

out that this referred to reforestation generally and not merely to the reforestation of sandalwood. In the Victoria district, attention should be given to the position of jam, the qualities of which for fencing purposes are so favourably known. The Government deserve every commendation for the work they have done in connection with our forests. That makes it difficult for me to reflect upon the Minister who is in charge of the department. At the same time I want to know why the Eastern goldfields have absorbed all the attention of the forestry officers regarding sandalwood. I am sorry that Mr. Seddon's amendment does not make the amount £10,000 a year.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Some years ago I approached the Forests Department on the subject of some of the matters mentioned by Mr. Hall. I was under the impression that the Victoria district should be given some consideration in connection with the reforestation of sandalwood. I was informed that there was very little land available in that district in comparison with what was available on the Eastern goldfields. I was also told that the sandalwood growing on the Eastern goldfields was much better on account of its oil contents than the sandalwood growing in the Central Province. Therefore I could take no further action. Mr. Hall has certainly put up a good case regarding jam wood in the Victoria district, and I am sure the Conservator will give every consideration to the hon. member's suggestion.

Amendment put and a division taken.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I appoint tellers, I desire to inform the Committee that I intend to vote with the "Ayes," for this reason: Prior to the imposition of the existing sandalwood regulations the royalty imposed on sandalwood was £2 a ton. The proposal is not only to take the increase by the regulations, but also the amount of royalty existing before the increase was imposed, three-fifths of which went into forestry revenue.

Result of division:—

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	11
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	1
				—

AMES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. G. W. Miles
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. E. Pose
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. J. Holmes	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Bill reported with an amendment.

House adjourned at 9.26 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 2nd October, 1928.

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Food supplies diverted to Albany	1075

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. E. B. Johnston and Williams-Narrogin Seat.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I desire to make a personal explanation. As members are aware, I have been selected by the political organisation to which I belong to contest a seat for the representation of this State in the Senate. In order to comply with the provisions of the Federal electoral law, it is therefore necessary for me to resign my seat in this House as representative of Williams-Narrogin. To-morrow is the seventeenth anniversary of my first election to this Parliament, and I therefore intend to

place my resignation in your hands, Mr. Speaker, to-morrow. It is a wrench for me to leave this Chamber, in which I have sat as a representative of the people for the past 17 years. I desire to take this opportunity of thanking you, Mr. Speaker, for the courtesy and guidance which, from your high office, you have always been ready to accord to me. I desire also to thank the members of the present and past Governments for their assistance in regard to matters affecting my constituency. Many important railways and other public works have been constructed in the Williams-Narrogin electorate during the period of my representation. I highly appreciate the courtesy and consideration which the members of the House have always extended to me. I thank also the Clerk of the House (Mr. Grant), the officials of the House and the "Hansard" staff for a generous measure of assistance which has done much to make one's duties here a pleasure. Despite the political differences that exist in this Chamber, I think the guiding principle of members of all parties is to secure the prosperous development of Western Australia and the happiness and welfare of our people. Whatever the future may bring forth, I shall always retain the happiest memories of my past 17 years' work in surroundings that have been made pleasant by the courtesies I have so briefly acknowledged. In my opinion the best training ground for the representation of the State in the national Parliament lies within the portals of this Chamber, and perhaps I may, in conclusion, be permitted to express the hope that the knowledge and experience I have gained here of Western Australia and its requirements may, in the future, prove of some service to my native State.

The PREMIER: May I be permitted to say I am sure I voice the feelings of every member of the House when I express regret at the departure of the hon. member from this Chamber. Apart from party and political considerations, to be a member of this House for 17 years is a fairly lengthy span in one's life. During that time personal friendships have been made, while political antagonisms, too, have been engendered, but I am glad to say that, notwithstanding political differences, we have always been able to meet each other on the common ground of personal friendship. Therefore I regret that Mr. Johnston is leaving us,

more particularly because I am sure it is his departure from the political life of Western Australia.

Mr. Lindsay: I cannot agree with you there.

The PREMIER: Being a young man, of course, he is not beyond the age when he can come back. I wish the hon. member just such good luck as one political opponent may wish to another. I am sure that whatever fate may be in store for him as a public man, he will carry into his private life happy memories of the 17 years he has spent in this Assembly.

Hon. SIR JAMES MITCHELL: I agree with the Premier that no matter what our political differences may be within this Chamber, we do try to be friendly away from politics, and I think we succeed fairly well. I suppose this is the most orderly House in the British Empire, not excluding the Mother of Parliaments itself. I was surprised at the speech of the Premier because he has said time and again that this Parliament ought to be a stepping stone to the Federal Parliament. With that I entirely agree. We in this House did pass a Bill that gave a member the right to stand for a Federal seat without resigning his State seat. The Federal Parliament, however, retaliated by providing that one might not stand for the Federal Parliament while he was a member of this House, but must resign some days or weeks before the issue of the writ. I know we were all greatly incensed and felt that we should like some of our members to have a shot at the Federal seats, if only to provide a satisfactory answer to the Federal law. We can quite appreciate that a Federal member does not wish to be opposed by a State member. Naturally the opposition that would be put up by a State member to a sitting Federal member would be much stronger than the opposition of a candidate strange to politics. The Premier and I have been in this House for the last 23 years, and the 17 years served by the member for Williams-Narrogin is a fairly long period out of one's life. I think the people sometimes fail to realise just what sacrifice public life demands, and what it means to give up one's private life to this work of serving the country. Like the Premier, I wish the hon. member every success in the campaign that is to follow shortly. The Premier wishes the hon. member happiness in private life; I wish him success in this venture.

Mr. THOMSON: As one who has been associated with the hon. member since my appointment as a representative in this Parliament, and as one who has had the privilege of his valuable assistance at my right hand for the last six years, I express my sincere personal regret that the hon. member is leaving Western Australia to seek advancement in the Federal arena. Unlike the Premier, I heartily wish him every success. I feel sure that when he goes to the Federal sphere, the valuable services he has rendered Western Australia in the past 17 years and the practical knowledge he has gained here will prove of inestimable worth to this State. While I am expressing my sincere regret that he is leaving us, I wholeheartedly wish him success in the forthcoming campaign.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I thank hon. members.

MOTION—URGENCY.

Waterside Workers' Strike.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to inform the House that I have received the following letter from the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition:—

Dear Sir, I desire to give you notice that it is my intention when the House meets this afternoon to move "That the House do now adjourn" under Standing Orders 47 and 47a in order that the serious position on the waterfront may be discussed. Yours faithfully, James Mitchell.

Before the motion can be entertained, it will be necessary for seven hon. members to rise in their places.

Seven members having risen,

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.43]: We all regret that the occasion has arisen for the moving of such a motion. A very serious position now confronts us, and the seriousness of it makes it imperative that this House should discuss the situation. The stoppage at the waterfront, which has extended over three or four weeks, will affect many people and be far-reaching in its effects. Unemployment, as we know, is already bad enough in this State, and trade already is suffering because of the shipping stoppage. Of course, this must accentuate unemployment and make the position more difficult, and so it is our duty

to do anything we can to bring about an improvement in the position at Fremantle. It is a strange fact and one difficult to understand that work should be going on at Bunbury while at Fremantle it has stopped. On the water front for years there has been stoppage after stoppage, each one, of course, helping to bring other people to their knees and making it difficult for many other workers to earn their livelihood. At this stage it is most important that the articles we need should be in stock here. I understand we shall soon be short of some of our food supplies. It may be argued that we should produce the food we require, instead of importing millions of pounds' worth of goods every year from the East as we do. The people, including the workers of Western Australia, are being fed up with these continual stoppages. Millions have been lost, not by the employers alone, but by the workers of Australia. The Federal Act which has been discussed is the Commonwealth Government's way, at any rate, of mending the situation. The Act does not interfere with arbitration or with unionism in the slightest degree. The arbitration award can be and will be given effect to in every detail whether the men go back under the Act or not.

The Minister for Works: What makes you say that?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Federal Arbitration Act is one thing, and the Transport Workers Act is undoubtedly quite another thing. Neither will unionism or the legitimate worker be in the slightest degree affected.

The Minister for Works: That law distinctly over-rides any other Act of Parliament.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It does nothing of the sort. Surely no hon. member of this Chamber can object to obedience to an arbitration award. I said the other day that arbitration has given the workers all they have, and I say to-day that I hope arbitration will always be the law of the land. To-day it is, in my opinion, entirely for the protection of the workers. Originally it was intended to protect the third party, namely the public; but now it seems to protect only the worker. It is our duty to see that the arbitration law, so long as it exists, shall be obeyed. All who disobey it, whether employers or workers,

should realise that they are not only bringing about disrespect of the law, but injuring many people besides themselves. The unions are not in the slightest degree interfered with. They exist for the protection of the individual worker. If I were a worker, I would be a unionist, but I would not for a moment submit to the tyranny of union bosses. The Federal law in question may, and I daresay will, weaken the control of the bosses, but it will not weaken the control that is rightly theirs for the protection of the workers by whom they are appointed. On that score I do not think any member can object to the wish that the arbitration law may be obeyed. The Act to which hon. members object is one that this House is not called upon either to approve or disapprove, it being not our law, but Federal law. When it was before the Federal Parliament, little interest was taken in its passage. The second reading was passed in the House of Representatives, having 75 members, by 30 votes to 12. When the measure reached the Senate, it was passed by 14 votes to three. In a new matter of this kind, and of importance, one would have thought keen interest would have been taken, particularly by those who are now so loudly—

The Premier: It was introduced on the last day of Parliament, when members, not knowing of it, were away in their constituencies.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know that notice of the Bill was given, and that it was opposed, and that the second reading was not taken on the day of the first reading. Objection was taken to that course under the Standing Orders. The usual formalities were observed, and the usual time was taken, for the passing of the Act.

The Premier: It was only one day's notice.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Notice was given of the first reading, and to the second reading it takes three days.

The Premier: No. That notice is not provided for. The first reading can be taken on the one day, and the second reading on the next day. I repeat, members were away in their constituencies.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Perhaps the Premier can explain where they were. They may have paired, but, not having seen the Federal "Hansard," I have to take the Press reports for it. However, the duty of members was to be in Parliament, particu-

larly at that time. On this question we are not asked to take sides. This is no question of the worker versus the employer, or the employer versus the worker. It is simply a strike against the law of the land.

Member: It is an election matter.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am sorry to hear that interjection. It would be a scandalous thing if the bread and butter of thousands of people could be made part of any election cry. Any party that sought to gain advantage at the expense of the people of this country, and particularly at the expense of the workers, would not get much support from me. It cannot be made a political issue by the Prime Minister, because he did not start the trouble. Neither do I see how the trouble will benefit either one party or the other. There are some people on strike, but there are a great many more workers who are out of work because of the strike; and there are many in work notwithstanding the strike who object just as strongly to disobedience to the Arbitration Court as we do. Arbitration being the law of the land, the duty of everyone is to obey it. The Premier has not seen the Federal Act, but he has seen the Federal Bill. I have not seen the Act, but the Bill has been here for some days, and I understand it passed without amendment. We have not seen the regulations under the Act, but we know from the discussions that the main objection raised to the regulations is the requirement of registration. As regards registration, the law now says that a man must have a ticket issued to him by the Federal Government before he can work upon the water front. Up to the present time the union has said that a man must have a ticket issued by the union before he can work on the water front.

The Premier: The union has not said that. The Arbitration Court has said it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Has the Arbitration Court said it?

The Premier: Yes; preference to unionists.

Mr. Davy: Preference to the lumpers?

The Premier: Yes.

The Minister for Mines: Yes; every Arbitration Court has said it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The man who wishes to be a wharf lumper now has to take out a ticket. Formerly he had to take out a ticket, not at a shilling, but at any fee fixed by the union. I am hopeful that better counsels will prevail, and that

the men will obey the law of the land. In this morning's newspaper, the Premier made a statement, and I am afraid that so far as the wharf lumpers are concerned his words are such as may encourage disobedience of the law. The statement leaves the lumpers more or less suspended in doubt as to the attitude of the House. I consider that that attitude ought to be made perfectly plain. In the same issue there is a statement made by the Disputes Committee which I think is calculated to do considerable harm. I do not know whether any members of the Disputes Committee are in this House. However, the statement refers to the system of registration, concerning which a long resolution was passed. The concluding words of the resolution are—

Any system of indentured labour, by license or otherwise, is totally opposed to the principles of organised labour, and is in direct opposition to Australian sentiment.

I have already said that I have no objection in the world to labour being organised. But, be it organised or otherwise, surely it must obey the law of the land. One is surprised to find the leaders of labour encouraging disobedience to the law. I repeat, if the trouble had arisen between the employers and the employees, it would be a different matter; but in this case it is a strike against the law. The secretary of the Disputes Committee, Mr. Barker, is reported as saying—

If it—the Federal Act—were accepted, it would mean a revision to the conditions of serfdom which existed in the Middle Ages, and the constant struggle of the working classes to shake off such restrictions of their freedom would have been in vain.

The Premier: It has never been attempted in British industrial history before.

Mr. Davy: What about the Land Agents Bill?

The Premier: What has that got to do with serfdom?

Mr. Davy: I know what is proposed.

The Minister for Mines: If you have private information, it is a darned shame that those interested have not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Where does serfdom come in? If the ticket is taken out and the man goes to work, he will do so under the Arbitration award in every detail. He will work just as he worked before under any other award.

The Premier: You do not know anything at all about it, or about the conditions under which he goes to work.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Premier: You do not know what conditions he goes to work under.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have here the statement of the union, and the objection taken by the union is to this registration, and to no other conditions. Nothing but the registration is questioned. The union say that the fact of registration will mean a reversion to the serfdom which existed in the Middle Ages. I should be found standing by the men if I thought anything of the sort possible. But as a matter of fact it does not mean anything of the sort. They will be just as free as ever they were.

The Premier: You do not know anything about it; neither do I, but I am not making a definite statement. You are making statements without any information.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am making a statement in answer to the statement made by the disputes committee, who are, I suppose, well informed.

The Premier: They are not well informed.

Mr. Davy: Well, why do they make that statement?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose we are to assume the disputes committee know what they are doing in making the statement they have made. I should like to test the statement, for I think it was altogether wrong. There is no suspicion of any attempt to take away any shred of freedom, except that the men must be registered before being allowed to work. Once registered, a man can work, so long as he obeys the law of the land. That is his matter, not ours. As usual, politics come into this position, which is to be regretted.

The Premier: They have come into it this afternoon for the first time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Oh no. I am reading this statement.

The Premier: Politics are coming into it now.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The statement goes on to say that the present position on the waterfront was not caused by the refusal of the men to accept work, but by the refusal of those in power, combined with the employers, to allow the men to work, and was nothing less than a lock-out engineered by the Federal Government for political purposes. I do not believe anything of the sort. I suppose everything we touch is more or less political. Still, I

think it a pity that that statement should have been made by a responsible body. The disputes committee, I understand, exist to bring about peace.

Mr. Chesson: They have not been asked to take a hand in this matter.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know about that. At all events, that committee have been instrumental in bringing about peace from time to time on previous occasions, and I know it is the usual thing to get an expert body to handle industrial trouble when it arises.

Mr. Kenneally: The action of the Prime Minister, tending as it does to create and intensify the dispute, increases their responsibilities and also their difficulties.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not sensible of the responsibility the disputes committee take, but I do wish they were more sensible of their responsibility. They should be very careful before making such a statement as they did make. Everything that can be done to bring about a resumption of work ought to be done.

