America they did not think it was disgraceful to have reservations, and it may be necessary to have reservations here, into which no person can go but the blackfellows, except

to trace criminals. Quixotic as this idea may be, yet this existed before white men came here; and if this thing existed before white men came here, why should not it exist now, provided that we see that these blackfellows have peace and comfort? The cause of humanity, if nothing else, demands it. We should have a select committee and see if men, whether black or white, are treated as men and not as so many beasts. The lash may be applied in that perfectly harmless manner suggested by the member for Roebourne (Dr. Hicks). Can anyone say, after listening to the hon. member's quiet and graphic description of the way in which the natives are punished, that it is not necessary to have an inquiry? I hold that his remarks are one of the strongest arguments that we have heard for a searching inquiry. Of course, the blacks are only coupled together neck by neck in a soft paper-collar kind of thing: no harm is done to them.

MR. F. CONNOR: What would you do with them?

MR. GARDINER: Treat them according to the civilised code that we judge them by.

MR. F. CONNOR: Go up there and see for yourself.

MR. GARDINER: I quite understand, in making these remarks, that I am not pleasing members of the House; but they can put their case with equal clearness and justice; and I ask for the men, the lowest form of aborigine life in Australia, the same treatment as is meted out to white men.

MR. QUINLAN (Toodyay): I have pleasure in supporting the member for Roebourne in his motion, and I do so because I know it has been stated abroad that the natives are ill-treated in this State. That has been stated in the Parliament of the Commonwealth, and it is due to us that the fullest investigation should be held to prove if it is so, or to the contrary. I can indorse the remarks of the member for Roebourne from an experience of two years in the North, some 20 years ago. I saw a good deal of the natives, in far greater numbers than during the member for Roebourne's period there, and I never in any instance saw ill-treatment. I think it is due to this State in particular that this investigation should be made. I feel confident

of the result, and I trust those who occupy positions on the committee may be those who have had some experience of the natives.

MR. GARDINER: Sympathy.

MR. QUINLAN: I shall decline to go on the committee. I think I have had greater experience of the natives than the member for Albany has.

MR. GARDINER: That is so.

MR. QUINLAN: The hon. member refers to putting paper collars on the blacks. I may say that we have had a little knowledge of this custom, and I venture to say that they are not to be led by paper collars. I hope the House is disposed to grant the select committee sought by the member for Roebourne.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison): While in sympathy with the member for Roebourne, I am in some doubt as to whether the select committee will answer the purpose which he is aiming at, and which I venture to say the whole House is aiming at. It seems to me a Royal Commission is necessary and perhaps will be better. I am not clear how, if a select committee is appointed, we will get the amount of evidence to satisfy ourselves, and to satisfy those outside. For my part, having known what has been said in regard to the native question for many years past, I feel convinced that even if we have a Royal Commission, and if that commission holds the most searching investigation, and if it prove to the very hilt that the natives in this State are, except in very isolated instances, treated with the utmost humanity and kindness, yet within twelve months of that commission reporting we shall find probably the same libellers who are libelling the State at the present time bringing up the old stories and libels which have been exploded on many previous occasions; bringing these up as soon as the report of the Royal Commission is sent to that obscurity which awaits most State papers. There can be no doubt that isolated cases of cruelty have occurred—all of us are aware of that, and we know that isolated cases of cruelty do occur in regard to our relations with white people. But what the Parliament and the people complain of is that on these isolated cases has been built up a gigantic edifice of exaggerated, hysterical, and untruthful statements. The treatment of the natives by pastor-

alists here will, I unhesitatingly assert, compare most favourably with the treatment of the inferior races in other parts of the world. Have the members of the Commonwealth Parliament taken the trouble to make themselves acquainted with the treatment accorded, only a few years ago, to the South African natives in Matabeleland? Have they taken the trouble to make themselves acquainted with the treatment of the natives in Queensland? If they are aware, as they should be, of these facts, I utterly fail to understand how they can represent this State in the Federal Parliament, and go there and libel the State in the gross way they have done. In regard to the alleged inhumanity of the law, I contend we must draw a distinction between the isolated instances of harsh conduct on the part of individual settlers and what may be the harsh law. Those members in this House who think the natives are treated with undue severity under the existing law, should lose not a moment of time in taking every step within their power to secure an amendment of the law; otherwise if they acquiesce in the existing law, a large degree of moral responsibility rests on them. Having myself seen, as the member for Roebourne has done, the treatment extended to the natives in the North-West, I can willingly bear him out in regard to the use of chains as described by him. Unquestionably it is more humane than close confinement or whipping. The member for Albany (Mr. Gardiner) may, in his accustomed fashion, wax eloquent in his description of the chains. They are little heavier than a dog chain, lighter than a bullock chain—not so heavy as that. I have seen the natives working in the North, and a fatter and happier body of men I never wish to see. It is all very well to wax virtuously indignant or virtuously eloquent. But is there not enough trouble, enough hardship, and enough suffering in this world without conjuring up sympathy with a class of men who are not ill-treated, without conjuring up sympathy with a class of men who do not need it. Some members object to the indenture system, and if they object to that why do they not suggest some other system in its place. The member for Albany on that point has been honest, and in that respect he has suggested that we declare reservations for the natives;

but has the hon. member taken the trouble to ascertain the tribal customs of the natives? How does he suppose we are going to drive the natives into the reservations? The natives do not want to go there. In legal parlance, the natives are *adscripti glebae*; they belong to the soil, and, as the member for Roebourne has pointed out, it is not the pastoralist who wishes to employ the natives now, whatever may have been the case in the past. The pastoralists find, now there is wire fencing, that if they employ natives it is a wasteful expenditure. No one would be more glad than the pastoralists in the North to have some system devised by which these natives could be removed from the stations and put upon reservations. But what would happen? Suppose you declared a reservation, and drive the natives from all parts of the State into the reservation. I will tell you what would happen. You would have something similar to what happened in reference to the Kilkenny cats—we should have a condition of tribal murder, and no doubt in a reasonable time, in a certain number of years, we should have the native question settling itself. But although that may commend itself to the particular brand of humanity of the member for Albany, I confess that although the treatment accorded to the natives on the stations may not on the surface bear that philanthropic brand to which the member for Albany has such a leaning, yet it has been tested by the best of all tests, that of practical experience. It has been subjected to examination, to inquiry after inquiry; it has been tested by the most searching investigation in courts of law; yet notwithstanding every endeavour on the part of every libeller of the State in this matter, it has been found impossible to show, except in isolated instances—instances of men in most cases not born or bred in Western Australia, but who have come from those other humane states—except in isolated instances, the treatment of natives of this State has been such as will compare more than favourably with the treatment of natives in any other part of the world. I shall have pleasure in supporting the motion, although as I said at the beginning of my remarks I would sooner see a Royal Commission appointed, because I know that we cannot have an inquiry

too close or too searching. However searching and close an inquiry may be, it will redound to the credit of everyone, or at least nine-tenths of the people concerned in the native question.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco) : I have listened with considerable surprise to the tone of this debate. As far as the last speaker is concerned, it seems to me the main object of the Commission or Committee to be appointed is to ascertain whether the native does not suffer from undue development of adipose tissue, due to the fact that he is too well fed and has an insufficient amount of work to get through. As a matter of fact some of the remarks made by the member for Murchison (Mr. J. L. Nanson) make me think that he must lately have been studying "The Pious Editor's Creed" :—

I do believe in Freedom's cause as fur
away as Paris is ;

I lov to see her stick her claws in them
infernal Pharisees.

