

two new bores, and on the hottest day those bores were not exhausted.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: You cannot get water in North Perth on a hot day.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That shows that the department is not capable of managing the business. After all these years in a city like Perth it does seem extraordinary that it is not possible to get water in a near northern suburb. There is plenty of water and it is running to waste. It can be pumped into the main for under 2d. and the people can pay 1s. for it. But the department is not equal to the occasion. It is said that there is a loss of £7,200. Money has been borrowed for water supply and sewerage, and under the practice of the Government, when loan money is borrowed, there is no recoup of that loan money. Let us take the water supply. Money is borrowed to purchase goods and those goods are sold and not used in the work. The money thus derived is not placed to the credit of the particular loan, but it goes into what is termed in the Estimates as "Sale of Government Property Trust Account." Hon. members will find these particulars on page 119 of the Estimates. In 1921 there was to the credit of the sewerage of Perth and Fremantle £233,423. An amount of £17,717 was added to it in 1922. I suppose for some repayment, I do not know what. The total account now stands at £251,140. I suggest that that money, being loan money, was borrowed for a specific purpose. Goods were sold or there were recoups and immediately they were credited to this fund and not to the loan. But they should be deducted from the loan standing against the department. In that way interest and sinking fund should be less and there would not be a loss. So far as I have been able to search the departmental files, there is not even an allowance for interest on this £251,000 to the Water Supply Department. The interest on that money alone would be more than sufficient to pay the department's deficit. I do not want to labour the question any further. I think I have shown the House clearly that with economy and care there would not be any deficit at all. On the other hand, if we cheapen the price of water, the natural law will prevail, and we will sell more water. Therefore, anything we can get over the 2d. will be profit, and will tend to make the scheme payable instead of a losing proposition which it is now. I am not representing a suburban province, but those members who are know well that during this summer and others many parts of Perth have been without water. People have had to go around with cans to those possessing windmills to get water with which to make tea. We know, too, that clothes have been spoilt through the discolouration in the water and that many have lost thousands of gallons through having had to let their taps run in order to try to clear the water so that they might be able to use it. For that waste they have had to pay excess at the rate of 1s. 3d. a thousand gallons. The least we can

do for those people is to reduce the price of water to 1s. per thousand gallons, the figure which existed a couple of years ago, when there was less consumption, when the rates were lower and when the assessments were also 20 per cent. below what they are to-day.

Question, as amended, put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	..	4
Majority for					4

AYES.

Hon. H. Boan	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	

NOES.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. Burvill
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	(Teller.)
Hon. E. Ross	

Question, as amended, thus passed.

House adjourned at 9.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 10th January, 1923.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAYS.

Excursion Fares.

Mr. MONEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether he is aware that a difference of one-third in favour of excursion tickets to Albany was made in comparison to excursions to Bunbury and Busselton as per handbill No. 14? 2, Why was this difference made?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Excursion fares are fixed according to distance, the basis being—up to 250 miles single fare, plus two-thirds; over 250 miles single fare, plus one-third.

Season Tickets, Deposits.

Mr. McCALLUM asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that the Railway Department forfeited the 1s. deposit held by them against all periodical ticket holders whose tickets expired at the end of the year and were not handed in until after the holidays? 2, In view of the fact that the date of expiry was a holiday will he agree to make a refund to all who applied for a renewal after the holidays were over?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, The regulations provide for deposit being refunded if ticket is handed in within seven days of expiry; also for the waiver of this condition if sickness or absence prevents the holder from returning ticket within the prescribed period. So far as can be ascertained the regulations have been observed by the department.

SELECT COMMITTEE—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, the time for bringing up the committee's report was extended till Wednesday, the 24th instant.

BILL—KOJONUP AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S LAND.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1922-23.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Department of Railways, Tramways and Electricity Supply (Hon. J. Scaddan, Minister).

