

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Perhaps so, and that may relieve the position a little. The expenditure under the General Loan Fund amounted to £4,159,236, as compared with the previous year's expenditure of £4,413,606, and £3,936,833 for 1923-24. The bulk of the expenditure was under the heading of "Development of Agriculture," the total of that amount being £2,259,276. Of that amount group settlement accounted for £1,103,972, the Agricultural Bank £257,072, soldier settlement £597,359, and assistance to settlers £192,710, making a total of £2,151,113 spent in assistance to settlers on the land. The expenditure under the heading of "Railways" was £511,630, of which £157,781 went for rolling stock. On the extension of the electricity supply £59,014 was spent, while the expenditure on water supply and sewerage works was also large, amounting to £633,277, of which the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage absorbed £539,482.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and passed.

House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 4th July, 1925.

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

CONDOLENCE—THE LATE MR. J. B. HOLMAN.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.32]: It is with the deepest regret that I rise to move a motion of sympathy respecting the death of the late Mr. J. B. Holman, a member of this House who passed away since the close of last session. Mr. Holman was one of our oldest members, having been first elected for the Murchison district in December, 1901, and having represented that constituency continuously for more than 20 years. Mr. Holman was a prominent member of this House and took a most active and keen interest in its deliberations. More than 20 years ago he held office as Minister for Railways and Labour in the Daglish Government, and from 1911 to 1917 he filled the office of Chairman of Committees. In that office his conduct of business was such as to earn the praise and approval of every member of the House. Mr. Holman was a thoroughly conscientious representative of the interests he espoused in the House. He was possessed of rare energy and determination. He served the people of this State well, and I am sure every member of the House deeply regrets his passing. Older members will recall the tenacity of purpose with which the late member maintained his opinions on measures that came before the House. Though for 25 years he filled a prominent position in the political life of this State, it was perhaps in the industrial

sphere that his best and greatest influence was manifested. There are in the mines and forests of this State large numbers of men who will long remember with gratitude the services he rendered on their behalf. It is with the deepest feeling that I move this motion expressing sympathy with those who have been so sadly bereaved by his passing. I move—

That this House places on record its deep regret at the death of John Barkell Holman, Esq., M.L.A., and tenders to his family its sincerest sympathy in the loss it has sustained, and desires that the terms of this resolution be communicated to the widow and family of the late gentleman by Mr. Speaker.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.36]: I should like to endorse every word that has fallen from the lips of the Premier. Mr. Holman was a good friend. That much all who knew him can certify. He was in Parliament when first I came here, and was very helpful to me in the early days of my life in the House. As Chairman of Committees he was always ready to help every member, and was particularly considerate to those who sat in Opposition. Then, too, as a legislator he certainly possessed great ability and rendered valuable services to the State. In the industrial world he has left an example that might well be followed. He was vigorous and capable, always standing by those whom he represented, although he was always fair and courageous, and ready to tell them when he thought they were wrong. In every respect the passing of Mr. Holman is to be deplored. Personally I regret it very deeply. It has left a blank in the House that will be very difficult to fill. I did not know him when he was a Minister of the Crown, but I make no doubt he was a very capable Minister indeed, for he was certainly a capable administrator of affairs. Naturally, a man of his temperament was bound to make some enemies, probably a few bitter ones, but he also made a very great many friends, and friends of the right sort.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray - Wellington) [4.38]: I think I am the oldest member of the House, and I should like to say a few words on this occasion. I endorse what has been so well expressed by the Premier and by the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Holman was my Minister for nearly two years when I was Commissioner of Railways. At first there were little differences between us,

as was only natural since we were both fairly determined men; but after that Mr. Holman gave me the squarest deal I had from any Minister while I was Commissioner of Railways.

Question put and passed, members standing.

PAPERS—GROUP SETTLEMENT ROYAL COMMISSION.

The Premier presented the report of the Royal Commission on Group Settlement.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I ask the Premier to set aside a day for the discussion of this report, or at all events to provide an opportunity for the House to discuss it apart from the debate on the Address-in-reply, members not yet having had a chance to peruse it.

The **PREMIER**: I rather think there will be full opportunity during the debate on the Address-in-reply.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But we have not yet read the report.

The **PREMIER**: Failing reference to this report, there will be nothing for members to speak upon in the Address-in-reply debate. The report is now printed. I recognise, of course, that it will take some little time for members to digest it.

Mr. Sampson: It is indigestible.

The **PREMIER**: Opportunity will be afforded to discuss it either on the Address-in-reply or on the Budget, which I hope to bring down in the course of three or four weeks. Alternatively, I will endeavour to see that fitting opportunity is afforded for discussing the report.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I want to hear the Minister for Lands on it.

The **Minister for Lands**: I have nothing to say about it; I have only to get on with the work.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS (5)—RAILWAYS.

Eastern Districts Facilities.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: 1. Will the provision of the authorised railway facilities for the Quellagetting, York-rakine, and North Baandee settlers be started this year? 2. Is he aware that it is over 17 years since many of these settlers were promised railway transport? 3. When

will the promise to soldier settlers, who were induced to take up land in the Lake Brown, Campion, Goomarin, Geelakin and adjacent areas, be honoured? 4, Is he aware that the old settlers at Goomarin have been waiting for over 14 years for transport and, as these older settlers proved the district a safe wheat area, can he indicate what steps are being taken to provide this necessary facility? 5, Is he aware that this season in the four districts named 25,548 acres are cropped, and 14,034 acres are under fallow; and that over 100 settlers are concerned, many of whom have been carting water and wheat 14 to 27 miles? 6, As the Advisory Board are to inspect the country east of Pithara-Dalwallinu this week, would it not be wise to extend the inspection to the extreme limit of country suitable for wheatgrowing, and plan a systematic lay-out for proposed railways?

The PREMIER replied: These matters are receiving the consideration of the Government.

Stronach-Dutton System.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has the promised inquiry been made into the Stronach-Dutton road rail system? 2, If so, is this system likely to be suitable for our pioneer wheat districts? 3, Has inquiry been made into the various light line systems, some of which were utilised with success during the war?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, 2, & 3, The Agent General was requested to make inquiries and report, but as the Premier, when in England, became aware of the fact that the newly appointed Engineer in Chief had investigated the Stronach-Dutton and other rail systems, the question has been left in his hands, and his report should be made available shortly after he assumes duty in the State.

Merredin, Trucking Yards and Refreshment Rooms.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, In view of the obsolete character of the existing trucking yards and the unsuitability of their position, will he consider removing them to the intended position at the east end of the Merredin railway yard? 2, Is he aware that the Licensing Board insist that improvements be made to the refreshment rooms at the Merredin

station, failing which they will refuse the license?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1 and 2, It is recognised that extensive improvements are required at Merredin passenger station and goods yards, the total estimated cost of which is £26,000. It has not yet been found practicable to provide for this expenditure. The matter will again be considered when the Loan Estimates are being dealt with.

Tammin Platform.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that Tammin station last season despatched 84,084 bags of wheat—the second highest total from any station in the State—and does he not consider that a station of such importance as these figures disclose, should have an adequate platform? 2, Will this deficiency be supplied?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1 and 2, The question of provision of a platform at Tammin for passengers has nothing whatever to do with that of the shipment of wheat at that station. The existing passenger accommodation is in accordance with the present standard for similar country stations.

Pilfering at Pemberton.

Mr. TAYLOR (for Mr. J. H. Smith) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that there is continuous pilfering of goods at Pemberton railway station? 2, Will he immediately place an officer in charge to protect the public interests?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Reports have been received to that effect. 2, Although Pemberton is not within the jurisdiction of the Minister for Railways arrangements are being made for the manager of the State Sawmills to confer with the Commissioner of Railways with a view to the protection of goods at that place.

QUESTION—MERREDIN COURT HOUSE.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Justice: 1, How many cases were tried before the magistrates at York and Merredin respectively from the 1st January, 1925, to the 30th June, 1925? 2, Will he consider the providing of a courthouse at Merredin?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, Police Court—York 139, Merredin 106; Local Court—York 9, Merredin 16. 2, The matter is now the subject of correspondence with the Public Works Department.

QUESTION—POLICE QUARTERS, TAMMIN.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Justice: When will police quarters be built at Tammin?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: So soon as funds are available a police station and quarters will be erected at Tammin.

QUESTION—WIRE NETTING SUPPLIES.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Do the Government intend to deal with the dingo, rabbit, and fox pests? 2, Can anything be done to make supplies of wire netting available to settlers where the pests are working most havoc?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, As in the past, the Government intend to deal with the dingo, rabbit, and fox pests with all the vigour possible with the funds, facilities, and power at its disposal. As indicated in the Governor's Speech, it is proposed to ask Parliament to give the Government increased powers to more effectually deal with these pests. 2, Already the Agricultural Bank is making advances to approved settlers, and the Federal Government has arranged for supplies of netting, the State Government undertaking the allocation and distribution of same.

QUESTION—WATER SUPPLIES, AGRICULTURAL.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. Cunningham): 1, Has he read the article headed "Tammin Rock Dam" which appeared in the "Sunday Times" of the 8th March, 1925? 2, Are the statements correct; and if so, will he state (a) What was the reason for dismantling the dam and running the water to waste? (b) What was the cost of the dam, channelling, quarters, telephone, etc.? (c) What was the cost of

the rabbit-proof fence erected prior to the dismantling of the dam? 3, Will he furnish a synopsis of the intended efforts to provide the area east and north east of Merredin, including Lake Brown, Campion, and Geelakin Rock, with a water supply?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM replied: The Tammin Rock Dam is controlled by the Minister for Railways, and his replies are as follow: 1, The article which appeared on the 15th March (not the 8th) has been read. 2, No. (a) The dam has not been dismantled; (b) £12,344; (c) £362. 3, The Chief Engineer for Water Supply has been authorised to make surveys and investigations with a view to locating water.

QUESTION—SUPERPHOSPHATES, ACID CONTENTS.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Have the Agricultural Department any data to prove that the promised increase of £1 in value of phosphoric acid content of super. in lieu of a reduction in price has been carried out by the local manufacturers? 2, Have the department systematically watched the farmers' interest in this regard by surprise sampling at undisclosed points, between the works and the purchaser? 3, Is he aware that complaints are rife that no increase of yield has resulted from the use of the same quantity of super. per acre? 4, Is he aware that bag-dealers, contrary to the pact, are readily buying bags used for this year's supply, which would indicate less, rather than more, phosphoric acid content?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes. These particulars show that, based on the old rates charged for the lower grade superphosphate, the present price of the high grade would be—£6 18s. 1d., as its present cost is £5 7s. 6d.; this shows a reduction of £1 10s. 7d. 2, Yes; also on the farms. 3, No. It is known that the anticipation of some farmers for higher returns from the application of the same amount—and also from increased amounts—of the higher grade superphosphate have not been realised. 4, The Minister is not aware that bag-dealers are now buying these bags from this year's supply, or that the condition of the bags would indicate the relative amounts of phosphoric acid in the fertilizer.

QUESTION—HOSPITALS, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister (Hon. S. W. Munsie): 1, What are the Government's proposals regarding the unsatisfactory financial position of country and town hospitals? 2, Will the promised contribution to the Kellerberrin X-ray plant be made this year?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (for Hon. S. W. Munsie) replied: 1, Certain proposals designed to strengthen the financial position of hospitals are under consideration, and a Bill may be introduced during the current session. 2, A subsidy, on the £ for £ basis, was promised the Kellerberrin Hospital in January, 1923. Nothing was done by the committee until July, 1924, when inquiry was made on behalf of the committee as to whether the previous promise still held good. The question was again considered but confirmation depended upon the availability of funds, and the committee was so informed. Later, the committee was told that no funds could be found, and accordingly the local committee proceeded to instal the required plant, and to met the whole cost themselves.