Mr. Kenneally: The hon. member would be well advised to communicate with the Prime Minister.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am much obliged to the hon. member. He has as much right to communicate with the Prime Minister as have I, and probably his communication would have just as much result as mine. I am not responsible for anything the Federal Government do, or for anything the Prime Minister may do. But as a member of this House I, in common with the rest of the members, am responsible to the people of this State, and so I have brought this matter forward to-day. And as I am responsible to the people, I regret that this statement should have been made. It is certainly not likely to clear up the position; indeed, it is likely to make it a good deal worse. The statement then goes on to refer to the Premier's wire to the Prime Minister suggesting that the waterside workers might be allowed to remain under the old conditions, without having to take out licenses; and to the refusal of the Prime Minister to grant that request because, I suppose, the regulations are intended to apply to all the ports in Australia. This is what the statement says:—

Mr. Bruce's refusal was a clear indication that he did not wish to secure industrial peace,

but preferred to have industrial unrest and turmoil.

That is entirely wrong. There is no responsible man in the Commonwealth who does not want industrial peace. I am sure the Prime Minister has a sincere desire to see the people of this country happy and comfortable, and living peaceful, prosperous lives. The point is that such statements as that made are only calculated to encourage the lumpers to persist in a continued breach of the law. It may be that for them it is an objectionable law; still, it is the law, and the sooner they realise that, the better. We do not want the things that have happened in Adelaide and in Melbourne, but we do want to see work resumed on the waterfront as soon as possible.

Mr. Kenneally: Under conditions laid down by the employers!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, all the conditions are set out by the Arbitration Court in the first place, and by the law of the land in the second place. The employers have had nothing to do with it.

Mr. Kenneally: The men have offered to work under the Arbitration Court's award.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know what the employer thinks about it or what he has had to do in creating the situation. It was created by the Federal law, and we ought to make that clear. The hon. member, of course, could make it clear amongst the lumpers with so much better effect than could I. He should make it clear to them that the employers are not in this trouble, that it is the law, and the Arbitration Court's award, that have created the situation. The strike is against the award of the court.

Mr. Chesson: No, the men accepted that award.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Well, the strike is now against the Act that the Federal Parliament passed. At any rate, I believe that when peace reigns again throughout the ports of Australia, if this law be all that members opposite believe it to be, there may be occasion to go further into the question. But my friends are quite wrong in thinking it will work the way they say it will, that it will make the wharf lumpers absolute serfs, suffering the tyranny of the employers. If it should

prove to do anything of the sort, then it will be the duty of everybody to endeavour to have the law rectified. But that has yet to be demonstrated. If we can by any means bring about a resumption of work, we ought to do it. It was suggested by the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) that I should communicate with the Prime Minister. Neither the Prime Minister nor any other Minister, nor any member of the House has communicated with me on the subject. What I have done, I have done with a view to helping the situation and with no other thought. It will be a pity if such statements as that made by the disputes committee are repeated, and it is a pity, too, if the facts regarding the whole matter are not understood. We must remember that very many more people than the workers themselves will be affected by this strike. Trade will become stagnant and trouble will pile up. There does not seem to be any reason at all why anyone in this State, even the disputes committee, should encourage a continued breach of the law. I hope members will not confuse this Act with the Arbitration Court award, which has nothing whatever to do with it. The men who work will work under the award of the court.

Mr. Kenneally: They are quite prepared to do that, but are not allowed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There you are again. They are prepared to work under the award, but not under the law of the land. They must work under the award and under the law of the land as well.

Mr. Sleeman: The law overrides the award.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It does not. All we ask is that the law of the land, everything set out in the Arbitration Court's award, shall be recognised and accepted. I know the strikers do not like the award. But that is no excuse at all. It would be a very weak thing if any Government intended the laws to be disobeyed without making some attempt to enforce them, whether it be an Arbitration Court award or any other law. I hope that in this State of ours work will be resumed and that the laws will be obeyed. They are not at all likely to work in the way suggested by the disputes committee. When they do, it will be quite time for us to make a protest against them. I move--

That the House do now adjourn.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [3.14]: When I spoke on the Address-in-reply, I said it was time we got back to sanity amongst the workers and their leaders. The present dispute, I am sure, has caused members of the Government a very great deal of anxiety. One approaches this question with a great deal of hesitancy, because he is afraid that possibly he might say or do something that might make the position worse. That is the way in which I approach this question. The position is very grave; Australia is facing a great crisis. I have been to other parts of the world and have heard statements made by ship-owners that when they send their boats to Australia they never know when those boats will return. We are now facing exactly that sort of position, which, unfortunately, gives Australia such a bad name elsewhere in the world. Because I drew the attention of the House to the matter, I have been charged with running down my own country, whereas I was endeavouring to draw attention to the manner in which we were regarded in other parts. Last week I asked the Premier a question in the House. Members will recall the reply I received. We also know that the Prime Minister telegraphed to the Premier asking for his co-operation and assistance. In effect, the Prime Minister asked if the Government here were prepared to see that law and order were maintained. We know that the Prime Minister received no reply to that question.

The Premier: The telegram did not call for a reply.

Mr. THOMSON: I maintain that it did call for a reply, in view of the difficulties of the situation generally. The Prime Minister wished to know whether the Government of Western Australia were prepared to stand behind the Commonwealth in the preservation of law and order.

The Premier: No Government in Australia has the right to question this or any other Government as to what they are going to do.

Mr. THOMSON: It is in sorrow that I have to draw attention to the attitude adopted by the Premier in this crisis.

The Premier: The telegram did not call for a reply.

Mr. THOMSON: The Government of this State did not consider the matter of sufficient importance to reply to the tele-

gram which the Prime Minister had sent to every other Premier in Australia.

The Premier: No question was asked of the Government. Do not misrepresent the position.

Mr. THOMSON: The Premier was asked—

The Premier: I tell you no question was asked. I was advised of a certain situation. I was not asked to take any action. It would have been an impertinence if I had been asked to take any. We are not pups of the Federal Government that we should be instructed by them to do this or that. Do not misrepresent the position.

Mr. THOMSON: No one—

The Premier: I am not going to be a fetch-and-carry for any Federal Government.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not wish to approach this question in anger. The position is altogether too serious.

The Premier: Be fair about it. Do not misrepresent us. Never mind about the matter being serious. You be exact as to the facts.

Mr. THOMSON: I will be exact.

The Premier: Do!

Mr. THOMSON: I am going to refer to the attitude of the Government when they were asked a certain question by the Prime Minister.

The Premier: They were not asked a question. Do not mis-state the facts. We were not asked any question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I trust there will be no interruptions in a debate of this character.

The Premier: I object to mis-statements of fact.

Mr. SPEAKER: I wish to draw the attention of the House to the Standing Order which says that no member shall interrupt another member whilst speaking unless at his request that certain words be taken down, or to call attention to a point of order, or to call attention to a quorum. I trust there will be no interruptions. There is always an opportunity afforded to those who have not spoken to reply to anything that has been said while the debate is proceeding. I would say to the hon. member whom I have interrupted that when another member denies a statement, or the accuracy of a statement, the hon. member making that statement must not repeat it, and must accept the denial.

The Premier: He always does deliberately repeat mis-statements.

Mr. THOMSON: I have asked the Messenger to hand me the correspondence which was laid on the Table of the House, so that I may read it, and show if I have wrongly interpreted it, or placed a wrong construction upon the request of the Prime Minister.

The Premier: You have said I was asked a question and did not reply to it. Do you deny saying that?

Mr. THOMSON: The telegram from the Prime Minister is as follows:—

Premier of Western Australia, Perth. The action taken by the Waterside Workers' Federation, because of their objection to some of the terms of an award given by Judge Beeby of the Federal Arbitration Court, is already resulting in holding up much of the shipping of the Commonwealth. As a consequence of this action by the federation, maritime transport is apparently again to be brought to a standstill and the trade of the Commonwealth dislocated, an action which will cause serious loss and suffering to thousands of our citizens. My Government feels that this unlawful and reckless abuse of power by the Waterside Workers' Federation constitutes a direct defiance of the community which cannot be submitted to by any self-respecting people. I have, on behalf of my Government, communicated with the representatives of the steamship owners calling upon them to make the necessary arrangements for carrying on the industry in the terms of the award made by the Arbitration Court, and assuring them that the Commonwealth Government will do its utmost to maintain law and order by prosecuting those who unlawfully interfere with the peaceful carrying on of the transport industry of the Commonwealth. If the interference with the legitimate trade and transport of Australia continues, I propose to advise the Governor-General to issue a proclamation under the Crimes Act declaring the existence of a serious industrial disturbance prejudicing trade and commerce with other countries and among the States. I will take this action in order to arm the Government of the Commonwealth with fullest power possible under the law and in order to protect the interests of the people. Recognising the serious results that this disastrous strike must have upon the industries of your State and the well-being of its citizens, I appeal for the full co-operation of your Government, and especially ask that due protection be given to all those citizens who are prepared to carry on the work of the maritime transport industry under the terms of the award made by the Arbitration Court—a court that has been established by the free will of the people of Australia, expressed through their Parliament. I am addressing the Premiers of the other States of the Commonwealth in similar terms. S. M. Bruce, Prime Minister.

And yet the Premier states that the last sentence alone does not demand a reply.

The Premier: It does no such thing.

Mr. THOMSON: In the opinion of many of the people of Western Australia that sentence did demand a reply.

The Premier: It did not.

Mr. THOMSON: That is a matter of opinion. The Premier is responsible for his own actions.

The Premier: It is an impertinence for any Federal Government to ask another Government if they are going to observe their own laws.

Mr. THOMSON: The Prime Minister says, "I appeal for the full co-operation of your Government and especially ask that due protection be given to all those citizens who are prepared to carry on the work of maritime transport industry." The Premier, or his Government, did not see fit to answer that very important request.

The Premier: I should think not.

Mr. Angelo: Three other Premiers replied to it.

The Premier: That would be tantamount to giving away our sovereign rights.

Mr. THOMSON: Giving away our sovereign rights?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. THOMSON: The "West Australian" published the full text of the reply of the Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce) to the suggestion of the Premier (Mr. Collier) that the operation of the Transport Workers Act should be suspended at Fremantle, as no free labour had been employed. Mr. Bruce replied:—

I regret being unable to accept the suggestion that registration should not be proceeded with. The question of exemption from registration at ports has received the most careful consideration of the Government. The only case where exemption has been granted is where men have worked continuously since the trouble broke out. The men at Fremantle have not worked since the inception of the trouble.

Something like 12 ships were lying idle when I asked the Premier the question I did, but the situation was not deemed to be of sufficient importance, or it was not deemed to be sufficiently necessary to get those ships away, to warrant the Government in giving protection to those who were desirous of carrying out the award.

The Premier: They had no right to ask for a guarantee.

Mr. THOMSON: I asked the Premier a question, but I regret to say he gave an evasive reply.

The Premier: This Government are not going to be asked questions as to what they are doing in the matter.

Mr. THOMSON: We also find from the "West Australian" that the Premier, referring to the Prime Minister's decision to enforce the system of registration at Fremantle, said that he considered the Prime Minister's attitude most unfortunate—

Mr. Pantou: And it was, too.

Mr. THOMSON: The "West Australian" continued:—

As the suspension of the Transport Workers' Act at Fremantle would have been fully justified, and would have had the effect of permitting the work of the port to be continued without further interruption.

Mr. Kenneally: Quite right.

Mr. THOMSON: Quite right? The laws of the land, the arbitration laws, for which the Premier stands so hard and fast—

The Premier: The law of the land!

Mr. THOMSON: The industrial laws provide that no employer may break them without being subject to a heavy penalty. Only a few days ago it was stated in the Press that the vigilance officer had charged the Commissioner of Railways with having paid a man a shortage of 2d. per week.

The Premier: What has that to do with the matter?

Mr. THOMSON: That was quite right. If the Commissioner was going outside the award it was right that he should be taken to court and made to obey the laws of the land.

Mr. Pantou: The waterside workers were fined £1,000.

Mr. THOMSON: Surely the people of Australia have a right to expect the waterside workers to obey the laws of the land. The port of Fremantle has been lying idle for weeks. No attempt has been made to supply free labour. I have no desire to see any disturbance at Fremantle or any other port in the Commonwealth. I have been associated with the industrial movement all my life, and know both sides.

Mr. Lutey: The men are working under the arbitration award now.

Mr. THOMSON: They flouted the Arbitration Court for several weeks. They refused to go to work.

Mr. Lutey: They could be working now.

Mr. THOMSON: Oh, yes, they are working now; I wish they were working throughout the Commonwealth.

Mr. Lutey: The "Dimboola" has been working, too.

Mr. THOMSON: I am dealing with the broad question. I want to know from the Premier whether, in the event of this law being put into force, and the Commonwealth regulations being carried out, the Government are going to provide adequate protection for those who are desirous of carrying out their calling. The Premier says it is an impertinence for the Prime Minister to ask that question, but it is not an impertinence for me or any other member of this House to ask it.

The Premier: It is an impertinence.

Mr. THOMSON: The Premier says it is an impertinence.

The Premier: Of course it is.

Mr. THOMSON: I regret that the Premier should adopt that attitude.

The Premier: I am not going to rattle sabres at the citizens of this country.

Mr. THOMSON: Would we be justified in assuming that something else might happen? We are in a position to judge as to what would possibly happen.

The Premier: We will act when something happens! We will not act on the assumption that something may happen.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not talking about something that may have happened, but concerning something that actually did happen.

The Premier: The Government will not rattle the sabre before the eyes of the people!

Mr. THOMSON: I do not want to import any bitterness into the consideration of this subject, for it is too serious. Here we have men who, when they were desirous of obtaining employment, were told that the only way to get the work they sought was to belong to a certain union.

Members: No.

Mr. THOMSON: That is the attitude that Government members have adopted.

The Minister for Works: That is the attitude you adopted.

Mr. THOMSON: It is the policy the Minister and others have given effect to.

The Minister for Works: Nonsense!

The Premier: You want us to go round rattling the sabre!

Mr. THOMSON: At any rate, that is the policy that has been given effect to. Those who object to men being registered as workers under the provisions of the Commonwealth Transport Workers' Act that will enable them to obtain employment in accordance with the provisions of the Beeby Award, have expressed their views, and in the circumstances we are justified in asking whether the necessary protection will be available if people desire to register under the provisions of that Act, and to work on the wharf. Not only have we the right to ask if that protection will be forthcoming, but the country has the right to know, too. We know that during the time the strike of ten-room girls was in progress, no provision was made for the protection of citizens and others.

The Minister for Justice: That is wrong.

Mr. THOMSON: It is not wrong.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Premier: What you want is bayonets to deal with a lot of ten-room girls!

Mr. THOMSON: Not at all.

Mr. Sleeman: I suppose you want the field ambulance out as well.

Mr. THOMSON: We are entitled to know, in these days, in the interests of the people of Western Australia, including the workers, their wives and their children, whether steps will be taken to assure that the ordinary activities of commerce in this State shall be carried on satisfactorily. I think we are entitled to have that information, particularly in view of the fact that there is a possibility of happenings such as occurred in the past. We have the right to know whether those who are desirous of doing their duty to the State in accordance with the law, will have all necessary protection.

The Premier: That is a rotten attitude of mind!

Mr. THOMSON: Not at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THOMSON: I am sorry—

Mr. Marshall: So you ought to be.

Mr. THOMSON: I was sorry to hear the Premier's interjection. It is surely a fair and legitimate request for information, when I put my query to him. We have the police force to protect my property and the property of other citizens.

The Premier: And who says they will not act should the need arise?

Mr. THOMSON: That is what I am asking.

The Premier: You have no right to ask such a question.

Mr. THOMSON: On the other hand, I claim that I have every right.

The Premier: I shall certainly not answer such a question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THOMSON: One can judge the position only as it is. May I quote further from the Premier's own statement. He said—

We understand from the newspapers that the Act was passed without amendment, and, from the Bill before us, it appears to be a one clause Act, giving the Commonwealth authority to make regulations having the force of law and embodying the widest power, but *affording no sense of protection to the worker*. Neither have we yet seen the regulations under which the waterside workers are supposed to register.