Vote—Railways, Tramways and Electricity Supply, £2,552,000:

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [2.36]: The running of our railways is more or less linked up with the developmental policy of the State. Therefore, it is as well that we should get out of our minds the illusion that the success of the railways is expressed in pounds, shillings and pence, for the value of the concessions granted from time to time immediately affects the revenue of the department. It is encouraging to note that, apparently, a good deal of economy has been exercised in the management of our railways during the last year or two. Whether that is in any way attributable to the recommendations made by Mr. Stead, the Royal Commissioner, it is not possible for me to say: but under the peculiar circum-

stances of the period since the war and during the time the present Commissioner of Railways has been in control, I think Colonel Pope has done very well indeed. It is easy to say that our railways should pay. But we have a big, undeveloped country, and until we have greater production from our lands and the opening up of many of our resources, we cannot hope for the railway revenue which some day will be ours. For years past goldfields members have stressed a desire for relief in respect of railway freight over long distances. In days gone by, when the gold mining industry was flourishing, it was possible to exact charges out of all proportion to the services rendered by the railways; but if the Government desire to further exploit the mineral resources of the State, no sounder policy could be initiated than that of utilising the railways to that end. Opposition members are certainly dissatisfied with the existing railway charges, and I hope the Minister, who I know is quite earnest in his desire to lessen the burden on the mining industry, will be able to reverse the policy of the past. Whether we can with advantage initiate the zone system, I am not competent to say, but I know that our railways should be utilised to a much greater extent than they are in the opening up of our mineral wealth. I hope the Minister will not further ignore the insistent demands of members on this side for a reduction in long distance railway freights and fares with a view to affording relief to the goldmining industry. I am not convinced that but little good has been derived from the appointment of Mr. Stead as Royal Commissioner to inquire into the working of the railways. It would seem that virtually all which he has recommended has to an extent been known to the Railway Department for some time past. I believe that, generally speaking, our railway officers are a reasonably competent set of men. The question whether any great amount of good has resulted from the appointment of Mr. Stead leaves most hon. members perplexed, for we cannot determine whether the Royal Commissioner or the Commissioner of Railways is right in his contentions. It would have been as well if we had had from the Minister some concrete statement as to the intentions of the Government.

The Minister for Mines: I gave it. I dealt with every item in the Royal Commissioner's report. If you did not care to sit here and listen, I could not help it.

Mr. LAMBERT: In point of fact I did not hear the Minister's speech, nor have I read it.

The Colonial Secretary: Perhaps you are not fond of literature.

Mr. LAMBERT: Not of the class of literature which the Colonial Secretary deals in. I have heard that termed quite another name. The Government are desirous of peopling the unpopulated portions of the State. In contradistinction to the opinion held by many people, I believe that the suc-

cess of our railways can never be truly expressed in pounds, shillings, and pence. It can be better judged by the facilities afforded for the opening up and utilisation of the big natural resources of the State. Provided the railways perform this function well, I do not think members will cavil at the balance sheet showing a loss.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: Probably it would help the country.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes. Recently a Royal Commission inquired into the need for tramway extensions in the metropolitan area. While listening to the evidence tendered and bearing in mind the type of economy urged by a certain political section of centreing all expenditure in the country districts, I became convinced that no good purpose would be served until the management of the tramways was removed from central control.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then you have not given the question much consideration.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not debating that matter at present. I give all credit to the hon. member for his intense application to this question, but one need not apologise for having arrived at a conclusion contrary to his. A board similar to the Fremantle Tramway Board, of which the hon. member is a member, would serve a better purpose than does Government control. I make this statement out of no desire to deprecate the present management. Certain portions of the metropolitan area are in need of tramway facilities and should be provided with those facilities, but until the system is placed under an independent board, cognisant of the interests and needs of the respective districts, we cannot expect success to be achieved or the extensions needed to be provided. I hope consideration will be given to this matter. I wish particularly to urge that relief be given to the goldfields in the matter of railway freights, so that the outback portions of the State may be developed. If such a policy were formulated the gold mining, pastoral, agricultural and subsidiary industries would be greatly benefited. The electricity supply is not altogether satisfactory. The agreements made by certain local authorities should be reviewed in order to ascertain whether the charges being exacted, particularly by Perth, Fremantle, and Cottesloe districts, for the retailing of current are hampering our industries, as has been claimed. Three or four days ago the manager of the rope works at North Fremantle told me it was necessary to get current from the Cottesloe council. The current is first retailed to the Fremantle Tramway Board, then to the Cottesloe council and then to the consumer. It is regrettable that an impost should be placed upon an industry as a result of such circumlocution.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is getting his current much cheaper than you are.