QUESTION—COMMODITIES, INCREASED PRICES.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware of the unnecessary increases in prices of primary products and other commodities immediately prior to and since the cessation of coastal shipping? 2, Will he have stringent investigations made immediately to ascertain the justification for these increases? 3, If no justification can be found for the increases, will he take the necessary steps to protect the public against this form of exploitation?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. It is realised that prices have been detrimentally affected by the cessation of shipping. 2 and 3, No legislative authority for the control of prices exists, but as a settlement of the shipping dispute has apparently been reached, prices and supplies should shortly become normal.

QUESTION—PROHIBITION POLL.

Mr. STUBBS asked the Minister for Justice: 1, What was the cost to the State of the prohibition poll of April last? 2, Will he this session introduce a Bill to amend

that section of the Licensing Act which makes it imperative to take the referendum every five years?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, The cost was £4,730 15s. 11d. 2, As the referendum is taken only once in five years, the consideration of this question is not one of urgency.

QUESTION—TIMBER AREAS.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to throw open the timber areas at present held over for public competition by tender, after duly advertising such intention? 2, If so, when?

The PREMIER replied: 1, All timber cutting rights on Crown land are disposed of by public auction or tender, in accordance with the provision of the Forests Act, 1918. 2, Permit areas are advertised only as applied for, and each application is considered on its merits.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

On motion by the PREMIER, ordered:

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m. if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS—PRECEDENCE.

On motion by the PREMIER, ordered:

That on Tuesdays and Thursdays Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £1,913,500.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.5]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day, and to enable the business aforesaid to be entered upon and dealt with before the Address-in-reply is adopted.

Question put and passed.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

In Committee of Supply.

The House having resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. Lutey in the Chair,

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.10]: 1 move—

That there be granted to His Majesty, on account of the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1926, a sum not exceeding £1,913,500.

This is the usual supply asked for at the beginning of the session.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Two months' supply.

The PREMIER: Yes. It is based upon the expenditure for the corresponding period of the previous financial year. The Estimates are now well under way, and I hope they will be down within a few weeks, so that hon. members may have an opportunity of dealing with the finances if they so desire. At this moment I do not think there is need for me to say more than that the money is merely to carry on the services until the end of August.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Committee of Ways and Means.

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

On motion by the **PREMIER**, resolved—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending the 30th June, 1926, a sum not exceeding £850,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, £750,000 from the General Loan Fund, £10,500 from the Government Property Sales Fund, £3,000 from the Land Improvement Loan Fund, and £300,000 from the Public Account for the purpose of temporary advances to be made by the Colonial Treasurer.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Bill introduced, etc.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, Bill introduced, passed through all stages, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*Second Day.**Amendment—No Confidence.*

Debate resumed from the 30th July.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.18]: I congratulate the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) upon her election. It will have been noticed that the Opposition did not send down anyone to contest the seat against her. We might have done so had it not been that she was a lady and the daughter of a former member of this Chamber. Her speech was pleasant to listen to, more especially as it is rather a difficult position for a new member to be called upon to address the House on the first day. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) was not so fortunate. His good nature got the better of him, and, bearing in mind the desire of the ladies to participate in afternoon tea, he was not able to say as much about the harbour and other Bunbury matters as he desired. The debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply affords an opportunity to members sitting behind the Government to speak freely, frankly and clearly what they think about the Government. It is the only chance for them to do so because if they take exception to Bills their actions may tell against the Government, but that does not apply to the present debate. If members behind the Government desire to criticise they should not do it half-heartedly as the member for Bunbury did. First I will refer to the Premier's visit to England and then give him an account of the work of Ministers during his absence. I doubt very much if he has been given an accurate account by any one of those associated with him in the Government.

The Minister for Lands: It is not likely we would tell him about our bad points.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: You did not tell him about the laying on of hands and a great many other things.

The Minister for Lands: They were good things.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am convinced that the country will be the better off for the visit of the Premier to the Old Land. It is necessary that the Premier of this State should be known at the other end, particularly at the present stage of our history, because there is so much to do here and so much depends on the good will of the people in the Old Land. We could not

finance without their help. The Premier has stated that he made satisfactory financial arrangements while he was at Home and that the London and Westminster Bank had agreed to continue the arrangement I arrived at when I visited England. That is a good thing, for it means a great saving in connection with the overdraft, particularly during the time we have to wait for a favourable market. I have heard good reports from people in England of the impression made by the Premier during his sojourn in the Motherland. I hope the mining people were impressed by his attitude, and I know that the Premier's work will operate for the good of Western Australia. I wish I could say that the Ministers he left behind did work of an equally useful character. The acting Premier (Hon. W. C. Angwin) sat tight indeed while the Premier was away.

The Minister for Lands: And he kept his temper.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He did not keep his hands in his pockets all the time, but he did not let anyone get to the Treasury while he was in charge. He had to undertake many tasks and he stuck at his work all the time. He had a very strenuous time and apart from one or two happenings, of which I will speak later, he did fairly well. In fact, he did not do much harm. The Premier will be glad to hear that his other Ministers travelled widely and extensively during his absence. I am inclined to think that they did a little bit of Federal electioneering. We know it is rather bad to throw bricks too early and for that reason I do not know that his Ministers did much harm. We do know, however, that works that should have been put in hand were delayed on the score that the Premier had to make his financial arrangements in England. Far too many times we were told that works would have to wait until the Premier returned. I had a few requests to make and in view of the fact that I had said "Yes" so many times to the acting Premier, when he was a private member, I thought I would have received a similar reply to my request.

The Minister for Lands: I gave you everything you asked for.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The acting Premier told me when I asked for some cash for my district that the matter would have to stand over until the Premier returned. Since then I know he has arranged with the Premier to make the money available so that I am now content. Although the acting

Premier was a very busy man he found time to visit the group settlements. He put in some good work there. I gather that the work he did there will result in an increase in the per capita payments made to this State by the Federal Government. Some years ago when we were on the groups, we met a lady from Cornwall and some time afterwards, when the present Minister for Lands had assumed Ministerial office, he again visited the group settlement. This particular lady presented to him a very beautiful child that had arrived in the meantime. The Minister's fame spread far and wide and now he will be able to tell us—I do not know that I could tell the House—just what happened during the Premier's absence.

The Minister for Lands: I will tell him all about it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know, but I do know that the Minister claims but apparently he has some special power. Merely by laying on his hands he has been able to do most useful work. Such power is not given to most of us and I really think that the Minister for Lands should resign his office and wander round the whole of Australia exercising his wonderful power. He had a telegram from two ladies at a group settlement telling him that two other ladies from the group had each presented this great country of ours with beautiful children.

Mr. Panton: Are they Cousin Jacks?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know, but I do know that the Minister claims some little credit for it. It really was the best work he did during the Premier's absence.

The Minister for Lands: Hickson showed no such results.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But you produced tangible results. The Premier was away for only a short time and this was indeed quick work. The Minister for Mines has been active and I hope he will be able, when we come to consider the Mining Estimates, to give a good account of the mining industry. The Minister for Works, as usual, was a very busy man, doing work all over the place. By some means, however, he missed my electorate whenever he had an opportunity to make a grant for the repairing of roads. He has done something for us this time, I am glad to say. The work of government in this country is no easy task. The work of preparing the Governor's Speech was surely a

very difficult one. It contains, to some extent, a record of ancient work but there is a little that is new as well. Some of the paragraphs are rather cleverly set out. I congratulate the Premier on the wording of some clauses in the Governor's Speech. I will deal with migration later. The Speech states that land settlement is very satisfactory. We shall ascertain how satisfactory it is when we get the Minister's returns. It is satisfactory, as Ministers have stated, that the harvest has been a very good one, producing a record tonnage of wheat. If the farmers had received the top price for their output the position would have been very satisfactory indeed, but I am afraid they will not all receive that top price. Under the heading of Railways the Speech says—

Following on the introduction of an increased land tax estimated to produce a return of £45,000, railway rates were reduced by a like amount as from the 1st May, 1925.

I call that rather clever. It really means that 12 months' land tax, representing £45,000, was collected, and that the reduction of railway freights was dated back only two months. According to a Press statement, the amount of reduction for the two months was £7,000. That paragraph in the Speech is indeed cleverly worded.

The Premier: People will get the full amount this year.

Mr. George: We shall have to pay land tax for two full years and not get freight reductions for two full years.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This represents an exceedingly good deal for the Treasurer, who has made nearly £40,000 on it. Apparently the Treasurer has much money still to collect from the land tax because, so far as I can ascertain, none of the small land holders have been notified that they have to pay the tax. That point evidently escaped the Premier when he was framing that paragraph, perhaps because he had not long been back from England.

The Minister for Lands: He did not have the money and so he could not give it away.

Mr. George: He is collecting it, anyhow.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Treasurer got the money and did not give it away.

The Minister for Lands: You said a lot of it had not been paid.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I believe that a lot of people have not received their notices, but the point is that the Premier

will collect more than £45,000. When he gets the revaluation, I think he will collect more than £60,000. The Minister for Works intends to revive the Main Roads Bill in the Upper House. What happened last year? The Bill passed this House and we agreed to the imposition of an additional halfpenny tax on property to provide the necessary revenue.

The Minister for Works: That was struck out of the land tax.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, it was not. The Main Roads Bill went to the Council and was there withdrawn by the Government. Then the Premier promised to give back the money collected to the people who paid the tax by way of a reduction of railway freights. Now the Minister for Works says he is going to revive the Main Roads Bill in the Council. Is there to be an increase in the land tax to meet the charge under the Main Roads Bill? Of course we shall know later on, but if that is the intention, it is not playing the game. In fact, it is rather sharp practice. The people cannot go on paying increased land tax indefinitely, and apart from that, all increased taxation has a tendency to restrict employment.

The Minister for Works: The amount provided in the land tax Bill was reduced by the amount provided in the Main Roads Bill.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It was not. Before the land tax Bill went through, I asked the Minister whether he intended to withdraw the Main Roads Bill in the Council, but I could get no reply. The Bill had gone from this House before we were told it was to be withdrawn. The reduction of railway freights has been so small that there was no real benefit from it. The Minister for Railways has, in fact, increased railway freights in respect of low rate goods.

The Minister for Railways: We increased the lower rate goods for a fortnight.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister should consider wiping out that provision. Wheat is being carried to the seaboard even in the present month. Further, it is wise to encourage the use of fertiliser, and there was no need to limit the lower freights to the period of wheat carting. Wheat carting will not be over next year by the 1st June. I suggest that the Minister allows the old conditions to stand, whereby one rate was provided for fertiliser going into the country. All this country needs

phosphate; otherwise it will not produce, and if it does not produce, the railways will not get any revenue.

The Minister for Railways: You had cheap freights for only a certain period and then imposed dearer rates.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I want the Minister to reverse the position.