Surely this House is justified in asking the Government if they will afford the necessary protection should men wish to work on the wharf at Fremantle. While the Premier may say it is a piece of gross impertinence—

The Premier: Your idea of protection means police and bayonets! I was not talking of that sort of protection.

Mr. THOMSON: All I ask is that the assurance of Ministers be given regarding necessary protection. In his telegram, the Prime Minister said—

I appeal for the full co-operation of your Government, and especially to ask that due protection be given to those citizens who are prepared to carry out the work of the marine transport industry

No reply was sent by the Premier to that question. Is it a matter for surprise that many citizens of this State are wondering just where we are, and what action Parliament will take?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that his speech, particularly during the last few minutes, has been in the nature of an imputation. It is for every hon. member of this House to respect every other hon. member. It is the hon. member's duty to place in other hon. members, an honourable trust. Until action arises when there is a possibility of proving a charge against some hon. member, which must be done by way of a substantive motion, the hon. member must not impute improper motives of any kind to

any hon. member, or to any member of the Ministry. Standing Order 132 clearly expresses the position. It reads—

. and all imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflections on members, should be considered highly disorderly.

I take it that this debate can be conducted without any imputations upon the honour of members or impugning the high character of anyone in this Chamber. Therefore, especially after repeated denials, the hon. member has placed a construction upon Press reports—which may not be used in the debates in this Chamber—that is disorderly, and I trust he will desist any further from making imputations or casting any reflection upon any hon. member of this House.

Mr. THOMSON: I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that you have quoted Standing Order 132. I want to assure you and the House that I have no desire to impute motives, or to impugn the honour of any hon. members.

Mr. Panton: It is not your fault; it is your failing!

Mr. THOMSON: I have been dealing with the question having in view the seriousness of the position confronting us. I maintain respectfully that I am entitled to draw attention to the fact that no reply was sent to the Prime Minister's telegram.

The Minister for Justice: How many more times do you want to be answered on that point?

Mr. SPEAKER: I would point out that the Premier has stated more than once that the communication read by the hon. member was not in the form of a question or a request. The Premier has repeatedly stated, notwithstanding what the hon. member has asserted—and in doing so the hon. member has gone over the same ground to such an extent as to make him almost guilty of tedious repetition, and at the same time has imputed something like dishonourable motives—that the Prime Minister's telegram did not embody a question but was purely a statement of the case.

Mr. THOMSON: I would point out respectfully—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not dispute my ruling, or make any such comments as the hon. member was proceeding to do, unless he is prepared to take the necessary steps!

Mr. THOMSON: I was pointing out that the interpretation placed upon the Prime Minister's telegram and the statement made by the Premier each represent a matter of opinion, and I desire to say respectfully, Mr. Speaker, that while the Premier may, with justice to himself, enter a denial, I consider I am justified in expressing my opinion, not offensively—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is disputing my ruling!

Mr. THOMSON: I am not.

Mr. SPEAKER: By that denial, he is doing so. The hon. member must obey the rules and Standing Orders of this Chamber. He must accept an hon. member's denial and he has no right to follow up the denial by repeated imputations.

Mr. THOMSON: If that is your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I am bound, most respectfully, to disagree.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can do so.

Dissent from Ruling.

Mr. Thomson: I move—

That the House dissent from Mr. Speaker's ruling.

If I did not take exception to your ruling, Sir, it would debar any member from continuing a debate once a Minister had entered a denial.

Mr. Richardson: That is so.

The Premier: That is the Standing Order. When a member denies a question, his denial must be accepted.

Mr. Speaker: Will the hon. member put his motion to disagree in writing?

The Premier: Right or wrong, that is the Standing Order.

Mr. Speaker: I understand that the hon. member has moved that my ruling be disagreed from.

Mr. Thomson: I have done so.

Mr. Davy: I gather, Mr. Speaker, that you have ruled that the hon. member was out of order in referring to the telegram that has been read.

The Speaker: The hon. member misunderstands the position. My ruling was that under Standing Order 132, the hon. member could not impute improper motives or reflect upon any hon. member. The imputation of motives would include neglect of duty, dishonourable conduct or anything else not in accordance with strict rectitude on the part of members of Parliament or Ministers of the Crown.

Mr. Davy: Do I understand that in view of the reading of that telegram and your ruling that the hon. member has imputed motives, that that is the attitude you adopt? Apart from the question of fact, the point arises first that the Premier denied that the telegram was in the form of a question. The hon. member obtained the telegram and read it to us. Grammatically the meaning of the telegram is not in question. It seems to me that the hon. member is entitled to express his opinion on that point.

The Minister for Justice: Once.

Mr. Davy: The hon. member suggested that the telegram was in a form to which an answer ought to have been sent. When he contended accordingly, you ruled that he was imputing improper motives. One may differ from the views of the Government without imputing improper motives.

Mr. Speaker: After the introductory remarks of the hon. member that there was a desire to know what the Government intended to do, the Premier denied that the telegram from the Prime Minister required an answer. The hon. member repeated his desire to know what it was intended to do. That was an imputation of motives and repeating it made the offence worse. On that score I ruled that the hon. member was out of order. His repetition of the statement was a non-acceptance of the denial by the Premier to begin with, and its repetition was an inference, or an innuendo that something that ought to have been done was not done by the Government.

Mr. Davy: I do not know whether I am in order in again addressing myself to you, Mr. Speaker, but I wish to point out that admittedly if the hon. member said that the form of that telegram was a question, and the Premier by interjection said it was not, that then was the end of it. But the hon. member read the telegram and submitted that although grammatically it was not in the form of a question, in his opinion the Government should have sent an answer. I submit that it is not necessary for a letter or a telegram to be couched in interrogatory language to require an answer. It seems to me we are going to be cramped seriously if we are not able to submit, without imputing motives, that the Government ought to have sent an answer. I should like to know your ruling as to whether I shall be debarred from submitting to the House that the Government ought to have sent an answer to

the telegram. I submit, in my judgment, that an answer ought to have been sent.

Mr. Speaker: The motion of the member for Katanning reads—

I disagree with your ruling that I am imputing improper or personal motives because I expressed and repeated my opinion that the Premier should have replied to the Prime Minister's wire regarding the strike.

Mr. Lindsay: I have carefully listened to your ruling and I also heard the interjections that caused your ruling to be given. I have not had very much experience of Parliamentary procedure, but if your ruling is correct, Mr. Speaker, we might just as well stop our debates. The ruling is that once a member makes a statement and that statement is denied, and another member declares that the denial is wrong, we are imputing motives. The member for Katanning made certain statements about the telegram. The Premier denied the truth of those statements. The hon. member said that the Prime Minister wired asking that something should be done and that the word "ask" was in the telegram. The telegram said "I ask for your co-operation." If I am asked by a member of this House to assist in some way or other, that surely is asking a question; it is a request for co-operation, and I should be expected to say "yes" or "no." What is the use of asking someone to do something unless that someone replies "yes" or "no"? It appears to me that the Prime Minister's telegram did require an answer. That is the point. Now if we stand up in this House and express a view in opposition to that of the Government or of any member, according to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, that constitutes imputing motives.

Mr. Speaker: No; that is not correct.

Mr. Lindsay: That is my opinion of the ruling you have given. So far as I can understand the position, the member for Katanning merely stated there should have been a reply.

Hon. W. J. George: That was his opinion and he had a right to express it.

Mr. Lindsay: The suggestion was that the Premier should state whether he was prepared to protect those people who went to work at the Fremantle wharf, and the member for Katanning expressed the opinion that the Premier should make a statement. Surely it cannot be held that a member is imputing motives when he expresses an opinion. I oppose your ruling, Mr. Speaker,

for the reason that if it is given effect to and is taken as a precedent, we might just as well put a stop to the debates in this House.

Hon. W. J. George: I listened very closely to what the member for Katanning had to say and I must confess that I cannot see where Standing Order 132 applies. I did not gather, from the hon. member's speech, that he imputed a motive, improper or otherwise. He may have had something at the back of his head, but if he had he kept it concealed there. I do not think he made any personal reflection on the Premier; I should be sorry if he did. The Premier is responsible for whatever action he takes and I have not the slightest doubt that when the time comes he will make his explanation. This is an occasion that is much too important to the State and to everyone of us, no matter what our views may be, to try to camouflage the question by imputing motives. If the hon. member had put the matter in this way, that seeing that those who were taking the action which was being objected to, were presumably of the same political party as the Premier, and that therefore the Premier was likely to be influenced by that fact, then I would say that improper motives were being imputed. But the hon. member did not even suggest such a thing; there was no necessity for him to go so far. I differ from the Premier in respect of many things, but I know that in his high position he has to play a man's part. I cannot agree with your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Sampson: I think hon. members generally will have a good deal of sympathy for the Government—

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. Sampson: In respect of the speech of the Leader of the Country Party, I regard it as having been a model of restraint.

Members: Oh!

The Premier: A model of a perverse intellect.

Mr. Marshall: Don't make a second reading speech; talk to the point of order.

Mr. Sampson: I realise the hon. member's view in this matter where a difficult duty must be performed. But on your ruling, Mr. Speaker, an hon. member need only say that a statement made was untrue or improper, to be called to order.

The Premier: So it would be under the Standing Orders; have you ever read them?

Mr. Sampson: I have read them. The Standing Order in question is quite clear.

The Premier: If an hon. member says that the statement of another hon. member is untrue, the remark has to be withdrawn. That is clear under the Standing Orders.

Mr. Sampson: The member for Katanning read the copy of a telegram. I do not know how a note of interrogation has to be sent by telegraph, but it seems to me that if one receives a letter in a private capacity, or in any other capacity, and it is expressed in the terms of the telegram that was read, one would feel it incumbent upon him to send a reply. The absence of an interrogation mark is of no significance whatever. The member for Katanning was most punctilious in the selection of his language, and I was surprised when the question was raised about the manner in which he expressed himself. I intend to vote in support of the motion that the Speaker's ruling be disagreed with.

Mr. Latham: I am extremely sorry, Mr. Speaker, that you have given this ruling. I will admit that you have been generous in the latitude that you have extended to the members of this Chamber, but I am afraid now that if we interpret Standing Order 132 as you have interpreted it, it will set a precedent that will be difficult to overcome in all future discussions in this House. I understand that your ruling is to the effect that the member for Katanning imputed motives.

Mr. Speaker: That he cast a personal reflection.

Mr. Latham: I cannot even see that there was any personal reflection. To my mind it is just a question of the interpretation of a telegram. After all, I know that the Premier would not object to our criticising his position as Premier, and his conduct in this House as Premier of the State. We would not be fit to hold our positions in this House if we did not watch carefully the conduct of the Government. That is what we are here for, and I am sorry you have interpreted the remarks of the hon. member in the way that you have done. It is not so much a matter that concerns the present debate, but it is a question of setting up a precedent. Your interpretation of Standing Order 132 will have the effect of narrowing down debates very much. No doubt a division will be called on the motion to dis-

agree with your ruling and I shall be very sorry to see the House divide on the matter. Of course the weight of numbers will be against this side.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is reflecting on the House when he says that the weight of numbers will be against his side.

Mr. Latham: I had no intention of reflecting on the House, but I have no desire that the debate should be restricted in any way. I am afraid we shall be restricting debate if we accept your ruling.

The Premier: I desire to support your ruling, Mr. Speaker, because I think it is in conformity with the Standing Order. Apart from the mere words expressed by the hon. member in reading the telegram, there was running through the whole of his remarks an imputation of motives.

Mr. Davy: Now you are imputing motives.

The Premier: If the hon. member will allow me to proceed, I will tell him the motives. I did not make that remark without intending to justify it, and the hon. member need not be too anxious to cross-examine me before I have had an opportunity to express my views.

Mr. Davy: There is no need to get cross.

The Premier: I am not in the witness box to be cross-examined by the youthful solicitor of this House who adopts the role of scholmaster to members of the House.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

The Premier: I am not in the habit of making statements without attempting to justify them. I am not here to be cross-examined before I have had an opportunity to express my views. Let the hon. member bear that in mind. He has not in the box at present a poor insignificant witness whom he can brow-beat.

Mr. Davy: On a point of order, is the hon. member entitled to stand there and lecture another hon. member?

The Premier: You are always lecturing the House.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member is entitled, not in an angry way, I hope, to reply to interjections. It is the evil of interjections that provokes disorder, and I trust I shall not have occasion to call either the Premier or the hon. member to order over across-table conversations and rebukes of each other.

The Premier: My remarks were due to the fact that before I had uttered ten words

the hon. member put in a cross-examination kind of question to me which I think he was not justified in doing. The remarks of the member for Katanning were a continuous imputation against the Government. He proceeded to deal with the tearooms strike which occurred in the city a few years ago, during which he alleged police protection was not provided. In dealing with the Prime Minister's telegram, he imputed the motive that the Government would be lacking in their duty and would fail to provide police protection if it were necessary tomorrow in the present dispute. There was an absolute imputation against the Government of improper motives, and that imputation ran right through the hon. member's remarks. Every member on the other side of the House who denies that is talking with his tongue in his cheek. Members know that the vein running right through his speech was an imputation of improper motives. Why did he go back to the tearoom strike, say that the Government failed to provide police protection and link it with the present trouble? Why did he infer, as he did, that the Government would act again as he considered they acted on that occasion? I deny his statement that the Government did so act on that occasion, but the hon. member imputed motives that the Government would do so again.

Mr. Thomson: I did not.

The Premier: In saying that the Government did not reply to the Prime Minister's telegram, he imputed that we had not replied because we were not prepared or willing to provide police protection if it was necessary. That was the imputation levelled against the Government, and running right through his remarks. I think your ruling is absolutely right, Mr. Speaker, and every member who followed the trend of the hon. member's remarks knows there was an imputation of motives right through his speech.

Mr. Davy: I must confess I have not yet heard from the Premier what the motive is.

The Premier: A motive of dereliction of duty.

Mr. Thomson: There must be a guilty conscience, then.

Mr. Davy: I submit that dereliction of duty is not an improper motive. An improper motive surely must mean dishonesty, not neglect, not weakness, not discourtesy,

or anything of that sort. As I understand it, there were three points in the remarks of the member for Katanning to which you, Mr. Speaker, took exception. First, he said the language of the telegram contained a question, and the Premier who received the telegram said it did not. The member for Katanning then repeated that it was a question, and in my opinion you rightly ruled him out of order under another Standing Order. Then he went on to read the telegram so that members might have the real facts before them, and it became apparent that it did not contain a question, although the words "request" and "ask" were used in the telegram. Then the hon. member proceeded to say that in his opinion the telegram required an answer and that an answer should have been sent.

The Premier: Why did he link up the tearooms strike except to impute a motive for the Government's not replying?

Mr. Davy: That has not been raised by me. It appears that if the ruling is correct, and if I desired to address to the House any remarks expressing the opinion that the Premier should have answered the telegram, I should be out of order. Later on, the member for Katanning went on to the question whether the Premier should give an assurance that police protection would be provided. The Premier was indignant that such a question should be asked. The member for Katanning persisted that in his opinion such an assurance should be given. Surely if your ruling is as I have indicated, when other members at a later stage desire to criticise the Government for not giving the assurance—I am not expressing an opinion whether they should do so or not—they will be out of order. It amounts to this, that if we are to be ruled out of order for making such criticisms of the Government, almost every criticism of the Government we offer must be out of order. If that is so, we shall be in a serious position, and we might as well be out of the House.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think the hon. member who has last spoken, and some others, can have gathered the scone of my ruling. I referred to the words of this particular Standing Order 132. The hon. member has included another Standing Order, and reference has been made to it by the Premier—the Standing Order relating to the accepting of a statement of another

member Had the hon. member contented himself with expressions of his own opinion, I should have allowed him to proceed. I should never for a moment dream of stopping an expression of honest opinion by any member. But this case is not on all fours with that of stopping a free expression of opinion. If ever the Government were guilty of dishonest or dishonourable conduct, it would clearly be the duty of the hon. member or members complaining to table a motion under which such conduct could be fully and completely debated and dealt with by the House. But in ordinary circumstances it is the commonest rule of all that you are to extend to all members due and proper respect, and to credit them with honour and honesty in their speeches and motives in this Chamber. That can scarcely be the case that gave rise to my ruling.