It's very well agin a King to draw resolves
and triggers,

But liberty 's a kind o' thing that don't
agree with niggers.

Indeed, it seems to me that some people in this State still hold the opinion which was held in America before the Civil War, that the black man has no rights which a white is bound to respect. I contend that everything that has been said cannot get us away from the fact that the natives have in a large number of cases been proved, by those who are not libellers of this State, to be unfairly and improperly treated. I contend that our native law in many respects is a bad law and should be amended. It is an absurdity to challenge members making that statement to get the law amended. The member for the Murchison knows very well how difficult it is for any private member whatever to carry through the Houses of Parliament any important legislation. Even if notice be given of the legislation on the first day of a session, the probability is that the measure will not have got through one House, let alone the other House, at the close of the session ; and a fresh start has to be made at the beginning of the next session. I do hope that this Select Committee will be appointed, although if all what the mover said and what some of those who followed him said be correct, there is no need whatever for a Select

Committee. I believe there is much in the law that a Select Committee would find grounds to recommend should be changed. The member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor), for instance, said it was not right that an employer should be able to flog one of his black employees. The statement or insinuation of the hon. member that the employer could do so, was plain. I am quite willing to admit that in one sense the employer cannot flog his black servant, but indirectly he can do so and does so. In this way : an employer is very often a justice of the peace, and therefore sits on the bench to deal with cases of offences committed by his own employees, and he very frequently sentences his own employees to the lash. —[SEVERAL MEMBERS : No, no.]—And though he is not the actual administrator of the lash, I contend that indirectly he has legal power to order his natives to be flogged, and he does exercise this judicial power. Who are the magistrates in the North and the North-West ? If not the squatters, who are the magistrates ? Where do you get your justices from if not from the squatters ? If a man does not sentence his own employees, there is nevertheless a sort of mutual arrangement whereby Smith deals with Jones's niggers, and Jones deals with Smith's niggers.

MR. F. CONNOR : That is most unfair.

MR. DAGLISH : I know this—

MR. CONNOR : You do not know. It is most unfair to make such a statement.

MR. DAGLISH : If my friend opposite had waited, he would have heard what I was going to say, that I know there are "white" men and "black" men amongst squatters. I do know there are honourable and upright men amongst squatters, and I know also there are "black sheep" amongst squatters.

MR. F. CONNOR : You are very generous.

MR. DAGLISH : I am not unduly generous ; but I do try to be what the hon. member is not at present, and that is, just. While admitting there are many good men amongst the squatters, I do want an inquiry held into the treatment which some who are not good men extend to their employees.

MR. F. CONNOR : I was about to demand that in this House. The remark does not apply to me.

MR. DAGLISH: I wish it to be thoroughly understood that I do not apply my remarks to the hon. member, who, however, persists in interjecting. I do not understand why the interjections should be made if the hon. member does not apply the remarks to himself. I am just now engaged in the hat-making industry; but I don't do the fitting, and I shall be glad if the member for East Kimberley will not do the fitting, either. When I came to Western Australia I was in the service of the Police Department, and the first thing that struck me, in reading police reports, was the degree of callousness exhibited by the police in regard to the treatment of natives. I know that many of the charges which have been made against the squatters are absolutely capable of proof; and I know this because I have had an opportunity of reading, during a period of over four years, reports of the police, called for from time to time, on the treatment of natives in certain quarters. I know that under our present law, owing either to its abuse or its imperfect nature, there have been very many cases of cruelty—not only isolated instances—which have never been properly sheeted home. I want to see a thorough inquiry held, not only for the sake of the natives but also for the sake of the State. I do think it behoves us who have come and practically stolen the land from the natives—[A MEMBER: Not bad!]
—to see that they are treated with the utmost degree of consideration, or at any rate as favourably as white men are treated. I know that many of the white employees of this State are not too well treated by their employers, and I know they would be far worse treated than they are if they had not the power to insist on a certain degree of fairness being extended to them. I am aware that employers are of the same class here as in the North and North-West, that human nature is the same in the South as in the North. I am satisfied, however, that among the large number of employers in the North there are some who do not show that fairness and consideration to the natives which should be shown to them. We have heard references to the treatment of natives in Matabeleland and Queensland—as though a wrong committed in those distant places in the past could justify the commission of a

wrong in Western Australia at the present day! I urge that we should set a good example, and not follow an example of evil set elsewhere. I trust that there will not be what the member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan) suggested, namely, the appointment of an “experienced” committee; because I know, judging from the interjections and speeches of “experienced” members in the course of this debate, that if you have an “experienced” committee, you have a committee sympathetic to one side only. I should like to see the committee composed of experienced members like the member for East Kimberley——

MR. F. CONNOR: That is not fair.

MR. DAGLISH: And of members who lack experience, but who would represent a desire to see that the natives shall be treated with thorough fairness. I trust there will be a Select Committee rather than a Royal Commission, because the appointment of a committee means that you have a body thoroughly responsible to the House, whose individual members are thoroughly responsible to their constituents for any recommendations they may make, and for the completeness or otherwise of their investigations. In a Select Committee you have a responsible body whose recommendations may be sheeted home to its component members; and if these members do wrong or fail to fulfil their duty in a thorough fashion, there is an opportunity of dealing with them later, either in this House or by their constituents when they stand for re-election. I trust that hon. members will not for a moment consider it desirable to appoint a Royal Commission. Such a commission is responsible to nobody, and its members may possibly experience a desire to protract their inquiries in order that large fees may be drawn. The Select Committee is, as I have said, directly responsible to this House, and to the country that elects the House; therefore its investigations are likely to be thorough and searching. I can assure the House that if the result of the investigations of such a committee shows that my opinion of the treatment of the natives is an unduly dark one, I shall be only too delighted. I repeat that I shall be delighted to discover I am wrong, and shall in such case be the first

in the House to stand up and express my pleasure at finding myself wrong, and my satisfaction at discovering that things are so much better than they appeared to me. I should like the scope of the investigation to be extended somewhat, so that it may include the working of the Aborigines Department, as I think there is some reason to believe this department may occasionally afford an instance of "a round peg in a square hole" as regards its management. The Aborigines Department appears to be one in which it has been thought that anyone can take the chief position or headship. It has been thought that anyone is good enough to look after natives. If an officer is to be dispensed with from the Mines Department or some other department, and there is no other vacancy available, the Government have said, "Oh, let him go to the Aborigines Department, where there cannot be much harm done, and where the blacks will not have a chance of making complaints." I now move, as an amendment:

That after the word "State" be added: "and the working of the Aborigines Department."