The Minister for Railways: We are following your good example.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The country needs cheap rates spread over a longer period. The railways have achieved wonderful results, particularly in the last four years, and we might all feel proud of them. In 1919-20 the railways showed a loss of £425,000, in 1920-21 a loss of £454,000, in 1921-22 a loss of £288,000, in 1922-23 a loss of £92,000, in 1923-24 a profit of £95,000, and in 1924-25 a profit of £199,000. So the financial position of the railways has been improved in four years by over £600,000. That is a marvellous result, due to the fact that the men on the railways are working together well and are satisfying the public, notwithstanding the high freights and the competition of motor buses. The motor buses, I think, are not likely to hurt the railways very much. I congratulate the Commissioner of Railways and his staff on their achievement. That is as it should be. The great point is that the policy we have stood for is producing the results. In 1919 I said we would depend upon increased production for the straightening out of our finances, and I pointed to the railways and to other things that were making large losses each year. The result of the land settlement policy has meant increased trade from one end of the State to the other. If the Minister for Mines could arrange for some great gold-producing mines to be opened up, the State would receive a wonderful impetus, but seeing that gold production is down, and that there is less chance of a big output from that source, we must go strong for production in some other direction. I shall deal with land settlement later on. At this stage I merely wish to stress the fact that the land settlement policy of the past, particularly of the last few years, has produced the improvement of £600,000 in the railway operations of the last four years. The country might well be proud of this result, because it is not a temporary improvement; it is a permanent and lasting advantage to the Treasurer. This improvement in the result of the working of the railways in the last four

years would be sufficient to pay interest on all the money that has been loaned for land settlement, including soldier settlement, in the last six years. Will not the public derive some comfort from that? Yet we hear croakers asserting that the State is losing population because we are settling on the land men without experience and without money. The Premier will be able to tell us of other advantages that trade contributions will represent, amounting probably to a like sum. From a well thought-out and well-directed land settlement policy is derived an interest that a Jew would be satisfied to collect, an interest in addition to the indirect gain. I am glad that the Minister for Agriculture has secured land in the Northam district for an agricultural college, and that the college will soon be established there. During my term of office we had an amount on the Estimates, and I had hoped to secure a property alongside the Spencer's Brook station. That site would have been preferable because it would have been at a point where all the lines from the wheat country converge, and thus would have been more easy of access. We negotiated for a considerable time, but there were difficulties in the way of securing that site. The present Government have done the next best thing by obtaining "Muresk." The Minister for Agriculture is also pushing on with the work of testing light lands at Wongan Hills. It is necessary to know just what our light lands are capable of producing. Just as it is difficult to work mines having ore of the low value of 7 dwts., so it is difficult to work land returning only 7-bushel crops. The tariff operates as strongly against land development as it does against the mining industry. Therefore the testing of the light lands is necessary. The Premier has arranged to obtain a ship from the Old Country. The conditions offered by the British Government rendered it imperative to obtain the vessel there. Apart from the fact that it can be built in England at greatly reduced cost, the difference between the Australian and British rates of interest, a little time ago, was sufficient to repay the loan in 30 years. This, of course, is a material consideration to a country like ours. When the Labour Government took office, the last spikes were about to be driven in the Busselton-Margaret River, Narenbeen-Merredin, and Margaret River-Flinders Bay railways. The Esperance-Northwards and Piawaning-Northwards lines are about completed,

and the Lake Grace-Newdegate railway is well in hand. The Government have indicated their intention of proceeding with the construction of the railway to link Salmon Gums with Norseman. I have no objection to that at all, except that there are other lines that the Government should build. The Dale River railway should certainly be constructed; the people have waited for that for a long time. Of course we are all to blame for the delay, and the line has been badly needed for the last 20 years. I hope the work of construction will not be any longer delayed. Then there is the Yarramony line promised in 1911 by the Government, of which the Premier was a member. I hope that also will be constructed. I should like to see the lines from Pemberton towards Nornalup, and from Denmark towards Nornalup, started. If we are to have development these railways must be built. We need not fear to go on with the work of construction. The position justifies the building of all these lines without delay, for unless they are constructed, it will be impossible to have settlement in any of the new areas.

Mr. Clydesdale: And the tramlines should be included.

Hon. Sir James MITCHELL: Yes, if the Government own the tramway system, as they do, they have a responsibility that they must not shirk. I notice that a good many appointments have been made in the Government service. I am not going to criticise them, because I do not happen to know anything of the gentlemen who have been appointed. On the Fremantle Harbour Trust an appointment has been made to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. Murray. I hope the right man has been selected. At any rate, I suppose we shall hear all about him from the Minister in charge when we come to the vote on the Estimates. The financial position of the country justifies most of these new appointments that the Government are making. We need useful engineers and officers who will assist in the development of the country. But I would like to say that I do not think the Minister for Works is entitled to make appointments of any description except on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner. It is a dangerous thing to do and should not be tolerated. All appointments should be made in a constitutional manner. The Civil Service Association has protested against the method adopted, and the Premier has replied to

that protest. Doubtless when we reach the Estimates we shall be able to deal with all matters of this description. I notice that amongst the legislation it is proposed to introduce, is included a Bill having for its object the marketing of produce. I do not know what that means, or how far the Government intend to go. Another proposed Bill will provide for a State Labour Exchange. Is it the intention of the Government to close all private labour exchanges? I hope not. Amongst the other Bills it is proposed to submit, some are fairly important, for instance, the Bill to deal with land drainage. That should occupy the attention of members for a considerable time. The legislation proposed by the Government is mostly restrictive, and not quite as helpful as I should like to have seen suggested in the Governor's Speech. We are going to deal with all sorts of questions which will mean less freedom for the people without taking much notice of their pockets. I shall be interested to see the Vermin Bill when it is brought along. There is so much vacant land and so few people spread over our immense area that it is impossible to do much without Government assistance. The extermination of the dingoes and rabbits is a national question and the Government must do their part. It would be possible to do a great deal more than has been done if the position were as it used to be when the Government carried the responsibility. The position is so serious now that we must vote a considerable sum of money for the eradication of these pests. I am aware of the Treasurer's difficulties. There is a good deal to do and we have not an overflowing Treasury. There are two Governments at work, Federal and State. The policy of the Federal Government is the policy of Australia, and we are bound to admit that extraordinary encouragement has been given by that Government towards the growth of cities. We have been accustomed to hear that farmers have been spoon-fed. If that be so, the city folk have been fed with a shovel, particularly the people living in the cities of the Eastern States. The State Government, on the other hand, have devoted the whole of their attention to the development of the land, but the great difficulty has been the limited extent to which it has been possible to go in respect of direct taxation. In this regard enormous sums are collected by the Federal Government. Only last month established another record in Customs revenue. That does not

mean that the people of Australia are getting all that they require made in Australia. If it were so there would not be such enormous collections through the Customs. Of course, a certain amount of the revenue is derived from intoxicating liquors. This State last year paid three millions in Customs and Excise. What would the Premier do if he had that three millions of money? Why, he would make the country fairly dance. Of course we get about £750,000 of it, but that total of three millions is not all that is collected from us by way of taxation. We have immense responsibilities that mean everything to the daily lives of the people. The position is difficult, and it must be remembered that direct taxation in an undeveloped country means limited revenue. Of course in a place like New South Wales, direct taxation means a great deal, but we cannot compare our population of 360,000 with the population of New South Wales. Our small number, none of whom is very rich, cannot provide the opportunity to raise money. Imagine what it must cost us when we pay such high prices for everything that is manufactured in Australia. For agricultural machinery we pay twice as much as we did before the high tariff came into existence. Perhaps the amount is two millions more. In a country like ours, land is our responsibility, and for the next 100 years we must see that it is made to produce. The Government are helping now by accepting the migration agreement, but they should do even more. The Disabilities Commission was sent by Mr. Bruce to this State to inquire into the difficulties under which we labour, and we are anxiously awaiting the result. When I appeared before them I said that we should have £1 per capita instead of the amount we were getting now, 25s. plus a special grant which was being reduced every year. I think we should have returned to us three-fourths of the whole of the Customs and Excise revenue collected in Western Australia. That would not hurt the revenue of Australia very much. It would be spent in development, and development is for the good of Australia as well as for the good of the State. It is not possible to clear land at Busselton or at Northam without contributing to the revenue of the Federal Government. The old arrangement should be reverted to, the arrangement by which the smaller States got three-fourths of the Customs and Excise revenue. We could then carry on comfortably and taxation could be reduced to the level at which it

exists in the Eastern States. We cannot expect manufacturers to come here while our present taxes are being levied. Neither can we expect people with money to lend it to us when they can place it to better advantage elsewhere. All these things come home to one, bit by bit. A perfectly reasonable way out would be for the Federal Government to give us for a term of 10 years three-fourths of the Customs and Excise revenue collected from this State. It is a crushing tariff that is in existence and if it is to remain, relief must be given to the people engaged in primary production.

The Minister for Railways: You were a very good witness before the Commission.

Hon. Sir James MITCHELL: I hope I was. I am sorry that I did not then make the suggestion I am making now, namely that we should have three-fourths of the Excise and Customs revenue. Every avenue of taxation has been exploited by the Federal Government, of course largely for war purposes, but I hope they will reduce the taxation as the expenditure due to war decreases. However, I suggest to the Premier that we make representations to them. He will ask, "Why didn't you do it when in office?" The reply is that we had no chance of discussing it with Federal Ministers, and it was not then quite clear to any of us that we had a right to it. I do not suppose we shall get it, but it certainly would be advisable to make the request. In a newly developed country all taxes are high. Even the local authorities have to tax pretty heavily to get their work done, and there are the State taxes and the Federal taxes—all sorts of taxes. For some of them, the taxes paid to the State Government, we get some return, but we get no return whatever from the Federal taxation, which is by far the largest. All these taxes retard production, create unemployment and cripple trade all along the line. We cannot manufacture here while taxation is so heavy, nor can we make low grade mining propositions pay. During the absence of the Premier, Mr. Hickey promised a gold bonus, and I suppose the Premier will have to provide it.

The Premier: He meant that the Federal people would provide it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If they do not pay up I am afraid you will have to pay. I hope the Federal Government will do something to make it possible to work our low grade shows. The Premier, when at Home, discussed with Mr. Amery the

establishment of the Dominions Department. That seems to be a wonderfully good idea. Crown Colonies are one thing, governed as they are from Downing-street, but Dominions are quite another thing and are very much more difficult for the Old Country. It is good that we shall have a Dominions Department that will treat us as self-governing sovereign States, apart from the Old Land, but willing to work in with the Empire generally. Under the Dominions Department we shall get very different treatment from what we have had. The Government of Western Australia will be able to say, "Here is a great work for the development of the State: will you take a hand with us?" The Dominions Department will be able to co-operate with us, just as the Federal Government can. At present, of course, the Imperial Government cannot co-operate with us. The new department will be a wonderfully good thing for this State. I do not know quite the sort of staff that will be built up, but it will be an excellent thing if they can have the staff composed of Englishmen with Australian experience, men such as the Minister for Lands. Of course, at first they will appoint people who will sympathise with us and wish to develop the outer lands of the Empire, and will come here for a month or two to be shown around, and will go away impressed with the greatness of the country but more or less mystified as to what is to be done. It will be the duty of the Government to keep in close touch with Mr. Amery. I hope he will not confine his attention to the Federal Government. Even to-day sovereign States can and do correspond direct with the Home authorities.

The Premier: He expects to come out himself next year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Premier will be able to correspond directly with the Dominions Department. Now I have something to say about finance. I rather suspect the Premier has made me a partner in this year's financial result, and I hope he will tell me about it when he gives me the information I am going to ask for. There is in the Estimates a line entitled "Departmental fees." It includes departmental fees, reimbursements and things of that kind. This money comes in largely as the result of money loaned to the Agricultural Bank, to the Workers' Homes Board and to individuals and corporations: it represents interest collected on money ad-

vanced by the Treasurer. We loaned last year about £2,300,000, and just about the same amount in the previous year. Taking it at two millions, the increased interest to be paid to the Treasurer would be about £120,000 or £140,000. But by some strange means this item, including reimbursements of interest, increased last year by only £40,000 over the previous year. In 1924-25 the increase was £208,000, and I do not suppose more than, say, £2,300,000 has been loaned to farmers this year. Since we started loaning in earnest to farmers there has been a pretty steady increase in the amount. In 1918-19 it was £455,938; in 1919-20 it was £564,934; in 1920-21 it was £759,702; in 1921-22 it was £864,848; in 1922-23 it was £992,989. Then suddenly in 1923-24 the increase dropped down to a mere £40,000. That is impossible! It cannot increase by merely £40,000, any more than it can properly increase this year by £108,000. It seems to me that what should have gone into last year has been carried over to this. Of course, there is nothing to be alarmed about. It is only that it makes so much difference to the two years' results; that is the position.

The Minister for Lands: The statements published were correct.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course so. Who says they were not? I say the money is rightly in the account, but it was put in at the wrong time.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But it was. The hon. member, who had been Acting Treasurer for something like six months, nearly fell off his chair when he heard what the financial results were to be last year. He got a shock. He did not know that the £80,000 was available, and so he was astounded when told that the deficit was going to be so small.