Mr. Thomson: On a point of order——

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. Thomson: I am not suggesting anything dishonourable.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order!

The Premier: You have no right to interrupt the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member would almost make it appear that one is quite right in stopping him, and that he cannot restrain his own tongue. The hon. member as the House will be aware, by implying that his previous questions had not been properly or fairly answered, by a reference to the conduct of previous Governments on the occasion of a previous strike, and the almost direct statement that the telegram of the Prime Minister required an answer as to the attitude of the Government in the event of a strike occurring, asking whether they would or would not do their duty in upholding law and order, surely was beyond all the limits and latitude of our Standing Orders. I allowed the reading of the telegram but after repeated denials the member for Katanning required an assurance, and it was then, and then only, I gave my ruling that he was out of order. I trust that while I am in the Chair I shall always rule in similar cases. With all due deference to the House members cannot cast personal reflections or innuendoes unless they are prepared to do it by specific motion in which the charges are clearly stated and every member has an op-

portunity to speak to those particular charges. By innuendo, insinuation and inference, imputations and reflections cannot be cast upon either a Minister of the Crown or the humblest member of this Chamber.

Mr. Thomson: In view of the remarks passed by you, Mr. Speaker, and other members, I should like to have a few words to say.

Hon. G. Taylor: I think we had better have some tea first.

Mr. Thomson: Perhaps so.

The Premier: You have no right to suggest that. You are not in the Chair; you are not Speaker.

Mr. Thomson: I have no desire to suggest it; I am prepared to go on.

The Premier: Go on till the time is called! It is not your province to call it.

Mr. Thomson: I moved to disagree with your ruling, but when I spoke I had no desire to impute improper motives to anyone. I respectfully pointed out that if your ruling was carried out, it would effectually debar us for all time from making a statement of fact.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. Thomson: With regard to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, that I was imputing impersonal or improper motives, I wish to say clearly that I have no such intention. I regret very much that such an interpretation could be put on my remarks. I also point out, most respectfully, that if we permit the ruling to go on the lines you have suggested, there would never be an opportunity of debating any subject-matter if the Minister who might be in charge of it did not reply. After all, however, the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition is that which is most important: and I shall now, Sir, allow your ruling to go to the House.

Mr. Speaker: It is somewhat out of the ordinary for the Speaker to rise in defence of his ruling, more than once at all events; but I deem this a question of some importance, by reason of the fact that hon. members are under the impression that if my ruling were upheld by the House, the liberty of speech of hon. members would be curtailed, restricted, or abolished. I am not alone in taking the view I do, and I expect hon. members will have noticed that the Standing order in

question does not only allude to improper motives, but also to all personal reflections on members. I want that interpretation to be placed in the mind of every hon. member as he is giving a vote. In the British House of Commons matters of a similar kind have been treated as out of order. In the debates of 1904, on page 748, hon. members will see a similar case of personal reflection or imputation that had been made by Mr. Lloyd George. The Speaker drew the attention of the House to those words, and said—

The hon. member will see that the words suggest that the right hon. gentleman is actuated, in prosecuting for crime, by the unworthy motive of punishing persons who are of different politics from his own. That is a suggestion which the hon. member ought to withdraw.

In other words, it was out of order. There are a number of instances of this kind. I submit that what caused me to call the hon. member to order was the imputation of possible misconduct, of dereliction of duty, of failure to face responsibility if an occasion arose. The very fact that the Government are sworn to do their duty should be recognised by every member of this House. That is to say, it should be recognised that the Government will perform the duties that are committed to them under their oath of office. But the hon. member did impute that there was a doubt. He suggested that there was a possibility of the Government not performing their duties. The member for Katanning said—

I am not talking about something that may have happened, but concerning something that actually did happen . . . I do not want to import any bitterness into the consideration of this subject, for it is too serious. Here we have men who, when they were desirous of obtaining employment, have been told that the only way to get the positions they sought was to belong to a certain union.

And so on. The reference to something that had happened was repeated. I allowed a considerable amount of latitude again and again. Moreover, the hon. member distinctly stated that the Government had been asked whether they would protect the citizens, and that no answer had been given to the question asked. This was repeatedly denied by the Premier. The Premier informed the hon. member and the House that the communication was of a character not demanding a reply; in other words, that it was a circular issued from headquarters to every Government and did not demand a reply. Notwithstanding

that, there was a reiteration that the question had never been answered, a statement that the question had been answered evasively. All these were more than suggestive of failure on the part of the Government to perform their duty, of unworthy reticence, at least, on the part of the Government sworn to perform their duty. It is clear that if we allowed this accusation by innuendo to prevail, we would very soon have an exceedingly disorderly House, and that instead of having free speech we should have absolute licence of utterance, which is quite different from freedom of utterance. I want hon. members to bear that distinction in mind, and to remember that if one hon. member wishes to accuse another hon. member of an offence, of dereliction of duty, of failure to meet his obligations, or of any other offence which can be recognised by this House, it is his duty, not to introduce that matter upon a general debate, but to give notice of motion of a substantive character, a motion, in this instance, that would put the Government properly on their defence and confine the matter to the subject of the innuendo or accusation. For that reason I gave the hon. member more than one warning, and ultimately felt it my duty, in the interests of the House, to curtail his speech. If I may presume indirectly to inform members, when it is a matter of fact, as this was, whether a question had or had not been asked of the Government demanding a reply, an accusation having been made of a character denied by the person responsible, the denial ought honourably to be accepted. The reply was not satisfactory, but had to be accepted in accordance with the rules of the House. If it was not deemed to be in accordance with the facts, the hon. member aggrieved would at all times have the course open to him of tabling a motion and having the point of difference fully and completely debated. So that my ruling is really in defence, and not in curtailment, of freedom of speech.

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	..	23

Majority against .. 5

AYES.

Mr. Angelo
Mr. Barnard
Mr. Brown
Mr. Davy
Mr. George
Mr. Griffiths
Mr. E. B. Johnston
Mr. Latham
Mr. Lindsay
Mr. Mann

Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Richardson
Mr. Sampson
Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Thomson
Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. North

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Chesson
Mr. Clydesdale
Mr. Collier
Mr. Corboy
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Cunningham
Mr. Heron
Miss Holman
Mr. Kenneally
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Lamond
Mr. Lutey

Mr. Marshall
Mr. McCallum
Mr. Millington
Mr. Munsie
Mr. Rowe
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Withers
Mr. Pantou

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.

Mr. Maley
Mr. Stubbs

NOES.

Mr. Wilson
Mr. W. D. Johnson

Motion thus negatived.

Debate resumed.

Mr. THOMSON: I was quoting from the Press report of the Premier's statement and was endeavouring to draw comparisons between his attitude when an appeal was made to him, and his attitude on the present occasion. May I now draw attention to the statement made by the disputes committee. A resolution was carried at the Trades Hall yesterday afternoon as follows:—

The disputes committee and representatives of the various organisations likely to be involved in the waterside dispute, view with the utmost indignation the attitude of the Federal Government in refusing the urgent request of Mr. Phillip Collier for the exemption of Western Australia from the licensing provisions of the Transport Workers Act. Any system of indentured labour, by licenses or otherwise, is totally opposed to the principles of organised Labour, and is in direct opposition to the Australian sentiment.

All I can say is I wish to God that was the true sentiment of Australia. Unfortunately we know there are restrictions of another kind imposed by those gentlemen who passed that resolution. I want to make a comparison between the indignation that has been expressed by that committee and the attitude of the Prime Minister in not immediately agreeing to suspend the Transport

Workers Act at Fremantle. For several weeks the transport of this State was held up. Quite a large number of people suffered serious losses, but I did not notice any evidence of the indignation, any keen anxiety in those gentlemen to see that the men whose case they have now taken up returned to work. Comparisons do not reflect very great credit on the attitude of those gentlemen who claim that they desire to see the laws of the land obeyed. I am not going to weary the House. I have made my remarks with the sincere desire to do what is best for the people of Western Australia. After all, that is what our duty is. While we may have different viewpoints, nevertheless, if I were to break the law of the land I feel sure that very quickly the Police Department would take charge of me, or that at all events a charge would be laid against me.

Mr. Lutey: You would not remain silent under it.

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member who made that interjection has remained silent for three weeks while the law of the land was being broken.

Mr. Lutey: I certainly do not try to make things worse.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not try to make things worse.

Mr. Lutey: That is what you are doing.

Mr. THOMSON: There again we get the different viewpoint. We have a duty to perform to every section of the State, to see that the ordinary channels of commerce are kept open to all. No section has any right to inflict injustice on any other section of the community. I believe there are hundreds and thousands of men and women in Australia who are looking to an Act that will give every man an opportunity to earn his living. That is the crux of the question with which we are faced to-day. I hope that when the Premier is replying he will give the reasons why he did not reply to the appeal made by the Prime Minister for his co-operation and assistance.

The Premier: You have not shown anything for me to reply to.

Mr. THOMSON: So far nothing has been done. We have asked what are the intentions of the Government. We are entitled to ask that. We are here to conserve the privileges of the people, privileges fought

for by our forefathers. Surely we are entitled to ask the Government their intention, as to whether law and order or chaos is to prevail.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid the hon. member is getting very near to a repetition of the same fault as he committed before.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope when the Premier does reply he will clearly indicate what the intentions of his Government are. Certainly it will serve to satisfy very many people. For I am voicing, not only my own views, but those of hundreds outside the House who desire to know the intentions of the Government. The country has the right to know what is going to be done in respect of our waterfront. I will support the motion.

HON. W. J. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [7.53]: I am sorry we should have had a little disturbance, but probably it will clear the air. The object of the Leader of the Opposition in bringing this matter before the House was to let the people of the State know that members of Parliament are not sitting silently for three weeks and saying nothing, but are merely awaiting the coming of that time when, whatever they may decide to do, shall be done to help bring about a cessation of the trouble. The Premier has given us to understand that when the occasion came for a declaration of the policy of his Government, he would be prepared to give it. But he resented, he said, attempts being made to force him to give a premature declaration of his intentions. I suppose there is not a member in the House who does not sincerely deplore the occasion that has arisen. I doubt if any member can really give a fair explanation of what has led to the position. It is easy to make accusations as to this and that being done for political purposes, but that is not going to the root of the question. What the country is anxious about is that whatever is done shall be done to preserve obedience to the laws of the country. No man that disobeys those laws has a right to remain in the country. Possibly some would attempt to draw a distinction between the laws of the Commonwealth and those of the State. But that is not a matter upon which any distinction can be made. Rightly or wrongly, the Commonwealth Government have taken a decided stand. Some of us may think it should have been taken long

ago, while others may think it is premature. However, this debate will serve the purpose of showing the people of the State that Parliament is alive to the importance and urgency of the position. Whether we can justly expect the Premier at this juncture to deliver himself as to what he is going to do under hypothetical circumstances, is a question that each member can ask himself. I do not propose to put any such question to the Premier. As you, Sir, have remarked, he and his Ministers have taken oath, and that oath binds them to maintain the law of the country. Until the Premier fails to do that, it is premature to attempt to force an opinion from him. Another thing: while, without doubt, there is great anxiety amongst the people of the State, there has not yet been any outspoken declaration of that anxiety. The position in Western Australia, indeed all through Australia, in regard to the dispute, is complicated; because quite a large body of men are agreeing to carry on according to the law, while another large body of men are refusing to work. Underlying the speech of the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson), probably, is the thought that it cannot be long, it may be only a few hours, before some decision will have to be arrived at, and that decision may be forced by the placing of free labour on the ships. The anxiety in the mind of the hon. member probably is as to whether, if that free labour starts to work and there should be a repetition of what happened at Port Adelaide a few days ago, action will be taken and what action will the Government take? That, probably, is what the hon. member would like to know. However, it is for the Premier to say whether or not he will make some declaration on that point. The position is very awkward for him. I do not think we have any right to prejudge him, because his political opinions may be on the same lines as those held by the men who are not working. If the occasion arises when he does not do his duty, I hope all members of the House will consider what they shall say to the Premier, not as individuals, but as the representatives of the people of the State. This is not the occasion when we can discuss the conditions of the dispute. That may come later. It seems to me the matter rests with the Premier, as to what he is prepared to say and do. It may be that he will allay anxiety in the

country by stating what his Government are prepared to do. That is entirely a matter for the freewill of the Premier himself. We have no right to force him in the matter. If he chooses to tell us, well and good, but if he does not do so, he is within his rights.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [8.2]: I look upon this as rather a serious matter. The effects of the strike are already seen in the country. In some of the small towns it is impossible to get more than a couple of pounds of sugar.

Mr. Sleeman: Whose fault is that?

Mr. BROWN: I will explain, if the hon. member has patience. We know that the strike is a serious one, and that the finances of the State are held up. There is a large amount of wool in Western Australia that cannot be either sold or shipped away. The warehouses are full, and the railways are not able to transport any more wool to Fremantle. It is possible in times of stress and unemployment for free labour to be offering. I understand that at Fremantle no such labour is as yet offering. There is something peculiar about that. One is forced to the conclusion that there is a certain amount of intimidation there. We know what happened in Adelaide when there was a riot or revolution. The Premier of the State said that law and order must be maintained. The police were reinforced, they were placed on the wharves, and all further trouble ceased. In Victoria, Mr. Hogan, the Labour Premier, is maintaining law and order. He is not afraid to say that law and order must be maintained. The police are being reinforced from the country, and are trying to stop disorders in Melbourne. Unless the Premier will give an assurance that law and order will be maintained here, no man will want to work at Fremantle for fear his head will be knocked off. It is possible that in some dark corner a man's brains may be knocked out. We know what happened in Queensland, where farmers are loading vessels with their sugar. They wanted to get rid of that commodity in order to maintain their wives and families. Our farmers want to get rid of their wheat and pay their debts. What is going to happen to Western Australia if this strike continues? All we want is an assurance from the Premier that he will uphold law and order.

If any trouble occurs, we want to know that we will see that the law is obeyed.

Mr. Corboy: What did you do to the free workers when you were on strike?

Mr. BROWN: We have a certain amount at stake in this country, and we want to see that our trade and commerce are not disorganised. We have not asked for anything unjust. I should be sorry to see people who are earning their living in other pursuits take the place of the workers at Fremantle. There are sufficient workers there to work the ships. I am glad to know there is no disorder in Fremantle. We have enough waterside workers there for the loading and unloading of all the ships. We know, however, that they are amalgamated with the Australian Waterside Workers. No one knows how far this strike will go.

Mr. Panton: That applies to the shipping companies.

Mr. BROWN: It may be if one big union takes a hand we shall all have to go out on strike, and that other unions will follow. That is not a very nice prospect to contemplate. The question is a simple one. The Premier has only to give an assurance that law and order will be maintained. To whom shall we look for the maintenance of law and order if not to the Premier? I do not say that the Premier will check the police. If a man transgresses, the police will have to play their part. Unless sufficient police are put on the wharf, what will be the result?

The Minister for Works: How many do you want?

Mr. BROWN: That depends on the nature of the strike.

The Premier: I will ask for an escort to see you home.