THE PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake): The question of the treatment of the aborigines of this State is one of the most difficult questions we have to deal with. Nevertheless it is well that the matter should be debated, and that we should know the views which hon. members entertain on so important a subject. I have noticed that whenever this question is under discussion, a great amount of bitterness is introduced. That I deprecate, because I think that when such dangerous subjects are under consideration we should endeavour to approach them with as little feeling as possible. At the same time I would not urge any hon. member to avoid in any degree the expression of his candid and honest opinion. The treatment of the natives of Australia has always engaged the attention of philanthropists, including the Exeter Hall party; and I at once admit that these people have not always been fair to Australian settlers. That there have been abuses—more especially in the neighbouring States—I am prepared to acknowledge; but I agree with those hon. members who have claimed that this State—and I honestly say this—is freer from such a stigma than any of its

neighbours. I speak with some little knowledge on this subject, because my experience in the law courts during the last five and twenty years has brought me more or less in touch with this native question, at any rate as far as the administration of the criminal law is concerned. The opinion which I have formed, and not hastily, is that on the whole the natives of the State have been fairly and humanely treated by the settlers. At any rate the tendency amongst the settlers themselves is towards such treatment, and it has always been the chief care of the administration of the day to see that the natives receive fair treatment. Indeed, the Administration have often been blamed for pampering the natives; justifying the suggestion that the State has always had due regard for the safety and welfare of the aboriginal inhabitants. It is a reflection on the humanity and integrity of our settlers when people in the neighbouring States declare that it is incumbent upon themselves or ourselves to cause inquiry to be made into alleged cruelties to the aborigines of Western Australia; and I cannot help thinking that the gentlemen who have brought forward this question have done so without due regard to the true facts. But at the same time, speaking as a Minister, I court inquiry; and I feel sure that in this regard I shall be supported by every member of this House.—[SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.]—If that inquiry can be made thorough and exhaustive, it is our duty to spare neither time nor expense in endeavouring to set at rest a question so disquieting. I am bound to admit there have been instances of cruelties, of gross cruelties, by the whites towards the blacks. But when these cruelties have been reported, no time has been lost by the authorities in endeavouring to bring the offenders to justice. Over and over again, I myself have prosecuted in such cases. I will admit, too, that the difficulty in securing convictions has been great, because, wrongly too, there has been a morbid sympathy with the offenders, since, unfortunately, it has been a question between black and white. I honestly believe that feeling is not now anything like so strong as it used to be, and that it is now a dangerous thing for any white man to treat a black man with

cruelty. There is more vigilance on the part of the police and the authorities; and such an offender knows full well the risks he runs. I can mention several cases of cruelty. There was the DeGrey case, not many years ago. There was the Kimberley shooting case, where, unhappily, the natives were shot down like birds, for they were in the trees. And there was another case from the Southern districts—that from the Frazer Range—where a blackfellow was done to death. But in all these cases the offender was pursued; he was captured; he was prosecuted—not in every case, it is true, to conviction—but it could not be said of the Government of the day that they spared any effort in their attempt, their honest attempt, to bring these offenders to justice. In some instances the offenders have been convicted, and have received heavy sentences. The latest offender of this kind received a life sentence at the hands of the Judge. Whenever there have been cruelties by the white man towards the black man, they have not been winked at—at least, that is my experience. I say fearlessly that the authorities of the day have ever been mindful of their responsibility for bringing this class of offender to justice. It has been urged that the system of contract between white and black is one of slavery. Well, that is too harsh a term to apply. We cannot, of course, deal with black men as with educated white people, for it is difficult to persuade them what are the obligations of each party to an agreement. But surely it cannot be against the interests of the black man that he should be employed at light labour. The object of the law is that if those men are employed and fed and paid—I do not suppose they get much money—the employer shall have secured to him the services of the black man for, at any rate, a limited term. It is not worth the white man's while to be unkind or cruel to blacks in his employ; because if he is, he will not be able to get so much work out of them as he otherwise might. We have to look at both sides of the question. The blacks themselves are not philanthropists; they do not trouble about the welfare of the white man; I fancy that, after all, they are imbued with quite as deep a spirit of selfishness as is the white man; that

being so, they will naturally consider, firstly, their own comfort and convenience at the white man's expense. While we regret the cruelties of the whites towards the blacks, we must not forget that cruelties have been perpetrated by blacks against whites. Many and many of our settlers, our pioneers, have been done to death by the blacks. We know, too, that there are cruelties between black and black. There are cruelties, too, between white and white. And if we come to analyze the records of our courts, I venture to think we shall not find many more cases of cruelties by the white towards the black than we shall find among the whites themselves. It is not fair to attempt to lay down a general principle, by singling out isolated cases. In my opinion, we cannot treat these unfortunate people as we treat civilised white men. The blacks have to be regarded more or less as children, and to be treated as such. They know only one law, and that is the law of retribution. If anybody offend them in their own country, and in their wild or semi-civilised state, they use their weapons and kill the offender. They do not pause to consider whether they are going against the principle of British law: they know the law of retribution, and that only. With them, every offence is punishable by death; and they know, too, that when they offend they will probably meet with that punishment. If they attack the whites and their property, that is tantamount to a declaration of war. Whilst we here work ourselves into hysterics over an attack upon the blacks, we at the same time—and so will good people elsewhere—shut our eyes to what takes place in other parts of the world, when, after an attack on a white man one of His Majesty's ships is sent to shell a village in an island of the Pacific, or in some other savage community. And what might be considered fair treatment in one part of the world may surely be considered fair treatment in another. If, however, an outlying settler in this State be attacked by a tribe of blacks, his family wounded or murdered and his stock killed or driven off, there would be a howl of indignation, virtuous and otherwise, if the neighbouring settlers were, after the manner of other people, practically to declare war and

administer retributive justice on the offenders.

MR. F. CONNOR: That is the position.