The Minister for Lands: You are the one who got the shock.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No. The hon. member frankly said he was astounded, staggered at the result.

The Minister for Lands: And some of your friends went so far as to say they were not paid.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The gentlemen whom the hon. member meets at the Trades Hall are not my friends.

The Minister for Lands: But it didn't come from the Trades Hall.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then it must have come from some of his lady friends, who are not very well skilled in finance. I say again the right money is now in the account; there is no suggestion of faking about it; but it was left out in my year and put in last year.

The Minister for Lands: It is because we assisted the farmers more than you did, and so we had more interest to come from them.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Before tea I was pointing out that reimbursements showed an increase last year of £40,000 as against an increase this year of £208,000. It was impossible that the amount could have increased by only £40,000 last year since we have advanced as additional capital for agricultural settlement over two millions of money. My contention is that £80,000 of it should have been credited to 1923-24, but found its way into this year's accounts. This enabled the Treasurer to reduce the deficit this year to £59,000, but it made the deficit in my last year of office £229,000. The latter amount should have been £149,000, and the deficit this year should have been £139,000. The surplus for the month of June last year was £202,000 as compared with June of this year £416,000.

The Minister for Lands: You have nothing to growl about. The "West Australian" said the credit was with you.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not speaking of the credit due. If I were seeking credit, I should go to the Minister for Lands who would readily give it to me.

The Minister for Lands: I do not care who gets the credit so long as the finances are right.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Neither do I, but a good deal was said by the Minister for Lands regarding the financial position during my term of office.

The Minister for Lands: All I said was---

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know what the Minister said. He said, "This is what we can do. This was done under Labour administration; that was the result under National administration. I really thought there would have been a credit balance this year. Still, the Treasurer got very close to it, no matter how that result was brought about.

The public can rest assured that the amount in the accounts is legitimately included, even if it was taken from the previous year and credited to this year.

The Minister for Lands: It was not taken from the previous year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But it was. Let me point out to the Premier that the increase in interest and sinking fund was £263,000 and the increase in reimbursements £208,000. It is impossible that so much interest could have been paid in that year on money loaned to the farmers. If the Premier can make clear whether I am right or wrong I shall be quite satisfied. He should be able to show where the additional revenue came from this year. I do not care a jot so long as the financial position of the country is satisfactory, and with the deficit down to £59,000 it is satisfactory. Money was saved this year largely by the Minister for Lands. He sat tight on the Treasury while the Premier was in England. There is no doubt about that.

The Minister for Lands: I was only carrying out instructions.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This is the first time in his life that the Minister has carried out instructions, and now he has done it at the wrong time. Miscellaneous services showed an expenditure of £117,000 this year as against £149,000 last year. This amount includes grants to local authorities and items of that kind which should not have been cut down. The Lands Department spent £18,000 less this year than last year.

The Minister for Lands: That was only in clearing, and some of it was in respect of firewood at the Peel Estate.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Anyhow, the present Government spent £18,000 less. I am talking about revenue account.

The Minister for Lands: It was charged to revenue account.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It seems to me that the lower expenditure was due to fewer surveyors being at work under the Lands Department, and if that is so, it is to be regretted. The Mines Department expenditure was a little less this year than last year. Yet the Minister for Mines has been going around the country stating that more money was being spent this year than previously. The revenue increase of £515,000 for the year includes reimbursements to the amount of £208,000, a cross-entry. The expenditure increased by a smaller amount, or there would not have been the surplus in

June. Where savings have been effected, however, they have been made on the wrong items. Still, I will not say anything more of the Government because of the results of the year. The improvement in the financial position will do us good with the public, with the Eastern States, and in London. The £346,000 by which the expenditure was greater than in the previous year was largely on account of interest. The profit on the railways this year is about £62,000 more than the sinking fund, and it is the first time for many years that the railways have contributed enough to cover sinking fund in addition to interest. That is a very satisfactory result, one that should make it possible for the Treasurer to reduce freights very considerably. Of course he must not use the railways as a revenue-making machine. He should take off £50,000 in railway freights, but he should do it quickly and not wait until May of next year. Let us have the reduction now. The railway earnings will increase because there is a greater area under crop this season. It is not the actual freight on wheat, wool and other produce or fertiliser that counts; it is the actual trade and activity generally that comes of production from the land. The fact that the railways have improved to the extent of £608,000 in the last four years, sufficient to cover interest on all the money advanced for land settlement during my five years and during the Premier's 16 months of office, justifies my contention that we cannot do too much in the way of land settlement. The wheat lands of the State are limited. Three years ago I told the people in England that it was of no use sending out men to settle on our wheat lands. We have to provide land for our own sons. Of course we might be able to open up other large areas, but if migrants come here, they must go to the South-West or to the North-West. There is no other opening. If there is no group settlement, there will be no migration. If we would only be true to ourselves and to the country, we would admit the value of the country. Everyone admits the value of our wheat lands: there is no question about that. If we had 10,000,000 acres of wheat land to throw open for selection to-morrow, it would be taken up in a very short time. The value of our wheat lands is known and accepted. The value of our South-West land is known, but is not generally accepted. Why is it not accepted? New Zealand lives entirely on its pastures. Our

South-West is patchy, just as is land elsewhere. Victoria, rich and all as it is, has not all good land, and New Zealand is very patchy. In the Old Country, the quality of the land changes rapidly. We have the soil and the climate, and we have produced the crops. Our South-West land has been tested and not found wanting. The Minister for Lands has seen pasture in the South-West practically equal to the pasture in the Old Land. The South-West can produce milk, butter, cheese, eggs, pigs, maize, tobacco, potatoes, all root crops and in fact anything that grows elsewhere in Australia, excepting tropical plants. Why cannot we do in the South-West such work as we have done in the wheat belt? Why not get to it and do it? The Premier says he intends to do it. I am glad to hear that. If it is to be done, it must be done on an extensive scale. Railways must be built and roads must be constructed. The climate of the South-West is one of the best in Australia, and few parts of the world can boast a better climate. It has good rainfall and perpetual growth. We have tested the South-West, and the results are there for people who have the eyes to see. There is no time to lose; the South-West should be settled.

The Minister for Lands: We spent £1,100,000 down there last year, which was not too bad.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Government could not help that.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, we could have.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, the Government had to carry on. When the Premier is considering the report of the Royal Commission on Group Settlement and other criticism, I hope he will remember that he has been Minister for 16 months and that the report deals with his time as well as mine. We have this vast territory awaiting railway communication, the necessary surveying and settlement. In the North-West we need great irrigation schemes. When we read of the fact that 14,000,000 people are living on 12,000 miles of irrigated land in Egypt, and that that country has been able to spend £10,000,000 on a single dam, and that the land is bringing up to £4 an acre, we must feel that, with proper facilities, there is a great future before our North-West. Big schemes, however, like this are very costly. The production of wealth is all-important. If the country is to produce

more wealth we must get to work in the South-West. Our wheat lands will produce twice 23,000,000 bushels of wheat in the near future, and carry much stock. Some day the wealth will come. In the meantime let us do something, and not stand idly by while the time slips on. Let us put a stop to buying our butter and bacon and other things from the other States. If there were any doubt as to the value of our South-West land I should urge caution, but there is no doubt about it. Very much less risk is taken with the South-West than when we went into the wheat belt, which has done so wonderfully well. I am glad that something more is to be given to us in the matter of soldier settlement. Under the terms arranged with Mr. Hughes, $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. allowed us went back to the soldier and the other 6 per cent. was to cover losses. I think the Minister for Lands said last year that there was a credit of £140,000 remaining up to the end of 1924. We should get about £400,000 to cover losses. I trust the Minister has been setting aside the interest.

The Minister for Lands: Not the interest—we have only considered it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Does the Minister say that he has not set aside the interest which is to cover losses?

The Minister for Lands: They have not been carrying out the agreement. They have not been paying on the amount the State has borrowed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Why does he not make them pay? I hope the Minister has carried the money to a trust account.

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There would be £400,000 there. Under Mr. Bruce's last scheme we are to get £796,000.

The Minister for Lands: It is not yet too clear as to whether that is not included in the other amount.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is perfectly clear.

The Minister for Lands: You make it clear, but my officers do not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is practically £800,000 of the five million the Federal Government are now giving, which will make £1,200,000 to cover losses on the six millions.

The Minister for Lands: They have not paid it, so that we have not got it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We shall not in fact get it. The debt between

the State and the Commonwealth will be written down, and the Government will have in hand the amount I have mentioned to meet losses on soldier settlements.

The Minister for Lands: We have to pay £7 5s. and charge the settler £5.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have not to charge the soldier settler £5. The £1,200,000 is to cover the cost of the scheme. We got one-sixth of the five million pounds granted to the State. We have got about one-seventh of the soldier settlers settled on the land established in this State, and settled more cheaply than anywhere else. The Commonwealth Government have said they will reduce the interest to 5 per cent. from 1930. It should be reduced to that now. It is iniquitous that we should charge the soldiers the high rate they have been charged. The interest could be reduced in any event because of the special grant.

The Minister for Lands: If we have to pay 5 per cent. it will cost us £325,000.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, it will not. The soldier is paying within a shade of what the money is costing.

The Minister for Lands: The soldier is paying $6\frac{1}{2}$, and the general average is £6 8s. 9d. It is costing £60,000 a year to administer the scheme.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister gets £50,000 now and if he saves £50,000 in interest he has £35,000 to the good. Cannot we afford to lose a few thousand pounds when we are making an enormous profit out of soldier settlement?

The Minister for Lands: They want us to charge 5 per cent. for what they are charging £6 8s. 9d.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It appears from the statements of Mr. Bruce to the Press that this is not one of the conditions. We can reduce the interest to 5 per cent. and still make money. The Federal offer is a generous one. The State's liability to the Commonwealth Government is now £800,000 less than it was originally. The Minister has, it seems, misled the Premier, who said that the State has already incurred considerable losses, that Boards and Commissions have shown the hardships the soldier settlers have suffered through their holdings being over-capitalised, and that this action of the Commonwealth will to some extent counter-balance the loss the State has already incurred over settling our soldiers on the land. Boards and Commissions have shown some losses. The

member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) was chairman of a Royal Commission that travelled throughout the State. This body did all it could to meet the soldiers, but only 266 came forward.

Mr. Wilson: We could have had the lot, but did not want them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What right had the Commission to say they did not want them?

Mr. Wilson: We wanted to save expense to the country.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The country went to the expense of appointing the Commission, and it was a very economical one. The Chairman went twice to Denmark, and gave the soldiers every chance of coming forward to lodge any complaints. Of course there will be complaints. No one could settle nearly 6,000 men on the land without some complaints, and it is a credit to the State that only 266 soldiers gave evidence. Many of the men had wonderful bargains, though some may have paid more for their land than did others.