Mr. BROWN: I can always defend myself against one man, but not against half a dozen, or against a piece of wood aimed at me around a corner, or against bombs. I am glad to know that our waterside workers have been orderly. That is a credit to Western Australia. The position is a delicate one, and my sympathies go out to the Premier. If he handles the matter tactfully and does not rush into it half-headed, by careful management he may be able to accomplish what he is aiming at quietly. We never know when it will be necessary to afford protection. That is the whole trouble. I hope the Premier will give us

an assurance that law and order will be maintained in Western Australia if the occasion arises.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [8.10]: Were it not that I know the Leader of the Opposition so well, I should be inclined to say that this motion was moved for political reasons, but I know that no such thought has entered his head. I am, however, entitled to ask what is the object of the motion? What purpose has this discussion served? In what way will it help towards a solution of the difficulty? I have never listened to a debate in this House so entirely barren of any suggestions, of anything useful that might be done to meet the situation. We have been treated merely to a rehash of the things we have read in the papers for days past, of things with which we are acquainted. Not one member who has addressed himself to the subject has made the slightest suggestion of anything the Government might do. There has been no charge against the Government, or a suggestion of a dereliction of duty. What good is this motion going to do? What is the object of it; merely to waste an evening in rambling round in a circle, as it were, without any suggestions being offered that might overcome the difficulty.

Mr. Stubbs: You will admit it is giving us a bad name.

Mr. Thomson: The member for Pingelly asked you a question.

The PREMIER: And the member for Katanning asked an equally stupid question. He was asking hypothetical questions, such as if something should happen next week or the week after, or someone should refrain from doing something and someone else should do something, what would be the attitude of the Government? That brings me to the telegram sent by the Prime Minister, regarding which the member for Katanning is so much concerned because the Government made no reply. I say at once that had the Government replied to that telegram we should have been false to our trust as the Government of a sovereign State.

Mr. Thomson: The Prime Minister appealed to you.

The PREMIER: What right have the Commonwealth Government to put any State Government into the dock and ask them what the yare going to do? It is an impertinence.

Mr. Thomson: It was an appeal.

The PREMIER: If the Prime Minister did ask the question and expected an answer, it was an impertinence to ask any State Government whether they intended to observe their own laws.

Mr. Thomson: He only appealed to you.

The PREMIER: This Government are not amenable to or under the discipline or control of the Federal Government. Have I any right to ask the Prime Minister whether he will do a certain thing in the event of something taking place? I have no such right, and no member has a right. The member for Katanning wants the Government to go around rattling a sword. No Government has any right to threaten any of its citizens, or to say to any of them, law-abiding as they have been in this State, "If you do so and so, I will do this with you." We have no right to threaten the people. The time for the Government to act is when the law has been broken. It is not for us to threaten the people, and to go about the matter as the hon. member would. I can imagine him emulating the Premier of South Australia, or going even one better, as he always desires to do. Strange to say, the State whose Premier first replied to the Prime Minister's telegram, offering all kinds of things, such as police, military and everything else, was the one in which disorder first occurred. That kind of thing, including threatening of citizens as to what the Government are likely to do, is not conducive to the preservation or order. It does not tend to make people more law abiding. People are not to be threatened, and it is not the province of the Government—it would be highly improper for them to do so—to threaten citizens so long as they maintain peace. What more do hon. members want? The member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) and the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) want the Government to get up on the housetops and issue proclamations and declarations as to their intentions, and as to what they will do in circumstances that may never arise!

Mr. Brown: You ought to be prepared.

The PREMIER: Does preparation mean threatening the people?

Mr. Brown: But you are not prepared!

The PREMIER: What do you know about it! The hon. member does not know anything at all. Because I have not climbed to the top of the highest steeple, and waved my arms about and threatened citizens,

what right has he to assume that the Government are unmindful of their obligations? It is wrong and improper for anyone, particularly for any member of this House, to adopt such an attitude. It is an imputation, as you, Mr. Speaker, said some time ago, against the Government. It is an imputation that they are lacking in their duty, because they have not issued a declaration as to what they are about to do. I am not going to make any such declaration, nor yet to threaten any of our citizens. The Government will act as occasion demands, according to the best judgment of the Government for the time being. The Government will be responsible to the people of this State for every action they take. That is all I am going to say in that regard. Now, with reference to the strike or the trouble itself, I say at once that I think the men were wrong in not accepting the Beeby award. I think they should have accepted it and the men, after having been out of work some time, have come to that conclusion themselves. On the other hand I repeat what I said in the "West Australian" this morning: The fact that no ships have been unloaded this afternoon at Fremantle is due to the action of the Federal Government. We have a copy of the Federal Bill. Members have talked about the law that should be obeyed and have declared that all the law asks is that men shall register under the law, but surely every man who is asked to obey a law and who is asked to register himself for employment, is entitled to know, before he is asked to do that, what the law actually is! Is there any hon. member in the House tonight who knows what the Commonwealth law is? Is there any hon. member who has read the Act? Is there any hon. member who knows one line or word or letter of the regulations under which men are asked to register themselves? Not one!

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have read the Act, of course.

The PREMIER: You have not!

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course we have not got the Act itself.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Bill is the Act.

The PREMIER: I have a copy of the Bill as it was read the first time in the Federal House of Parliament. The Act itself has not reached here yet.

Hon. G. Taylor: Assuming that the Act is the same—

The PREMIER: But we do not know. We know only what we have read in the

Press. We have a copy of the Bill as it was introduced the first time, and men are being condemned to-day for not registering under the regulations! I say it was a most improper and wholly un-British thing for the Federal Government to ask men to register under a set of regulations, when the men have not seen those regulations and no copy of them is obtainable in the State. On many occasions we have heard the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) give us his views regarding Acts of Parliament that provide for the making of regulations. He has declared that it is the duty and responsibility of Parliament to say in Acts of Parliament what is required and what is meant, not to leave it to a Government to carry out by way of regulations.

Mr. Davy: I still say that, too.

The PREMIER: I know the hon. member does.

Mr. Davy: I do not believe in this type of legislation.

The PREMIER: Here is the Bill. Let me read it to hon. members. I have no doubt most hon. members have not read it. It says—

This Act may be cited as the Transport Workers Act of 1928. In this Act unless the contrary intention appears, "transport workers" means the persons offering for or engaged in work in or in connection with the provision of services in the transport of persons or goods in relation to trade or commerce by sea with other countries or among the States.

The next clause says—

The Governor General may make regulations which, notwithstanding any thing in any other Act, shall have the force of law with respect to the employment of transport workers in any particular, for the regulation of the engagement, service, discharge of transport workers and the licensing of persons as transport workers and for the regulation of or prohibiting the employment of unlicensed persons as transport workers and for the protection of transport workers.

Hon. G. Taylor: Was that clause not amended?

The PREMIER: I do not know. We have not a copy of the Act in the State.

Hon. G. Taylor: I am not sure, but I think that clause was amended.

The PREMIER: While it is important that we have not a copy of the Act itself, the most important fact is that we have not a copy of the regulations. Under the latter clause, the Government have full power to set aside all or any Act of Parliament and to frame any kind of regula-

tion they may deem fit. The lumpers were asked to register under those regulations, but those men do not know what the regulations contain. They may provide for a wage of 5s. per day; they may provide for the deportation of waterside workers under a given set of circumstances; they may provide for their execution, for all they know! Surely men are entitled to see the regulations, and read them, and know what they are to sign.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They do not sign, of course!

The PREMIER: But they register under those regulations.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Those regulations may be varied every week.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Davy: Do you know what the form of registration is?

The PREMIER: I do not.

Mr. Davy: That could be easily ascertained.

The PREMIER: I suppose so.

Mr. Davy: What do they actually do?

The PREMIER: I do not know.

Hon. G. Taylor: A commissioner was appointed locally.

The PREMIER: At any rate the men are asked to register under the regulations.

Mr. Pantou: They pay their bob and take their chance!

The PREMIER: So far as the men are concerned and as far as we know, they are asked to sign a blank cheque.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: Their leaders in the Eastern States who have seen the regulations and know them, have advised the men to accept them.

The PREMIER: That does not matter; would the hon. member sign a contract because John Smith signed a contract in some other part of the State?

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: What is the good of the union sending men to a conference in the Eastern States, if they do not take notice of what is recommended?

The PREMIER: Would the hon. member sign a blank cheque merely because somebody else suggested he should do so?

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: But the waterside workers sent their delegates across for a certain purpose, and now they will not follow their advice.

The PREMIER: That is not the question.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: It is; and you are evading it.

The PREMIER: The hon. member talks about evading the point! That may be quite right according to the views of the hon. member who prefers foreigners to Britishers. He would not have Britishers if he could get foreigners.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: Yes, because they do the work.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: The hon. member would prefer a foreigner every time to a Britisher whether he was a unionist or not. He is a good sample of a Western Australian!

Mr. Sleeman: He wants the Southern Europeans on the wharf.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: That is merely evading the question.

The PREMIER: It is a very direct answer to the question. No matter what these men may do, they would be wrong in the mind of a man who prefers foreigners to Britishers.

Mr. Thomson: Now you are imputing motives!

The PREMIER: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. Thomson: Yes, you are.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: I am merely stating a fact. The hon. member said in this House that he preferred foreigners to Britishers and I have merely repeated his own statement.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: And I will say so again.

The PREMIER: There is no imputation of motives when I repeat what the hon. member himself has said!

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: At any rate that sort of argument will get you nowhere. Why not stick to the question?

The PREMIER: I am sticking to it too much to suit the hon. member. He would deport Britishers if he had his way.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: I would send a shipload of them away.

The PREMIER: They would not be foreigners who would be shipped away. That is a strong point with the hon. member.

Mr. Thomson: You know that is not correct; you are imputing motives yourself now, and you have no right to do so.

The PREMIER: I am not imputing motives at all, but merely repeating what the hon. member said.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: I said, for certain purposes.

Mr. Thomson: And it is not right for the Premier to make such a statement.

The PREMIER: It is perfectly fair.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: It is a weak argument.

The PREMIER: I hope it is a better argument than the hon member put forward in favour of foreigners in preference to Britishers.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: You are evading the question.

The PREMIER: The men are asked to register under these regulations.

Mr. Thomson: Just the same as men are asked to register—

The PREMIER: The member for Katanning has gabbled long enough to-day!

Mr. Thomson: You don't.

The PREMIER: He wandered on for hours, and kept going round in a circle all the time. He gave us his usual dose of reading from newspapers, from printed documents and from what someone else said.

Mr. Thomson: You did not like it too much!

The PREMIER: The hon. member spoke at greater length than the Leader of the Opposition. I want to ask the Leader of the Opposition to bear in mind the feelings of hon. members generally. I ask him to try to curtail the remarks he feels called upon to make in this House, for no matter for how long he may speak, the other leaders on his side of the House will always speak for a longer period. While we and others may be pleased to hear the Leader of the Opposition speak from time to time, we do trust that he will bear in mind that we shall be inflicted subsequently with a much longer speech.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: With more sting in it, too.

Mr. Thomson: What about Standing Order 132 now?

The PREMIER: I am not imputing motives.

Mr. Thomson: No, it does not suit now.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must withdraw that statement.

Mr. Thomson: Why, Mr. Speaker? I did not impute any motives to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cast a distinct reflection upon the Chair. He said, "it did not suit now."

Mr. Thomson: No. I most respectfully deny having cast any reflection upon the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well. The Premier may proceed.

The PREMIER: It is wrong in principle for a Government to make regulations in such circumstances, but it is a thousand times more wrong when people who represent a section of our citizens who will be subject to those regulations, which represent the law, have not been allowed an opportunity to even see them. They have not been allowed to read them, and do not know what those regulations contain.

Mr. Corboy: They have not had that opportunity yet.

The PREMIER: What kind of an action is it for the Commonwealth Government to enforce the regulations in this State when not a copy of those regulations has reached the State? Fancy asking the citizens to obey a law they have never seen and know nothing about, except what they have read in the newspapers! However justifiable the action may have been on the part of the Federal Government with regard to Melbourne or Adelaide or any of the other States where no doubt they have seen the Act and the regulations, no member here will say that it is a proper or right thing for the Government to enforce a law against the section of the citizens of the Commonwealth before those citizens have ever seen that law and do not know its contents. And because those citizens have refused to register, the Commonwealth deprive them of the right to work.

Mr. Lindsay: According to the "Daily News" the men were working this afternoon.

The PREMIER: Perhaps the Federal Government discovered the error of their ways, but certainly the men were stopped yesterday because they would not register under a law about which they knew nothing. Not one copy of the Act or the regulations has found its way into Western Australia.

Mr. Angelo: Have any steps been taken to get copies?

The PREMIER: Yes. I searched the town yesterday and to-day, without result. What is to be said of a Government that stops men from working, that holds up the trade of a port when men are working under the law of the land—the Commonwealth Arbitration Act? True, those men had ceased work, but they were working yesterday under an award of the Federal Arbitration Court and the Commonwealth Government stopped them from continuing, declaring, "No, you must not work unless you

comply with our Act." Then, as reasonable citizens, they were entitled to say, "Where is your Act?" If one of those lumpers consulted the member for West Perth in his professional capacity and said, "Before I proceed to work and register under this Act and its regulations, do you think that I shall be in any way compromising my principles or rights as a citizen if I do register?" The hon. member would be quite unable to advise his client.

Mr. Davy: I would like to know just what it is that these people are asking.

The PREMIER: The men are being asked to register under an Act and its regulations. The regulations contain all kinds of pains and penalties, so far as we know. The member for West Perth would not be able to offer any advice.

Mr. Davy: I am asking what it is they would be asked to do.

The PREMIER: The lumper would say, "I am asked to register under a Commonwealth Act and its regulations; can you advise me as to whether I am in any way prejudicing my rights as a citizen in doing that?" The hon. member would be unable to offer any advice because he would not have seen the Act or its regulations. They may contain anything at all. It is a blank cheque these men are asked to sign. There may be terms and conditions in those regulations unheard of. That is the position in Western Australia to-day, and it is a position that has been brought about by the Commonwealth Government. However justified the Commonwealth may have been in the action they have taken in the Eastern States, I say they have done a most improper and monstrous thing so far as Western Australia is concerned. It is outrageous. Any Government ought to be challenged for endeavouring to enforce on the citizens an Act and regulations that those citizens have never seen.

Mr. Keaneally: And when the men were peaceably working!

The PREMIER: Yes, peaceably working under the law of the land, working in compliance with a Federal award. Why should they be prevented from continuing their work just because they had not registered under an Act they had not seen?

Mr. Lindsay: They did not know that Act had been passed when they went back to work.

The PREMIER: Nobody in this State knew it until a wire was received in reply to my telegram as to whether the Act was to apply to Western Australia. We know that there are ports of the Commonwealth which are exempt. It does not apply to Sydney, Albany, Bunbury, Newcastle and some others.

Mr. Lindsay: How do we know it does not apply?

The PREMIER: Because the Prime Minister has said so, and he said also that it would apply to Fremantle.

Mr. Lindsay: He did not say so until yesterday.

The PREMIER: He said it applied to all the ports where the men were on strike. There was no strike yesterday at Fremantle; the men had resumed work. I venture to say that the majority of the citizens of this State, certainly of the metropolitan area, believed when the men returned to work on Friday last that the Act was not going to apply to Western Australia. Ninety-nine per cent. of the people were surprised when they learned yesterday that the Act was to apply to Fremantle.

Mr. Mann: The newspapers indicated last week that there was a probability of trouble on the following Monday.

The PREMIER: The newspapers know no more than we know. Does the hon. member expect us to accept everything that appears in the newspapers?

The Minister for Railways: The printed word.

The PREMIER: This, too, should be remembered, that the Act was passed by a dying Parliament, by a defunct House.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Oh, no!

The PREMIER: Oh, yes. It was the last day and the last sitting. It is three years since the Parliament went to the people, and before they appeal to the people again the Government are enforcing their will upon the citizens. Does the hon. member say that the Federal Government have the endorsement of the people at the present time, just because they were elected three years ago? Work was being carried on at the wharves in Fremantle until the Federal Government intervened yesterday.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Was there no stoppage at all at Fremantle?