THE PREMIER: But after all, there is an element of justice in that sort of thing. It is true the blacks are ruled by the right of might; and by no other means can you impress such people; at the same time, I shall not advocate such a procedure. We live in a more humane age; we must, as far as possible, be guided by the laws of the land, and, if possible, administer them with an equal hand towards both white and black. Of course I recognise the difficulty; it must be recognised by everyone; but we cannot start with the idea that these people are our equals. They are, perhaps, in theory; but they are not our equals physically, mentally, or by the standard of civilisation; and they must be treated differently. That has been recognised. Our criminal law provides that they shall not be subjected to the same long sentences which white men receive: they must be dealt with summarily, and being dealt with summarily, they receive shorter sentences. We could not administer the criminal law against these blacks if, every time an indictable offence were committed, they were to be brought before a jury of their countrymen. When these natives commit a crime, they are ever ready not only to admit it, but to boast of it. That has been my experience in the criminal courts of this State; so that we do not want the heavier machinery of the Supreme Court and a jury system to bring them to justice. The law, I submit in all humanity, says "These men shall be dealt with summarily." I do not think there are many cases where the black man has been wrongfully convicted, and for the simple reason that immediately after he is arrested he pleads guilty. Those who have had experience in this State will, I think, say I am right. It may not be so in the other States, but certainly that is the practice here. We cannot, as I say, deal with these natives as though they were members of a civilised race. The settlers, as a rule, have to deal either with the wild natives or with those semi-civilised, and in every case there are difficulties. You cannot possibly bring the natives up to our level in the space of time at our disposal. Perhaps our civilisation is not sufficiently advanced,

but the first thing you have to do with the black man—I am speaking of the Australian black—is to humanise him. It is possible you may then civilise him, and after that the missionary may step in and attempt to Christianise him: with what happy results, I leave members of the House and the citizens of the State to declare. The last undertaking is almost impossible. We have had splendid men attempting to civilise and Christianise our natives; and with what result? Absolutely hopeless. The men, and the women too, reap not the advantages but all the disadvantages and vices attendant on civilisation and close settlement. I need not enter into detail. Anybody can go on where I leave off. In administering justice to these people, if, as I say, they only understand the law of retribution, you can only punish them by short, sharp, and severe sentences. Many of us perhaps deprecate the lash; but some people have to be made to realise their responsibilities through their skins, some through their pockets, and others by being deprived of their liberty. To deprive these blacks of liberty is sometimes no punishment at all, because if they are brought into prisons in the centre of settled districts, they are well cared for, and better fed than in the bush, when left to fossick for themselves. Consequently, they do not fear imprisonment, and when discharged they have obtained some knowledge of the cunning and vices of white men. They go back to their tribes more dangerous than when they went to prison. The only regret these men have when in prison—and I do not want to offend any one's sensibilities by what I say—is the loss of their women-kind. It has been suggested that we might establish big reserves for natives, that was suggested by my friend the member for Albany (Mr. Gardiner). Other members ventured to suggest that there was a practical difficulty; and I think so too. I do not think that idea can be carried out. There is, at the present moment, in my office a draft Bill which has been submitted to me, but which I do not approve, and of which my predecessors did not approve. The Bill embodies this very principle, but I cannot think it is practicable. It is useless fencing in tens or hundreds of thousands of acres, and declaring them a reserve for natives. Nor

is it fair to draw a parallel between this country and the American colonies or States.

MR. HARPER: Where it has failed.

THE PREMIER: Whether it has failed or not does not affect my argument. I dare say it has failed, and if it has failed there it must fail here, because there they have different resources, they have a big country, and what is essential to the life of a savage, an abundance of game. We have not that here. Will any member say he can pick a tract of land, we will say 100 or 200 square miles, where there would be an abundance of game, on which a number of the aborigines could feed and live, without the extraneous support of the Government or of the settlers? It is absolutely impossible. And, again, wherever the natives go, they will take with them their tribal customs. We know that on the death of a member of a tribe, there is an obligation on his friends to kill one of another tribe. Though this system of reserves would offer facilities to natives to kill one another, that would not be a proper step either in the progress of civilisation, or towards the amelioration of the condition of these unhappy men. I repeat, therefore, that this is not a practical scheme which you can well consider. The great source of difficulty is, that where the white comes into contact with the black there is an undue interference by the one sex with the other sex. If you can stop that interference you have the key to the position, and you may probably solve your difficulty. Nearly all these difficulties, the murders by blacks, these attacks by blacks, may be traced to this.

A MEMBER: No.

MR. HARPER: Depredations.

THE PREMIER: Not all of them. There are, of course, depredations upon stock, and so forth; but where you find some degree of settlement, what I suggest, has been one of the troubles. If I am overstating the case, I hope members will interrupt me and keep me back. This is no party question. We want to get at the bottom of the matter, and see what is the proper course to pursue.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL: You have not overstated the case at all.

THE PREMIER: The motion suggests that there should be a select committee.

Much as I desire to see an exhaustive inquiry, I pause before giving my adherence to the suggestion, because I do not think that such a committee would have sufficient scope: it would neither have the time nor means at its disposal to thoroughly prosecute the necessary inquiries. If an inquiry is to be made, I am inclined to think it will have to be by a Royal Commission. [MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] And the Royal Commission must not sit in Perth. It would be useless to confine its inquiries to the settled districts of the State; absolutely useless. [Several MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] It is no use to herd up a lot of civilised and semi-civilised natives, and ask the settlers round about the Eastern districts, or even on the goldfields, what is the best thing to do with our natives. The Royal Commission, if it is to do any good, must travel, and what is more, take risks. Let there be no mistake about that. They must go to the outskirts of settlement. Nay, farther: they must go right into the wild country itself, and camp there; otherwise they can never come into touch with a native as they ought to see him, namely in his natural state. They do not want to see him clothed in European garments, but with nothing at all on, in all his naked savagery, and surrounded with all his difficulties and disadvantages; and I venture to think, too, that the Royal Commission would find themselves surrounded by dangers and difficulties. It is no use to think of going out armed only with philanthropic motives. If they go into that country, they must go with both revolver and rifle, which must be kept loaded; and watch must be kept at night. It is no use mincing these matters. If you have to get to the bottom of this subject, you must do it in a practical way. You must come into touch with the native as he is known in his absolute freedom, otherwise you cannot understand him. You cannot get at his ideas, nor can you appreciate the difficulties under which the pioneer settler labours, by merely attempting an inquiry in these settled portions. No. You must mix with the savage just as you must mix with a civilised being, if you want to make yourself acquainted with his peculiarities and ways. Consequently, I say, do not waste time, do not waste energy or money in appointing what will

be a useless committee which will come to no proper conclusion. But if you are going to do anything, let it be by a Royal Commission, the members of which can travel from North to South, through and through the country, where they will see the savage to the greatest possible advantage, or, if you will have it, disadvantage. But see him you must, in his native state, and not in his semi-civilised state. You will probably have to apply those conditions, those principles of semi-civilisation or savagery which perhaps you do not altogether appreciate. I shall not oppose the motion, nor will I propose an amendment; but in the event of the House thinking this inquiry necessary, we as a Government will give every possible assistance, and I merely state that, of the two methods suggested, I prefer the Royal Commission. And whilst we desire to protect the natives, whilst we are humane towards them, let us also be fair towards ourselves and our companions, and see if we cannot, at the same time, prevent these natives from committing depredations on the settlers, murdering them and their families and plundering their flocks and herds. I do not think hon. members can say I am unduly biassed in favour of the white man against the black. I have always declared, and I still declare, that if I see a case of cruelty perpetrated by a white man against a black man, I will do my best to hound the offender down and bring him to justice. I say that as a Minister, and I say it as a professional man: it has been my practice during my career, and I do not propose to depart from it. While we desire humane treatment of the one, let us have fairness and justice to our own settlers; and let us avoid hampering them with conditions and difficulties, because after all unless we help them the temptation to err will be too strong. They may be prone to take the law into their own hands, a practice we all deprecate; but if the settler finds he is in risk of his life, or that his property may be destroyed, then there are certain principles of law which apply and will justify him in a certain degree in protecting both himself and his property; but it is no use asking this or any Government, in the event of fear of attack or of difficulties of settlement, for *carte*

blanche to shoot natives. We are not going to countenance that for a moment. There is a "close season" for natives, and that is all the year round. We all want to see that there shall be humane treatment on the one hand and protection on the other. If by the appointment of a Royal Commission members think they can attain that end, the support of the present Administration will be given with the greatest possible heartiness.

