

# Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 6th November, 1924.

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

## QUESTION—STATE HOTELS.

Mr. J. H. SMITH asked Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister): 1, Are the State Hotels adhering strictly to Section 118 of the Licensing Act and supplying meals when demanded by travellers and others? 2, Have travellers been refused meals because the cook and waitress were off duty?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE replied: 1, I believe so. 2, Inquiry is being made.

## ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read, notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Bunbury Road Districts Rates Validation.
- 2, High School.
- 3, Presbyterian Church Act Amendment.
- 4, Trade Unions Act Amendment.

## BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Dividend Duties Act Amendment.
- 2, Bunbury Electric Lighting Act Amendment.

- 3, Carnarvon Electric Lighting.
- 4, Reserves (Sales Authorisation).

Transmitted to the Council.

## BILL—FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: The Fire Brigades Act of 1916 limits to 6 per cent. the rate of interest that may be paid on borrowed money. The board find at present they are unable to obtain

money at that rate of interest. Therefore the object of the Bill is to enable the board to increase the rate to 6½ per cent. That may seem to be very high. Still, for borrowers on other than Government securities, the money cannot be obtained for 6 per cent. The Commonwealth Bank, the bankers of the board, have refused to make an advance to them even at any rate of interest, and other semi-public bodies in other parts of the State have had to pay as high as 6½ per cent. on money borrowed during the last 12 months. The Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works recently raised a loan at 6½ per cent. and so other institutions of the kind have had to increase their rate of interest. The Fire Brigades Board have asked that the Bill be passed to enable them to raise money for purposes they consider to be urgent, mainly for the erection of fire stations in different parts of the State, for the purchase of new equipment and also for the purchase of property adjacent to the city station to enable the board to extend their accommodation. The board say that the money is required in the interests of economy both to the community and to the fire brigade employees, for the erection of a new fire station at Narrogin which it is proposed to go on with in the near future, for necessary additions to many country fire stations throughout the State, for alterations to the Perth and Fremantle stations, and for the purpose of a new fire engine with efficient pumps for the Kalgoorlie-Boulder district. It is said that to-day, owing to the growth of the city, the firemen have had to move further out from the fire station, which occasions delay in getting to the station in the event of fire. It is proposed, I understand, to purchase property adjacent to the city station for the purpose of providing accommodation for the employees. It is held by the board that this will be of advantage to the employees as well as to the board, in that the cost of rental will be considerably less than that paid by the firemen to-day, that in some instances it will mean a reduction of rent to the extent of 10s. or 15s. per week, besides, of course from the view of the board, enabling them to attain a higher degree of efficiency in that the men will be on the spot and available whenever required. A considerable amount of money will be necessary for the purpose. They say the provision of quarters for the staff is the only means whereby the introduction of the platoon system can be avoided, and that the introduction of such a system would mean added expenditure in the wages bill of approximately £13,000. It is contended that the erection of the proposed buildings will avoid the incurring of this increased expenditure. It is said that if the platoon system has to be introduced, an additional annual amount of £3,250 will be required from the Government, that the local authorities will have to provide an additional £4,875 and the insurance companies also

will have to contribute the same amount. The additional annual charge on the contributing bodies in providing for the extra loan it is proposed to raise, will be, the Government £750 and the local authorities and the insurance companies £1,125. It is owing to the expansion of towns in the agricultural areas that it is necessary to erect new stations and make additions and extensions to existing stations. Alterations are also required at Fremantle and Perth to make better provision for the married men. I understand there are practically no single men in the service, and that the firemen are compelled to be away unduly from their homes, having to live at some distance in the suburbs. The board hold that it is desirable they should borrow this money for the purposes I have indicated. They are unable to do it at the present rate of interest and consequently they desire authority to pay as high as 6½ per cent. I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

On motion by Mr. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

## BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.45]: I do not know that there is much objection to offer to this Bill. Each year we deal with the closing of roads. This Bill is a little out of the ordinary. It proposes to close a portion of Patterson-street at Collie. I understand it is intended to add the closed portion to the freehold of a block abutting on the street. The Minister intends that the rounded corner of the street shall be changed to an ordinary street corner.

The Minister for Lands: It is a lopsided affair at present.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No. On one side of Patterson-street both the corners are rounded. It is the desire of local authorities generally to round off the street corners wherever possible, because of the danger of square corners on account of the traffic.

The Minister for Lands: Only one side of the street goes round the corner.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister proposes to keep one rounded corner and to close the other.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is proposed to close the street at one corner. These corners are dangerous in the case of fast traffic, and should be rounded off. I suppose the owners of the land have approached the Minister in the matter, and desire to have the corner made square because it is more expensive to build on a rounded corner. The Minister would not

wish to close the street unless this were so. I suppose the mayor and council of Collie are agreeable to the alteration. I hope it will not be said that this matter was fixed up before we left office.

The Minister for Lands: I have not been approached over the matter.

Mr. Wilson: It is an exchange block.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member will have to give a coal mine for it.

Mr. Wilson: We gave a gold mine for it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This is a matter of closing part of the street. The block belongs to the Trades Hall. I do not offer any strenuous objection to the closure, but the Minister should be certain he is doing the right thing. The Town Planning Association will probably approach him when they hear of this. I suppose the people who have bought the land are agreeable to the closure in the case of Swan Location 1227.

The Minister for Lands: They cannot get their titles because the blocks comprising the public road have been sold. This arrangement meets with the approval of the local authorities.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the people concerned are satisfied, I do not see why we should offer any objection. I approve of the proposed alteration at Crawley. That was arranged before the Minister came into office. Of course he knows about the alteration to the foreshore at Fremantle.

The Minister for Lands: That was arranged before I had anything to do with it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That will not do. He must know the position at Fremantle. If not, he should satisfy himself concerning it.

The Minister for Lands: I am quite satisfied.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know what will happen when these roads are closed. The Minister ought to satisfy himself that this is the right thing to do. Before many years Fremantle will be a big city, and it is important that he should look to the thoroughfares and not give away anything that will be wanted in the future. I think this must be the place where the Minister goes mixed bathing. I am sure I have seen him there.

Mr. Taylor: What were you doing there? You would make a nice pair in your bathers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There was no mixed bathing when we were there. We have to rely upon the Minister as to whether these alterations are advisable or not, but we ought to be certain before we agree to the closing of roads. It is not a question of present convenience, but of the future.

Mr. WILSON (Collie) [4.35]: This is an exchange block at Collie. It used to have a 6ft. frontage, but that frontage was no good to the Trades Hall. The Lands Department agreed to give half a chain, making the frontage practically 28ft.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I remember the exchange.

Mr. WILSON: When the plan came along, the street was found to have been rounded off, leaving a frontage of only 16ft. Mr. Camm had agreed to the 28ft., and this Bill is carrying out his suggestion to rectify the mistake that was made.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is all right.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [4.58]: I have not been approached in regard to any of these road closures except by the officer of the department. I knew nothing about the Fremantle or Collie lots until I saw the Bill. I did know about Crawley because the Leader of the Opposition had spoken about it. These things were handed down to us to be embodied in a Bill this session. With regard to the subdivision in the Perth Road Board area, the streets had been marked out on the plan, but the blocks containing the streets were sold. The result was that the Titles Office would not give titles. The road board is willing, conditionally on other streets being opened up, to have this error rectified. A few years ago it was the custom in many places in Western Australia to have certain streets declared and shown on the subdivisional plan, and then for the vendors to endeavour to get a high price for the roads from the local authority under threat that they would be sold.

Mr. Sampson: That sort of thing was notorious in Leederville.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: These particular streets were sold, but the people who bought the land cannot get their titles. At Collie one corner of the street is a square, and the other corner is rounded. It is required to make the rounded corner square so as to give a better frontage on which to put the hall.

Mr. Sampson: That is a retrograde step.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is plenty of width in the street and the traffic is not heavy. This was arranged before I took office.

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.

## BILL—PERMANENT RESERVES.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 4th November.

Mr. RICHARDSON (Subiaco) [5.3]: I congratulate the Minister for Lands on the action he is taking. Older countries have in recent years discovered that it is almost impossible to secure open spaces and recreation grounds for the public. In this Bill the Minister has shown foresight by transferring reserves set aside for other purposes to the category of parks and recreation reserves. I have had the opportunity of inspecting three of the reserves mentioned in the measure, and I agree with the Minister's proposed action, more especially as regards the reserve situated in the very middle of the Subiaco municipality. It is, I believe, the only reserve in the metropolitan area of any size which still carries its natural timber. I am hopeful that when the Bill is passed, the Minister may in his wisdom see fit to vest that reserve in the Subiaco Municipal Council, who are very desirous that it should come under their control while still remaining under the supervision of the State Gardens Board. The Subiaco council realise that possibly future councils of the municipality might wish to erect buildings on the reserve, or perhaps desire to remove the timber. If a vesting order is made, I hope the Minister will see that the order expressly lays it down that the reserve must be left exactly as it is, except for the clearing away of undergrowth. I have the assurance of the municipal council that immediately upon the reserve being vested in them they will proceed to improve it by clearing away undergrowth, lighting the reserve, erecting fences, making footpaths, and installing gates, especially one giving access from the playground attached to the school adjoining, so that the children may have the benefit of the reserve during the luncheon hour. There is beautiful timber on the reserve. If there are other reserves of this nature which are not required for public buildings or similar purposes, I hope they will be transferred similarly.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.7]: We are naturally loth to interfere with reserves. The one at Subiaco is a beauty spot, and ought for all time to be held in trust for the people. If it is vested in the Subiaco municipality, as it ought to be, instead of being controlled by the State Gardens Board, that matter should receive attention. The board cannot be responsible for the upkeep of every reserve in the metropolitan area, though the reserve at Crawley and part of the foreshore must be cared for by the board. The people of Subiaco are better fitted to have control of this particular reserve and look after it. There is one thing I wish to ask the Minister for Lands to be careful about, and that is to protect the trees now growing on the

reserve. I know of no other reserve in the metropolitan area carrying jarrah with any pretence to size. These are well grown trees, the best jarrah trees known to me in the metropolitan area. If the reserve is vested in the municipal council, care must be taken to protect the trees. Not a single tree should be removed from the reserve without the approval of the Governor-in-Council. Very little protection can be given to the trees in the vesting order; otherwise power should be taken to protect the trees on that and on other reserves. There is no reason why the Subiaco reserve should be a charge against the revenue, and it will not be if the Subiaco Municipal Council accept the responsibility for its upkeep. The other alterations proposed by the Bill can, I think, be approved by the House.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [5.10]: I presume the Minister for Lands will assure the House that the transfer which is proposed will not permit of anything further than this area being used as a recreation reserve, and that the Subiaco council will not have the right to make it a revenue-producing area by erecting buildings on it. It is badly needed as a park for the recreation of children, and I hope that the vesting order will safeguard that aspect of the position.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [5.11]: As regards the area at Subiaco, the alteration proposed by the Bill is for the express purpose of preventing the erection of buildings on that reserve. As matters stand to-day, the reserve can be used only for the erection of public buildings.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But of course the Government would not erect buildings on it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Government were about to do so a few months ago, and the Subiaco people were up in arms against the proposal.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That was four years ago.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At all events there was such an intention, and the object of this Bill is to prevent the Public Works Department from erecting buildings on the reserve. The Minister for Works, having visited the area, said he thought it would be a scandal to erect buildings on it. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) interviewed me regarding the matter, and I also inspected the reserve. I thought it advisable to strike the iron while it was hot, while we have a reasonable Minister for Works. The officers of the Public Works Department have not been asked whether they are willing to part with the reserve or not. The reserve is to be included in State gardens, not with the idea that the State Gardens Board should expend money on it, but so that the board might still exercise

control over the reserve after its transfer to the municipality, and thus prevent, for example, the cutting down of the trees.

Mr. Richardson: That is what we want.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The reserve will be transferred subject to conditions. Any vesting order must provide that the ground shall be available for the use of the school children, and that it shall not be cut up into football grounds, bowling greens, or tennis courts, whereby the children would be debarred from using it. That can be assured only by giving the State Gardens Board some authority in the matter.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Amendment of Permanent Reserves Act, 1921:

Mr. SAMPSON: Will the Minister explain this clause?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When the measure was passed in 1921 the idea was that a man could put up refreshment rooms on the south beach at Bunbury, to be used as a hostel. After the measure had been passed it was found impossible to carry out the intention. The clause will overcome that difficulty.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7, Schedules—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1924-25.

#### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Lutey in the Chair; Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister) in charge of the vote.