Mr. Wilson: Some men ought to be gaoled for selling soldiers the land.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The soldiers have not cost the State a penny. Not one penny has been written off to the debit of revenue on account of soldier settlement. That never will be done now. Mr. Bruce has made this offer. The migration scheme is very satisfactory. It is fortunate for us that Britain is willing to do so much, and the Commonwealth is willing to assist. At the time I made the first agreement it was the initial agreement of its kind made by the British Government. Under that we got 20 per cent. to cover losses. Seeing that under the Agricultural Bank, our losses had been only 6 per cent. I thought that would be quite sufficient. Under Mr. Bruce's agreement it is arranged that instead of Western Australia getting two-thirds of the interest for five years, we get for five years money at 1 per cent., even if 6 per cent. is paid for it. For the second five years the State pays one-third of the interest. In 10 years we get an advantage equal to about 40 per cent. of the money that comes under the agreement. I am glad the Premier is going on with it. Let us go on with it at some decent pace. We shall not have this offer always, but we have it now. As the Old Land comes to want its people, and industries there revive, we shall not get such terms indefinitely. It is a

wonderful offer to get 40 per cent. to cover loss in connection with land settlement. When we settled soldiers on the land it was the first time in our history that we asked for money for ordinary land settlement. I asked the Governments to help us, and pointed out we could not do the work ourselves. We were told it was the best they could do, but if the money market improved they would give us better terms. They are now giving us improved terms. The people ought to tell the Premier to go on until the cows come home. We cannot possibly lose. I pointed out the great advantage of land settlement to the general revenue of the country. We do make money by it. If we want our trade to prosper, our people to be employed, and our country to grow, we must do something definite in a big way along definite lines. So far as I know, unless the Minister for Mines can tell the House that a general mining revival is at hand, our best course is to settle the land, and do that quickly. But we cannot produce without expenditure. We ought to be grateful to Mr. Bruce for this improved agreement. I do not know why the revenue from State Batteries has gone down. Of course the gold yield has fallen, but the Ministry cannot help that. We have the report of Mr. Kingsley Thomas, and I do not know whether any good is going to result from it. According to that report, everything is wrong on the fields; the work is costing too much and the management is not all that one might like it to be, and generally a good deal of fault is found. I hope something beneficial will result from the report, but I am always a little doubtful about people coming to us from a black man's country.

The Minister for Mines: It is a white man's country.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: South Africa? Oh, no! I shall await results with much interest. I commend the Minister for having got the best man he could to make the report. In appointing a Commission the great thing is to get the right man or the right men.

The Premier: Mr. Kingsley Thomas's report is the most valuable document this State has been presented with for a long time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope so. The Premier: I am sure of it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We shall see the results. I wished to say a little on

the subject of arbitration to-night, but I do not know that I need deal with that subject at length just now. I trust that the Royal Commission on the cost of living will soon present its report. I do not know why that Commission was appointed, seeing that all the necessary information is in the hands of the statisticians already. I may say that I have read in the Press some of the questions asked by my friend the member for Menzies (Mr. Pantou) as to our meat supplies. The way out of the difficulty is to provide our own food. We have to pay tremendous prices for commodities that we should be producing in the South-West. In that direction will be found the means of reducing the cost of living. I do not consider that this Commission was necessary. The Acting Premier appointed it.

Mr. Taylor: We must have a Commission or two going.

The Premier: Yes, or "Hansard" would have nothing to do.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am glad the Minister for Justice is in his seat, because I wish to draw attention to another injustice that has been done to Northam. A little time ago there was run in Northam what is called a "white city," and I believe the proceeds were for the benefit of the Trades Hall. In that case no action was taken by the police. But some little time ago a deputation waited on the Minister for Justice to protest against gambling at the "white city" in Northam. The Minister said, "The previous Government allowed gambling, and I am not going to alter the position." As a fact we did allow gambling, but for purely charitable purposes; and we restricted, so far as possible, the use of get-rich-quick machines.

The Minister for Railways: We have restricted their use more than you did.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The one "white city" was used to get funds for a political organisation. Will the Minister say to the Primary Producers' Association that they can run a "white city" for a week to get funds?

Mr. Lindsay: Do not tempt us.

The Minister for Railways: If they applied, probably we would give them permission.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is absolutely wrong that the Trades Hall can run gambling halls in country towns without incurring prosecution. The police must have

been instructed not to prosecute in that particular case.

The Minister for Railways: No further instructions have been given.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But when another man came to Northam the other day and ran a gambling affair—

The Minister for Railways: That was for his own private gain—a different thing altogether.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Different? It was not as bad as the other. Of course it was for his private gain, but he was promptly prosecuted and was fined £20.

The Minister for Railways: Yes, he was fined; and everybody gambling for private gain should be fined.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Next time we shall form a company to gamble, and divide the proceeds between us.

The Minister for Railways: If you like to build a hall, you can get permission to gamble.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Anyhow, it is wrong, and against the law; and the Trades Hall organisation should not be allowed to travel about the country gambling.

Mr. Pantou: The Trades Hall organisation should not be allowed to live.

Mr. Latham: You are right.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It makes no difference whether the gambling is by an organisation or by a private individual. If the law of the land says there shall be no gambling, why not administer the law?

The Minister for Works: Why did you allow gambling?

Mr. Lambert: Why did you grant the land for the building?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We built the premises. I do not say we were right in allowing gambling, but we did not let loose this sort of hell.

Mr. Hughes: Oh, you were worse!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The gambling we permitted was purely for charitable purposes. The present Government turned out the Ugly Men to let the Labour Party in.

The Minister for Works: You have a wonderful imagination.

Mr. Clydesdale: We were not turned out; we would not go.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Government will deal out an even measure of justice to everybody. One man is fined, and other people are applauded. Those others took £1,500 out of the place,

and I suppose the man who was fined took 1,500 shillings.

The Minister for Railways: One stuck to the lot; the others gave it to public purposes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They had no right to be allowed to make money by gambling.

Mr. Hughes: Why did you permit it?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I was foolish enough to permit it for purely charitable purposes, but this was gambling for money to pay salaries to politicians—

Mr. Hughes: Has that been done?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: —to pay election expenses, or to put up a building to make members of an organisation more comfortable. Is that not the same thing as gambling for private gain? I warn the Minister for Justice that he must see that this gambling is not allowed. If he wants to allow gambling, let the law be altered so that everybody will be permitted to gamble. Do not let us have one law for one sort of people, and another law for the Trades Hall people. That is the sort of justice which is being meted out in my town. The Premier said that we can have an opportunity later of discussing group settlement. Apparently we are to have two opportunities. I suppose there will be 20 opportunities before the session closes. The Commission's report condemns everything whole-heartedly. The last Minister was bad, and the present Minister is not much good, and the men on the groups are useless, and the women are not suitable, and the land is poor, and even the climate is worse than the Eastern States climate apparently, and the agreement is bad. The wholesale condemnation destroys the value of the report. It would have surprised me if the Commissioners had found anything whatever good in a thing that is practically all good. The report is purely condemnatory; it contains no suggestion, nothing constructive, no advice. In my opinion the only thing wrong in the whole business is the Commission itself. However, I suppose I ought to thank the Commissioners for their wholesale condemnation of everything. Why they wanted to refer at all to the wives of the settlers I do not know. Why they refer to men generally as loafers, I do not know. Why they consider 10s. per day too much to pay to men working I do not know, and neither does anybody else. Why the Commissioners sug-

gested that there should be piecework passes my understanding. Better men than the members of the Commission have said time and again that the only means of developing the South-West is group work. The land, of course, is too heavy to be cleared single-handed. A man working alone cannot get the heavy machinery or the help required. All land settlement in this State has been undertaken by men without experience and without money. We waited 80 years for men with money and experience to come here and grow wheat. Of course we did not get experienced men to come on the wheat belt. All the men who went on the wheat belt did not succeed, but the land succeeded. Land that was left by the first settler was again occupied. To-day the settlers on the wheat belt are no longer inexperienced; they are experienced now. They are no longer without money; they have money now. For the most part they were good, solid, honest workmen. If you had said to them, "Go to a training school," they would have replied, "No." It would have been quite unnecessary. Of course one would get with money and experience if one could, but they are not to be obtained. We cannot wait any longer, nor can we afford to continue sending two millions sterling annually to the Eastern States for foodstuffs. We have to settle our lands. We are told that there ought to be a training farm. Just imagine the mother of ten and the father of ten going to a training farm to be trained in agriculture—a long process. What would happen to the children in the meantime? I suppose the Minister for Lands would have to look after them. The idea is ridiculous. One cannot even put young fellows on a training farm in great numbers. How many students could even Hawkesbury College take? It is monstrous to suggest such a thing. The expense would be enormous, and we would never get the country settled. Agriculture is a natural industry; to grow things comes naturally to people. The Minister for Works did not enter a training school before he took up land in the South-West. He has had a go at it, and has produced results which are an example to many old settlers, men who have spent all their lives on the land. If he can do that, why cannot others do it? If the members of the Commission could do all they have done on the land, why should not others do the same? It is simply ludicrous to suggest that large numbers of people should go into training schools. What should

they study there? Turning somersaults? Cooking cabbages?

Mr. Lindsay: Why did you put in your agreement that migrants should have 12 months on a farm before going on groups?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I did not put that in the agreement. I had the right to keep them here for 12 months before putting them on a group. I had that right because I thought it would take 12 months to deal with the men we had here. We had every right to do it, but that was a different thing altogether. One would like to put newcomers on to farms where they could earn money for 12 months, and so keep their families, while they were gaining more experience. It would not be possible to do that, however, because most farmers have not got the necessary accommodation for the migrants. One of the great advantages of the group settlement system is that it enables the State to bring out families with children. In the last statement made by the Premier I think he said there were about 8,500 men, women and children on the groups. Some 2,000 of those were men, and hon. members will realise what a great asset the others represent. It is no use sending a man on the land unless he is married. It is good that settlers on the land in the South-West shall have children to help them. I would like to see members of the Royal Commission doing the work that some of these people have done during the last few years in the South-West.

Mr. Lindsay: I would still be carrying my swag if I did.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: These settlers are not carrying their swags, and they are not going to! Settlement under Agricultural Bank conditions is precisely the same as that in connection with the groups, except that the payment is made in a different way. Payment is made for work done, and the settler under Agricultural Bank conditions gets his cheque every month from the inspector. With the group settlement scheme the payment is slightly different, but if they cannot earn 10s. a day, working under supervision, then either the settlers are pretty bad men, or they have pretty bad supervisors. As a matter of fact, they have produced wonderful results and have transformed the country in a little while. By no other means could it have been done. We applied the Agricultural Bank conditions to settlement in the South-West to what is known as the Spanish settlement, a show place at present outside Busselton. It was not successful and practi-

cally all that was received back was the fencing and wire. The rest was lost. The present settlers went there and have built up splendid homes. Some Italians and Spaniards have settled there on land that is perhaps some of the poorest in the Busselton district. Notwithstanding that, they have produced wonderful results. They have produced crops, pastures, and fruit—everything that man could want can be produced by those people, and they have transformed the country wonderfully. Throughout the South-West enough has been done to justify us in saying that dairying can be successfully carried out there, and that pastures can be grown, pigs grown, and crops, including fruit, as well. However, this report of the Royal Commission is as dead as Julius Caesar already, and perhaps the more we say about it, the worse it will be. When these Commissioners talk about men under Agricultural Bank conditions developing an equity in their properties, and assuming responsibility with the first advances, that is quite correct regarding everyone who takes up Crown land. The equity is in the value of the land, not in the work done on the place. There is some equity growing all the time. The Commission also talk about such men leaving their blocks only when they have some other purchaser to take over the property and assume the responsibility for the debts incurred. That was not done as they suggest. The men simply walked off. They did not bother about getting anyone else to take over the place. Even under the Agricultural Bank conditions men have walked off their properties when they felt so inclined. If you have value in the improvements, fencing and so on, somebody else will come along and take over the holding. That happened in the wheat belt. In the South-West the position has changed only to the extent that we pay 10s. a day sustenance to these settlers with children, and that sum should not be considered too much. If it is, I do not know how contract work is to be done. I have seen piece work and I consider the cost is greater than under the group system. If there are 100 trees to be taken out on a block, under the group system perhaps 50 trees would be taken out, whereas under the piecework system in all probability 20 of them would come out, and they would possibly be the smallest of the trees. From what I can see there is not the same value under piece work conditions for every pound spent as is obtained under the

group system. I do not know that I need take up any more time dealing with this monstrous document. I notice that the Royal Commissioners dodged dealing with the Peel estate, an area so dear to the Minister for Works. Perhaps they got a bit scared. As a matter of fact, the Minister for Works scared them stone stiff while the Premier was away. The Minister went down to Augusta and in opening his heart to the people told them the truth. Then, by heavens, there was a lot of re-writing of the Royal Commission's report! The Minister told the people about the experiences of his relatives in Gippsland, and added something to this effect: "You have a great chance here; you will not be struggling for an existence all your lives. You will get round the corner in good time. My people in Gippsland have done well. Two generations are still living there, making a competency for themselves, and the third generation is also on the land. They had greater difficulties to face than you have, and they got a lower price for their products, too." It was an excellent speech; the best he ever made. Anyhow, it was very courageous on his part. I would naturally applaud him for such a speech, but I have heard others say, "That Minister for Works is a much-improved man."