MR. HARPER (Beverley): I do not propose to say much on this subject; but there are a few remarks I would like to make. It seems to me we are travelling over a very old road, because I have been mixed up more or less in this native question for 30 years. I think it would be very conducive to fair judgment in this matter if those members who are hastily speaking to the subject will go over the files of the newspapers and the reports of the House for the last 25 years, and I am sure they will find by the time they have done that they will have learned something. In the course of my life I have been a great deal amongst the natives, in fact as a boy they were my only companions and playmates; therefore I have always felt the strongest sympathy with them. For many years in the North I lived amongst them and employed them, I think to their benefit, although sometimes I had to use even corporal punishment in a way, to keep them in order, for had I not I should not be here to-day. You must maintain authority. Take the position of three or four white men situate 200 or 300 miles from another white man, with 200 or 300 blacks around them. The white men are absolutely at the mercy of the blacks, and unless you inspire some degree of recognition of superior force, the lives of the white men would not be worth half an hour's existence. That is the position of the man who goes into the back blocks. No doubt the member for Mount Margaret who has spoken on the question could give a lot of information on this subject. The only time I was in Queensland, the whole country was in turmoil and disturbance over what was the practice of the dispersals of the blacks in Queensland; and I have no doubt that the member for Mount Margaret could tell us a great deal about that, because I

believe he has been in the back blocks of Queensland. It may be that he too will study the question here and compare it with the condition of things in Queensland, and I think he will realise that Western Australia is not, at any rate, the worst place for the blacks. There are one or two suggestions I would like to deal with. A proposition has been made by the member for Albany (Mr. Gardiner) that you should put these blacks in reservations. This has been tried all the world over. It has succeeded in some places, but there is just one condition, and only one, that offers any hope of success, and that is where the indigenous tribe will settle on the land and cultivate it. If the blacks will not do that, the matter is hopeless. How can you pen a lot of men, with a certain amount of physical capacity, on a piece of land and tell them to do nothing? You will try to confine them within a piece of country where there is absolutely nothing for them to do. Do you know what they will do? They will deplete on the country all around. If the blacks will cultivate the soil, as they have done in some parts of North America and New Zealand, there is hope of settling the question; but unfortunately the blacks of Western Australia have never taken to that work, therefore it is hopeless to carry out that suggestion, let alone the question of tribal differences and the love of particular spots. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) says he would make the laws equal to black and white. That is what I understand he meant.

MR. DAGLISH : As far as possible.

MR. HARPER : I will show a practical difficulty there. If the hon. member be so unfortunate as to drop into that condition which we call vagrant, he will find very soon that he will be "run in"; but we allow the black to become a vagrant and assist him.

MR. DAGLISH : The blacks have been arrested for that.

MR. HARPER : That may have been, but it is not the custom.

MR. DAGLISH : But there are cases.

MR. HARPER : They are quite recent.

MR. HASTIE : They get into trouble for it.

MR. HARPER : Some years ago I was studying the question deeply, and I came upon an idea as to what could be done in

the way suggested. I said to myself : if we could keep the blacks entirely out of towns we would do something to save their immediate downfall; but the gentlemen who are philanthropists say that is harsh. How are you to prevent a black from going into the towns? You cannot stop it. The matter is too far gone in the South-Western district to have any possible effect. Another point I will take in regard to equal laws. Suppose, for instance, the Government, through the Aborigines Board, took a number of blacks and trained them, civilised them, brought them up to trades, and taught them to work in towns, would the member for Subiaco and those working with him be prepared to admit these blacks into their unions? So far as I know, the unionists are very much opposed to black labour.

MR. DAGLISH : It is a question of the majority. We are governed by the majority, not by one.

MR. HARPER : The unfortunate black being in the minority would starve because unionists would not allow him into their labour union. I think there is something like that at the present time before the public. Because an unfortunate man happens to be of a different colour, his employer is required to dispense with his services. I do not mean to say it is wrong or to know anything about it, but I say it is impossible to make laws equal as suggested by the member for Subiaco.

MR. DAGLISH : As far as possible.

MR. HARPER : There is a difference, and unless you can frame laws which will protect the one from interference with the other, the case is hopeless. I only wish there was some means of regenerating or rescuing the aborigines of the State. I feel convinced, from many years' study of the question, from my infancy upwards, that it is morally and practically impossible. The characteristics of the black unfit him from getting into a higher groove than that in which he lives. You may cultivate his physical capacities, you may make him, as we know from experience, a good worker, but there is no constancy in him. He has no hope of rising; there is nothing to inspire hope in him beyond getting his food for the day and his night's rest; and where you cannot inspire a man beyond that, the case is hopeless. With regard to the

treatment of the blacks, I am quite in sympathy with those who wish to see them have fair treatment, and generally speaking I am sympathetic; but I cannot help sometimes being a little "riled" when I hear people who have a superfluity of sympathy accept idle tales and descriptions as the truth. I say I cannot help feeling "riled," because I have heard these tales so often that I have become callous. I hope the House will agree to appointing some board of inquiry which will throw light on the subject, and I earnestly hope the House will be careful to select those who express themselves as full of sympathy and hopefulness. I am sure it will be a liberal education to them when they have done. I would make a suggestion which I hope may be accepted. This question having arisen in the Federal Parliament—and we have been taught to look for very high motives and results from the Federal Parliament—I think it is for the Federal Parliament to appoint the Commission and pay for it, and to send the best members they can find, as the Premier has said, out amongst the wild blackfellows to study the question. Then they will know something about it. We who say we have treated the blackfellows better than any State in Australia should not be saddled with the expense of a commission to prove to our libellers that we are right. So far as I am aware, all settlers and all connected with the North-West will be only too glad to welcome every possible investigation; and I hope those hon. members who think that squatters as a rule are men of the very lowest type—[Several MEMBERS: No]—will go and look for themselves.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Kingsmill): It has fallen to my lot to pass many years of my life in some of the not too well known portions of Australia. I have thus had opportunities of observing the aborigines of Australia from what the Premier terms "his naked savageness" up to the highest point to which the civilising efforts of missionaries and others have raised the blacks. I think I may say that, never having been connected with the pastoral industry, which it appears some members look upon with considerable distrust, I have observed this matter from a fairly disinterested standpoint. I may mention