*Vote, Aborigines (North-West), £3,347:*

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [5.19]: I am pleased to see an increase of £441 in this vote. I should have liked to see an even larger amount provided, because material, particularly clothing, costs considerably more than it did a few years ago. It is important to give some account of how we are treating this remnant of perhaps the oldest race in the world. Those countries without a native problem are particularly critical of those that have it and it is only right to give these matters as much publicity as possible. I recently had an opportunity to cover a very large area of country, embracing the principal mission stations and

the two aborigine depôts. It is estimated there are 75,000 natives in Australia and we are credited with having 25,000, so that Western Australia has a very important duty towards this race. After a long residence in the North, I can say that Western Australia takes no second place in the humane treatment of its natives, either from the point of view of the Government or of those people employing them. I am safe in saying there has never been any general occasion for hostile criticism on this score. At times visitors to the North are horrified to see prisoners in chains and they return to Perth with extraordinary yarns. That sort of thing appeals only to new chums, because people having a knowledge of the North know there is no harm and no cruelty in this practice. It is necessary in the interests of the natives. I have known of natives without chains getting away from prison and dying before they were able to reach their own country. When we have occasion to imprison them, it is reasonable to guarantee their safe-keeping, and the little thin dog-chain placed around their legs is not of the slightest consequence. Every precaution is taken to have the collars and chains covered with leather so that in hot weather there is no possibility of their doing the native injury. When discussing the Estimates last year I suggested that the department might be more generous as regards the quality of clothing supplied. I regret there has not been much improvement. It may be that the department held stocks that have not yet been exhausted.

Mr. Sampson: An improved quality of blanket has been provided.

Mr. TEESDALE: Short sleeved singlets should be supplied. Many of the shirts issued are torn within a day or two because of the trumplers stitching of the sleeves giving way. The strong, well-stitched flannels favoured by miners give good service, and I hope the department will issue them next winter. I take exception to the issue of cotton shirts, which are not warm enough for the cold weather. A boy with one thin blanket does not sleep warm enough in one of those shirts. As I was lying on the sand at night fairly well covered, I often wondered what sort of night the poor natives were having with their thin rugs and scant clothing. I am glad to hear from the member for Swan that a better class of rug has been provided. I do not like the idea of the old couples, who have done so much for the upbuilding of stations and enabled some of the owners to live in Perth in affluence, being pinched in the matter of clothing. The pastoralists should be asked to be more generous in their interpretation of "rugs." I do not think the department considered that any thin, old blanket should constitute a rug. The idea was that the natives should be supplied with a rug to enable them to sleep warm in the cold weather. If there has been any slackness in interpreting the clothing pro-

vision, a little memo. to the pastoralists might have the desired effect. I made a point of examining the camps, and saw a number of old people who should have had better blankets. I have no fault to find with the members of the police force who have been in the North for any length of time. The average policeman who goes to the North, however, is apt to be a little unsympathetic to the natives. I saw two instances during my trip, and I took the trouble to see the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner does not hold with his men being unsympathetic to the natives. There is no necessity for the police to be brutal to them or to treat them as dogs. Natives are responsive to kindness just as are other people. The constables I have in mind will probably receive an intimation from the Commissioner. The present system of paying the natives is something novel to me, and after considering it fully with several pastoralists I have come to the conclusion it is not a good system. I want the natives to be paid for their labour, but the money they earn could be utilised better than it is at present. The system of payment has greatly increased the habit of gambling, and has led to considerable trouble as a result of drink in the camps. In the North as in other places, we have a percentage of degenerate whites mean enough to accept money from the natives in return for grog; consequently great trouble and sometimes bloodshed is caused on the station camps, where otherwise everything would be peaceful. The system of paying wages to natives has been responsible for a good deal of immorality amongst married couples who, prior to getting wages, observed very strictly the moral laws. In fact, the very greatest care was observed in olden times respecting the moral laws of the natives, care that might be an illustration to white men. At the present time it is beyond doubt that the natives who get good wages make overtures to the older natives to secure their women, and the consequence is that trouble results in the camps, and often bloodshed followed. This is the result of the slack interpretation of the moral laws that has prevailed lately. It would not be a bad idea, therefore, if an arrangement could be made whereby the money earned by the natives could be handed over to the chief protector instead of being given to the natives themselves. Then it could be paid into a fund and utilised in the direction of providing the natives with better clothing and superior rugs, whilst some of it could be devoted towards the maintenance of the older aborigines, who are a drag on many of the station owners, and who are kept on station properties merely because the younger relations prove so useful. One might say this kind of labour is expensive; why not get rid of it? The services of the boys are valuable, and it is on that account that

the older natives, the parents, sisters, cousins and aunts are fed and clothed. If the natives were civilised enough to realise the full value of money, the position would not be so bad. But I know that in many instances Asiatics supply the natives with things that are of inferior quality and charge them exorbitant prices. The natives are swindled in a disgraceful manner. I have known a native pay £3 for a rug which was not worth 25s. A native may go into a Chinese or Japanese shop with £3 or £4 in his pocket, and come out with a little clothing and not a penny left. It was never intended that this kind of thing should occur, and therefore we should be able to fix up some satisfactory scheme in the manner that I have suggested, allowing the native boys to have sufficient money to enable them to purchase a bigger ration of tobacco, and perhaps better clothing for the winter. Some of their money could also be expended in providing a few more comforts for the dependants of the working natives, for the welfare of many of whom at the present time no one seems to care. Many of those unfortunate natives have done good work and have helped to build up huge stations that now enable the owners to live down here in affluence. The young bucks are strong enough to look after themselves. Unfortunately, too, they are becoming a little too civilised, and also too cheeky. It is difficult sometimes to avoid trouble with younger natives, and especially those that are brought into contact with half-castes, and who, in consequence, become very clever.

Mr. Heron: They are waking up.

Mr. TEESDALE: The less they wake up the better. If they wake up too much they will become very objectionable. It is somewhat difficult to make an alteration at this particular juncture, and I do not think it would pay the State to go out of its way to improve the mentality and the education of the natives. There are about 5,000 employed in this State at the present time, and speaking generally, the treatment of the natives is fair and humane. Of course there are exceptions, and whenever any cases of cruelty or improper treatment are brought under the notice of the protector, they are severely dealt with. I wish to express appreciation of the work performed by the Chief Protector of Aborigines, and for the manner in which he has responded whenever I have brought anything of particular moment under his notice. At times, when I have reported cases of illness, immediate attention has been forthcoming, and proper attention has been provided for the sick natives. It reflects credit on the State when this can be said of the Chief Protector, because we know that at times people are inclined to say things that could be easily explained by people who are familiar with what is going on. It has been suggested by the protector of the southern ab-

origines that there should be an exchange made between the natives of the North and those of the South. I was asked to look into this matter on the occasion of my last visit to the North, and I came to the conclusion that it would be a good experiment to make. Unfortunately, the manager of the Moola Bulla station has had one or two tussles with some of the natives on that station, and he agreed with me that it would be a good idea to send those men to the Moore River settlement, and that those who were making trouble at Moore River should be sent North. To my surprise, the Chief Protector, Mr. Neville, seemed to think that there would be considerable risk in sending the southern natives to the North, that they might possibly be killed by the natives of the North. I think I can assure him that there is very little risk because crime is not so prevalent in the vicinity of the stations that are close together. It is unusual now to hear of trouble with the natives, that kind of trouble that we heard such a lot about in past years. If the exchange could be made the expense would not be considerable. I have it from a deputation that waited on me at Moola Bulla that the natives would be met at Derby, and conveyed to the stations. It would therefore be merely a question of paying the fares to Derby or to Wyndham, at which ports the pastoralists would take charge of the natives and give the scheme a trial.

Mr. Heron: Could they keep the northern natives at Moore River? Some that were sent there from my district did not remain a week; they found their way back in no time.

Mr. TEESDALE: I think there would be a certain amount of hesitation before leaving the Moore River. There would be the fear of coming across natives with whom they were not friendly. The natives that found their way back to Leonora would perhaps not run that risk. The natives from the North might be inclined to remain at Moore River where they would know they would be protected. There are about 70 relief stations and depôts throughout the State, and two industrial farms. I would like to see the number of depôts increased. The other day I was interested to find that South Australia recognised the importance of our system of creating depôts, or sanctuaries, as I might call them, for the natives. Let me read this paragraph from a South Australian paper:—

“Some suitable portion of the back country should be set apart for the exclusive use of the natives where they could be allowed to live their primitive manner of life, pursue their tribal habits and customs, and be protected from the vices of others. The race is fast disappearing, and this appears the only practical way of preventing, to some extent, their complete and inevitable extinction.”

The tendency to kill cattle has decreased since the establishment of Violet Valley and Moola Bulla stations. At the present time any native that has done a reasonable amount of work can go to either station and get enough beef for himself and his family free of charge.

Mr. Coverley: Yet the Broome gaol is full.

The CHAIRMAN: Moola Bulla station is not included in this Vote.

Mr. TEESDALE: I do not see how I can deal with the work of the natives unless I refer to Moola Bulla.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member may allude to it generally.

Mr. TEESDALE: Employers in the vicinity of the depôts find a difficulty in getting their natives to remain during the musters. As soon as the hard work of the season comes on, they all start out on pinkie. People up there tell me it is because these natives who have been fed and clothed for some time in order that they might take part in the mustering, see the natives at the depôt lying about, apparently doing no work. This is a bad example to the natives employed on the adjacent stations. It will be necessary before very long to have a hard and fast rule in regard to natives allowed to camp there, because it is found impossible to keep the boys working adjacent to those camps. The member for Kimberley interjected that the Broome gaol was full. Had he taken the trouble to consider, he would have found that the reason is because the Broome gaol is being used as a depôt for about four other ports.

Mr. Coverley: It took you a long time to think that out.

Mr. TEESDALE: Natives have been sent up from Roebourne gaol, which is now closed down altogether. A good illustration of the benefits of the missions on the coast was the healthy appearance of the natives. At one mission that I have heard adversely criticised I was agreeably surprised at the splendid treatment given to the natives. Although I have some strong opinions on the Christianising of natives, I can appreciate the fact that the missions are keeping these natives strong and healthy, and that when anything at all is wrong with them it is immediately attended to. If the missions accomplish no more than that, they are fully justifying their continuance. The splendid health of the mission natives is evidenced by the very low rate of mortality. There is practically no disease amongst them. At the Forrest River Mission, with a roll call of 113, there was not a single case of disease. It is marvellous when we consider the attraction such places offer to the travelling public. Of course there have been individual cases of disease there, but they are immediately attended to. At the Beagle Bay mission, with a roll call of 170, there was only one suspected case. It is marvellous to think

that in two missions like that, with a total of nearly 300 souls, there should be only one suspected case. At Violet Valley, among 76 natives, there were three cases of disease. At one station—perhaps the best that we visited in point of clothing and feeding—we were particularly struck with the quality of the clothing. Strange to say at that station there were seven cases of disease. I am afraid they had not been using the proper medicine. Dr. Cook arranged to send them up some medicine, and it was agreed to administer it according to instructions. After having made this trip, and having had the benefit of Dr. Cook's views, I have come to the conclusion that the Government must arrange for an annual inspection of the natives. It is not sufficient to send up a medical man once every three or four years, as in the past. The Government will find the expense of an annual inspection amply justified.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: We are making provision for the appointment of a permanent travelling inspector.

Mr. TEESDALE: I am delighted to hear that. It will be very much appreciated by everybody up there. With all due respect, I suggest that this officer should reside in a central position, preferably at Hall's Creek, where there is a hospital, and where arrangements could be made for nursing severe cases. It is very difficult for a medical man to be camped at a place where there are no facilities for treating bad cases. The stations will not be bothered with them. If the medical man could reside at a central site, and make excursions as required, I believe the department would solve a lot of difficulties that have arisen in the past. However, I am glad to hear that a permanent man is to be appointed. As an illustration of the difficulty in treating natives, I want to mention the case of a young native woman at the Hall's Creek hospital. The moment it was known that this unfortunate native girl was sick, the townspeople objected to her being at the hospital. She was not in the native ward, but was about at the back of the hospital, no doubt camped under some shelter. I suppose she was from time to time employed in some work at the hospital. However, a report was made, and this unfortunate woman, although very sick and under treatment by Dr. Cook, was rushed off to Moola Bulla. It was not fair to send that case to the station and have to depend upon the manager and his wife for its treatment. Yet the hospital authorities were compelled by weight of public opinion to send the girl away, and so she was put into a buggy and driven 25 miles to Moola Bulla. There are hundreds of such cases in Western Australia to-day, and they are treated, and every possible consideration given to them. The Government spending big sums of money on them: so I want some little consideration to be paid to the very few cases

we have in the North. As evidencing the sort of treatment some men give, one medical man up there, treating a native boy, declared that the case was incurable, and thereupon performed a shocking operation on the boy. If I had my way that medical man should never again treat another patient, not so long as he remained in the Government service. That man is getting too old for his position, and should be called upon to resign. Apart from that instance, I have every reason to congratulate the Government on the class of medical men we have up North. That case was a scandalous one, and should be looked into. That unfortunate boy was a police boy, and when I was up there he was riding about the country in a shocking state. Two medical men were aghast on hearing of the operation that had been performed on him. There was a good deal of trouble amongst the people at one townsite in connection with the inspection of the natives who were taken to the local hospital. They were girls who had been working in and about the homes and nursing the babies and helping with the cooking. Because the unfortunate medical man was called upon to examine these girls in the interests of the people of the town, and because he dared to take them into a ward of the hospital, the whole township, composed of half a dozen people, rose up in their wrath and sent protesting telegrams all over the country. They asked a certain member to take a hand in the matter and, instead of trying to smooth over the difficulty, he made out things to be worse than they were. The natives were clean enough and wholesome enough to nurse the babies and help with the cooking, but the townspeople said the doctor had no right to take them into the hospital in case they should pollute the atmosphere. One or two girls were found to have quite an ordinary complaint, such as might occur to anyone and no notice would be taken of it. A hospital is not polluted because people walk into it and are examined by a doctor for two or three minutes. One would think these girls suffered from leprosy or some foul disease, but that was not so. This complaint was confined to the one township and to a small number of people. It shows how difficult is the task of a medical man in keeping the health of the town right, when the local people make such senseless and idiotic objections to examinations that are made in their own interests. It was not a very humane objection on the part of the employers of the girls. They were glad to utilise the services of the natives, and it is up to them to help the department and see that the aborigines are kept healthy and are well looked after. Apparently, so long as the girls do their work, it does not matter if they die in the mangroves. I have no time for such people. Like a member of the Legislative Council, I do not care whether they like my remarks or not. I shall continue to make such remarks in

connection with these people who do not give the natives a fair deal. I have always fed and clothed well any natives I have had to do with. There is a great increase in the number of half-castes in the North-West.