The Minister for Lands: His speech was true, was it not?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes; and the truth is refreshing when it comes from someone in authority. What the Minister said is particularly valuable in view of what the Royal Commission have reported. At any rate it caused a good deal of re-writing of this precious report. There is something about the Minister for Works that scares people, and he scared the Commission off the Peel estate. Perhaps they relied on another report upon the Peel estate, but that report died very quickly, too! Of course we have to face difficulties in all great works of development. On one occasion Chamberlain said, when referring to a Crown Colony, "You have to sink money into it to get money out of it." We are told, I understand from the report of the Royal Commission, that we must stop this work of settlement in order to wait until we ascertain if these people can pay their interest. We are to do that before we expend any more money on group settlement. If we had had to wait till the first 500 settlers in the wheat belt had been in a position to pay their in-

terest, the Minister for Lands would still have that land to settle.

The Minister for Lands: I do not know whether all of those settlers have paid up yet.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They have paid. The men in that part have done well, but they had to create a good deal of wealth before they could pay. This year some 3,000,000 acres will be under crop and I suppose it has cost well over £3,000,000 to put that area under crop. That is a lot of money, and if the men cannot pay interest at the moment, what harm is there in that? Because of it, would it be suggested that all future land settlement must be stopped? Of course not. I would not mind if the Royal Commission had said in their report, "We find this country valueless. Do not touch it. Do not settle it. Let it stay as it is." But to make recommendations that are altogether impossible, which would have the effect of preventing settlement and killing land settlement, is quite a different matter. Then the Commissioners talk about the women down there. I have seen the women there.

The Minister for Lands: They are a fine lot, too.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They are magnificent, splendid. When I was Minister for Lands, the present Minister nearly always came down too and while I was looking around the land and talking to the men, he talked to the ladies and I learnt from him afterwards that they were satisfied with their lot. I spoke to them myself and I have never seen a finer lot of women and children than on the groups. The only trouble is that there are too few of them.

The Premier: That is capable of being remedied.

The Minister for Lands: I can tell you that the Premier agrees they are a fine lot of women.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. I wish to congratulate the Premier on his speeches in England. I read a good many of them and if I had the eloquence of the Premier, I might have made them myself. They embodied my sentiments and the Premier did the right thing. I am glad there was no Royal Commission report in connection with the wheat belt during the early stages. In the very early days of settlement in New South Wales a Commission was sent out after the first three years. We have had Commissions ever since. I do not remember

any one that has been altogether favourable to the schemes investigated.

Mr. Mann: There was one in the Swan in 1829!

Mr. Latham: Don't you read "Scrutator"?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Royal Commission took a long time over the work. The Premier was able to go to London, do a lot of work there and get back to Australia while they were on the report.

Mr. Lindsay: That shows how well we did it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Commission spent time on it. They paid four visits to Busselton. They carried out their inquiries thoroughly, but they did not learn much when they went there. I do not contend that the South-West is better than Victoria, but I say it will do what Victoria does, and the best of our land will do it equally well. I do not pretend that all people who go on the land are good settlers. that would be impossible. I do not claim that some money has not been spent unnecessarily; of course it has. I do not say that all group foremen are perfect; that would be impossible. But I do say they are doing their duty to the best of their ability and that the men who are kept on the groups are working well. Some 54 per cent. have remained. That is a very good average, showing that the foremen have been doing their work. If we are going to demand that the perfect man shall be the only man, and the perfect woman shall be the only wife, then we are not going to get settlement. However, we shall have another opportunity to discuss this Royal Commission's report, and I do want to hear the Minister for Lands on the subject. I quite approve of what he said the other day, namely that he was going on with the job. The public also applauded that. One other thing I wish to mention: I do not know whether the Premier realises that a Labour Conference was held in Perth recently. That Conference passed the following resolution:—

That Conference is of opinion that the men in charge of State enterprises should be direct supporters of that policy, and that the present Government be instructed to put this resolution into effect immediately.

I hope the Premier is not going to obey those instructions, is not going to dismiss men from the State trading concerns merely because those men are not of his political

faith. I hope the Premier will not take the slightest notice of it, for men employed in the Government service have a perfect right to their own political views. Of course the Premier is not responsible for all that the Conference did. The Minister for Health was sometimes there, and the Minister for Works had a few arguments there. I am glad to say he got the best of the deal once or twice. But it is extraordinary that an outside irresponsible body should instruct the Government. Of course the Government cannot be held responsible for that. It is the duty of the Government to put down extremists. Some extremists had considerable argument with the Minister for Works at Fremantle, and certainly the Minister got the best of the deal. Everybody in the State applauded the Minister for the attitude he took up, and I hope he will be just as definite whenever instructions come to the Government from an irresponsible body. Now I have finished all I wish to say, except in respect of the recent strike happenings. I do not propose to discuss the strike itself, because the Minister in replying will not be allowed to discuss more than the motion I propose to move. Actually it will take the form of an amendment to the motion moved by the member for Forrest (Miss Holman), the amendment being the addition of the words, "Regrets that the Government failed to maintain law and order during the recent industrial upheaval." I regret that the Government should have so failed, but I cannot let their failure go unchallenged.

The Minister for Lands: This is a vote of no confidence in the Government, and that is all you can find! The strike affected, not the State, but only a few people in Perth.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the hon. member will plead guilty now, it will save me a good deal of trouble. The restaurant employees' strike lasted more than four weeks. My charge against the Government is that during the strike the police force, controlled by the Minister for Justice, failed in its duty, and that with the knowledge and concurrence of the Government. The police force in this State is equal to any other police force in Australia. We could not have a better force. It is an honourable, capable and courageous body of men who have deservedly enjoyed the confidence of the public. I cannot believe that they failed, as they did, in their duty unless

it was understood to be the wish of the Government. I confess that the remarks made at the Labour Conference and the fact that the Disputes Committee during the Fremantle strike very generously and publicly gave the Government permission to use the police—

Mr. Panton: Who told you that tale?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That was in the Press. Naturally that makes one doubt. If the Minister says he did not instruct the police in their attitude, I will believe it, but I say that he should have instructed them to do their duty.

The Minister for Lands: There were no instructions to the police, save that they were to carry out their duties.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Law and order were set at defiance during the Perth strike, which lasted from the end of April to the beginning of June. Of course it is no part of the Government's duty to take part in strikes. All strikes cost the Treasury a great deal of money and the Government a great deal of trouble. I do not hold the Government responsible for the strike, but I contend their duty is to hold the balance fairly between all people and to maintain law and order. A man in this country should be at liberty to go about his business in his own way. It is a free country and the police are paid by the people to protect the law-abiding and to protect life and property. However, during this strike people were not allowed to go about their business. People who were running eating houses without assistants were prevented from carrying on their business. Some people were imprisoned for a whole day in a hotel in the city of Perth. Streets were blocked and people were insulted. I cannot show, I am glad to say, that there was very much damage done to property: but it is quite certain that unless we maintain law and order, unless the House is prepared to show to the Government that it will have nothing but an untrammelled police force, we shall drift from bad to worse until eventually we have really serious trouble. The Premier was away during the strike and, I hope, knew nothing about it. But a protest came to the Acting Premier from the Mayor of Perth, from a public meeting, from the Justices' Association—

The Premier: Some of them ought not to be justices any longer.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think that is what the acting Premier told them.

The Premier: I am considering it now.

The Minister for Lands: None of them resigned. Their resignations would have been accepted quick and lively.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The protest came also from the Employers' Federation, from Mr. Mooney of the Disputes Committee, and from the Press. So it was a pretty representative deputation. I am obliged to read from these newspaper cuttings to establish the fact that from the 1st May to the end of June the strike happenings went on.

The Minister for Works: What the Press says will establish a fact! That is a novel contention.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am going to read what the Minister said to the Press. On the 2nd May there was a reference to this trouble, and on the 6th May it became far more serious than before. On that day the proprietor of a Hay-street cafe complained that when he endeavoured to carry on his business the union employees demonstrated outside. He sought police assistance and was told by an inspector either to sign the agreement or close up. He therefore closed up. But at about 5 p.m. a crowd of employees returned to the establishment and forced an entrance at the back. "One of Shelly's army," he said, "wrenched a poker out of the hand of a member of my family which had been taken up as a means of protection." That surely justified police intervention.

The Premier: Of course it did!

The Minister for Works: Because the newspapers said so, the police should be there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: On the same day another place in Hay-street was treated in the same way. Notices were placed on the windows describing the premises as black, pickets were posted outside, and the public were not allowed to enter. Business was suspended; nothing was permitted to be done. On the 7th May the Press commented on the trouble. Ministers read of the happenings, and knew day by day what was going on. On the 7th May the Press published a report under the headings "Compulsory conference called, restaurants closed, picketing unchecked." On that day appeared a statement by the Minister for Justice. A member of Parliament had at

last become interested in the trouble. The report stated:—

The persistent demonstrations carried out by tearoom strikers had the effect of making most of the city restaurant proprietors keep their doors closed yesterday for the sake of peace and good order. The policy of the demonstrators seems to have been to allow no discrimination in favour of those few proprietors who were managing to struggle along without outside labour. With every restaurant in Hay-street closed, the militant leaders of the boycotting campaign were able to concentrate on the Maypole teashop in St. George's-terrace. The shop was plastered with notices designed to make the public keep out, and these were fortified by a lot of feminine persuasiveness at the doorway. When the midday rush began and there were signs that the determined amazons at the door were likely to be defied, the defenders sought to intimidate the crowd with such epithets as "Terrace tugs." Now and again a few isolated nourishment-seekers pushed through, but with little success. One of them received a nice, juicy pie, at the hands of a smiling waitress, not on a plate, but on his vest in a splashing flattened form. Two others were seized by infuriated women, and retreated after having their coats and shirts torn. A combined rush at another stage was, however, more successful. The fair guardians toppled back in confusion, while a crowd pressed in, and Mr. Teesdale, M.L.A., was in the van of the rush. A hurried lunch was thus made accessible to a lot of hungry clerks, but the doors were closed shortly after the luncheon hour, and this left Perth practically without afternoon tea resources.

The Minister for Lands: I told him I was only sorry the girls did not strip him.

Mr. Richardson: Sorry for the girls?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is a nice remark to come from a law-abiding Minister.

The Minister for Lands: He was breaking the law.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is what I complain of. The pickets held up business and prevented people from carrying on their restaurants. In the eyes of Ministers the people who wished to enter the restaurants were breaking the law, but the pickets were not. Mr. Teesdale had a perfect right to go in. On the same day was published a protest from Mr. W. H. Taylor, of the Maypole Dairy Co., and a letter from the Minister for Justice. This, of course, is the Minister's own statement—

The Minister for Justice and Police (Mr. J. C. Willcock) was disinclined yesterday to discuss the position caused by the strike. In answer to a question, however, he said that he had given no instructions to the police in connection with the matter; but he was quite

satisfied with the manner in which they were dealing with the situation.

That sounded rather like an instruction to go on doing what had been done. The Minister knew of these happenings. They took place almost within sight of his office. The Minister had not instructed the police but he entirely agreed with them, so they were instructed for the future to go on not doing their duty. Then a compulsory conference was held, and there was a demonstration at the King Edward Hostel. Mr. Bannan, who was in the doorway, whipped out a revolver from his hip pocket and levelled it at the mob. The Press report stated that the following ensued:—

"Don't come any further," he said, and the crowd fell back to a more respectful distance. It was as well for them that they decided to make discretion the better part of valour, for behind Mr. Bannan were ranged the visiting English footballers, who, as Mr. Bannan said later, were "quite prepared to act if the necessity arose." Someone called out "Look at that man; I wonder if he's got a license for a gun."