more especially that I have spent several years in the North-West of this State; and I am very glad to be able to say, in support of several hon. members who have spoken, that whatever instances of cruelty may have occurred are isolated instances, and very exceptional. As I say, I have looked at the matter from a disinterested point of view, and I may safely say with regard to the great majority of the pastoralists of the North and North-West that their treatment of the natives whom they employ is humane and considerate. A great deal of fault has been found with the legislation which is at present on the statute book of Western Australia. This fault-finding, I think, is not well-founded. I think that the legislation is fairly good, but perhaps if there is any failure it is in the administration. Perhaps there is not quite enough supervision—the lack of it I presume being due to the insufficiency of the funds given to the Aborigines Department. If the strict letter of the contract as between white and black is carried out, I think the black will have nothing to complain of. With regard to the contention raised by the member for Roebourne (Dr. Hicks) as to the expense of this native labour, I say that he has, if anything, understated the case. There is in my mind no doubt about that, and I venture to say that to-day there is no doubt in the minds of the majority of the pastoralists in the North and North-West that black labour is practically the most expensive they can employ. In years gone by, in the days of shepherding when wire fences were practically unknown, a great number of natives could be employed in the North-West; and they were not only employed in shepherding, but pastoralists who lived at all near the coast in those days very often engaged in pearling also, and during any slack time the natives used to have—it was really done for them—a sort of picnic at pearling. But pearling has now practically been done away with. The pearlshell has been depleted in those places where it was obtainable by native divers, and there is thus less and less employment for the natives of the North-West. The Government are therefore confronted with an extremely awkward position. If those natives are not

employed by the pastoralists, and are not kept on their own country by the pastoralists, what is to become of them? The game from which they once earned a rather precarious living, has practically disappeared owing to stocking of the country. The system of reservations recommended by the member for Albany (Mr. Gardiner) is, I think, absolutely impracticable. In the first place it would take an immense amount of trouble and an immense amount of time to get the natives on to these reservations.

A MEMBER: Some boundary-riders would be wanted.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Moreover, I was about to remark that if the Government are going to import wire netting to keep out the rabbits, they might as well import a double quantity to keep the natives in the reservations. This is apart from the circumstance that the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) is right in his estimate of the results which would ensue, once you caught your native and safely placed him inside the reservation. There is no doubt that this idea of reservations, if carried out, affords a rapid, if not a satisfactory, solution of the native question. There is one point which the member for Roebourne (Dr. Hicks) has touched upon that should, I think, claim attention from this House—the shortening of the period of indenture. The present system of indenturing boys until they reach the age of 21 is not so good, nor quite so logical, as it should be. I would prefer that it should be possible to indenture these natives only until they reach the age—16 years I believe—when they are able to make contracts on their own account. Another point has been touched on by the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), and in this I think a great deal lies—that we should make reservations not so much against the whites as against the blacks. I think that if legislation is necessary in the matter, legislation should be introduced: otherwise that it should be an instruction to all police officers in mining communities, at all events—perhaps not only in mining, but also in pastoral, communities—that where there is white settlement the natives should be rigorously excluded from it to as great an extent as possible. At all events, unemployed natives should be absolutely kept away from the settle-

ments of the whites. I think if that were done, an immense amount of trouble would be saved. With regard to the suggested appointment of a Royal Commission, I fancy a Commission is somewhat superfluous in view of the action now being taken by the Federal Parliament. If this House think that it should be done, the Commission would at all events have one very good object—an object which I should like to see attained as soon as possible—and that is the vindication of the character of the people in the North of this State, and the vindication of the character of Western Australia, from the aspersions which have been cast on us by people in the Eastern States, who, I regret to say, know very little of the subject. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] Those good people in the Eastern States, if brought in contact with the black, would not look on him as the harmless and long-suffering individual they now represent him to be. I certainly have every sympathy with the native, and want to see him get fair treatment; and I want to see the present system of legislation, if not altered, at all events rigorously carried out in the interests of the native. At the same time I desire that the subject shall be thoroughly discussed, and that any decision on it shall be arrived at by men who have looked into it from every possible point of view. I think it would be as well perhaps if the proposed Royal Commission were to consist of men who have not had very much experience of the blacks, that these men should go through some suitable experience in the North, and that they should take means to get that experience as quickly as possible.

A MEMBER: Another Ministerial trip.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: One hon. member says that it should be a Ministerial trip. I beg to move as an amendment to that motion, that if the Commission is to take a party form all, the members of the Opposition should be appointed Commissioners.

SEVERAL OPPOSITION MEMBERS: We have all been there.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: To return to the question, however, I hope, and indeed I am sure, that whatever form of investigation may be adopted and by whomsoever the investigation may be carried out, the inquiry will be

thorough and minute; and I venture to say that if this is the case, a great deal of the animus and a great deal of the bitterness which have attached to this native question will disappear for ever, and that the character of the people in the North of this State, and the character of Western Australia as a whole, will be so much the better the more searching the inquiry.

MR. F. CONNOR (East Kimberley) : It is with great relief I have listened to some of the speeches on this question to-night. It will be within the memory of hon. members that, in speaking on the Address-in-reply, I demanded from the Premier and Attorney General that an inquiry should be instituted, to prove whether or not there was any truth in the vile accusations which have appeared in the Press, and in the unworthy statements which have been made by public men, in reference to the black question in the North of this State. I am pleased indeed to know that it is the intention of both sides of the House that this inquiry should take place, because when addressing my constituents in the far North of the State—the pioneers of the country, at present the farthest-out people, the people most deserving of credit, and, if necessary, most deserving of protection—I said, “If I am returned as your representative, I will demand of the Government that this inquiry shall be made.” My constituents, when they read some of the lying reports that appeared in the Press, were very angry; and I made them this promise. I did demand an inquiry, but the Government failed to come up to the mark. I am very pleased now to find that the inquiry is to be held, and I personally thank the Premier for the manner in which he has spoken on the subject to-night. I do say, however, that it would have been better for him to initiate the inquiry instead of waiting for a member on this (Opposition) side of the House to force the hand of the Government in the matter.

A MEMBER: Is that fair?

MR. CONNOR: It is fair. If hon. members will read *Hansard* they will see that I demanded that inquiry—I said the people demanded the inquiry. Now the demand for inquiry is supported by the Premier, and by members on both sides of the House: consequently it seems that

we shall have the inquiry. I would like to explain to hon. members that I believe there is no person to-day in this State in a better position to speak with authority on this question than I am. I say here to-night that there are no cases at present, and that there have been no cases for some considerable time, of ill-treatment of the natives. I have a right to speak with authority on this subject—I have a right to give my opinion, and I will give it; and I ought to be listened to because I have had an experience which nobody else here has had, not even the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish). I have been through the back country; I have taken my life in my hand, and ridden there by myself 40 and 50 miles, nobody accompanying me; and I know what the danger is. The member for Subiaco does not. There are no wild niggers in Subiaco—there are no spears thrown in Subiaco. Rather, I should say, no wooden spears are thrown, though spears are thrown which are not wooden and not manly.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: They generally throw mud, in Subiaco.