The Premier: How do you account for that?

Mr. TEESDALE: This is proving a very big problem. Some time ago I was looking at some 25 splendid, healthy, robust half-caste girls. Some of them were well educated and one or two were able to play the piano. They could all speak good English. It struck me that the White Australia policy was being attacked from the inside. We are watching it at our front door but there is an attack made upon it within our gates, and this may create an awkward position before long. The number of half-castes is increasing wonderfully. I saw one girl aged about 20. She is already the mother of five. If we progress at that rate there will soon be a very much larger number of half-castes.

The Premier: The empty North will then be a thing of the past.

Mr. TEESDALE: Those girls are not going to marry natives, for they are living higher than the natives are. In one instance a man who owns much property is engaged to one of his half-caste girls. She is a fine-looking girl and should make a good wife, but this mixing of races is to be deplored and cannot be satisfactory. When these girls arrive at a certain age they have a perfect right to leave the mission in which they are. That is where the big trouble will come in. At 21 they are entitled to leave the mission, and possibly they could leave it at any time if the matter were put to a test. When they do leave they will go into the towns and a serious position will arise. The department will certainly have to take some action. As evidence of the sympathetic treatment of the Government and their interest in the natives—this applies to the present Government as well as to past Governments—considerable expense was incurred in procuring the services of a first-class doctor from the Federal authorities. After much correspondence and delay this doctor arrived here. It was arranged for him to make a tour of the North-West and inquire particularly into cases of leprosy. The inspection lasted about three months. A considerable area of country was covered, far more than was ever attempted by any other medical man. Stations that had never been visited by a medical man representing the department welcomed him with open arms. The people of the towns, the stations and the depôts were grateful to the Government for sending him round. His visit has acquainted them with the position regarding their natives and the health of those people. The doctor was also able to deal with various accidents that had occurred. Our visit was, therefore, doubly welcomed. Over



3,800 miles were travelled by motor car, and a big mileage was done on horseback in cases where the roads were impassable. No fewer than 120 stations, out-camps, and drivers' camps were visited. The doctor examined 1,299 female and 1,113 male natives. It is interesting to know how equal in numbers the males and females are. It never occurred to me before to look that up. The natives examined were immediately under the control of the department. They were subjected to a close and exhaustive examination at the hands of the doctor. It was perhaps a more thorough examination than has ever been attempted by the department. It is very gratifying to know that this work has been done. A certain road board made a good deal of fuss because no advice was given as to the doctor's visit. The whole success of the trip would have been nullified had this information been given. The only chance the doctor had of meeting the natives was in arriving at the stations unannounced. In only two instances were we unsuccessful. The natives are very superstitious, and very extraordinary tales travelled around the country like lightning. On one occasion a yaru was started on a station that the doctor was going about the country taking the fifth rib out of every man. What importance the natives attached to that I do not know, unless they thought we wanted to prevent any more females being born. On the next station we visited we found not a single native. A boy had travelled 21 miles during the night and had told the natives about this, and created such a scare that even the house girls had bolted.

The Premier: He told them you were on their tracks.

Mr. TEESDALE: Yes, and taking out their fifth ribs. I believe the station manager was actually surprised to find we were not performing this operation, but that there had been some trivial operation which had been exaggerated. From two of the stations we visited the birds had flown before we arrived. It will thus be seen how important it was that the Chief Medical Officer should take these precautions. We were asked not to give information to anyone as to the purpose of the trip, lest its object should be defeated. The precautions were satisfactory. Two young fellows carried a poor sick native, who was lying in camp and was not supposed to live, 10 miles during the night, in order to get away from the operation. They half-supported and half-carried him all that distance. The next morning a boy came in and reported that the native was lying at a creek some 10 miles away. The boys had taken him all that distance to get away from the rib-cutter. They were not going to have any more injury done to the old man. Once the natives had gone through the ordeal of the inspection, they were quite satisfied. Being able to speak a little of their language, I was able to cajole some of the women into undergoing the examination. I was fairly

successful with them, and my slight knowledge of the language caused them to be friendly. At first the women were not willing to be examined, but afterwards we heard them laughing and joking amongst themselves. They were quite surprised at the kindly and humane treatment they received, and relieved to think that they had been so considerately treated by the doctor. The next doctor who goes along will be received with open arms. I think the women have been badly treated at one time and expected the same sort of treatment again. Several of the men objected to the womenfolk being examined. That was quite natural. There again I interpreted to them the necessity for the examination, and I so calmed the feelings of the men that they raised no further objection. At one station the manager was very doubtful about the whole thing. He said the natives had a rooted objection to anything of this kind. Some medicine man had taken away four or five of the women. The men had not been told whether the women had died on the island to which they were sent, or had been married. It was quite natural that the men should not wish to be deprived of their wives. Some of them have the greatest respect for their womenfolk and strongly object to their being taken away, especially when they never hear of them again. I doubt whether it was a success sending natives to the islands.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. TEESDALE: Besides appreciating the care and attention paid by the two medical men to the patients in Derby, I was much struck with the precautions taken by those doctors to protect the health of the public. Every emergency was provided against. There is very little cause for alarm with regard to that township. Leprosy is not very infectious in the generally understood sense of the term. On two or three occasions I visited the lazarette and sat yarning with the patients, thus backing up my opinion; and I am still in pretty fair health. Bearing in mind the hundreds of nurses and medical men who come in contact with leprosy cases, one must acknowledge that the disease is not particularly infectious. I have had some knowledge of leprosy for 30 years. The first two or three cases known in Western Australia occurred in my district. After a lapse of 30 years that district now has only two leprosy patients; a third died a little time ago. Not a single case of infection has been known. A certain strip of country was only partially worked during the late inspection. I refer to the beach from Broome to King's Sound, beyond Wyndham. That strip is inaccessible for a shore party. There must be a boat party working with the shore party to ensure a thorough search of that

strip of beach. We were in a position to test the matter on two occasions, when we got in from the road on which we were travelling. I am sorry to say that our examination disclosed more than the usual percentage of cases. Among the women below La Grange Bay there was a rather large percentage of disease, which fact shows that in order to make a clean sweep of the disease the department must take action with regard to the immediate beach. I am not a bit afraid as to the country eight or ten miles from the beach; there everything possible has been done. But that is not the case on the beach proper, where Asiatics with their pearling boats have access to the womenfolk, and where the womenfolk deliberately congregate to cater for the crews of pearling boats. Under such conditions one must expect to find a good deal of disease; and I am afraid a good deal of disease exists there. It would be a good idea to send out a small shore party consisting of three or four good bushmen. I do not suggest a police party, because the moment the natives hear that the police are about, there is an exodus. The local policeman might see the party through to his boundary, and then hand them over to the guidance of the policeman stationed in the adjoining district. Such a trip would convince the department that the position as to disease has been exaggerated by a certain northern road board. There is fine accommodation for whites and natives, except in one locality, which I mentioned this afternoon. With that one exception, the treatment of the natives in the hospitals is admirable. They are treated kindly and humanely by the medical men. From conversations I have had with those medical men, I know that they are doing their utmost to eradicate the disease that must necessarily exist on parts of the coast to which pearling boats have access. The cases at present in the lazarette at Derby number six—one white man, one coloured man, and four natives. They seemed to me a happy and contented crowd, being properly treated and receiving every possible attention and comfort. I desire to place on record my appreciation of the Principal Medical Officer and the Chief Protector of Aborigines for the great attention they paid to the visiting party, and for the great help they gave to make the trip a thorough success. In Dr. Cook we had a first-class official, and great credit is due to the department for the manner in which they backed up Dr. Cook right through the trip.

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.40]: I thank the member for Roebourne for his most informative addresses on North-West matters, both to-night and other occasions. I would wish that arrangements could be made whereby mem-

bers of Parliament might gain first-hand knowledge of some portions of the North-West. We of the South are under a disability in that respect. Comparatively very few citizens of this State have an opportunity of seeing anything of the North-West, and the consequent lack of knowledge must militate against the consideration to which the North-West is entitled. I put forward the suggestion, and it may possibly receive consideration from the Government. When during the early part of the remarks of the member for Roebourne I interjected to the effect that the contract for blankets this year specified a better quality, I was erroneously referring to the aborigines in the South-West. It may be that the contract for blankets for the North-West aborigines specifies a better quality, but I am not in a position to say that that is so. I think it right to correct an error which possibly I made.

Vote put and passed.

#### Public Utilities.

*Note—Aborigines' Cattle Station (Moola Bulla), £7,484:*

Mr. TEESDALE: Lately I had a good opportunity of making a thorough examination of this station, and I congratulate the Government on possessing a very fine investment. From inquiries I made I find that the station was purchased at a very low figure—the cattle at 30s. per head, and the horses at £5. At that time horses were much more expensive than they are now. I was surprised to find that numbers of stations in that district are breeding horses, and breeding them quickly, too. I saw one paddock with 300 horses of good stamp for sale. The position is extraordinary in view of the fact that at one time those stations had to depend on my district for hacks. I was also pleased to see what good sheep country there is on Moola Bulla station. The Government might well put 5,000 breeders on it, and see what the result will be. The country can be well watered at reasonable cost. More weirs should be constructed to conserve water for cattle. At present the water position is rather serious. If there is no rain within the next six weeks or two months, all the Moola Bulla cattle will be on the one water, so that the position would be very serious if that one supply failed. The station depends practically upon weirs for conservation of water. However, it has had very small losses to date, and it may get through better than some of its neighbours; that is, provided rain comes about December. Next year bullocks will be young and scarce. If the Port Darwin meat works resume, there will be difficulty in keeping up the full complement for the Wyndham Meat Works. The Government

could run another 10,000 head of cattle on Moola Bulla station with a little water development. In view of the possibilities at Port Darwin, we should make a big bid to supply fats for our meat works at Wyndham. There is no reason why Moola Bulla should not send 2,000 or 3,000 head yearly to those works, and that would represent a great saving to the Government. The returns from the station for last year are not yet available, but the previous year's returns showed a profit of £27. I am afraid this profit is mythical, for I hear of certain debits that, if charged up, would swamp not only the profit, but a good deal more. The station is running a mail, and a great boon it is to the district. At the same time it is making a loss on the mail, owing to the great mortality amongst the horses. In the first instance horses going to the Fitzroy Crossing introduced a disease amongst the Moola Bulla stock. There was considerable mortality from that alone, and owing to the drought eight or ten mail horses have gone under. Those horses are not charged to the mail. They have to travel 48 miles in one stage without water, and the watering place at the end of that long stage is not always adequate. The Government ought to provide water there for our own stock and also for that of the travelling public. If repairs to buggies and harness, blacksmithing, etc., were charged up to the mail, it would be found that it was being run at a considerable loss. It is a great benefit to the district, and it would be only fair if all those enjoying it contributed to its cost. More drafting yards are required at the station. If there were to be an outbreak of pleuro there are no yards where the manager could treat the cattle. The plant, taking it all through, is practically obsolete. I would scrap the whole of it and replace it with good useful stuff. In one instance two old second-hand drays were brought up by steamer at a freight of £20, to say nothing of the cost of dragging them 400 miles inland. I inspected those two drays, and I can say I would not give £20 for the pair of them. One good wagon should be purchased to replace all the old stuff and a few good sets of draught harness. Then the old junk ought to be thrown out to make room for the new plant. I found the manager with an old derelict of a car that would not bring a tenner at auction. He was at great disadvantage, inasmuch as he could not get about the country quickly, as one must be able to do in drought time when some distant mill breaks down. I brought this matter before the department and pointed out that a good utility Ford truck would be the very thing required. I am pleased to say that truck was put on the next boat, and so the manager is now out of his difficulty. The huge new tannery, 80ft. by 50ft., will run into about £3,000. There is in the building a lot of expensive cement

work that was done at the suggestion of the tanner. He has since condemned it. In my opinion he has funk'd his job and will not go back to take over the big expensive building for which he was responsible. We are wrong in attempting to run anything ambitious in the shape of a tannery. We shall never be able to do more than cater for the requirements of our own stations and one or two neighbouring properties. The leather has a very poor reputation in the district. It is very defective. I saw new straps put on to a set of traces and, after going 25 miles, the pins in the buckles stripped right through the solid leather. There appears to be in the leather some core not properly tanned, and when it is subjected to concentrated pressure it strips down. The stockmen on the station refuse to use the leather for stirrup leathers or surcingles. It is all right for saddle flaps or anything of the sort, but it cannot be used where the strain is concentrated. We have 200 hides up there, but Vestey Bros. refused to take them at half price. Those hides must be turned into money somehow. We ought to confine ourselves to a less ambitious attempt to cater for the leather market in the Kimberleys. On the tanner being asked where he proposed to get the hides with which to work that huge tannery, he said he was going to have them carted from the Wyndham Meat Works, 375 miles away. If he is to compete with the southern tanners he cannot afford to cart his hides one yard; for the average killer's hide is not suitable for leather for use on a station. It is not yet known whether migram bark is as satisfactory a tanning agent as it is supposed to be. It will devolve on the Moola Bulla station to prove its utility. It would be much better if the department, recognising the position, cut the loss and devoted a quarter of that huge building to the purpose of a tannery, using the balance as a shearing shed. It would be in the best interests of the station if the department could provide a telephone service. Too much time and money are expended in continually keeping natives on the roads travelling with official communications from Moola Bulla to Hall's Creek. Only nine miles of a line would be required, and the time saved in the sending of messages would soon pay for the telephone service, while it would be of very great benefit to the department down here to be able to communicate direct with the manager in emergency. The small expense, whatever it might be, would be amply justified. I want it understood that my criticism to-night is in no way hostile. Any suggestions I have made have been made in the interests of the better working of the station. I found there was considerable friction between the manager and the tanner. This, of course, is against the proper working of the place, and should be avoided. Moola Bulla is a perfect sanctuary for the natives. There they are free to live their own lives.