The PREMIER: There was a stoppage and it was wrong; but yesterday the men

were back at work, and the Commonwealth Government stopped them. It has to be remembered also that all hon. members in this House object strongly to regulations.

Mr. Thomson: If the men registered, they can all work.

The PREMIER: Of course. The hon. member would have them sign a blank cheque. Does the hon. member know under what conditions the men have to register, what conditions are likely to be imposed?

Mr. Thomson: No worse than the conditions imposed on the men by their union regulations.

Members: Oh!

The PREMIER: The hon. member always raises his voice against government by regulation. The position is intensified tenfold when regulations are passed and Parliament is closed. There is no opportunity to lay the regulations on the Table of the House so that they might be disallowed. The Transport Workers Bill was passed and Parliament closed; it was the final sitting of that Parliament and the regulations were afterwards made by the Government and there was consequently no opportunity for the voice of the people to be heard through their representatives in that Parliament.

Mr. Thomson: When you draft regulations here you can carry them in this House by force of the numbers behind you; it is just the same thing.

The PREMIER: Is there no benefit to the people even though the Government might have the majority to enable them to carry the regulations?

Mr. Thomson: The Federal Parliament have only done what you have often done.

The PREMIER: Will the hon. member at this late hour tell me just what he suggests should be done. He failed to make any suggestion while on his feet except that we should make a declaration about the police.

Mr. Thomson: I do know that the Prime Minister made an appeal to you for your co-operation.

The PREMIER: Yes, and I have expressed my opinion about that too.

Mr. Thomson: You ignored that.

The PREMIER: I did. I would be recreant to my duty if I recognised the right of the Prime Minister to question me about the laws of this country.

Mr. Thomson: It was an appeal; not a demand.

The PREMIER: It was an impertinent appeal, and it would have been an impertinent question for any member of this House to ask the Government what it was intended to do in the event of something happening. What right has any member to assume that there are going to be happenings which will call for intervention? What right has anyone to assume that our citizens are going to break the law and that the Government will not do their duty? Hon. members seem to be anxious to make political capital out of this, but they cannot wait for the stage when action is called for.

Mr. Thomson: Now you are imputing motives.

The PREMIER: They want to step in and anticipate; they want to know what we are going to do and why we are not going around rattling the sword and the sabre.

Mr. Thomson: We do not suggest that. We know what has happened in the Eastern States.

The PREMIER: In the first 25 minutes South Australia proclaimed to the world what it was going to do. That is the State where the most trouble occurred.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Victoria was more troublesome.

The PREMIER: The trouble existed in South Australia to a greater extent. In Western Australia there has been no trouble and no disorder.

Mr. Thomson: No disorder!

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member think it is no offence to organise labour to take sides in a dispute?

Mr. Thomson: No, but one might almost be pardoned for having certain doubts.

The PREMIER: Doubts about what?

Mr. Thomson: About the statement you made just now.

Mr. Marshall: Do not waste time over him.

The PREMIER: Having doubts! The hon. member, of course, if he were here, I have no doubt would turn himself into an employer and would rush down and engage men and act the part of an employer of private labour.

Mr. Thomson: You are not imputing motives now! Look at Standing Order 132 that was quoted so frequently to-night.

The PREMIER: I should like some other section; I do not think 132 is drastic

enough so far as the hon. member is concerned.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: What is the object of the motion? What purpose has it served?

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: To find out where you stand.

The PREMIER: Well, the hon. member has only succeeded in my making it more plain where he stands. I have merely emphasised the hon. member's attitude.

Mr. Thomson: By imputing motives.

The PREMIER: If something had happened and the Government had failed to take action, it would have been quite the right thing for any member to move in this House, but so far the Government have not come into the dispute in any respect whatever. There has been no suggestion of the Government having failed to do anything that it was their duty to do; we have not come into the dispute at all. It is not our function to provide employment on the ships or to enforce the Commonwealth Arbitration Act. It has nothing to do with us. So I say the motion serves no purpose whatever, except that it has enabled us, and I hope the people of this State, to know that the Government have not taken the outrageous attitude of enforcing the law on the citizens when they have never seen the law and do not know what it contains.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am afraid that is usually the case.

The PREMIER: No, it is not. No law is ever proclaimed here unless it has been printed and is available to the citizens.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No one ever sees it.

Mr. Sampson: People would have to spend their lives in reading.

The PREMIER: During the discussion someone suggested that the Act does not set aside the Arbitration Court award.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It does not, either.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is not in a position to say that because it will depend upon the regulations.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

The PREMIER: This Act gives power—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: When it suits you to call it an Act, you call it an Act, but when it suits you to call it a Bill, you call it a Bill.

The PREMIER: Well, this Bill.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Stick to one thing or the other.

The PREMIER: It gives power to make regulations and set aside any other Act. It says, "Notwithstanding anything in any other Act," and that includes the Arbitration Act. It gives the Government power to set aside the Arbitration Act and consequently an award. I am not saying that the Federal Government are doing that, but it gives them the power by regulation to annul the Arbitration Act.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They cannot set aside an award.

The PREMIER: Of course they can.

The Minister for Justice: They can say that all awards are set aside.

The PREMIER: It gives the Federal Government supreme power to do anything.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: They would not interfere with any award.

The PREMIER: They could include a regulation to hang the hon. member without a trial. A Government with a Parliament expired and dead—

Mr. Lindsay: Why talk about hanging a man?

The PREMIER: I said the regulation could give power to hang a man. That is not to say I should like to have anyone dead. What a stupid suggestion that is.

Mr. Pantton: There are men starving at present.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: A lot are starving now.

Mr. Pantton: The Federal Government are doing their best to starve them.

The PREMIER: There is nothing the State Government can do or ought to do. The only request made is that the Government ought to issue a declaration as to what they are going to do. That is an improper request to come from anybody. There is no justification for any member's assuming that the Government will not do what they believe to be the right thing. That is what the Government will do.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is not a question of what the Government believe to be the right thing; it is a question of what the law requires.

The PREMIER: The Government will do what they believe to be the right thing.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And what the law requires.

The PREMIER: I repeat, the Government will do what they believe to be the right thing.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Law or no law?

The PREMIER: The right thing within the law. This is not the Federal Government that has the right to make laws by regulation—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have that right also.

The PREMIER: The right to make laws by regulation any day and to alter or amend such laws.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: So can we and we do it.

The PREMIER: Yes, subject to the approval of Parliament when Parliament is sitting.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Regulations are made when Parliament is not sitting.

The PREMIER: No matter what the regulations may be, I hold that the Commonwealth Government were entirely wrong. They had no justification for stopping yesterday work that was proceeding under the law of the land, more especially when our citizens did not know anything about the Commonwealth law.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [8.52]: I feel that the issue has been clouded as the whole substance of the Premier's reply dealt with the possible irregularities or unusual qualities of the Act empowering the Commonwealth Government to gazette regulations, but we are apt to forget the original cause of the trouble. Had the award of the Arbitration Court been accepted, I take it the whole trouble would have ended. Unfortunately, the men did not accept the award, and it is this deeply engrained habit of the waterside workers throughout Australia to strike so frequently that has caused the trouble. It is a fact that throughout the world Australia has gained an evil reputation because of the frequency of industrial troubles.

Mr. Panton: Its workers have lost fewer days per thousand of population than those in other parts of the world.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am sure the hon. member is wrong.

Mr. Panton: I produced the figures to prove it.

Mr. SAMPSON: I should like to see the figures.

Mr. Panton: You will find them in "Hansard."

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member might show figures relating to two or three decades ago—

Mr. Panton: No, they dealt with the last seven years.

Mr. SAMPSON: The strike weapon is an obsolete weapon. In other parts of the world there has been displayed by the employees an inclination to meet the employers, and consideration is shown on both sides. In older countries it is realised that to strike is to do something inimical to both sections of the community.

Mr. Marshall: What did the Maltese do when you were over there? Did they strike?

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member is concerned about the Maltese. Let me inform him that they are white people and British people, and they mind their own business. Everyone regrets this trouble on the waterfront. Perhaps it is one of the effects of the birth of a nation, one of the early troubles that a country must pass through. My belief is that in a few years strikes will be unknown.

Mr. Panton: You are optimistic.

Mr. SAMPSON: We have an Arbitration Act, and if the spirit of arbitration and conciliation were acted upon as it is in other parts of the world, the regrettable position that obtains in certain parts of Australia to-day would not be prevailing.

Mr. Panton: There are successful round table conferences in Perth almost every day in the week.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not know about successful round table conferences.

Mr. Panton: Well, I am telling you.

Mr. SAMPSON: On the water front time after time the men refuse to accept the award and troubles occur. The trouble continues for a time, the country suffers, individuals suffer, and later on the men are prepared to return to work and the employers say, "Very well, go back and don't be bad boys any more." It seems that the consideration extended to the men has caused the evil to grow to greater proportions. I recall the occasion of my leaving on my recent trip abroad; there was some trifling trouble on the water front and because of that the passengers suffered some inconvenience in that they did not have the full opportunity they expected to visit Colombo. That is only a trifling matter, but it is symptomatic of the trouble that so

frequently occurs. In the printing industry a little while ago there was industrial trouble for over 13 weeks. I do not know what good anyone got out of it. I can never discover any good; I can never discover that either employee or employer benefits by such trouble.

Mr. Latham: What about the general public?

Mr. SAMPSON: As a rule, employer, employee and the general public suffer very badly. The position at the time of the printing trouble was just the same as at present, as I view it. There was a disinclination to accept the award of a properly constituted court established after very much effort on the part of the representatives of labour. The employees refused to continue work under that award, and the final result after 13 weeks of next door to idleness in the industry was that the men resumed work on the old basis. No one blames the employees for trying to get more wages and better conditions, but there is a constitutional way in which wages and conditions may be improved. At all events the arguments can be put forward and no one can reasonably object to their being put forward. As Australians we stand for constitutional Government and the Arbitration Act must be observed. The Act must be respected and the awards should be carried out. It is surely in the best interests of the worker that the Arbitration Act should be defended. I hope the day is approaching when strikes will end and the Arbitration Act will be given that opportunity for usefulness which I regret has been denied it for a long time past. I feel that the present industrial trouble has the support of very few workers. That is my candid opinion. I believe that if it were possible to obtain a secret ballot of those who are concerned—I repeat my opinion that the great majority of them are victims—the trouble would end speedily. It is futile to expect that Australia can progress under the dreadful industrial conditions which it has to face to-day. I hope that wiser counsels will prevail. I trust that arbitration awards will be observed and respected. Until that is done, the position whereby Australia is a by-word among the nations of the world must continue.

MR. KENNEALLY (East Perth) [9.2]: Being one who, as the Leader of the Opposition has mentioned, has been and is likely to be engaged in endeavouring to secure a

settlement of the trouble, I wish to ask certain members of the Chamber whether they think they are assisting in the direction of industrial peace by their outbursts on this motion. We have heard from members of the Opposition a direct appeal for industrial peace in this country. Yet those members by their actions and utterances, are making the matter very difficult indeed for those who do not get on the housetops to preach industrial peace. As mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, the Industrial Disputes Committee of this State has been giving attention to the question with a view to obtaining a settlement. I do not wish to say anything at all that is likely in any way to prejudice the prospects of a settlement. If the time comes—I hope it will not—when it is found that a settlement cannot be effected, I shall not hesitate on the floor of the House to let members of the Opposition know what I think of their utterances this evening. We have before us the fact, first of all, that the Beeby award was given, and was not accepted by the workers. We will not go into the question whether they should have accepted it. Probably some members of the Chamber are more conversant with the conditions of the award than others. Again, it might be argued that the award should have been accepted as being the law, whether the award was good, bad, or indifferent. However, I am mindful of the fact that there came a time when the award was accepted, when the men, realising that they had done wrong by not accepting it, were prepared to accept it and unreservedly offered themselves for employment under the award, which was the law of the land. Subsequently to that, a number of men were picked up and actually employed under the terms of the award, and arrangements were made for the picking up of others. Nor am I unmindful of the fact that whilst the trouble was on and the men were not offering for employment, we were told that there were various shortages of commodities, which commodities were on ships ready to be unloaded, the action of the lumpers, however, preventing the unloading of such commodities, which were rotting in the holds of the vessels. When the offer to accept the Beeby award was made and certain vessels were brought to the wharf to commence unloading, however, the very men who said that the lumpers were the cause of the shortages of certain commodities, gave their attention not to the ships containing

those commodities, but to ships of a different kind altogether. Right through the piece I have encountered those difficulties, as have the various people who have been endeavouring to effect a settlement of the trouble. When meeting those difficulties, one cannot fail to observe that the people who are so glib to-night in blaming the men for the position which has been created, would be prepared to say, if they had the responsibility of trying to effect a settlement, "I can see some faults on the other side."

Hon. G. Taylor: I do not think anybody really blamed the men to-night, you know.

Mr. Panton: Then I hope nobody starts to blame them.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I hope I shall not be sitting here when hon. members opposite commence to blame them.

Mr. Panton: Hear, hear!

Mr. KENNEALLY: To blame the men would be very serious indeed. I shall not enter into the merits of the dispute to-night, because, with due respect to members opposite, the motion is ill-timed. At a juncture when it is quite possible, seeing work has been partially resumed on the wharf to-day, that a settlement may be effected, to bring forward a motion that may tend in any way to prevent a complete settlement—

The Premier: It cannot help towards a settlement.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I do not wish to contribute to the debate for or against. If one goes far that way, one has to say things which at this juncture are better left unsaid. I hope the House will adopt the same attitude. With what is in progress at present there is a possibility that we shall see industrial peace ruling once more. But we shall not help to bring that about by creating divisions of opinion on the subject in this Chamber. There are sufficient divisions of opinion outside already. Members who wish to assist the State by obtaining an effectual settlement of the question, will be well advised to refrain from debating the motion at any length, and certainly to refrain from debating it from a party standpoint. I shall vote against the motion, which I do not think can serve any good purpose.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [9.8]: I have understood that the particular form of motion which has been moved to-night is practically never put to the vote.

Hon. G. Taylor: No.

Mr. DAVY: It does not take the form of a vote of censure.

Mr. SPEAKER: It may; it can.

Mr. DAVY: I have been here only a short time, but I understand that as a general proposition this form of motion is not intended as an opportunity of shooting hostile criticism at the Government, censuring them, or doing anything other than bring before the House a matter of urgent public importance for discussion. That being so, it seems to me that provided the matter is urgent and of public importance, it is a proper thing to do. Surely no one can suggest that the situation which exists at Fremantle to-day, and has existed for some time, which has existed on previous occasions and, as far as we can see, may possibly arise on future occasions, is not a matter both urgent and of public importance. I certainly did not come here to-night with the idea of trying to frame some criticism on what the Government have done or will do. As regards a piece of legislation which we believe, according to Press reports, has been passed by the Federal Parliament, and as regards the regulations framed under it, I am just as strongly against such a piece of legislation when passed by the Federal Parliament as I am against attempts to pass similar legislation here. I will never cease to protest against the shirking of the responsibilities of Parliament, against their being shelved on to the shoulders of departmental officers and the Government themselves. It may be that in certain emergencies the Government have to take special and wide powers, which in ordinary times would not be permitted to them. The worst example, I suppose, that we ever had was the War Precautions Act and the regulations framed under it, the ramifications of which were enormous.

The Minister for Works: This Federal Act gives equal powers, does it not?

Mr. DAVY: I do not think it does. Perhaps the Premier will say I am trying to lecture the House, but I am not: I am trying to suggest what my view is. It seems to me that the power of this Federal Act is limited by the latter part of the section which says, "in particular for regulating" and so on.

Mr. Panton: Transport itself is so very wide.