MR. CONNOR: I have explained this to the House, and I want it to appear in *Hansard* that I demanded this inquiry, and that I came from my constituents to demand this inquiry. I am sorry to say that lately some of the things which I have said have escaped *Hansard*. I will ask *Hansard* to note that I have demanded this inquiry. I am glad to see we are going to have it. Before I finish I shall move, if I am in order, an amendment to the present amendment, with the object of altering the Select Committee to a Royal Commission. I want to ask hon. members, and particularly the Labour members, are the people who go out to the back parts of this country to have the right of protection? Are their lives and their property to be protected, or do the sentiments expressed mean in effect that we are not to be protected? When I say “we,” I mean the people who are the pioneers of the country. Are we not to be protected either in our property or in our lives? Are we to be the means of bringing population to this country and of supplying their requirements, and at the same time are we not to have the same protection to life and property as is enjoyed by the people who live in Subiaco and other places? I want to know that

before I have done. This question has been brought before the Federal Parliament by a gentleman connected with the Press. I should go somewhat farther into the matter, but for the reason that I have given notice this evening to introduce a Bill which will deal with the Press; and as to this gentleman who introduced to the Federal Parliament the subject of the treatment of the blacks, I should deal with him more effectually to-night were it not for the fact that I have given notice of that Bill: consequently, I must pass that over. But I hope, on this day week, if that Bill come before the House for second reading, I shall have an opportunity of dealing with Mr. Mahon, and then I shall have something to say in reference to him.

MR. DAGLISH: He is a very good "Mahon."

MR. F. CONNOR: I shall have something to say, in the meantime, of the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish). We have been told about the terrible atrocities perpetrated by the whites on the blacks; but do we hear anything worse than what occurs in our towns here? Isolated cases occur in the country where people have exceeded what they have a right to do, and where they have been unjust and cruel to the natives. But because that is so, because those isolated cases occur, must the general public suffer? Because a man is garrotted in the street here, or some terrible crime is committed on a woman in Perth or Fremantle, is that any reason why the people in this district should suffer for it? Why, it is just as logical to say that because these few isolated cases occur in the North, the people there should be treated badly, as to say that the people of Perth or Fremantle should be so treated in similar circumstances. Why members of that particular bench (Labour members) are always harping on this black question since they came into the House, I do not know. I challenge them to give specific cases. These general statements—"Oh, you treat people badly; you are a squatter; you live in the North"—are useless. I want the hon. members who sit on that bench to state specific cases; and until they do so, it is unmanly and unfair that they should even be allowed in this House to make insinuations against a

better class of people than is to be found in this part of the country.

MR. HASTIE: Who made the insinuations?

MR. F. CONNOR: I am not talking to you. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) said he was not connected with a hat factory. That was an insinuation. The hon. member was not manly enough to make a charge against me, but he told me he was not connected with a hat factory, therefore he could not make the hat fit me; but that it did. I want to tell that honourable gentleman—if he is an honourable gentleman, and I hope he is—that making insinuations such as that against me is, I consider, unmanly, undignified, unparliamentary, and unfair.

MR. DAGLISH: I take the opportunity of rising to explain that I made no insinuation against the hon. member.

MR. CONNOR: I took your words down, sir.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member interjected something, and I replied to him.

MR. CONNOR: Exactly.

MR. DAGLISH: I replied; but not in the words he has taken down; and I think it is very unreasonable that this school-boy or debating-society attack should be made on me. I contend it is unreasonable that I should be accused of unmanliness, because the hon. member through his persistent interjections compelled me to give some attention to him, and perhaps a little more than he deserved. I ask if it be in accordance with the rules of this House to accuse anyone of being unmanly or unfair, unless some specific instance be alleged.

MR. CONNOR: The hon. member condemns himself by his explanation. He admits that he gave me what he said was probably more than it should have been. His own explanation condemns him. And although I was never connected with the Police Department, and although I know nothing about detective practice and have never been in a police office, I know enough to know that the hon. member has committed himself, and acknowledged that he said more than he had a right to say about me.

THE SPEAKER: I must say I did not hear the member for Subiaco make any attack on the member for East Kimberley.

MR. CONNOR: I do not know if it be within your memory, sir, that he mentioned a hat factory.

THE SPEAKER: But I do not know what connection that may have with the hon. member.

MR. CONNOR: Well, sir, he did. I took the words down at the time; I have them here, and I can give them to you.

THE SPEAKER: I do not see how that applies to the hon. member.

MR. CONNOR: Well, he applied it to me. The member for Plantagenet (Mr. Hassell) made an interjection while the Premier was speaking. He stated the Premier had not said too much. That was when the Premier referred to the possibility of the reason for the trouble in the North being somewhat of a sexual nature, that probably if the sexes were kept more apart this trouble would not exist; and the member for Plantagenet interjected. That hon. member should know a good deal about this question; consequently I did not think it was worth my while to interject to put him right, because I presume he knows all about it. But I think it was rather unwise of him to make the interjection at that stage of the debate. The question of indenture has been talked of here; and it has been discussed whether it be wise that the system should continue. Well, as far as my constituency is concerned—and that is not in the North-West but in the far North—I do not think there is at present one single native under indenture there. There may be, but it is without my knowledge; and I hardly think it would be unknown to me if such were the case. I do not think there is such a thing as an indenture there; and I say that more contented or better-looked-after servants—I will not call them natives and I will not call them blacks, but servants—more contented servants of any people do not exist anywhere, either in Australia or in any other part of the world. I went through those places; I saw the "boys." Each of them has his own horse, his own saddle, his own quarters: they are well fed, well clothed, well looked after, and thoroughly contented.

MR. HASTIE: An inquiry will not hurt such people.

MR. CONNOR: I have demanded an inquiry before the hon. member interjecting thought of it. I am going to

make it more than an inquiry: I want a Royal Commission; and I will ask hon. members to have a Royal Commission, and then we shall settle once for all the question of this so-called terrible infliction on the natives of this country; these excuses for vain-glory in politics, and for gentlemen to show off their ability to talk and be sarcastic without having the faintest knowledge of what they are talking about—men who never saw the country about which they are talking, and who do not know anything about it; men who, if they did see it, would come back stones lighter than they are, because their condition would in consequence go off. I beg to move an amendment, if in order.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot move an amendment, unless the member for Subiaco will withdraw his amendment.

MR. DAGLISH: I am willing to do so, if I can move my amendment at a later stage.

THE SPEAKER: You can do so.