Within reason they can do what they like. No police are allowed to hunt them, and they have unlimited supplies of the best of beef.

The PREMIER: Are there many natives there?

Mr. TEESDALE: About 127. There has been no trouble with them. They work practically when they like. From my point of view that is a slight defect. I would sooner see them have to work a few hours, if only four hours a day, just to keep their digestive organs in order. I was pleased to find that the manager's wife is keenly interested in the natives. In case of sickness she is always willing to do what she can. Particularly are her services valuable to the blind natives. There are eight or nine poor creatures who have to be led about, and she is very thoughtful and humane to them, especially as they are apt to be a little neglected by other members of the tribe. The station is a really good investment, and the Government who bought it deserve to be complimented. The present Government should back the investment by putting another 10,000 head of cattle on the station within the next four or five years. This would probably necessitate purchasing a few breeders and providing additional water supplies, but the outlay would be justified. It is one of the best runs in the East Kimberley, and if it carried the additional stock, the Wyndham Meat Works would be catered for better than they are at present.

Mr. Munsie: There are 49 pedigree stock on the station at present.

Mr. TEESDALE: That is a good start. I visited Violet Valley and found the conditions there very satisfactory. The natives examined numbered 76. That is a small run, but is a good belt of country. I was disappointed that this station could not cater for its own beef requirements, which are obtained from Moola Bulla. That place could be made self-supporting in the matter of beef. I compliment the department upon their administration of the regulations dealing with natives. I, who claim to be somewhat critical, am perfectly satisfied, and am prepared to back up my statement to the public at any time.

*Item, Temporary labour, etc., £1,783:*

Mr. COVERLEY: Can the Minister explain this item?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I regret that I have not particulars, but if the hon. member will call at the office, I shall supply them.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Albany Cold Stores, £800; Butter Factories, £16,146; Goldfields Water Supply Undertaking, £131,944; Government Refrigerating Works, £5,525; Kalgoorlie Abattoirs, £2,377—agreed to.*

*Vote—Metropolitan Abattoirs and Sale Yards, £19,090:*

Mr. TAYLOR: This vote shows a net increase of £3,995. Can the Minister explain it?

The PREMIER: The increase is due to the Midland Junction abattoirs being closed down for the time being pending the erection of new works, and we have had to lease portion of the meat works at South Fremantle at an annual rental of £7,000.

Mr. SAMPSON: The R.S.P.C.A. raised a question about the methods of slaughtering at Midland Junction not being modern. Is provision made for the most humane methods?

The PREMIER: I have not heard of any complaints as to the methods employed. The works being erected at Midland Junction are costing a considerable sum. The plans have been carefully prepared, and the most up-to-date appliances are being provided. Complaints made by the R.S.P.C.A. are not always well-founded.

Mr. Taylor: That is so.

The PREMIER: In slaughtering stock some measure of cruelty is unavoidable, but the men responsible for the work endeavour to carry it out properly.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: There was justification for the complaints voiced in the Press, as I learnt on a couple of visits to the abattoirs. I think they arose from the pithing being left to youthful apprentices, who were not experts. The voicing of the complaints led to a remedy being found.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage, £125,384:*

Mr. NORTH: I should like to amplify the remarks I made on the Health vote. The question of doing away with nightcarts should be more clearly defined for the benefit of the smaller suburbs. The metropolitan area is partly sewered, but many portions cannot be served by the deep sewerage owing to the enormous cost entailed. In other parts of the world, including Adelaide, individual householders have installed septic tanks, but the department here is hostile to that system. If there is any serious objection to individuals installing septic tanks, the department should prevent them being installed at all. The time may come of course when those connections will have to be scrapped in view of the extension of deep sewers. I understand the sewerage scheme at Subiaco will cost up to £400,000, and that possibly the whole of the metropolitan area will share the overhead expense in order to lighten the load on the residents of Subiaco.

Mr. Richardson: That is bunkum.

Mr. NORTH: Then it will be very hard if the 15,000 people at Subiaco have to carry that load. Assuming that septic tanks are satisfactory, the money could well have been devoted to the construction of roads and other necessary works. There are hundreds of such tanks in use in the metropolitan

area, and many more are being installed. If they are faulty, or if they are shortly to be superseded by a deep scheme, the Government should notify the public in order that they may not be put to unnecessary expense. Even if the deep sewers were extended, the septic tanks might still be used, but that would mean a waste of public money. Septic tanks can be installed at a cost of £24 to £30 per house, whereas deep drainage costs much more. I am informed that in the metropolitan area there are sufficient surveyed blocks and roads to serve a population of 7,000,000 to 8,000,000 people, so that deep sewerage for the whole area is out of the question, and if the Government made an announcement, the community in the future might be saved as much as £2,000,000 or £3,000,000, which would be available for other work.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Other Hydraulic Undertakings chargeable to revenue, £27,731:*

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Minister for Agriculture on September 16th at Bruce Rock stated that the Government had purchased Muresk, a property adjoining the railway line between Spencer's Brook and York, for the purpose of an agricultural college. It had been urged that the college should be established in the wheat belt but he said the agricultural college would not be an experimental farm. The Government hoped to conduct there every aspect of agriculture that could be carried on in the State, including the growing of cereals, the raising of sheep, dairying, orcharding, viticulture, root cropping, as well as ascertaining the amount of irrigation required. This vote deals with the upkeep, maintenance and improvement of minor town water supplies; water supplies in country districts and on goldfields; sinking wells and boring; maintenance of boring plants, pumping plants, etc.; preliminary investigations into water supply, sewerage and irrigation schemes; advising boards, local authorities and others on hydraulic matters generally; collecting data, stream gaugings, etc.; maintenance and upkeep of main drains and flood gates. In 1919 I tabled a motion connected with the Avon River. I urged that something should be done to investigate the possibilities of making that river suitable for irrigation. It is a series of pools more or less salt, some being very salt and others almost fresh. The river is polluted through the water running into the lakes at the foot of County Peak, and gathering up all the loose salt lying there. At the end of the season, when it can do most harm, all this salt water pours out into the river and pollutes it. No attention was paid to that motion, and I tabled another this session, asking that some little step should be taken to see whether something

could be done to minimise the salinity of the water. I did not ask for anything big. I wanted a small expenditure incurred on an experiment to see whether the water could be shut out from the lake at the foot of County Peak. I was away when the vote was taken. Some members said I brought this forward merely to make a name for myself, but nothing was further from my mind. I brought the matter forward because I believe much can be done by way of irrigation from the Avon River. It is said that the land in the Avon Valley is not as good as people make it out to be. The soil is similar to that on the south coast of New South Wales. It is mainly decomposed granite. Not only will it grow stone fruits, apples and pears, such as are grown in parts of New South Wales, but it will grow citrus fruits and vines. The climate is such that without artificial means the fruit can be dried. It is largely through man's folly that so many of the streams run salt. People have stripped the creeks of every stick of timber, and the resultant capillary evaporation has brought the salt to the surface. So bad is the salt in some parts that it will be difficult to reclaim the land around the creeks. No doubt this will be done some day. In the meantime I shall lose no opportunity of drawing attention to the importance of the matter. We have the soil and the climate. The locality is convenient to the metropolitan market and is on the road to the goldfields. All that is required is a suitable water supply. Last night a good deal was said about irrigation. One member said there were no rivers in this State. I have heard that there are great rivers in the North, and I hope to see them some day.

The Premier: You had better go up there at a time when they are running.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: An article was recently published under the heading of "The Idle North," "Great River Systems," "Oasis of the Kimberleys." This article stated—

Throughout the world the mass of population collects in those parts where either large rivers enable irrigation to be proceeded with or where the rainfall and sun heat are sufficient to promote intense cultivation. There exist in Northern Australia many rivers annually carrying such volumes of water as to make comparison with those in the southern portion of the continent almost absurd. One of these is the Fitzroy River, taking its source in the Leopold Range and flowing into King Sound, near the Port of Derby, after describing a horseshoe course of some 500 miles. For more than half this distance it traverses a comparatively flat plain of rich alluvial soil, which enjoys an average rainfall of over 20in., and though deficiencies are occasionally experienced they are fewer than those of similar areas in the Punjab of India. For six miles on

either bank the soil generally is of an extremely productive nature. Two widely differing river systems present themselves for comparison, and as examples of what has been done elsewhere by taking advantage of conditions. To name an obscure unknown water course in the same breath as the Nile, or the far-famed Indus, and its tributaries, or to suggest it as being in the same category as the Euphrates would at first appear ludicrous. Yet the comparison can be made and sustained. The Nile is well known to Australian troops. They saw its wide volume passing under the bridges at Cairo, and its canals through Zagazig and Tel-el-Kebir, but how many realised that the whole acreage of cultivated land in Egypt was barely 5,000,000 acres, and that out of its 500 miles of length from Assouan, only about a mile on either bank was cultivated for 400 miles? But what crops of grain, sugar, cotton, and other produce are obtained, and in a rainless country! In most years the Fitzroy River sends down a volume of water as wide as the Nile (before the Assouan dam was constructed), and the surrounding country is inundated for a greater width than that formerly flooded by the Nile.

The Premier: In what paper was that published?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In the "West Australian," and it was written by an authority on the subject.

The Premier: By De Rougemont?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If, as the writer states, there is a volume of water pouring down the Fitzroy comparable to the Nile, I agree with a good deal of what the member for Roebourne has said with regard to the possibilities of agriculture up there, notwithstanding the remarks of the Minister for Agriculture. Too little attention has been paid to irrigation in this State. There are something like 200,000,000 people dependent on irrigation in the world. India irrigates 50,000,000 acres, the United States of America 10,000,000 acres, Egypt a little over 6,000,000 acres, Italy nearly 5,000,000 acres, Spain nearly 3,000,000 acres, and France 400,000 acres. In the case of the Avon it is a question of getting water suitable for stock. Around York for years the settlers have been growing lucerne on water supplied from the pools. Twenty or thirty years ago the pools were used for drinking purposes, but owing to the constant increasing salinity, due to cutting out of the timber, they are now becoming unfit for stock or anything else. At Northam there is a reservoir and a small weir. That weir was brought into existence largely by the aid of a former Minister for Water Supply, Mr. W. D. Johnson, and that of an ex-mayor of Northam, Mr. Barnard. Much of the information I have been able to ad-

duce here on various occasions has been gathered from Mr. Barnard, who has had the project at heart. Reading a publication of his, dated about 1913, enthused me with the possibilities of the scheme. I do not claim that my ideas are original; they are the result of research. Let us see whether those pools cannot be reclaimed. The shutting out of the water cannot make any difference in the general water-level, and the Beverley people would welcome the scheme. Every year the pools are fouled by salt originating from the lake. Blocking up with sandbags proved an effective remedy last year. The engineers have investigated the question, and I understand they have reported that the cost involved would not be large. There are great possibilities in the scheme for the Avon Valley, and it would enable the agricultural college to test thoroughly the possibilities of that valley.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Perth City Markets, £935—agreed to.

Vote—Railways, Tramways, and Electricity Supply, £2,683,000:

Mr. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [\$35]: I understand that for years past there has been a scheme for a railway south of the river.