Mr. DAVY: Yes. Under the definition of transport workers the thing, however, is limited in relation to trade or commerce by sea with other countries. If this is the Act, it can only deal with sea transport and the work connected therewith.

The Premier: That seems to be the case, but within that sphere there is unlimited power.

Mr. DAVY: Yes. I admit there is power under the Act to enable the Federal Government to deal with maritime workers.

Mr. Panton: The interpretation was that maritime workers were waterside workers.

Mr. DAVY: The hon. member interjecting seems to have more knowledge than the Premier has of what is in the regulations. I admit I am completely in doubt, because all I know is what has appeared in the Press. As regards that question I do not withdraw from my position of hostility to such phraseology, but at the same time I do say that Australia cannot go on as in the past with constant recurrences of strikes by waterside workers. There is no question that almost every award brought out is disputed by some section of the maritime workers of Australia. In Queensland there has actually been the spectacle of people coming down to the wharves and threatening to do the work themselves. It seems to me that we have never known in the past 10 years, since the beginning of 1919, how long the most essential service of the country would be allowed to run smoothly. The member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) put up a very sane and moderate plea for industrial peace. I do not consider that the securing of a possible settlement of this particular dispute will carry us much further if six months or a year hence we are to have a recurrence of the same trouble. Surely, when we come to the House and ask that the whole situation be discussed, we must not be blamed for raising the discussion merely because we may prejudice the immediate settlement of this particular portion of the running fight that is always going on.

Mr. Kenneally: What is the object? To grind the men down so that they will not rise again?

Mr. DAVY: If I had any object, and could put it into force, it would be to say that a body of people who, in common with the other workers and the employers of Australia, have a piece of machinery spec-

ially designed to make striking unnecessary, should be compelled to abide by that piece of machinery and by its legally given dictates. But at present, unlike a great number of unions in Australia, this particular union, wherever it goes, wants the thing to be, "Heads I win, tails you lose."

Mr. Kenneally: Which particular union?

Mr. DAVY: The union covering waterside workers. Surely no honourable man will deny that they have over and over again got an award and immediately refused to accept it.

The Premier: Most of the waterside trouble has been due to the seamen.

Mr. Panton: The waterside workers have not given any trouble for years past.

Mr. Kenneally: How long since was the previous award that they would not obey?

Mr. DAVY: I cannot answer that, but they have had three important strikes since the war.

The Premier: Those later strikes were by the seamen.

Mr. DAVY: Well, there have been two important strikes by the waterside workers. Admittedly, until this machinery was created for the settlement of industrial trouble by arbitration courts, and the regulation by a subordinate legislature—which is what the Arbitration Court is—of the conditions of employment, the strike was the only weapon whereby the worker could enforce his demands. Necessarily, in order that that strike weapon should be effective, the worker had to prevent anybody else from doing the work he refused to do. If a body of workers going on strike could be supplanted by somebody else, that would be the end of the strike. So the unions had to build up a common public opinion that when a body of men were out on strike, their job was sacrosanct. Then we brought in the arbitration law, and for the first time made strikes illegal. But we have also left by tacit consent that public opinion, that sort of accepted doctrine that even if a body of men did go out on strike illegally and against the law and in defiance of the decisions of the tribunal erected to give them justice, nevertheless their job still remained sacrosanct. The member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) asked what my object is. I say we have to face the situation that when people go on strike they are doing an illegal act, and there shall be no pressure brought to bear on others pre-

pared to do the work the strikers refuse to do. The Premier to-night has made one or two remarks that I cannot accept as representing my view of the correct attitude of a Government. He says it is not proper for the Government to assume that the law will be broken; that it is not proper to do anything until the law is broken; that the time to threaten is when the law is broken.

Mr. Panton: I think he said the time to act.

Mr. DAVY: Yes, perhaps he said the time to act was when the law had been broken. I say the whole strength of the arm of the State is and must be a constant threat to evil-doers; that is what the police are for. They stand there as a threat. The law is a threat to impose a penalty.

The Premier: That being so, is not that sufficient? The police are there.

Mr. DAVY: I agree that it should be sufficient. But we have one branch of the law that everybody must agree has been broken over and over again, and we may well assume that it will be broken again in future: that is the forcible interference by strikers with people who propose to do the work those strikers refuse to do.

Mr. Kenneally: Where did that happen?

Mr. DAVY: As far as I can gather from the newspaper, it happened to one man, I think yesterday; a man who, foolishly perhaps, from the point of view of the Premier, decided to register. He was at least man-handled.

The Premier: He was a bit mental, and they were only having a joke with him.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He should not have been knocked about.

The Premier: He was not knocked about.

Mr. DAVY: In any event, if 500 men standing outside an office in which one registers—

Mr. Sleeman: Who said there were 500 men there?

Mr. DAVY: I was not there; the newspaper said so.

Mr. Sleeman: You would be nearer the mark with 200 men.

Mr. DAVY: Well, if 190 fierce-looking men, each pretty hard and strong, are standing outside the door, they do not need actually to engage in physical violence if one poor little man, or even one poor big man, decides to go in and register.

Mr. Panton: That man would be mental if he did such a thing.

Mr. DAVY: The hon. member rather supports the view I am taking, that the mere standing there of 190 men—

Mr. Panton: Waiting to be picked up.

Mr. DAVY: Outside the registration office! That is a little too much to ask us to believe. Every time there has been a strike, there have been not only moral suasion, but almost physical interference with people who desire to exercise what they deem to be their rights. I am not saying the Government ought to arrive with a platoon of soldiers with bayonets, or of police with batons drawn, although I remind members that it was not so long ago when the police were called out to keep in order a demonstration of strikers. There were police stationed at the front door leading to the Premier's office.

Mr. Lindsay: It was unemployed, not strikers, who were demonstrating.

Mr. DAVY: Those men had in fact done no wrong when the police were called out. Certainly they, or some of them, had talked a lot of hot air on the Esplanade; but the police were called out in considerable force. Why? Because it was assumed that those people might do some wrong.

The Premier: The police were not called out by me or by the Government.

Mr. DAVY: The police simply did their duty in the ordinary way. I am not suggesting that the Premier called for them. But they were there and they did their duty; and the duty of the police, their policy being controlled by the Government, is where there is reasonable assumption of riot or of interference by one set of people with another set in the exercise of their lawful avocations. It is the duty of the Government to make some preparation to see that the law is not broken. Every time there has ever been a strike, there is a distinct risk that those on strike will endeavour to interfere with those who propose to do the work the strikers refuse to do. If we are to make arbitration a success, we have to decide that the old doctrine that the strikers' job is sacrosanct is out of date. Until we have the courage to insist that the arbitration system as a method of adjusting grievances and the striking system as a method of adjusting grievances are mutually exclusive, the mere patching up of this trouble for the time being with unfortunately very nearly a certainty that the same thing is going to hap-

pen again, will not restore the confidence of the people of Australia in the sanity of those men engaged in the maritime transport business of Australia.

The Minister for Justice: There is no patching up about this. It is the absolute acceptance of the whole of the Arbitration Court's award.

Mr. J. H. Smith: About three weeks belated.

Mr. DAVY: And what assurance have we that when the time arrives and the strength of the workers has been restored by regular employment, they will not decide again to try to have the law altered by a show of violence. The Minister for Justice says this is a complete acceptance of the Arbitration Court's award. What reason have we to believe that this acceptance would have been made if pretty rigorous action had not been taken by the Commonwealth Government? It is true that to this minute we do not know the exact terms of the Act or of the regulations. But it is also true that we have known for a considerable time that the Commonwealth Government had passed drastic legislation and made some drastic regulations, and I suggest that if the drastic action taken had not been taken, or if the workers at Fremantle had not known of it, they might well have been out still. The Premier has told us that no one in Western Australia knew that this Act was going to be applied to Fremantle. But there must have been some threat that it was going to be applied. If not, why did the Premier wire to the Prime Minister asking him not to apply the Act to Fremantle? He did not wire to the Prime Minister asking that it be not applied to Albany or to Bunbury. There was an assumption that it was going to be applied to Fremantle. And the knowledge of that assumption was not confined to a few people, but was common knowledge to be gathered from reading the Press. The Premier therefore anticipated that this Act was going to be applied when he wired asking that it be not so applied. Whatever be the justice in asking people to register or not to register without knowing the terms, if the Commonwealth Government had not taken the drastic action they did, I verily believe the strike would still be on in Fremantle. Nobody on this side desires to make an attack on the worker. I am not prepared to even inquire as to whether the

Beeby award is just or unjust. That is matter of absolute irrelevance. Once we accept the arbitration system, the award must be observed, and the whole of the force of the State and the whole of public opinion ought to stand behind the strict observance of it. We have not wasted time this afternoon, and there was nothing improper in the Leader of the Opposition bringing forward this motion to enable the House to discuss this matter of urgent public importance.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [9.29] One would think by the remarks of the hon. member, when he says this is not the only time the trouble is likely to arise, that he intends to crush those men until they will never raise their heads again.

Mr. Davy: Do you think they ought to be permitted to strike?

Mr. SLEEMAN: They are not striking. I do not think the employer should be entitled to lock them out when they are ready and willing to work. There are other members in this House who want the Government to assume that something is likely to happen; some big riot. And they want it to be as it was on a previous occasion when we had barbed-wire entanglements, and the police and the ambulance. Some of the speeches that have been delivered to-night are more likely to cause something to happen than anything else. It was a pity the matter was ever brought up. The other night the member for Mount Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) showed his good sense when he advised people to keep away from the place. No one in this State knows anything about the Act or the regulations governing the situation. Neither the employers nor the workers know anything about them. They are all at sixes and sevens.

Mr. Thomson: Do they not know in the Eastern States?

Mr. SLEEMAN: If they do, they keep it to themselves. I will explain the attitude that has been taken up by the employers in Fremantle. On Friday the lumpers decided to go back to work, and loyally abide by the Beeby award.

Mr. Lindsay: How kind of them!

Mr. SLEEMAN: The men were picked up on Saturday morning, but before lunch time they were told they must go off, and

they could not come back again unless they were licensed.

Mr. Davy: The employers did not do that.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Some of the men were ordered back to work on Monday morning, and were told they could work without a license. On that morning, however, the men were again stood off, just as they were on the Saturday morning. They worked from Monday morning until lunch time, and were then told they could not come back unless they had a license.

Mr. Davy: Did not the registrar under the Act take them away from their work?

The Minister for Works: No, he sent word to the company to that effect.

Mr. Davy: It comes to the same thing.

Mr. SLEEMAN: On Saturday at dinner time they were told to stop work, and on Monday at lunch time they were again told to stop, and not to come back without licenses. This morning they were again started at work. On one boat there were two men short. One was away sick, and the other did not turn up because he did not know there was any work forthcoming. It was ruled that no new men could start on that vessel, with the result that the whole gang was put off because of the absence of two men. The organiser of the union offered to make good the two men who were away, but the shipping company said that no new men could, under the award, be allowed to do the work, the whole gang were therefore put off.

Hon. G. Taylor: Was the gang registered?

Mr. SLEEMAN: No one was registered. It was said that on one but those who had been working on the boats before Monday could continue to work on it. On the gunney boat, two men were absent, but no new men were picked up in their places. Later in the day the companies went back upon that. In the case of the sandalwood boat two men were picked up, because it was convenient for the employers to employ them. Two men were away, and two others were picked up although they had not registered. According to regulations they should not have started because they were not previously engaged on the boats. In the case of the "Minderoo" one man was picked up. Where it pleased the employers to pick up men, this was done and no harm was seen in it. In the case of the "Napura" also two men

were picked up this morning. When the boat was unloaded they applied to the lumpers to go on to coaling. Lumpers who follow cargo do not work coal. The coal men follow coal and nothing else. It was a distinct breach of custom to ask cargo men to go on to coal. The result is that the men will not handle the coal, because they do not follow that line. Now it will be said that the men have refused work. These are only irritation tactics. The employers are only picking up men when it pleases them to do so. The member for West Perth quoted the "Dimboola" and another vessel that is in port. The member for Pingelly also referred to the shortage of sugar and butter in the country. He should tell the people that the shortage is not the fault of the wharf lumpers at Fremantle. If the shipping companies had brought in the vessels containing the sugar and butter, just as they did the gunney boat for the sake of the farmers, the people in the country would have had sugar and butter. They are blaming the lumpers for a purpose. They want the people in the country to believe that the wharf labourers will not unload these essential commodities.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do not talk nonsense.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Let the Leader of the Opposition say why the ships were not brought in. They could have been worked up to Saturday at midnight, and they could be worked now. There is an object in this. It is designed to tell the people in the country that the wharf labourers are starving them. That would be a lie.

Mr. Lindsay: What have they done for the past few weeks?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The people will be told that all those things that were needed by them have been purposely left in the steamers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Who is going to the country, the people who imported the butter?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Sugar and butter just now are more important than wheat bags, and should have been unloaded as it is perishable cargo. The result of the action of the shipping companies is that onions and potatoes also are practically unprocurable. All these charges have been laid at the door of the lumpers. The people are to be told that they cannot get these things because the waterside workers will not

handle the ships. The member for West Perth said that 500 men were waiting outside the registration office yesterday to see if some unfortunate labourer would register. The hon. member did not know anything about the matter.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: This is a free country; men can register if they want to.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Who is to stop them?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I should not think anyone would.

Mr. SLEEMAN: No one did stop them. The hon. member made out that people were prevented from registering. There were a few men there for part of the day. The Beeby award was responsible for that. They have to stay there from a quarter to 8 to a quarter to 10, and a quarter to one until a quarter to three. Some of them moved away a few yards to see how many registrations were being effected. No one was man-handled. I cannot believe that any fair minded man would in the circumstances endeavour to take work away from the lumpers. Whilst the men themselves were ready to work under the Beeby award, the Federal Government have locked them out. The speeches that have been made to-night will do irreparable harm. They are calculated to create trouble. Reference has been made to the equipment of a hospital and the provision of nurses to attend the wounded. I hope nothing will happen to cause either a hospital or nurses to be brought into use.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [9.40]: I think perhaps the motion has served its purposes. We all owe a duty to the country to see whether we cannot do something in this time of trouble. It is unnecessary to go into the merits or demerits of the Beeby award. I know it is pretty bad. Nothing could be more degrading than for men to have to go along for a pick-up, and after seeing 30 or 40 of the number chosen, then to go away. While some men may earn £8 or £10 a week others less favoured will not earn £2. The award says there must be two pick-ups, which is absolutely unnecessary. Had it not been that the member for Fremantle endeavoured to hoodwink the House, I would not have spoken.

Mr. Sleeman: I take exception to that remark. I made no attempt to hoodwink the House.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I withdraw the remark. I should have said that was my opinion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is qualifying his withdrawal.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I withdraw absolutely. We were led to believe by the member for Fremantle that this dispute has only just arisen. He said the men were working contentedly.

Mr. Sleeman: Did I not say they decided to go to work on Friday?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We were led to believe that the trouble only arose on Friday. Reference has been made to machine guns and nurse girls and to barbed wire entanglements. The Premier said that if such an occasion arose he would not stand on the highest steeple in the town, and declare what the Government would do to maintain law and order. The Fremantle lumpers only went back when they knew that the Registration Act would be enforced. There was no guarantee if they went back without registration that within a fortnight the same trouble would not occur again. The ship owners said they would insist on registration as some assurance of continuity of work. What harm is there in registration? No one would be breaking any union rules if he registered. This is the law of the land.

Mr. Withers: He is already registered under the Arbitration Act.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: And he is breaking the arbitration laws every day when they do not suit him. The lumpers at Fremantle have been holding up the industries of Western Australia, and have sent delegates to Bunbury and Albany.

Mr. Withers: They did not do anything of the kind.