MR. DAGLISH: With the permission of the House, I will withdraw my amendment, to afford my friend an opportunity of moving his.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

MR. CONNOR: I move, as an amendment:

That in line 1 the words "Select Committee" be struck out, and "Royal Commission" inserted in lieu thereof.

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan): I second the amendment.

MR. F. WALLACE (Mt. Magnet): I understand it is the desire of hon. members that this debate should be adjourned, and I accordingly move the adjournment.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

PAPERS—KALGOORLIE RESIDENCE AREAS, MRS. MECHAM.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie) moved:

That all the papers in connection with the granting of four residence areas, known as Lot 509, to Mrs. Meham, of Kalgoorlie, be laid on the table of the House.

The object of the motion was to clear up a matter that had for some time been occupying the minds of people at Kalgoorlie. One Mrs. Meham had, he

understood, been granted four residence areas in Kalgoorlie, which were known as Lot 509. It was, he understood, contrary to the Act for anyone to hold more than one residence area; and the motion was moved that members might see from the papers exactly what Mrs. Mecham had done for the country that she should receive four areas. She had now, he believed, received the fee simple. On portion of this Lot 509, one Mrs. Marshall had been living, whose husband at the time was sick; and when the ground had been made over to Mrs. Mecham, Mrs. Marshall had been told to leave this portion of land, which was evidently Crown land, and also to remove her sick husband. This she did; and Mrs. Marshall now considered she was entitled to compensation. On several occasions this matter had been brought before him (Mr. Johnson); he had been unable to get to the bottom of it; and he desired to have the papers laid on the table to have the matter cleared up, and thoroughly to understand why and when the ground was made over to Mrs. Mecham.

Mr. J. RESIDE (Hannans) seconded the motion. He had been approached on the matter, and knew a little about the facts or supposed facts of the case. The party referred to, Marshall, was one of the pioneers of Kalgoorlie, and camped on this particular plot of ground somewhere about 1893. After he had lived there for some considerable time the ground was claimed by Mrs. Mecham, and, through what had been hinted at as a species of jobbery, she was allowed to register an acre of land as four residence areas, although, he was told, Marshall himself had been refused registration for the block on which his house was fixed. Afterwards Mrs. Mecham endeavoured to get the Marshalls to pay ground rent, and they refused to do so; then she tried to evict Marshall, and what had been termed a bogus case had been brought on at the police court. Eventually, an order was obtained from the Supreme Court to evict Marshall. Mr. Marshall was then on his death-bed, and it was supposed that owing to the removal under these circumstances his death was hastened; and he (Mr. Reside) certainly thought the treatment meted out to the Marshall family was unjust. Undoubtedly there had been a great deal of talk in

Kalgoorlie over this particular case, and it was only right that the papers asked for should be produced. He did not know whether the Marshalls were entitled to legal compensation or not, but there had been not exactly fair-play in connection with the case. The matter should be ventilated, and if justice could be done, some consideration should be shown to Mrs. Marshall for the unjust and cruel treatment meted out to her.

THE PREMIER: The Government had no intention of opposing the motion.

Motion put and passed.

RETURN—DIVIDEND DUTY, AMOUNT COLLECTED.

On motion by Mr. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas), ordered that a return be laid upon the table of the House, showing the amount collected to date under the provisions of the Dividend Duty Act 1899, and from whom such duties had been collected.

MENZIES-LEONORA RAILWAY.

Mr. A. E. Morgans (Coolgardie) had given notice of the following motion, but was not present to move it:

That in view of the fact that the largest proportion of traffic on the Menzies-Leonora railway is east of Malcolm, this House authorises the Government to alter the Act, to divert the extension of the railway from Mt. Malcolm to Leonora in the direction of Murrin Murrin instead, where much more important interests will be served, as well as a much larger population.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): This notice of motion was practically delaying the construction of the earthworks. The Minister constructing the works had told him the construction of the earthworks had ceased on account of the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Kingsmill): There was no contract. This was an important matter. Would the House express an opinion?

THE SPEAKER: It could not be done. If the member who had given notice of the motion was not present to move it, the motion lapsed, but it could be reinstated on another day.

THE PREMIER: Could not some other member move it?

THE SPEAKER: Someone else could move it.

Motion lapsed.

RAILWAY WORKSHOPS: MIDLAND JUNCTION SITE, TO INQUIRE.

Mr. H. Daglish had given notice of the following motion:—

That in the opinion of this House: 1, a Royal Commission should be appointed forthwith to take evidence and report as speedily as possible upon the question whether the Midland Junction site is the most suitable place for the erection of the railway workshops. 2, Pending the report of the said Commission, no unnecessary expenditure should be incurred upon the workshops in course of construction at Midland Junction.

MR. DAGLISH (Subiaco) said: When he gave notice of the motion, he fully intended to divide the House on the subject, but he found the matter was one which had caused a deal of feeling in the past, and that the result was beyond a question. A large number of engines connected with the Railway Department were unfit for use; and as a debate on this matter would delay things, and prevent the locomotives from being put into working order quickly, he recognised that in the interests of the State and the efficiency of the Railway Department it was desirable the notice of motion should be withdrawn. Therefore, he asked leave to withdraw it.

Notice of motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:36 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 29th August, 1901.

Papers presented—Question: Pilot Service, Steamer *Pelican*—Question: Public Battery at Yalgoo, Tailings—Question: Railway Stationmasters' Hours of Duty—Question: Premier's Department, as to Abolishing—Question: Woodcutters' Licenses, Revenue—Question: Kurrawang Firewood Company, Building Sand—Question: Goomalling Railway, Time for Completion—Question: Midland Railway Debentures—Motion for Papers: Countess G.M. Company, Bonus—Motion: Meat Supply, to Increase and Cheapen; Inquiry—Motion: Gold Mines, Inspection by Shareholders (adjourned)—Motion: Perth Commouage, Fee Simple not to be granted (adjourned)—Motion: Immigration of Domestic Servants, not to Assist; Amendment passed—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Regulation for the hours of attendance of public officers.

By THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Report by the Engineer-in-Chief on the proposed Australian Transcontinental Railway.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—PILOT SERVICE, STEAMER "PELICAN."

MR. F. McDONALD, without notice, asked the Premier: 1, If the steamer *Pelican* has been handed over to the pilot service as given forth in the public Press. 2, If not, is this steamer to be handed over to the pilots? 3, Who is to have control? 4, Is the crew which is working the pilot service at the present time to work the steamer *Pelican*, when handed over?

THE PREMIER replied: It is reported to me the steamer *Pelican* is at present being examined with a view to transference for service as pilot steamer. Instructions have been given that there must be no delay in providing this steamer for the pilots.

QUESTION—PUBLIC BATTERY AT YALGOO, TAILINGS.

MR. WALLACE asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Whether it is true that he is inviting tenders for the purchase of tailings from stone crushed at the late Yalgoo Public Battery. 2, If so, whether he proposes to compensate the various owners of those tailings, and how.