Mr. Taylor: This vote has to do with running railways, not with railway construction.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Then I will come to the burning question of long service leave. I hope the Government will give the railway men at all events something of what they ask for. The salaried staff are granted long service leave after serving 10 years, and again after serving seven years, while the wages men receive no long service leave whatever. I do not believe in such differentiation. The same terms might be granted to both the salaried staff and the wages staff; say, long service leave after 12 or 15 years. I protest emphatically against the monopoly in stock trucks granted to two or three big firms. That monopoly can be used, and I believe it is used, to corner the market in Western Australia. That there is something in this is shown by the fact that the big firms make such an outcry when it is proposed to take the monopoly from them. It is said that the small men never complain, but that is simply because the great majority of them are in the hands of Dalgetys or Elder Smith. In the interests of the country the monopoly should be abolished, and I hope that in the near future the alternative scheme will be given a trial. In view of the competition of the motor buses I think the Railway Department should grant return fares at reduced rates. At present the cost of a return ticket is twice the cost of a single fare. That fact operates in the

interests of the motor bus proprietors. If the Government are not prepared to take over the buses in the metropolitan area, they should put a few buses of their own on that run, making the bus tickets interchangeable with those of the railways. Many people who come to Perth by train go up the street to do their shopping, and then find a bus waiting for them; and so, instead of going back to the railway station, they take the bus. Therefore return tickets at reduced rates are essential. I trust the Government will grapple with the motor bus question in some way. Inside and outside Parliament protests are continually being heard against sending our trade out of the country. I believe the Railway Department send to the East for the whole of the waterproofs they use. Surely we can make as good waterproofs here as any that are made in the Eastern States. The question of a railway institute in Fremantle has been before the department for some time. Fremantle, I understand, is the only centre of any size in Western Australia lacking a railway institute. Part of the Fremantle railway station is not used at all, and I understand that part would be suitable for an institute, giving accommodation for a library and first-aid classes. I trust the Minister will see his way to do something in that respect.

Mr. Mann: Isn't the Minister going to introduce these Estimates?

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [8.42]: I am not particularly anxious to make a statement regarding these Estimates, seeing that the annual report of the Commissioner of Railways has been on the Table of the House for some time, and also seeing that we have the first quarterly statement for the current year. In the circumstances most members who take an interest in railway matters have already obtained practically all the information they need. Therefore, rather than make a general statement of what has been done by the Railway Department during the past year, I would have waited to see what matters hon. members might desire to bring forward, and I would have dealt with those matters in a general reply. However, as the Railway Department has such an important bearing on the finances of the State, it may be well to enlarge somewhat on the figures before the Committee. The revenue anticipated for the current year is £3,320,000 and the estimated expenditure £2,320,000, leaving a gross profit of £1,000,000. From that gross profit has to be deducted £800,000 for interest. Therefore it is estimated that the result of the year's work will be a profit of £200,000, not taking into account sinking fund. The improvement on last year is £104,000, and on the previous year £292,000. It is estimated that this year the department will receive £138,000 extra revenue, which will be earned at an increased cost of

only £13,000. It is expected that additional interest payments for this year will absorb £30,000. It may interest members to know the exact quantities of various commodities carried by the railways, as this has a great influence on the total of railway revenue. If one talks with a person about the Railway Department, the conversation generally boils itself down to a question of the haulage of the harvest. The majority of people have an idea that wheat is responsible for a larger proportion of the Railway Department's revenue than is any other commodity. Such people will be surprised to learn that wheat is not the principal commodity carried by the railways. The principal commodity is timber, the traffic from which extends from one end of the year to the other, is regular, and is remunerative to the department, besides being responsible for the expenditure of a large amount of money in this State. Timber represents nearly 50 per cent. more traffic than wheat. Last year timber produced a revenue of £385,000, as against wheat £284,000. General goods brought in £420,000, livestock £149,000, and passenger traffic £851,000. It is expected that local timber receipts will increase during the current year, because the demand for Western Australian hardwoods is extending throughout the world. The timber traffic is likely to maintain its pride of place from the point of view of railway revenue.

Mr. Griffiths: It is to be hoped that afforestation is being provided in order to keep up that trade.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** The Forests estimates will come on later, and the Minister in charge of the Forests Department will then be able to give information on that head. The increased area under wheat, and the beneficent late rains will, it is expected, make a big increase in the yield. This of course will make a corresponding demand on our railway resources, to get the harvest to the coast in quick time. During the past 12 months we have been faced with the necessity for increased locomotive power. We have reconditioned many engines in the locomotive workshops, and brought other engines into an improved state of repair. Consequently it is expected that we shall be able to handle the harvest as well as, if not better than, it was handled last year. But I want to utter a word of warning. During the past year or two the department has not attempted to ship the whole of the harvest to the coast within a couple of months. It is unreasonable to expect that we should obtain all the rolling stock and locomotive power necessary to meet all requirements during the year and then in an emergency to treble it.

Mr. Griffiths: The department managed very well last year.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** And will manage equally well this year. But during recent years the tendency has been

to spread the handling of the harvest over a longer period.

Mr. Mann: The ruling high price of wheat and the possibility of its falling, renders it desirable to get the harvest away as quickly as possible.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: And we are doing our very best. But during the past three or four years the later wheat has commanded a better price than he earlier.

Mr. Mann: It doesn't look as though that will obtain this year.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, it does not. Yet there seems to be a general idea that the price of wheat will continue to rise until wheat is available from other parts of the world, which will not be until June or July of next year. However, as I say, the tendency both on the part of the department and of the shippers, has been to spread the handling of the harvest over a greater period. That tendency must be encouraged, because it is not to be expected that the increasing volume of wheat should be shifted as quickly as were the very much smaller harvests of some years ago. There may be complaints over the shifting of the next harvest; it may happen that not everything will go smoothly; yet I have every reason to hope that the results will be even better than those of last year.

Mr. Taylor: We have had a good season, and the farmers must have something to growl about.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We have more trucks than ever before, and better facilities. Moreover, we are getting an increased truck-mileage. Each truck is now doing 27 miles daily, which represents a 40 per cent. increase over recent years. So we are making the very best use of the rolling stock at our disposal. We had hoped to improve our truck movements this year under a system of charging on an average of 12¼ or 12½ bags to the ton, and so obviating the weighing that is responsible for so much delay. However, the shippers generally thought it was not desirable from their standpoint, so the same old system is to be perpetuated this year. Next year we shall see if it is not possible to introduce the system I have alluded to. While we do not make a profit out of the carriage of wheat, still the fact that we have a good harvest will greatly improve the financial resources of the wheat growers and others in the industry, and so it is expected that in consequence the general goods earnings will be considerably enhanced, and so we shall obtain the additional revenue forecasted for this year. In 1920 the average haul of wheat was 84 miles. In 1921 it rose to 119 miles, and in 1922 to 133 miles. In 1923 it slipped back a little, but this year it has reached 143 miles, showing how far out cultivation is spreading.

Mr. Mann: Is that in any way due to sending to Fremantle wheat that should go to, say, Geraldton?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, not 10 per cent. of the wheat goes to other than its natural port. Of course the hauling of the wheat to the coast means considerable extra expenditure to the department. During last year, in penalty rates for overtime, in away-from-home allowances, in cutting in staff stations, and in many other items, the increased expenditure amounted to £40,000. There is also this to be considered: if we concentrate and endeavour to shift the wheat within a period of two or three months, it means the payment of interest on expenditure for a great deal of rolling stock that will necessarily lie idle for nine months of the year. To revert to the daily movement of trucks, I may say that whereas in 1920 each truck ran 19 miles daily, last year the distance run was 27 miles. So we are doing 50 per cent. more work with the same rolling stock than we did five years ago. We have set ourselves the goal of 30 miles. I have here a lot of information in regard to the items on the Estimates, but practically all of it has been given in the department's report, which has been on the Table for six or seven weeks. On the Loan Estimates an amount will be provided for additional rolling stock, and I shall then have an opportunity to explain what we intend to do. Up to the 30th June last there were 442 casual men employed on re-grading and similar work. There are several increases in the staff classified at over £400 per annum, but that is only owing to the fact that some men have automatically moved up into that class. No new positions have been created above the £400 mark during the past 12 months. Last night the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Lamond) referred to starving stock on the Port Hedland railway. Nothing has been brought before the department in that respect, but I may say we have reduced by 25 per cent. the freight on chaff for starving stock. Moreover, for the carriage of such stock itself, we have instituted a special rate. Large numbers of Murchison stock have been shifted down to the coast at that rate. Coming to Tramways, let me say that the revenue last year was £275,000, and we expect it to increase to £290,000 this year. This notwithstanding the competition of the motor buses. We have provided additional rolling stock, at least 10 bogey cars having been put on the tracks during the last seven or eight months. The expenditure has been £225,240, and it is expected that there will be at the end of the year a profit of £3,000. However, this does not include the payment to be made to municipalities, which amounts to almost that sum. During the financial year it has



been necessary to expend a considerable amount for relaying tracks. The main tramway system has been down for 20 or 25 years, and everyone will admit that the relaying was necessary. To a deputation yesterday I said I did not feel inclined to remain Ministerial head of a department that would allow the trams to continue to steeplechase up and down Barrack-street as they were doing four or five months ago. To anyone with experience, it was a marvel that the trams did not jump off the rails. Relaying had been deferred from year to year until we had reached the stage when it was essential to do it. This work has to be paid for out of revenue. However, we do not charge the whole of the expenditure to one year. We have a suspense account, and the expenditure is spread over a period of years.

Mr. Taylor: The Newcastle-street line is very bad.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Most of the lines were bad but, owing to the financial position of the State, work which should have been done was neglected, and we have had to face a considerable outlay this year. During the next two or three years we shall have to find considerably more than our share to put the tracks in order. In 1911, when the Labour Government came into power, a similar condition of affairs existed in the railways. The Government then were faced with increased expenditure for rolling stock and other things, which had been neglected during the preceding three or four years, and somewhat the same thing applies to the tramways to-day.

Mr. Clydesdale: What are the prospects of tramway extension?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We shall discuss that on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. Clydesdale: I want to get in early.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The prospects have been pretty clearly stated during the last few months, and I do not think anyone in the metropolitan area has any doubt as to the prospects of extension this year.

Mr. Clydesdale: But almost half the financial year has gone.

Mr. Taylor: It will take six years to get over the Como stunt.

Mr. Clydesdale: No fear, it will not.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: An amount of £8,850 has to be paid to the municipal bodies. That is the 3 per cent. payment, and really represents a license fee for the right to run over their roads. On top of that a similar amount has to be expended on the maintenance of roads, many of which are worn out by motor and other traffic, and not by the trams. This year we are faced with an expenditure of nearly £50,000 for relaying. During the last five years the amount spent on relaying was £46,000. Consequently we have to find a

greater amount this year than has been spent on relaying during the last five years.

Mr. Taylor: And even after that you will have a lot to do.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I suppose the hon. member, who rides in the Newcastle-street and Oxford-street trams, thinks it time those tracks were relayed.

Mr. Clydesdale: What license will be paid by the buses now running in opposition to the trams?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Traffic Bill may contain some provision dealing with that. The electricity supply commenced operations in December, 1916, and the extension of the use of electrical current in the metropolitan area can only be described as marvellous. In 1918, 10,000,000 units were generated, and last year the number was 45,000,000, about 40,000,000 of which were retailed through the various public utilities. The use of electrical current has resulted in an extension of our industrial enterprises, and we have to keep pace with the increasing demand. To give an idea of the expansion of business, since 1918 the load has increased by 23½ per cent., the units generated by 326 per cent., and the revenue received by 403 per cent., and that has all been done with an increase in the plant capacity of 62 per cent. Consequently it will be necessary in the near future to increase the plant considerably. The capital cost has increased by £500,000, or about 100 per cent. of the original cost. Several matters have been mentioned by the member for Fremantle. The question of long service leave has been the subject of a deputation by the joint railway unions. This will affect not only the Railways but all Government departments. The matter has been referred to the Minister for Labour in order to obtain necessary data, and the whole question will be again reviewed, after which we shall be able to say what we are prepared to do. There seems to be much misapprehension regarding stock trucks. Previously I considered it was not in the best interests of the State that the system in vogue should be continued, but notwithstanding efforts on my part to find complaints, I have not been able to get a single complaint from anyone that the marketing of stock under the present system has been to his detriment, or that anyone has been refused a truck.

Mr. Clydesdale: We had that in evidence before the marketing select committee.

Mr. Sleeman: Will you stand for the principle simply because you cannot find anyone to whom it has done harm?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, but if it were doing harm to anyone, complaints would be made, and we could then rectify it. So far we have had no serious complaints. A similar system operates in Melbourne and is giving every satisfaction there. Many are the reasons why we should adopt this system, and I have not been able

to ascertain any reasons why we should not. I have made inquiries from the Primary Producers Association, from various societies dealing with stock, from individual farmers, from the Abattoirs Department, from the Department of Agriculture, and from all possible sources of information, and I have not been able to learn anything to the detriment of the system. It has been said that this system results in higher prices being charged to the consumers, but I have been unable to get any proof of that. Under the old system serious disadvantages did accrue to the people dealing in stock and to consumers in the metropolitan area. In some weeks there was more stock than the market could absorb, and prices went down. In other weeks there was a scarcity and prices went up. The people with capital could buy up during the glut weeks, and the consumer got no advantage.