Mr. Sleeman: They did not send anyone to Albany. Stick to the facts.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They sent delegates to Bunbury, without success, and they are said to have sent delegates to Albany, where the people would not meet them.

Mr. Sleeman: They sent none to Albany.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They tried to bring in Albany and Bunbury, where the lumpers are sticking to the Melbourne executive. Had they been successful, their purpose would have been served, but they were not successful. To-day, instead of the principal port of the State getting the trade, it is being diverted to Bunbury and Albany. There seems to be disunity in unity. These men all belong to the one organisation. If it is wrong to work at Fremantle, it must be wrong to work at other ports.

The Premier: There has been disunity in the United Party.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: And in the Premier's party. We want to do the best we can for Western Australia.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: How are you going to do it?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I would not like to say. I would not do it with free labour.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Put up a concrete proposition.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We must show a united front in Parliament and see if we cannot keep our industries going. I do not want to be a pessimist; I am usually an optimist even to my own discomfort. We want to prevent this trouble from spreading. What I am afraid of is that it will go right through Australia and cause a stoppage of industry everywhere. If we can do something to prevent that, it is our duty to do so. The Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party should get together and confer with a view to seeing if it is not possible to meet the men, talk the matter over with them, and get industry going again. If that is not done the trouble is sure to spread. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) was not right in talking about inflaming speeches being made by members on this side of the House. He said such speeches would probably lead to bloodshed.

Mr. Sleeman: I did not use such a word.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Well, it amounted to that.

Mr. Sleeman: I ask that that remark be withdrawn. I shall not allow the hon. member to mis-quote me.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I withdraw the remark but I do not withdraw the reference of the hon. member to what he described as inflaming speeches delivered from this side of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not reflect on another hon. member.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I would not do that for the world. Instead of the member for Fremantle pouring oil on the troubled waters, he accused us of endeavouring to squeeze the men out of existence.

Mr. Sleeman: There is no doubt about that either—some of them.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Then it is either the system or the award that is wrong. The hon. member probably knows men at Fremantle, Bunbury and Albany who are earning £6, £8 or £10 a week, while other less favoured men are lucky to earn a couple of pounds a week.

Mr. Sleeman: This will make it worse

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The motion, I take it, will not be put to the vote but will be withdrawn by the Leader of the Opposition. I hope when that is done the leaders of the three parties will confer to see whether they can devise means to prevent the trouble from spreading. That is our chief interest to-day.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [9.47]: One does not like to enter upon a debate of this kind in view of the trouble existing not only at Fremantle but right along the water front of the Commonwealth. Some of the remarks made to-night may tend rather to inflame the passions of the men than to appeal to their better judgment. I hope that what has been said to-night will appeal to the better judgment of the workers, but I am afraid some things have been said that would have been just as well left unsaid. It is idle for us to shut our eyes to the real facts. We know that the moment the Beeby award was made it was objected to by those to whom it applied. They naturally resented it, and that resentment lasted until the men, thoroughly disgusted I suppose, found they could no longer defend their attitude and were compelled to accept the award. Unfortunately, in the last moments of the Federal parliamentary session, the little Bill, a copy of which I hold in my hand, was passed, and it has been generally accepted as the Act that has been placed on the Federal statute-book. A few days ago I remember reading that the objectionable feature of Clause 3 of this little measure—it contains only three clauses—was amended after a debate extending over 18 or 20 hours. It was amended in the early hours of the morning and, speaking from memory, the amendment was suggested by that highly respected blind barrister, Mr. Maxwell, of Melbourne. That is the reason I remember it; references of that kind were made to Mr. Maxwell in the report. Having met Mr. Maxwell, and having been impressed with his wonderful ability, I remember those few lines that I read in the paper. The objectionable part of the clause was amended by bringing the clause under Section 17 of the Commonwealth Interpretation Act.

Mr. Panton: I think you are mixing it up with the amending Arbitration Bill.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not think so.

Mr. Panton: That is the one Mr. Maxwell got amended.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No, I think it was this one, though I may be wrong.

Mr. Panton: I think you are wrong.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If this Bill has become law as it stands, I do not blame any waterside worker, or any other worker, for refusing to register for employment in view of the fact that he does not know what regulations are framed under the Act. Power is given to the Federal Government to frame regulations to cover every sort of work in which maritime people engage, and I say they are bound to resent it. I do not think that we in this State are justified in condemning the workers for resenting it. I would not condemn them because I would not accept it myself. I hope what has been said here to-night will be regarded by the men as something helpful to them.

The Premier: At least they should see the regulations.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: They should see them and thoroughly understand them before they sign on. What will the regulations be? Have they been drawn up by the authorities to give the waterside workers greater freedom than they have had in the past? We must assume that they are going to curtail the workers' powers and give the employers, through the agency of the Federal Government, power to carry on their industry in a lawful manner. That is something the employers have not in every instance enjoyed in the past. Let us be fair and say we must see the regulations and decide whether the men are justified in objecting to them. Although we cannot tolerate the action of the men in refusing to abide by the laws of the country, I shall not utterly condemn them because it is not fair to ask the men to comply with a law about which they know nothing. There is the position in a nutshell.

Mr. Panton: That is all they object to.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: They are justified in doing so. The men will not be compelled to abide by the regulations through the employment of free labour and especially free labour such as is now offering for work, namely, the unemployed. Those men should not be compelled, by straitened circumstances, to accept conditions that the other men have rejected. Had the waterside workers accepted the conditions the unemployed of to-day would still be out of work. It is because of the lumpers' resentment of the conditions that it is possible for men from the ranks of the unemployed to take

work under the new conditions about which they know nothing. I have some knowledge of what occurs during industrial upheavals and I have a pretty good idea what the regulations under the Federal Act will be. I could almost type them out to-night and guarantee that they would not be very wide of the mark. That is why I am not going to express any opinion against the men who are not accepting the conditions because I have a fairly good idea of what they will be. Unless they are pretty stringent they will not prove as effective as was desired by the members who passed the Federal legislation.

The Premier: That is surely a monstrous thing—to enforce an Act and not a copy of it obtainable in the State.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There is no doubt about that. In my opinion it is unconstitutional for the Federal Government to force on the people laws of which they are wholly ignorant. We must assume, however, that the regulations are not as bad as we thought they might be, or as the wharf lumpers thought they might be. In Adelaide, where they are known, the men have signed on.

Mr. Panton: The circumstances are very different over there.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not think the Beeby award will be affected by the Federal Act. The two pick-ups will not come under the Act. I regard that as a different proposition.

Mr. Panton: There are two pick-ups in Adelaide.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: And the men there have accepted the conditions.

Mr. Panton: A lot of them.

The Minister for Works: The two pick-ups are provided for under the new award.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not think the Federal Act will interfere with that; I think it will lay down conditions for employing the men and carrying on the work. If the regulations are known in Adelaide, it is significant that the men have accepted work under them.

Mr. Panton: Some of them.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Therefore the regulations cannot be as bad as has been anticipated. I hope copies of the regulations will arrive here soon, so that the men may discuss them and so that we can discuss them and endeavour to bring about a better understanding between the employers and employees. It is about time the State Parliament, apart from party feeling of any description, understood what the conditions of

registration are. That is only a fair statement.

The Premier: They apply even to our State ships. We cannot work our own ships except by the consent of the Federal Government.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not intend to touch that question, but it is as well that the Premier made that remark. The officials administering the Shipping Department have not complied with the Beeby award but have carried on operations under the old award, which is not now in existence.

The Premier: No, the phase of the award to which the men objected did not affect our ships.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If it did, then the Government broke the award, the same as the wharf lumpers have done.

Mr. Kenneally: The hon. member forgets for the moment that the arbitration award fixes only a minimum, and any employer can pay above the minimum and observe conditions above the minimum.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I thought I had made my point abundantly clear, that if the State ships are working under the old award and not under the Beeby award, the Government have broken the law.

The Premier: It is not contrary to the arbitration laws to give better conditions than are set out in the award. The arbitration laws says an employer may not do less, but he may do better.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: As to how the Government are carrying on the State ships, I am in the dark. The Press has repeatedly said that the State ships are being worked without a hitch under the old award. That is all I know.

The Premier: Under this Act we cannot work our ships except as stipulated by the Act.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That is what I say. This came into force on the 1st of the month.

The Premier: Under it we cannot work the ships except by registered men.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Then the Government will be breaking the law, like the men.

The Premier: I am afraid we shall.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I sincerely trust the Government will not set such an example to the people of this State. Wharf lumpers and maritime men are defying the law. If the Government also defy the law, it will

be called to mind that there are only six Cabinet Ministers, and a mere total of 27 on the other side of the Chamber, whereas there are 600 or 700 lumpers at Fremantle. Then those lumpers would also consider themselves justified in defying the law. I hope, therefore, that the Premier will endeavour to point out to those concerned the inconsistency of the law and get it held back. I ask the Government not to stand by and let men who are looking for work, some of them pretty hungry, perhaps, and with wives and families wanting food, to go down to Fremantle and as a result be looked upon for the rest of their lives as inferior specimens of humanity by a large section of the people of Western Australia. There are enough men seeking work in this State to man the ships. But that should not be done. What we want is a permanent settlement of the industry, a settlement for some years at least; and that can only be attained by straight-forward, honourable discussion. Get to the men and talk to them. Many of the men in the union are as sensible and as capable of analysing the situation as we are, more particularly with reference to their own calling. If the Premier could talk to them, if members on both sides of the House could talk to them, and get them to look upon us as their friends instead of their enemies, I am sure that the men would be guided by us and that the trouble would be at an end.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam—in reply) [10.8]: Naturally, I have listened to the discussion provoked by the motion I moved. I am surprised at the Premier's attitude. If I wanted to get rid of the Government—and Heaven knows I do—I should not set about it in this way. We on this side are perfectly justified in asking the House to discuss questions of the first importance to this country whenever they arise. I have listened with a good deal of amusement to the discussion on the Federal Act. That is not the point at all. Everybody knows there is such an Act, and knows fairly well what the Act is. They know as much about that Act as about any other Act of either this or the Commonwealth Parliament. I venture to say not many members of this Chamber know much about the laws we pass. When it comes to regulations, I do not know that we can plead, as we have pleaded, that

under an Act we pass a set of regulations never to be altered. They can be altered from day to day. I venture to say that among the papers now on the Table of the House there are numerous regulations passed by our friends opposite this session.

Mr. Panton: But we have opportunities of seeing those regulations, and that is not so in this case. The Federal Parliament is closed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Every year we have regulations made during the six months that Parliament is not in session. Does the hon. member contend that the Federal Government could go into recess without having provided for some way of meeting the situation which had arisen on the waterfront? The Premier, I think, said that the law had been passed in the dying hours of a dying Parliament. But there was no option. The trouble did not arise until just before the closing days of the session. I agree with the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) that legislation by regulation ought to be avoided as far as possible. In point of fact, this Federal Act could have done everything that is required without the power to make regulations. Regulations are intended merely to give effect to the working of the Act, for the more convenient working of the Act, and cannot legislate beyond the scope of the Act, whatever that scope may be. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) talked of happenings at the Esplanade, and wanted to know whether we again desired to see doctors and nurses and police with bayonets. I think it would have been wise to let that incident alone. What really happened was that notice was given of an intention to raid the Esplanade Hotel. A week's notice was given.

Mr. Sleeman: Who gave the notice?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Some of the hon. member's friends, who were going to do the raiding. They kindly and considerably gave notice. Adequate preparation was made. We do not want that again, and we hope the occasion will not arise. But I am sure that the Premier, if in power when the happening in question occurred, would have allowed the police to provide in their own way for meeting the situation. When there is going to be trouble, the only way to avoid bloodshed is by the display of adequate force. That is all that was done on the day the Esplanade Hotel was to be raided, and as a re-

sult no one was hurt. If 20 police had gone down there with batons, somebody might have been hurt. A very wise precaution did prevent bloodshed, which I think we all desire to avoid. I have never, as Premier, threatened anyone, either employer or employee.

The Premier: I did not have the hon member in mind when I said that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: When in office, one has to be ready for any and every emergency, and one must be ready in one's own way. I am glad the Premier did not apply that remark generally, because I consider there is never any need to threaten. All we have to do is to do our duty as we see it. The subject of the motion has been discussed, I hope with some advantage to the situation. It is no use disguising the fact that for weeks there has been no work on the waterfront. There is no disguising the fact that great loss has occurred to the men and to the country, and that much unemployment has been occasioned—temporarily only, I hope—as a result of the strike.

Mr. Panton: They can have a thousand men to go to work to-morrow morning.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is no use for the hon. member to talk like that.

Mr. Panton: And it is no use to talk about no work going on when the men are there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member says, in effect, that the men will take work if the employer will take them back on the old conditions.

Mr. Panton: No; on the Beeby award. We will guarantee a thousand men under the Beeby award to be there to-morrow.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, on their own conditions. When introducing the motion I said that we are not responsible for the Federal legislation, with which we may agree or disagree. We have not been consulted about it. We are, of course, responsible for the maintenance of law and order. It is not for us to say to men, "Now don't obey the law, but come back under your own conditions." If the law be wrong and hard, it can be amended.

Mr. Sleeman: Men can be got under the same conditions as they were picked up to-day.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I understand that, but I think there were special conditions attached to that employment.

Mr. Sleeman: The special conditions were that they wanted the men badly.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I understand that the old award and the new award contain almost identical provisions, and so the boats were worked between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. It is not necessary that we should know every clause in every award. I am afraid that if we were expected to do that, and to be familiar with every clause of every award, we would have little time for anything else. It is useless saying that men could be employed on their own conditions; they should return to work in accordance with the law.

Mr. Pantou: That is what they have offered to do.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They would be wise to return under the conditions that obtain.

Mr. Pantou: Under the Beeby award.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the laws are harsh and unjust, they can be altered.

Mr. Heron: The laws would not have been passed if they were not harsh!

Mr. Latham: They would not have been passed if the men had continued at work!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I want to help the situation on the waterfront, and to help the men there as well as the men throughout the State who are also affected. We must remember that the strike itself was a harsh thing. I agree with the Premier that we do not want that sort of thing, but rather we want to avoid trouble of that description. Let us realise it is our job to keep the wheels of industry going. I hope the Premier will realise that we can and should discuss matters of importance in this House as we have dealt with this motion. It has not been our desire to criticise the Government. I am not desirous of wrongfully attaching the blame to anyone. We have not attempted to do that. We have tried to put the case fairly according to our standpoint. We were perfectly justified in drawing attention to the reports in the "West Australian" this morning, particularly the report of the disputes committee. I do not think such a report will tend to help to make things better. As is usual with motions of this description, I am satisfied that discussion will make only for good, and, therefore, I beg leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave withdrawn.

BILL—KULJA EASTWARD RAILWAY.

Returned without amendment.

QUESTION—WOOROLOO SANATORIUM, X-RAY PLANT.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Health: Will he advise whether it has been decided to instal an X-ray plant at the Wooroloo Sanatorium and, if so, when?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: The Minister recognises the need for an X-ray plant at the Wooroloo Sanatorium, and will take steps to secure one when funds are available. It is impossible, at the moment, to indicate when that will be.

QUESTION—FOOD SUPPLIES DIVERTED TO ALBANY.

Mr. MANN asked the Minister for Railways: In order to make better provision for the necessary food supplies for the people in the metropolitan area, will he apply the through bill of lading rate, namely, 22s. per ton, for goods consigned to Fremantle on ships that may be diverted to, and unloaded at, Albany?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The Rates Book provides that goods on a through bill of lading to or from ports beyond the Commonwealth will be carried between Fremantle, North Fremantle, or Perth, and Albany at rates as under, viz.:—Commissioner's risk, 22s. per ton; owner's risk, 17s. per ton. Consignments complying with the conditions laid down will be carried at the rates specified.

House adjourned at 10.16 p.m.