I do not suppose he troubled about a license when he thought his property was in danger of being damaged. Bannan kept them off with the revolver; otherwise they would have forced an entrance. On the same day there was a demonstration outside the Crystal Cafe in Hay-street, which attracted a large crowd of onlookers and caused a serious block to traffic. That, too, was known to Ministers. Day by day these happenings continued.

The Premier: Because it was a daily newspaper recording them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, because these were daily happenings. Here is a statement by the proprietor of the Esplanade Hotel.

The Premier: Who, one of the police officers reported, was one of the most excited men during the whole trouble. There was no cause for this excitement; nothing was happening, but he was trembling with excitement all the time. He saw visions of riots every time. I have read everything in connection with it, and that is all you have done. I think.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Some of my friends from Northam were there. They were not allowed to leave the hotel for a whole day, and they were not allowed to even receive telegrams addressed to the hotel. The premises were picketed.

The Premier: If that is so, the proprietor made no complaint of that sort to the police. Why did he not do so if his hotel was besieged in that fashion?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He did.

The Premier: He did not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Will the Premier allow me to make my statement? The police were there in the roadway. I saw them. One of my friends had to go down a verandah post; he was not allowed to go through the door.

Mr. Marshall: I bet he was pleased at the opportunity. The landlord did not see him going.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Members may treat it as a laughing matter, but how would they feel if their homes were surrounded by a howling mob? This place was surrounded and men and women were not allowed to go either in or out. They were kept there a whole day, and this happened within 300 yards of the Minister's office. The Minister must have known of it.

Mr. Lutey: Your friend would sooner drop down amongst the crowd than walk out? A spectacular exit!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This happened within sight of the Minister's office, and Ministers knew that this lawlessness was going on. I understand that amongst the people at the hotel were a number of passengers who had to catch an overseas boat. They had to go down a verandah post, and have their luggage lowered. Is that right?

The Premier: That is not so. They did not go down a verandah post. I have read the police report.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: My friend had to.

The Premier: It is not correct.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Did the police say the house was surrounded?

The Premier: No, they did not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I can assure the Premier that it was surrounded, that the people were not allowed to move, and that they were imprisoned in the house for the day.

The Minister for Works: If they were not allowed to move, how could they get down the verandah post?

Mr. Marshall: Do not confuse the hon. member.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: How would the Minister get down a verandah post?

The Minister for Works: I always pay my way.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Ministers treat the whole affair as a joke.

The Minister for Works: That sort of trash is a joke all right. It should appear in "Comic Cuts."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If Ministers doubt that there was any trouble, that people were inconvenienced and that the house was closed, let them listen to the statement of Mr. J. S. W. Paxton, published in the "West Australian" of the 12th May:—

On Monday, without any warning, we were surrounded by 200 or 300 employees, representing a large proportion of the stop work meeting which had been held at the Trades Hall. They rushed down Howard-street, a certain number going towards the back portion of the premises, and the rest going to the front. We were just able to close the front door and keep them out; otherwise they would all have invaded the premises.

The Premier: How did he know?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Mr. Paxton continued—

We then closed the back door of the hotel. In the meantime many of them had sealed the fence and broken open the back gate, which allowed those who were in the lane at the back to enter upon the precincts of the hotel. In the backyard of the hotel there must have been the best part of 100 people. Two or three policemen came down, but the people took no notice of them. Several of the employees raised a window on the ground floor and were climbing into a guest's room, but we were able to lock the door of the room so that they could not get through into the hotel. They also broke a large window pane at the back. From then on we were besieged. The police protection was practically useless. We were unable to admit anyone to the hotel or let anyone out. Some of the younger male guests climbed the verandah posts in order to get in, and used the same means to get out. We rang Mr. Duncan, Inspector of Police, and he told us he was unable to give us any more protection than we had. Anyone who approached the hotel was told that he could not enter. A telegraph boy came along with two wires, but he was not permitted to push them under the door. It must be recognised that, although this is an hotel, it is also my home and that of my wife and family. The whole episode was one of the most disgraceful I have ever heard of. The reason why we could not allow guests to come in or go out was that the police protection was insufficient to stop the mob from rushing into the hotel the moment the door was opened. The mob kept

on telling us it was their intention to rush the building if they could. This sort of thing went on until about 7 p.m. Towards evening the crowd had dwindled to about 100, but when it became dark, the numbers again increased. We were under the impression that under the cloak of darkness it was the intention of the employees to break into the place. We therefore rang Inspector Duncan again. He said the only way he could get the mob to disperse was for us to allow two of the union officials to go through the house and see if any unionists were working there or other people. Miss Shelley and some other member of her party were eventually admitted, under protection of two policemen. They found only one Asiatic sculleryman, whom we had told to leave the premises, but who could not do so because he could not get out. We have learned since that this Asiatic has been made a member of their union. Miss Shelley subsequently left the premises. She evidently advised the mob outside that there was no one in the hotel that concerned her, for the people ultimately drifted away.

On the same day there is a statement by Mrs. Knight, proprietress of the Celtic Cafe. She says—

On Monday afternoon, about 3 o'clock, Miss Shelley and Mr. Ryce called and tried to force me to sign an agreement. I refused, for I would not "scab" on my fellow employers. Thereupon Miss Shelley said I would not do any more business. I replied, "So it is a strike?" and she admitted it. Between 5 and 6 some half-drunken hoodlums broke open the back door, although we had posted notices outside the premises to say that we were closed until further notice. The hoodlums, however, tore down the notices and invaded the scullery. One man grabbed me and another grabbed my daughter, but we succeeded in getting away. They then fell to fighting and brawling amongst themselves. Fortunately a member of the Celtic Club, to which our premises belong, had communicated with the police, for we are only women here, and a policeman was able finally to clear the people out of the premises before much harm had been done. After Miss Shelley called earlier in the afternoon we rang up Inspector Barry. He advised us that it would do no harm if we signed the agreement they wanted us to, but I declined. He then said, "The next best thing you can do is to close up your premises." This we did, and will remain closed until the trouble is over.

Mr. Rees, of the Crystal Cafe, complained that the strikers had used moral force to persuade his boarders to go to another place. The police were not in evidence during any of these happenings. On the 14th May the dispute goes gaily on, the deadlock continues, and there is the move for deregistration. Justices of the peace are selected because of special qualifications. Many have been

selected by hon. members, and have been in their positions for many years.

The Minister for Lands: Five or six of them had the damned cheek to speak for 600. I wish I knew who they were.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They wrote to the Acting Premier as follows:

At a meeting held last night of the council of the Justices Association of Western Australia, representing nearly 600 justices of the peace, the following resolution was unanimously adopted: "This council by virtue of the oath of office taken upon appointment as justices of the peace to maintain law and order—

The Premier: What right had they to speak for 600?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The resolution continues—

views with alarm the fact that during the present industrial disturbance business people and others are prevented from proceeding with their lawful avocations, and urges the Government to take the necessary steps for the adequate safeguarding of the rights of citizens. Yours faithfully, Fred. A. McMullen, President; H. Casper, Registrar, the Justices Association of Western Australia."

The Premier: A most impudent letter. It shows he is unfit to be a justice of the peace.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not agree with the Premier.

The Premier: I am certain of it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Premier was not here.

The Premier: I know all about that letter.

The Minister for Lands: Read my letter.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There was obvious lawlessness in the streets, which were blocked, and along which the public were not allowed to go about their business. The justices of the peace were justified in calling attention to the position. The mayor of Perth, Mr. Franklin, said he was watching events, and that if a serious disturbance or damage to property occurred he would not hesitate to call the ratepayers together.

The Minister for Lands: Does that not prove there was none?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He says if the police exercised the powers they have, they would be well able to cope with the position.

The Minister for Lands: There was no occasion for them to do so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is a reply by the Acting Premier, which does not deny the lawlessness.

The Minister for Lands: To tell the truth, I did not at that time read the papers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The reply of the Acting Premier is as follows—

The Minister for Lands: That is my second letter.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The letter says—

In reply to your letter of the 19th inst., I have to advise you that it is not my desire to enter into a controversy with members of your association, which appears to be the desire of members of your council, otherwise the council's letters would not have been handed to the Press for publication before I had the opportunity to peruse them. I am pleased to inform you that the letters which I have read show that the action of your council is not endorsed by all justices of the peace who are members of the association. One justice pointed out that your action shows the danger of having associations controlled by committees.

Control by committees is always dangerous. The letter continues—

I have the pleasure of knowing a large number of justices of the peace whom I regard as friends, and they have the good sense not to express any opinions regarding matters on which they may at any time be called upon to adjudicate. Such justices can be relied on, as stated in your letter, to discharge their duty without fear or favour.

There is another letter from the justices.

The Minister for Lands: That was in answer to my last one.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They resented the Acting Premier's remarks.

The Minister for Lands: They resented the first letter.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Is that stronger than this one?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am sorry I have not got it. They wrote as follows to the Acting Premier:—

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your favour of May the 14th which was considered by my council at a special meeting held yesterday. The previous communications to you urged the Government to take the necessary steps for the adequate safeguarding of the rights of citizens. I am to inform you that the members of this association are not concerned with the merits or demerits of the existing industrial dispute, and neither biased nor prejudiced as you imply. Their concern is primarily for the rights of those citizens who are prevented by parties in the dispute from proceeding with their lawful business, and whose freedom of lawful action has been restrained. My council deprecates the occurrence of breaches of the peace; but if justices should be called upon to adjudicate, the public may rest assured that they will discharge their duty without fear or favour.

The implication of bias and prejudice is unworthy of one occupying your position, and is strongly resented by this association.

The Minister for Lands: That is in answer to my first letter.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Perhaps the Minister would be good enough to get it for me.

The Minister for Lands: I am sorry they did not send in their resignations.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The mayor then wrote to the Minister for Justice to the effect that a petition had been signed by 25 ratepayers for the calling of a special meeting to deal with the situation. He explained that he had not called the meeting, because the requirements of the Act had not been complied with as to the advertisement connected with the meeting.

The Minister for Justice replied—

In reply to your letter of the 13th inst. I have to state that notwithstanding newspaper reports and letters in the press, which appear to have a political object, there is no serious complaint regarding police action, or inaction in the present industrial dispute.

The Police Act provides that action shall be taken by the police, not by the Minister. The Minister goes on to say—

During industrial disputes experience teaches that "least said is soonest mended." As bitterness and strife are frequently imported into these disputes quite unnecessarily . . . I think you will agree that the very slight inconvenience which has been caused to individuals in the present instance does not give much cause for complaint. You can be assured, however, that no disorder or lawlessness will be permitted by the police. I hope, as no doubt you do also, that the dispute will be settled before the date mentioned by you for the proposed ratepayers' meeting.

The duty of the Minister was to see that the police did their duty.

The Minister for Lands: You said they are honourable men and do their duty.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, if they are left alone.

The Minister for Lands: They were left alone.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not at all. Mr. Mooney then had a complaint. He said—

Over 100 delegates were present. It was stated by various delegates that the police were using their powers unduly in connection with the peaceful picketing that had been practised by certain industrialists. While the police, they said, had been only too anxious in some cases to take the names of those who were engaged in picketing, when asked to take the names of others who were abusing pickets,

and in some cases roughly handling them, there was a complete disinclination manifested to do so. Delegates stated that the police suddenly lost their hearing when requested to note the language which was being used by certain apparently hired individuals whose main object was to unduly interfere with any unionist who happened to be in the vicinity.

Perhaps the Minister will believe Mr. Mooney. Someone writes to the paper and lays the blame at the door of members of Parliament. He says we are all wrong and that there ought to be a new set of members. The writer also says that because of the action of members of Parliament this lawlessness existed.