Mr. Sleeman: There will be no glut under the present system.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Instead of refusing orders for trucks, it has been the agents' first care and desire to get sufficient stock to the markets to cater for the requirements of the public. That is reflected in the high price of meat, because the agents have been unable to get anything like the number of stock required by the market. The Minister for Health may be able to tell us how much meat has been imported from Wyndham, and how much frozen meat has been brought from the other States in order to keep the price down to a reasonable figure. It was estimated by the Department of Agriculture that the saving to metropolitan consumers alone during the last three or four months amounted to £30,000. Thus, if we had not instituted the importation of frozen meat from Wyndham and from the other States, consumers in the metropolitan area would have had to pay £30,000 more for their meat. Still there is a shortage, and prices have established a record. It has been the endeavour of stock agents to induce people to send their stock to the markets.

Mr. Sleeman: The two firms control a lot of producers.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If any reputable firm wish to start selling agencies at Midland Junction, they will be registered by the Department of Agriculture and will have the same control over stock trucks as have the other firms.

Mr. Sleeman: They will not have the same control over the growers.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is easy to make such statements, but it is not easy to prove them. I have asked the hon. member and others to supply information in verification of such statements, but none has been forthcoming. I wish to correct one misapprehension regarding stock trucks. It is considered by some people that the agents have control of the whole of the stock trucks of the department. The only control they have is that any truck

of stock consigned to the metropolitan abattoirs for slaughter is in the hands of the agents so that we shall not have a glut in one week and a poor market in another week.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [9.14]: I was pleased to hear the statement of the Minister. We ought to congratulate ourselves upon the improved position of the railways during the last two years, and especially during the last year. This is largely due to the activity and productivity of the outlying agricultural, pastoral, timber and coal areas. The staff must be working in a harmonious manner, from the Commissioner down to the smallest office boy or cleaner, or we should not have so successful a result. It is pleasing to know what has been done, and to be able to congratulate ourselves upon it. Notwithstanding the large mileage per head of the population, the largest in the world, we stand better than any of the States except New South Wales and South Australia. Victoria last year lost £108,765; New South Wales made a profit of £5,669; South Australia made a profit of £50,754; Queensland lost £1,593,066; and Western Australia made a profit of £142,170. I presume that in these figures no regard is paid to a sinking fund, and that they are all shown in the same form. Our system is, therefore, most satisfactory. In regard to the percentage of working expenses to earnings, Western Australia shows 71.20 per cent.; South Australia 73.83 per cent.; Queensland 87.34 per cent.; Victoria 74.63 per cent.; and New South Wales 69.91 per cent. New South Wales showed a profit with her large system and large population to work on, but she is in a better position than this State. The railways there get a lot of back-loading, which we do not get, at all events from the gold-fields section. That State cleared only £5,000, and its percentage of working expenses to earnings was 69 as against our 71. With the exception of that State, we are the lowest in percentage in the Commonwealth. That is most satisfactory. Last year the Minister for Railways moved a motion as follows:—

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

He thought that could be accomplished rather easily, without financially embarrassing the Treasury, but I believe, now he has had Ministerial experience, he realises there is a difficulty in the way. He is now taking the precaution necessary for one holding that position, and has handed the matter to the Minister for Labour to see what would be involved financially.

The Minister for Railways: That is so. Mr. TAYLOR: The then Minister for Railways, Mr. Scaddan, said the first instalment would cost about £40,000, but that

if the proposal were made retrospective it would cost between £500,000 and £600,000. Seeing that we were losing on our railway system, it was rather a large order to expect us to involve ourselves financially to that extent. I am satisfied that if the Minister does work out a proposal to meet the requirements of his motion, he will not be able to say next year that he is showing any profit on the railway system, notwithstanding the increased wheat yield, the improved wool clip, or our greater timber and coal exports. I am afraid the proposition would absorb a large amount of money.

The Minister for Railways: The men are very reasonable in what they have put up.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am pleased to know that. I hope the Minister will not, through any rash step, put our railway system back into a state of financial chaos, and turn it into a losing concern instead of a profitable one.

The Minister for Railways: You can rest assured about that.

Mr. TAYLOR: We must stare the position fairly in the face. We cannot have our railways run for anyone except the railway employees. Millions of money are involved in them. Let us be candid with each other. The employees should get a fair deal, but we must remember we have £19,000,000 of capital wrapped up in our railway system. We should make a profit on that investment. We should also give great service to our people. We should be able to satisfy our people as well as the employees. We should not run the system at a loss, and tax the people to make good that loss. There should be no deficit upon the system, and no funding of the deficit. In the past this has occurred and the deficit has stood as a further loan, interest and sinking fund being charged upon it. Members must take a reasonable view of the situation, whether they lose votes or not. I have had my difficulties. During my campaign I lost the votes of the railway men because I gave a casting vote against the motion moved by the Minister for Railways last year. I only did my duty as Speaker. Notwithstanding my personal feelings, I was bound to protect the revenue. I therefore received none of the railway votes.

Mr. Teesdale: A case of victimisation.

Mr. TAYLOR: I would rather be out of Parliament than be here seeking for votes.

The Premier: I want a Speaker who will protect the revenue for me.

Mr. TAYLOR: We will have to face the position in respect to all our State undertakings where the employees are concerned. They should, of course, be treated fairly and well, but the public are also entitled to consideration. I am glad to learn of the position in which the railways are to-day.

Mr. NORTH (Claremont) [9.25]: I draw the Minister's attention to the following extract from the report of the New South Wales Railway Royal Commission:—

It is recommended that the Railway Commissioners should be given full control of their own funds, and should be responsible for the renewal of loans and the raising of future capital.

The Minister for Lands: You would put the Commissioner over Parliament?

Mr. NORTH: It has been found after long investigation in New South Wales that it is advisable for the railways to be run as a business concern, removed from Parliament. The question should be looked into.

The Minister for Railways: The members of the Country Party on the cross-benches would not like it if the railways put an extra charge on the carriage of sugar.

Mr. NORTH: The railways are making a big profit in New South Wales.

The Minister for Railways: Or if they charged full fare for children going to school.

Mr. NORTH: The Commissioners might not be fools.

The Minister for Railways: That would be running the railways as a commercial concern.

Mr. NORTH: The question will probably solve itself. I think we shall be forced to do this in a few years' time. Coming to another question, it may be advisable for the Minister to appoint, through the Commissioner, advisory experts on railway electrification. Although this question is at present only in the air, it is already looked upon as a sort of prospective white elephant and beyond the realms of practical politics in view of the cost. It has not, however, received fair treatment. Very few of the railway officers have any practical knowledge of railway electrification. Even Mr. Taylor is in charge only of the electric tramway system.

The Premier: The tramways have installed an up-to-date electric railway in East Perth.

Mr. NORTH: I am aware of that. This was apparently done with the object of gradually bringing members round to that way of thinking.

The Premier: It was a practical demonstration of what can be done.

Mr. NORTH: If we had in the employ of the State electrical railway experts, we would be more partial to the system than is now the case. It is looked upon by some people as a sort of bogey.

The Premier: It is not a joke but a matter of cash.

Mr. NORTH: I should like to let the words of a great man speak for themselves. Mr. Ford, who I believe has £20,000,000 cash in the bank, was asked, "Will railroads electrify?" His answer was:

That depends upon their banker managers. Certainly it would save them money in the long run. The steam locomotive is not much more efficient than that old-fashioned power plant, the horse. Like

the horse it spends about 70 per cent. of its time in the round house, where it takes five men to fuel, oil, and repair it. An electric locomotive is in the shops for repairs only for about two weeks in the year, but the greatest saving is in the loads hauled. An electric locomotive pulls heavier loads, or else pulls an ordinary load more quickly. Moreover, it does not burn coal, and right there it lops off a 40 per cent. saving. A considerable percentage of the traffic of our rail-roads is coal to burn in their own engines.

This State is in the hands of steam experts. We had exactly the same fight in other spheres between gas and electricity in connection with light and heat. For 35 or 40 years the gas engineers have fought the electric engineers to the disadvantage of the latter, because they preponderated. If we had a railway expert who understood modern system of railway electrification, we would probably learn that there was nothing in quite a lot of the bogeys that have been put up. It is said that the inauguration of the system would cost about £2,000,000.

The Minister for Railways: Much more than that.

Mr. NORTH: But it should effect an enormous saving in revenue expenditure, which would go towards meeting the capital cost. However, at this juncture I content myself with stressing the point that if the Government would see fit to employ just one advisory electrical expert at a cost of a few thousand pounds for a few years, we would eventually be better fitted to tackle this great task. Let us not put it off for 20 or 30 years, thus becoming the last country in the world to adopt electrification. I will quote a few lines from a leading article which appeared recently under the heading of "Cheap Power":—

No one to-day would dream of installing steam-driven machinery in a factory when electric power is available at the rates now ruling within the metropolitan area. Sooner or later the steam locomotive is as surely doomed to obsolescence. That it will share the fate of the steam engine in the factories is inevitable. Already the United States, Switzerland, Italy, France, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Holland, the Danish East Indies, Spain, Brazil, Chili, and other South American States have adopted electrification quite definitely, and are carrying out immense schemes of railway electrification. Victoria has led the way in Australia by electrifying its metropolitan-suburban service, and this example must be followed in time and in turn by the other States.

Mr. Taylor: If we had the population those States have, we could do it, too.

Mr. NORTH: The fact of our having a small population is all the more reason why we should obtain the best advice in the direction of utilising the best means of transportation. If it should come to the

practical question of electrifying certain of our railways, we might do well to put in plant from the Old Country, assuming there is still a prospect under the Trade Facilities Act, of getting machinery in cheaply from Britain. I hope that Mr. Taylor, when he returns from his tour abroad, will have considerable information to put before the Minister, who, I am sure, is only too anxious to introduce modern methods of transport here if it can possibly be done. That ideal of the Minister and others, to improve the conditions of the railway employees, would be more likely to be obtained if the average man was doing a better day's work by using improved methods, than it is possible for him to do to-day.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [9.35]: With regard to the Naremburn-Merredin railway, which is under construction, when do the Railway Department expect to be able to place trucks on that line for the handling of the wheat harvest?

The Premier: It has already been done.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I heard that, but I wanted to make sure. Would trucks be available for other traffic on that line?

The Premier: They will be supplied.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: As regards the Yarramony Eastward railway—

The Premier: You cannot discuss that railway on these Estimates. You will have that on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Then I shall exercise my right to speak on the Loan Estimates. It is pleasing to note the improvement in the affairs of the Railway Department. When the present Commissioner was appointed a hullabaloo was made about it; but apparently he is proving satisfactory.

The Premier: There was no hullabaloo.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I was in the House at the time, and I heard considerable noise about the appointment. While the Commissioner has undoubtedly done good work and managed the railways economically, I am afraid those results have been achieved partly by cutting down facilities from out-back places. I trust that before there is any more tramway extension consideration will be given to people who have been without railways for 12 to 15 years.

The Premier: That, too, is a matter for the Loan Estimates.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I wish to draw attention to the sort of treatment I am getting from the Commissioner of Railways, whom however I do not blame. I suppose the fault lies with the Treasurer. At Tammin I have been asking for years for a platform. For Kellerberrin I have been requesting the construction of an overhead bridge. That town is growing into a very solid place. Most of the population is on the south side of the line, and most of the Government buildings are on the north side. About 150 school children have to cross the line every day. At Merre-

din station buildings are required. The existing refreshment room at Merredin consists of two settler's rooms, and the department derives a revenue of £600 a year from the refreshment room. If private persons did that sort of thing they would be called profiteers. Five lines run into Merredin now, and it is probably destined to become the biggest railway junction in Western Australia. For Burracoppin, a substantial little town, the appointment of a caretaker has been requested. The reply received is, "No funds." For Walgoolan I have requested a trucking yard, and the answer is, "No funds." A similar reply was given to a request for a trucking yard and the fencing of the station yard at Carrabin. These are perhaps parochial matters, but they are highly important to the people concerned. I bring my requests to the attention of the Treasurer, and I ask him to consider whether he cannot find a little cash at any rate to start some of these very necessary works.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [9.42]: I also have a sheaf of matters to bring forward on the Loan Estimates. Meanwhile I wish to call attention to the item referring to a spark arrester. Is this something new, or is it an improvement on the spark arrester of the past? An efficient spark arrester is a matter of great importance to the farming areas, more particularly from this time of the year onward. Hitherto the use of Collie coal on the railways has been a menace to the agricultural districts. Undoubtedly many disastrous fires have been caused by sparks from railway engines.

The Minister for Lands: There were no complaints about Collie coal during the war, when other coals were unobtainable.

Mr. Griffiths: There were many complaints.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Last Friday I was travelling by train from Perth to my electorate, and on that journey I counted no fewer than 30 fires within a distance of 20 miles, all caused by the engine, which was fitted with the latest spark arrester. If that is a sample of the work done by the spark arrester for which £1,000 was paid, it is time the matter was looked into. I was informed by the driver of the engine that it was fitted with a spark arrester. It is not right that one primary industry of this State should be made to suffer for the benefit of another primary industry. Is this H.D.D. arrester something fresh?

The Minister for Railways: Yes.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Well, I hope it will meet the position.

Mr. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [9.45]: I am in sympathy with the Treasurer, for I know that funds are not available for making all the necessary improvements to country stations. But I want to stress the inconvenience

the people at Pemberton are under. That line is run by the State Sawmills.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing on the Estimates dealing with that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No, perhaps not. Some six months ago the Commissioner promised to make provision at Balingup for a receiving place for butter, fruit, and cream. I hope the Minister will hurry that along. I have noticed that our station buildings have not had a coat of paint for years. To bring those buildings up to standard now would cost anything from £50,000 to £100,000. It is false economy to allow these buildings to get into disrepair.

The Premier: Look at the artistic advertisements we have.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If you would put the revenue from these advertisements into paint and renovations, there would be some sense in it.

Mr. RICHARDSON (Subiaco) [9.48]: I am disappointed to find that we are not to have any further extensions of the tramway system.

The CHAIRMAN: That is for the Loan Estimates.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The Minister was not pulled up when he mentioned this matter to-night. If we are not to have any tramway extensions, it is for the Government to consider the starting of a motor bus service. If they will not do that, why should they prevent private people from running motor buses? I hope I am in order.

The CHAIRMAN: No, that is traffic. In any case, a Bill is coming down to deal with it.

Mr. RICHARDSON: But it is a most urgent question.

The CHAIRMAN: It is anticipating legislation that is already on the Notice Paper.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Very well, I will take a later opportunity.

Mr. KENNEDY (Greenough) [9.50]: Although the railway revenue shows an improvement, there is still room to effect economies in all branches of the service. At present we have fewer permanent way men than we had five or six years ago. Yet the numbers of the administrative staff have increased. We have large numbers of engineers, assistant engineers and inspectors, travelling the railways weekly, collecting good salaries and large amounts under the away-from-home allowance, yet all of no use to the railways. We have practical men in charge of our running roads in the inspectors of the permanent way, who are essential to the working of the line, notwithstanding which, there comes along a team of engineers and their assistants. Go where you will, to any of the various railway centres, we find an engineer, an assistant engineer, and an army of clerks carrying out unnecessary corres-

pondence of no use whatever other than for the collecting of salaries and away-from-home allowances. The Railway Commissioners' report shows that notwithstanding the increased population and mileages, for the last five or six years we have not put one extra coach into running. As a result, at times of peak traffic we cart passengers about in trucks. I agree with the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) that our station buildings are in a most disgraceful condition, not having had a coat of paint for many years. I agree that the harvest transport should be spread over a longer period. I cannot understand why the railways should be overtaxed at every hour of the day and night for three or four months, and then have the rolling stock lying idle in unattended sidings for the remaining nine months. Nor is it the rolling stock alone, for under the rush of the harvest traffic we have to transfer engine drivers and firemen and guards from their own sections and for three or four months pay them an away-from-home allowance of £1 per day over and above their usual rate. I have no quarrel with the concession to the farmers on the railings of super. at a stated period in the year, for the truck that takes out the super. can bring back the wheat. But it is not right that the truck carrying the super. should lie idle for eight or ten days at the siding before the farmer releases it. That means an economic loss to the service.

Mr. Taylor: Does he not pay demurrage?

Mr. KENNEDY: It is difficult to fix it, because usually it happens at an unattended siding. However, with telephones all over the place it should not be a difficult matter to notify the farmer of the arrival of his super. and insist upon his promptly releasing the truck and loading it with wheat, so that the next train could haul it away. The other day the Minister for Railways announced a reduction in freight.

The Premier: I think he said it was being considered.

Mr. KENNEDY: When it comes it will be welcome. However, the Minister did not say anything about fares, in which there is a big room for reduction, especially the second class fares. We have a system of excursion fares for week-end trips, with a radius of 50 miles. In my view that radius is not sufficient. Frequently the 50-mile section drops one in the middle of a sand plain, whereas another 10 or 15 miles would bring him to some desirable resort. If the week-end tickets were made available for a distance of 100 miles instead of 50 miles they would be of some benefit to the travelling public. For a number of years the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway has been run at a big loss. Yet a fortnight ago an inspector of permanent way was appointed for the first time at a salary of approximately £400. This is a ridiculous appointment seeing that the railway has been carried on with one train or half a

train a week for the last ten or eleven years. A huge amount of stationery is used in the Railway Department, and this, I think, could be curtailed. A large sheet is supplied to the guard of every train, and he has only the light of a hurricane lamp by which to compile it. It is of very little use to the department. The Commissioner and Chief Traffic Manager claim it is necessary, but that is all nonsense. In the Eastern States, where nearly ten times the traffic is carried, the form is not required. There are numerous other forms that could be abolished and a big saving would be effected. Touching the transport of fruit, a train leaves Perth for Meekatharra on Monday and Thursday at eight p.m. At various stations between Perth and Northam a large quantity of fruit is picked up. One perishable truck is attached to the train for fruit and vegetables destined for stations between Mullewa and Meekatharra. At the stations where fruit is picked up the train stays only a few minutes, and often 50 to 200 cases have to be loaded. The door of the truck is opened, and the cases are just thrown in, and when the truck reaches its destination there is fruit all over the floor. This has been pointed out to the inspectors, but it continues year after year. A number of locomotive inspectors travel to and fro during the year, but for what purpose I do not know. One inspector says he is instructed to ascertain how much coal a fireman uses on a trip. He was a driver many years ago when only Newcastle coal was used, but everyone knows that it takes two or three times as much Collie coal as Newcastle coal to do the same work.

Mr. Taylor: He would know that.

Mr. KENNEDY: He has never used Collie coal, and does not know.

Mr. Taylor: You said everyone knows.

Mr. KENNEDY: Yet he tries to show the engineman how to use it. He travels five or ten miles on the engine, and then returns to a first-class carriage and has a game of bridge. I consider the railway report has been camouflaged to show a profit, and that if the real position were given there would be no profit at all. Many large salaries are paid for which no return is received.

Mr. Taylor: They are all provided for in the Estimates.

Mr. KENNEDY: But they are not itemised. One tramway that requires to be relaid is the Beaufort-st-Oxford-street line. The Minister spoke of trams steeple-chasing in Barrack-street, but I suppose he does not travel on the Oxford-street line. The sooner that track is relaid, the better it will be.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes*—State Batteries, £36,455; Cave House (including Caves of the South-West, etc.), £12,771; Sale of Government Property Trust Account, £31,136—agreed to.

*Note—Forests, £16,360:*

Mr. TAYLOR: It has been stated that sandalwood cutters were getting only £13 to £14 per ton for their sandalwood landed at Fremantle. The member for Menzies (Mr. Panton) made that statement on the Address-in-reply.

Mr. Heron: For some of it.

Mr. TAYLOR: For most of it. He also said there was £8,000 to £12,000 dangling in the air for someone to get hold of. That was the difference between the price of £16, which was the amount the cutters should have received. On investigation I find that out of 3,990 tons delivered in Fremantle to the 30th June, there was deducted 10s. per ton on 23 tons, £1 per ton on 62 tons, £1 10s. on 82 tons, £2 on 120 tons, £2 10s. on 52 tons, £3 on five tons, and £3 10s. on four tons. The average that the pullers received for that quantity of wood was £15 16s. 9d. Whenever there is a dispute between the cutter and the buyer there is the right of appeal to the Forests Department. The Conservator or his representative inspects the wood and his decision is final.

The Premier: On 90 per cent. of the wood there was no deduction.

Mr. Hughes: Was an appeal lodged in respect of every deduction?

Mr. TAYLOR: I presume so. The cutters in my district appeal. The amount cancelled for bad wood was therefore very small. Some wood is very brittle, and almost falls to pieces on being handled. If people send in such wood, they cannot expect to get top prices for it.

Mr. Hughes: We would want to know whether every deduction was the subject of appeal before we could take your figures.

Mr. TAYLOR: I merely wish to refute the statement that £3 to £4 per ton was knocked off a large quantity of wood.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Would you be surprised to know that some of the wood has been sold at £10 5s. per ton?

Mr. TAYLOR: I have no record of it and cannot get it. I have tried.

Mr. Hughes: Do you deny it?

Mr. TAYLOR: I can only quote the figures I have obtained. Ninety per cent. of the wood delivered at Fremantle up to the 30th June of this year averaged £15 16s. 9d., and the price is £16.

Mr. Hughes: You do not know whether every deduction was the subject of appeal?

Mr. Richardson: If 90 per cent. averaged that, what is there to growl about?

Mr. TAYLOR: Does the member for East Perth wish to maintain that all the wood was first class? The time has gone by when these wild, bald statements should be given forth that someone is being robbed, and that a Government department is sitting by and permitting it. That is what I object to. That sort of thing is all right for electioneering purposes, but we are three years distant from an election. Surely we can tell the truth for a couple of years and

then be content to start such propaganda again.

Mr. Hughes: You accused Ministers of corruption many times.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for East Perth must refrain from interjecting.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member cannot find on record any such accusation by me. I shall not permit the department to be accused of shutting their eyes while the pullers are being robbed. It is untrue. I am surprised that the member for Menzies should have made the statement without being sure of the facts. I am taking the first opportunity of contradicting the statement. The Honorary Minister has the departmental figures at his command, and will know whether I am telling the truth or not. The member for Menzies spoke about a large sum of money dangling for someone to get hold of. The decision of the Conservator in respect to the quality of the sandalwood is final. His word is law, and there is no appeal from it. If he says wood is worth £10 or £16, both parties have to accept the price.

Mr. Hughes: Only when they appeal to him.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member knows nothing about the business.

Mr. Hughes: I know as much as you do.

Mr. TAYLOR: In view of the hon. member's colossal knowledge, I would not like to contradict him.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must cease from interjecting.

Mr. TAYLOR: He can interject as much as he likes to bolster up a weak statement. He cannot justify it. Let him go to the department and see whether or not I am telling the truth. Sandalwood has caused a great deal of trouble, and we should tell the public the truth about it. I have taken this first opportunity of contradicting the statement.

Mr. Hughes: When the member for Menzies is not here.

Mr. TAYLOR: I did not wait until he was out of the State. I was ill when he made the statement, and read it in the Press with much disgust. Since that time I have done the best I could to arrive at the exact position.

Mr. Hughes: Why did you not answer him on the Address-in-reply?

Mr. HERON: The member for Mt. Margaret has misrepresented the member for Menzies. What the hon. member said when he spoke on the Address-in-reply was that a price as low as £13 per ton had been paid for sandalwood. Here is "Hansard" to prove it, and here are the facts supplied by the Forests Department, bearing out his statement.

Mr. Taylor: Where did he get the £12,000 or £18,000?

Mr. HERON: These figures prove that a reduction up to £3 a ton was made.

Mr. Taylor: He said "which amounted to hanging up between £12,000 and £18,000."

Mr. Richardson: He said the average reduction was between £2 and £3 per ton.

Mr. Hughes: He did not.

Mr. HERON: He did not, and here is "Hansard" to prove it.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Is the hon. member quoting from "Hansard" of this session?

The CHAIRMAN: No, he is referring to it. These interjections must cease.

Mr. HERON: He said that as low as £13 a ton had been paid for sandalwood.

Mr. Taylor: He talked about thousands of pounds dangling for someone.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must keep order when he is asked to do so.

Mr. HERON: The statement of the department proved that the reduction was between £1 10s. and £3 a ton. The member for Mt. Margaret quoted only what suited him, but he cannot get away from the statement of the department.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The report of the department shows reductions from 10s. up to £3 10s. per ton. There is a total of 3,390 tons. These reductions cover in one instance £3 10s. for five tons, and £3 10s. for four tons. That is a question of nine tons out of 3,390.

Mr. HUGHES: I cannot allow the member for Menzies to be misrepresented in his absence. The member for Mt. Margaret had an opportunity of replying to him on the Address-in-reply.

Mr. Taylor: I was ill.

Mr. HUGHES: He was not ill all the time. I remember seeing him here on two or three occasions, and asked him if he intended to speak on the Address-in-reply, but he did not do so.

Mr. Taylor: I had no opportunity of replying then.

Mr. HUGHES: I saw the hon. member after he had recovered.

Mr. Teesdale: But he had not the figures then.

Mr. HUGHES: He was fit to make venomous speeches in other directions, and was able to reply to the member for Menzies.

Mr. Taylor: I had to wait until the Estimates were under discussion.

Mr. HUGHES: He need not have waited until then. It is all humbug for him to say he is replying to the member for Menzies as soon as he can. He should have done so when that member was here to defend himself. The member for Menzies said, "If it is possible for four companies enjoying a monopoly to have a reduction of £2 or £3 per ton in the value of the wood, there will be certain sums unaccounted for."

Mr. Taylor: Four tons out of 4,000 tons, and a sum of £18,000!