Mr. Lambert: You read that before.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, I did not. On the 23rd May a disgraceful incident occurred outside the Crystal Cafe during the lunch hour. The picket was present in full force and a large crowd had congregated, much to the inconvenience of traffic. There was also trouble at the Moana Cafe on the same day. The acting Premier came into the matter again. He said—

The police were carrying out their duties in such a manner as to prevent breaches of the peace. He had discussed the matter with the Police Department, and he had learned that, so far, the dispute had been carried out in a most orderly manner. To his great regret some people appeared to be anxious to encourage someone to take some line of action which would have a tendency to cause breaches of the peace, but whether this was for political purposes or not he could not say.

What have politics to do with the trouble.

The Minister for Lands: Quite a lot.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Nothing at all.

The Minister for Lands: Those who were kicking up a row had a lot to do with it, but there was no actual row because the police kept order. I know of one or two politicians who were mixed up in it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know of any. I saw the Acting Premier myself after a meeting of the Nationalists, but he said very little.

The Minister for Lands: I told you what the Commissioner had said: I did not want to say any more.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Here is a statement upon the matter which reads—

In conformity with a resolution carried at a meeting of the United Party on Wednesday Sir James Mitchell interviewed the Acting Premier, Mr. W. C. Angwin, yesterday morning. "Mr. Angwin assures me," Sir James

said to a representative of the "West Australian" "that the police are doing their duty and that they will maintain law and order." At the Party meeting it was decided to ask the Government to maintain law and order. It is realised by all of us that to do this is essential for the well-being of all sections of the community. We felt, also, that this industrial trouble will create a certain amount of unemployment, and the longer it lasts the greater will the unemployment be. I am not referring now to the parties in the dispute, but speaking generally. Mr. Angwin's assurance will be welcomed by the public. Members who attended that meeting were themselves onlookers of the unlawful happenings.

The Minister for Lands: I know, because one or two of them were taking an active interest in it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Who were they?

The Minister for Lands: I am not going to mention names.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Mr. Mooney was taking an active interest, I suppose.

Mr. Panton: Of course he was. Why should he not?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then there was the ratepayers' protest on the 26th May.

The Minister for Lands: One or two political people were there, too.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They had a perfect right to be there. It was their duty to be there.

The Premier: Who was the chap that seconded the motion and said the strike was going to disrupt the British Empire?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I should think it was probably my friend Mr. Butler. The Perth members would have been wrong not to go to that meeting. They knew the trouble had existed for nearly a month. It is true that property was not destroyed, but every other act of lawlessness that could be committed was committed. I could tell the Premier of some happenings that I would not care to mention here in the House.

The Minister for Lands: I went down and had a look at it myself, and everything was in order.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister for Lands turned his back on one part of it.

The Minister for Lands: Everything was in good order. There was nothing to find fault with.

Mr. Latham: I am afraid the Minister must have had something special on just about lunch time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The mayor of Perth received a letter on the 25th May from the Minister for Justice, it is reported, in regard to the protest by the meeting of ratepayers "against the failure of the Government to afford citizens the necessary police protection in carrying on their legitimate businesses, as evidenced in the dispute in the cafe, hotel, and catering trade."

The Minister said that the position had not altered since his previous communication to the mayor, and that he was surprised that statements of the kind should be made when no single special instance had been brought under notice. The ordinary duties of the police were being carried out in the usual manner, and, from reports by the Police Department, there was no lawlessness, nor any reason for police action other than what was being taken.

The Minister knew of acts of lawlessness. He knew of that fearful happening at the Hotel Esplanade. He knew that all the cafes were being visited in turn. He knew that Albany Bell's cafe, the Bon Ton, the Piccadilly, the Arcadia, the Crystal Cafe, the Milk Palace, the King Edward Hostel, and various cafes were the scene of unlawful happenings.

The Minister for Lands: There was only one thing I was sorry for in connection with that strike.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That you were not in it?

The Minister for Lands: There was more drunkenness when the hotels were closed than when they were open.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: On the 27th May the Minister for Works took a hand. On that day the pickets were withdrawn, and we were getting very near to a settlement. On the 28th May it was stated that there were no developments, but there was a case in the police court in which a Miss McIntyre, described as a typist with the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Union, was charged by a returned soldier. She was fined. The police had taken no action; but when the soldier was compelled to take action, they took action.

The Minister for Railways: What else could they do? Should they have slaughtered the girl?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They should have prevented a breach of the peace. The magistrate said she was guilty of the

conduct with which she was charged, and she was fined.

Mr. Panton: Well, what are you growling about?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: She was not prosecuted by the police. If the Minister for Justice is assaulted or abused while on his way home to-night, and if there is a policeman on the spot, action will be taken.

The Minister for Railways: I would take the man's name and prosecute him myself.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What are the police for but to maintain law and order? I believe that during this strike the police were not allowed to take action until the owner of the property invaded had personally endeavoured to push the invaders out, and that failed; not until then were the police allowed to take a hand. That surely is something new. The Minister comes into the thing again, once more with injustice to Northam. Apparently the brewery employees in Perth were out on strike by this time, and very good beer was being brought to Perth from Northam.

The Minister for Lands: Wheat was more important.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister for Railways decided that the railways should not bring the beer to Perth.

The Minister for Railways: No fear!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. The Minister ordered the Railway Department not to carry the beer, because it was intended to supply hotels which had bought beer from the breweries that were in trouble. Beer was got from Northam and Albany, and the Minister ordered that it be not carried.

The Minister for Railways: More newspaper assertions!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister came into the strike now. The Press reported—

When questioned last evening concerning the statement that the Railway Department was refusing in certain cases to accept beer for transport the Minister for Railways (Mr. J. C. Willcock) gave his explanation of the position. Representations had been made to him by the Disputes Committee, he said, that if beer from country breweries, intended to take the place of beer supplies previously manufactured by men now on strike, were accepted for carriage on the railways, the railway unions would immediately be compelled to take cognisance of the fact, and there would be a likelihood of serious trouble. As it was not desired to risk provoking the extension of the present industrial dispute to include an essential service of the State, it had been decided

that beer intended to replace supplies previously made by strikers would not be transported by rail. There would be no restriction on the sending of beer by breweries to their ordinary customers. He believed that at present the decision only affected beer supplies from Albany.

Because there was a strike here in breweries, the Minister would not have beer conveyed from Northam and Albany to people in Perth. By that measure he was supporting the strikers. This in itself is an act against the law, since the Commissioner of Railways is a common carrier. If the Minister has that power, he can starve the goldfields of food and explosives, for instance, at the request of the Disputes Committee.

The Minister for Railways: I say that is a rotten misrepresentation of the facts. I contradicted it, too; but they would not publish my contradiction.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope it is a misrepresentation, and I hope the Minister did not instruct the railways not to carry beer here.

The Minister for Railways: I told the railways not to accept beer which would not get to Perth if it were accepted.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This report is right, then.

The Minister for Railways: No, it is not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Evidently the Minister did something he should not have done.

The Minister for Railways: I said, "If you cannot guarantee to carry the beer, what is the good of accepting it for consignment?"

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Suppose the Railway Department said they would not carry me back to Northam, would the Minister sit down and say, "Well, don't carry him"?

The Minister for Railways: I would take you back straightaway myself.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If we are only to have trade unionists working in the Government service—as apparently is desired, according to the resolution I read this evening—and if they can be instructed only to do the things which they are pleased to do, what sort of a country are we going to have? The Minister supported the strikers. I dare say it was an error of judgment on the part of the Minister, and I hope he will not be guilty of another error of the kind. The law is clear enough that the Commissioner of Railways is a common carrier and must take anything he is asked

to take. If there happens to be a strike in one timber mill, will the Minister say that he refuses to carry timber from any other mill? If there is a bit of a row amongst the shearers, will the Minister refuse to carry wool already shorn?

The Minister for Railways: That is what you did.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I did nothing of the kind.

The Minister for Railways: Yes, you did.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Nothing of the kind. What happened was this: I told them that if they practised the business of declaring black here, they would have all the forces of the Government against them. At no time during my term of office did the Government allow the railway employees to say just what they would carry and what they would not carry. It never came to that. Now the Minister decides for them what they are not to carry. He says, "There is a strike in the Swan brewery, and the hotels cannot get beer from that brewery, and so they shall not have Northam beer."

The Minister for Railways: I said nothing of the kind.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister said he would not bring Northam beer down.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister can disprove the statement if he likes. I hope the Minister will be able to disprove it, because it is a shocking thing if strikers can determine at their own sweet will just what is to be carried over our railways.

The Minister for Railways: If the railway workers struck, the whole country would be on strike.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Press report continues—

The Minister for Railways said yesterday that he wished to correct an inaccuracy in the outline of the position regarding the carriage of beer on the railways, which he had given over the telephone on the previous evening. It was not the Disputes Committee, but the secretaries of the railway unions, who had waited on him and informed him that if beer were transported to areas covered by the recent industrial dispute, it would result in the extension of the dispute to the Railway Department, which, of course, would be a very serious matter.

The Minister for Railways: That statement, which I gave out typewritten, was altered before being published.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The report further states—

In the circumstances, seeing that it was probable the beer would not reach its destination, it was decided not to accept it for transport until the position became clearer.

Is that correct?

The Minister for Railways: No. I gave out a typewritten statement in regard to that matter, and the statement was altered before it was published.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That was bad luck.

The Minister for Railways: It was not bad luck, but rotten misrepresentation, and deliberate, too.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Anyhow, I know that the Minister hung up Northam beer.

The Minister for Railways: It had nothing to do with Northam beer.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The people in the metropolitan area were very anxious to have Northam beer, but they could not get it.

The Minister for Railways: Nobody stopped them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am delighted to hear it. The Minister will have an opportunity of disproving what is asserted.

The Minister for Railways: No. You have the opportunity of getting somebody from Northam to prove that the beer was stopped.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At all events, I have shown that these happenings continued throughout the month, day by day. They were undoubtedly breaches of the peace, and undoubtedly the police did not do their duty. I say unhesitatingly that the police have never failed in their duty before, and that they would do their duty to-morrow morning if they were given a free hand to carry out the work for which they are responsible. Then the Minister for Works comes on the scene, and there is a hope of negotiations. So gradually the strike petered out, very much to the disadvantage of the unfortunate workers, who never, I believe, wanted to go out on strike at all. I do not suppose a fraction of them wanted to strike. Certain notices were posted on the windows, and each one represents an offence against the law. However, the member for Perth and other members to whom reference has been made to-night will state that part of the

case more in detail. Meanwhile I should like to call attention of the Minister for Justice to the fact that we have a Police Act, and that the police are required under that Act, and have power under that Act, to preserve law and order.

Mr. Panton: Did they not do it on this occasion?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I want to know why the Government did not see that the police did their duty. My charge is that the police did not do their duty and that the Government knowingly and cheerfully allowed these happenings to continue all through the month. I cannot say why the police did not do their duty unless it be that it was decided that the services of the police were not to be used during the time of a strike. That would be a monstrous thing, because disorderly conduct should be punished at any time. It is right that the police should not take sides during a time of industrial strife, and they have never done so.

Mr. Panton: Don't make us laugh; we thought you were serious.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The police were badly treated by certain people. They did their duty fearlessly and well in the past, and would continue to do it if allowed. I do not think it is necessary to do more than to assure the Premier that acts of lawlessness did occur. Is it right that Ministers should sit idly by in the midst of such happenings day by day? Is it right that they should allow them to go on? Of course it is not right. I hope members who believe in law and order being maintained at all times will vote against the Government on this occasion. Section 43 of the Police Act provides power to constables to arrest offenders and sets out inter alia—

Any officer or constable of the police force, without any warrant other than this Act, at any hour of the day or night, may apprehend any person whom he may find drunk, or disorderly, or using profane, indecent, or obscene language, or who shall use any threatening, abusive, or insulting words or behaviour, with intent or calculated to provoke a breach of the peace, in any street . . .

Then there is special provision dealing with licensed houses, which enables police officers to enter premises for the purpose of making arrests if people are conducting themselves there in a disorderly manner, and power is also given for search without a warrant. Of