Mr. HUGHES: The member for Mt. Margaret has not stated the facts. He

tried to put into the mouth of the member for Menzies the definite statement that £2 or £3 per ton had been taken off each lot. The hon. member did not say that. He prefaced his remarks with the word "if," showing that he was not making a definite statement. He gave instances indicating that as low as £13 a ton had been paid. If the seller is dissatisfied with the reduced price, he can appeal to the Conservator. Do we know that on every occasion when a reduction has been made an appeal has been lodged?

Mr. Taylor: There have been only five tons in question.

Mr. HUGHES: We do not know that. The only record the Conservator would have would be of the wood concerning which an appeal had been made. We do not know whether the reductions specified are the whole of the reductions made.

Mr. Taylor: Yes, the whole of the reductions made on that quantity. That is all that was sold.

Mr. HUGHES: The Conservator adjudicates only when he is appealed to. If there is a reduction and no appeal, the Conservator would have no record.

Mr. Teesdale: There would not be a grievance if there was no appeal.

Mr. HUGHES: I have heard sandalwood people complain that sums had been knocked off their sandalwood.

Mr. Heron: It is in the stacks before they get their chits back.

Mr. HUGHES: Until we are satisfied that an appeal has been made for every reduction, the figures quoted are not worth the paper they are written on.

Mr. CORBOY: The member for Mt. Margaret said there were five tons out of 4,000 that had been reduced in price.

Mr. Taylor: Five tons at £3. I read out the figures.

Mr. CORBOY: The member for Avon said that in one case five tons had been reduced in price and in another case four tons. I do not say that these members are endeavouring deliberately to misrepresent the position. The Conservator knows of 348 tons of which the price was reduced last year.

Mr. Griffiths: Out of nearly 4,000 tons.

Mr. CORBOY: Out of 3,390 tons. Anyone listening to the remarks of the member for Mt. Margaret would come to the conclusion that there had been only nine tons on which there had been a reduction.

Mr. Taylor: The member for Menzies quoted a reduction of £3 a ton and I dealt with that.

Mr. CORBOY: I will come to that in a moment. As a fact the quantity is not nearly 4,000 tons, but on the wrong side of 3,500 tons, and the price was reduced on approximately 10 per cent.

Mr. Taylor: The full price was brought by 90.7 per cent.

Mr. CORBOY: Frequently the wood is in the stack before the puller knows the



price he is going to get; and how can he appeal then? The Conservator got his figures only from the appeals which were made to him, and from the cases with which his inspectors dealt. There are instances in which the Conservator has not become acquainted with a reduction in price, simply because it was not possible for the people to appeal to him. An endeavour has been made to discredit the member for Menzies by misquoting his statement. His statement was not a definite assertion, as the member for Mt. Margaret tried to make us believe. The statement opened with the words, "If it is possible." The member for Menzies had complaints coming to him from people working in the industry in his electorate, that the firms were reducing the price by £3 or £4. The Conservator's report bears out the statement that reductions of £3 and £4 have been made.

Mr. Taylor: Yes, on three tons and five tons.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am not particularly concerned with the sandalwood business, but I like to see fair play. Three speakers from the other side of the Chamber, the members for Leonora, East Perth, and Yilgarn, have said distinctly that the member for Menzies did not make a definite statement, but a statement prefixed with "if." On the same page as that from which members opposite have quoted, the member for Menzies is reported as saying—

I do know that the bulk of the pullers are now receiving as low as £13 per ton. That phrase "the bulk of the pullers" would indicate that from 75 up to perhaps 90 per cent. of the pullers were receiving £13 per ton. After making that definite statement, the member for Menzies went on to say that "if" it was possible for the firms to buy at a price lower by £2 or £3 per ton, there would be £12,000 to £18,000 hung up, to be reaped as profit by someone. The member for Mt. Margaret stated exactly what the member for Menzies said, and gave the correct figures, figures supplied by the authorities. The Queensland Government have adopted the principle that operates here, and have granted a monopoly over certain parts of Queensland. If the monopoly here proves a failure, the Government should, at the end of the term, cancel the existing arrangement and endeavour to arrive at something better. Meantime let us be fair and see how the present system works out. The member for Mt. Margaret, being convinced that the figures given by the member for Menzies are wrong, is perfectly within his rights in correcting them here.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I want to know why we should go outside the State and import foresters who have not had any practical knowledge of Western Australian forestry. Why have our own practical men been passed over in favour of these imported

men, some of whom apparently know nothing whatever about timber? Again, when are our forests to be dedicated; when is there to be an end to the continual warfare between the Forests Department and the Lands Department? Is it not possible that when applications are made for land, a proper inspection should be carried out, so that where necessary a jarrah ridge running through an agricultural area could be set aside for forestry while the lowlands were devoted to agriculture. I know dozens of applicants for land who have been turned down on the score that the area applied for was carrying jarrah. Surely the timber could be reserved without hanging up land settlement? Another point: If one has not held a hewer's license prior to 1918 he is debarred from cutting on Crown lands to-day. It means that the hewers are gradually but surely going.

The Minister for Lands: That is the law.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But it should be amended. If a settler on the land, an ex-sleeper hewer, wants to go out and cut a few sleepers, why should he not be allowed to do so?

The Premier: It is laid down in the Act.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But surely the Act should be amended. Then there are the timber licenses and royalties. They should be based upon a sound system. Small men are not receiving the same consideration as is extended to big men with large concessions. I hope the Minister will give that consideration.

*Item, Clerk in charge, £324:*

Mr. TAYLOR: In confirmation of what I said earlier, I should like to quote from the Conservator's annual report. On page 8 it will be found that for 3,390 tons with no deduction made, the percentage borne to the total of sandalwood received under license up to the 30th June, 1924, was 90.7. Ten shillings per ton was allowed on 23 tons, the percentage being 6 per cent. On 62 tons £1 per ton was allowed, the percentage being 1.7. On 82 tons 30s. per ton was allowed, and the percentage was 2.2. On 120 tons £2 per ton was allowed and the percentage was 3.2. On 52 tons £2 10s. per ton was allowed, the percentage being 1.4. On 5 tons £3 per ton was allowed, the percentage being 1. On 4 tons £3 10s. per ton was allowed, the percentage again being 1. So my statement is precisely borne out by the Conservator's report.

Mr. HUGHES: I did not challenge the hon. member's figures. But can the hon. member assure us that every case in which there was a reduction was the subject of an appeal? Until we know that, we cannot take those figures as complete. If we were sure that there had been an appeal in regard to every deduction, we would know it was the total. We do not know whether the figures are complete, and it is necessary to point out that contingency.

Mr. HERON: When Mr. Panton spoke the figures were not available. Forty-nine deductions have been made, and 27 of them were in respect of his own district.

Mr. Taylor: He spoke on the 24th July, and the report of the Conservator is to the 30th June. It was a wild statement.

Mr. HERON: Mr. Panton said there was a deduction of as much as £3 per ton.

Vote put and passed.

This concluded the Estimates of expenditure for the year.

Resolution reported.

## SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1924-25.

Message from the Governor received and read transmitting the Supplementary Estimates for the year ending 30th June, 1925, and recommending appropriation accordingly.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

*Votes—Premier, £367; Colonial Treasurer, £638—agreed to.*

*Vote—Minister for Forests, £237:*

Mr. HUGHES: Are these the grade increments that were withheld so long from the civil service?

The PREMIER: These are the grade increments to the civil service. All officers on a salary up to £264 a year receive annually automatic increases. Those over £264 have not each year received increments. Since the strike of 1920 the increments were not paid to officers above the £264 mark, but last year the grade increase was given.

Mr. Hughes: Was it not paid for only six months?

The PREMIER: I think it was for the whole year. I did not make provision for any increases in the general Estimates, and as the Government have decided to honour the decision of the appeal board, it has been necessary to bring down supplementary estimates for this year.

Mr. Taylor: They were paid last year, and these amounts are for this year.

The PREMIER: Yes, the total covering all departments amounts to £7,108.

Mr. Teesdale: Let them go.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Minister for Lands, Immigration, and Industries, £1,068; Minister for Mines, £672; Minister for Agriculture, £336; Minister for Justice and Police, £1,056; Minister for Public Works and Labour, £1,050; Colonial Secretary, £517; Minister for Education, £117; Minister for Public Health, £390; Minister for North-West, £132; Public Utilities, £578—agreed to.*

Resolution reported.

## BILL—TRUST FUNDS INVESTMENT.

### *Council's Message.*

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's modification of the Council's amendment.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES—STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

*Division—State Brickworks, £22,177:*

Mr. TAYLOR: I look upon the discussion of these Estimates as being almost futile. The Minister is compelled by Act of Parliament to lay them on the Table. The language of the section of the Act is peculiar. It says that the Estimates shall be submitted to Parliament. I do not know that we can alter them. It is only a matter of debating them.

The PREMIER: It is only to cover the salaries of the officers.

Mr. TAYLOR: I hardly know that we are justified in debating them. They have to be submitted to the House. As, however, we have debated them in the past, I should like to draw attention to some figures I have here on the State Trading Concerns of Queensland. They show that we are better off with ours than they are. The cattle stations of Queensland last year lost £674,789 3s. 1d.; the State produce agency lost £1,766 10s. 7d.; the State cannery lost £63,477 0s. 1d.; and the State fish supply lost £39,713 12s. 9d. On the whole of their transactions on these items, including profit on the butchers' shops, the hotel at Babiinda and the railway refreshment rooms, which showed a profit, there was a loss on the working of the year of £723,796 3s. 6d. These figures are taken from the report of the Auditor General of Queensland, and are to the 30th June, 1924. For all the trouble we have here about our trading concerns, we are somewhat better off than they are in Queensland.

Mr. Hughes: You are very careful not to tell us the accumulated profits on some of them.

Mr. TAYLOR: I could tell the hon. member about the accumulated losses, for I have the whole of the report here. It is very condemnatory of the whole financial situation in Queensland. The Government there spend money without the authority of Parliament up to £1,000,000 out of loans and trust moneys, but I do not wish to discuss that matter. I thought I would use this illustration to show that we are not so badly off with our trading concerns as some people try to make out.

Division put and passed.

*Divisions—State Ferries, £8,159; State Hotels, £61,734; State Implement and Engineering Works, £156,490; State Quarries, £22,806; State Steamship Service; £203,700; State Sawmills, £750,703; Wyndham Freezing, Canning, and Meat Export Works, £247,000—agreed to.*

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 11.8 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 11th November, 1924.*

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

### MOTION—TRAFFIC REGULATION, TO DISALLOW.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [4.36]: As I explained to the House when moving for the postponement of this notice of motion, as the result of certain inquiries I propose to alter its terms. I now move—

*That Regulation 150 promulgated under the Traffic Act, 1919, as amended by the Amendment Act, 1922, published in the "Government Gazette" of the 5th September, 1924, and laid on the Table of the House on the 10th September, 1924, be and is hereby disallowed.*

The subparagraph in question exempts from a heavy traffic regulation which has been promulgated all districts and subdistricts comprised within the metropolitan area. Not being a metropolitan representative, I felt some diffidence in moving in the matter, as I thought possibly someone else would take action. My justification, however, is that as a member of this Chamber I consider that the districts and subdistricts of the metropolitan area should not be freed from heavy traffic regulations. In

that view I am supported by answers given in another place to questions asked by a member there, and these I shall read later. Further, I have been in consultation with the Road Boards Association of Western Australia, who considered the matter at their quarterly meeting in October last. As the result of mature consideration they came to the conclusion that it was undesirable to free the metropolitan area from the regulations in question. In that they were adhering to a decision come to by a road boards conference held in August, 1922. Prior to the regulations gazetted on the 7th September last, the regulations as then existing were amended and regulations were promulgated to impose special fees on heavy traffic. Those fees were imposed by the Armadale-Kelmscott road board and other road boards. Comparatively lately someone took exception to the imposition of those fees by the Armadale-Kelmscott road board, and upon the matter being taken to court it was held that the heavy traffic regulations were ultra vires. In consequence the Government promulgated other regulations to deal with what I think all members will consider a matter that should be dealt with—special fees for heavy traffic. These regulations were laid on the Table on the 10th September last.

Hon. J. Duffell: Was it not that same district in which a fatal accident occurred just recently in consequence of a bad road?

Hon. H. STEWART: I do not know, and I do not see that the query has any bearing whatever on the point.

Hon. J. Duffell: You said the fees were levied by that road board.

Hon. H. STEWART: New regulations have been promulgated, but exemptions are provided as I have stated. The subparagraph in question reads—

The following parts of the State are hereby exempted from the operation of this regulation: that is to say, all districts and subdistricts comprised in the metropolitan area.

That paragraph I am seeking to have eliminated from the regulations. Whether a fatal accident has occurred as stated has nothing whatever to do with whether a certain fee should or should not be imposed upon heavy traffic. In connection with the regulation there is nothing to release any local authority from any responsibility in the matter. The whole tendency of the Government's regulations is to foster in local governing authorities the desire to provide good roads. Further, the tendency of the regulations is to make people who do particular damage to the roads pay fees proportionate to the extra damage they cause.

Hon. J. Duffell: What about main trunk roads?

Hon. H. STEWART: That being the case, I do not see—though I am open to enlightenment—and the Road Boards Association of Western Australia do not see, why