Mr. LAMBERT: The question is whether he is getting it at such a price as is calculated to assist one of our secondary industries. I had an opportunity to accompany the Minister on an inspection of the new unit installed in the generating station at East

Perth and it was certainly a credit to the manager, Mr. Taylor. The energy and enthusiasm displayed by the manager augurs well for the success of the scheme. I again urge the Minister to inquire whether the Commissioner of Railways cannot alter the present policy of railway charges, which places the outer districts and particularly the goldfield at such a disadvantage.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [2.55]: I did not intend to speak on these Estimates until I saw to-day the pictures dealing with the electrification of the railways in Victoria. Members are aware that when the electric supply was taken over by the Government, it was intended to electrify the railways. This would be one of the best propositions we could undertake in the interests of the finances of the State. I do not say that we should embark upon such an elaborate system as Victoria has adopted. This State cannot afford it, but we should adopt a system somewhat similar to that now being operated in the streets of Perth, using the new cars just brought into running by the manager of the tramways and coupling two or more of them together. By these means a faster and cheaper service could be provided between Perth and the port and Perth and Midland Junction. Fares could be charged on the cars so used just as they are charged on the trams in Perth. Using the present railway tracks, I gather that the approximate cost of adapting them for the running of electric cars would amount to only about £1,500 per mile. I did not obtain that figure from the manager of the tramways. I made inquiries elsewhere and am assured that that would be the approximate cost of running electric cars along the railway.

The Minister for Mines: We could provide for Fremantle to Northam for less.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the comparatively small cost I have mentioned is correct, it should pay well to handle the passenger traffic to the metropolitan area by electric cars. Very little complaint can be levelled against the working of the tramway system. Unfortunately, our people always seem to be in a hurry. If one car is full, they are always in too much of a hurry to wait for another. In parts where we have only a single line, if there are two cars, passengers invariably overcrowd the first car and leave the second car practically empty, instead of assisting the officers of the department to work the system in a manner which would cater for the comfort of all.

Mr. Marshall: Would some of them be satisfied if a car were provided for each individual?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is impossible to satisfy everyone, but in nine cases out of ten complaints ought to be directed against the users of the cars and not against the management. During last year no fewer than 20 new cars were put on the running in Perth. These cars cost about £4,500 apiece. Members will realise therefore that to provide a large number of additional cars at present,

even though prices are coming down, would cost a considerable sum, and increase the capitalisation of the system to such an extent that there would not be an opportunity to reduce the existing fares to the pre-war level, which I am sure the Government and the public alike desire in the near future. It is necessary under the prevailing conditions that the scheme as a whole should be considered. The member for Coolgardie said we could not have a satisfactory system in Perth unless it was placed under a board. I do not agree with him. The Fremantle system has been pointed to as one that could be followed. The jealousy that exists between some of the districts in Fremantle is sometimes almost unbearable, and the same thing would apply to a greater extent in the case of Perth. The public would not get a better service if it were run by a board than it would under the present system. The system is being managed by the Government under the control of one man, the manager. We get better results under that system than we would get under a board of control. The local authorities have not understood the position they would be in if the trams were placed in their hands. They would have to provide certain statutory payments which the Government are not called upon to make. The terms connected with the raising of loans by local authorities are different from those which apply to Government loans. The Government can raise money for a longer period than can a local authority, and have no occasion to provide the same amount of sinking fund. In Perth last year on a capital expenditure of £779,080 there was a surplus, after paying working expenses and interest, of £15,047, made up of relaying of tracks £11,212 and surplus profits of £3,835. In the case of Fremantle the capital was £171,000, but the local authority was compelled by statute to provide no less than £13,754 to meet the statutory obligations. This was made up of sinking fund or loan redemption £4,108, and depreciation £9,645. This shows the difficulty local authorities would be placed in should the tramways be handed over to their control. Local authorities can rarely secure a loan over a period of 25 or 30 years, as the Government can. They should also make provision for a sinking fund to meet the loans at the time of maturity. That is not always necessary in the case of the Government, which may provide a sinking fund of a half to 1 per cent. as against sinking funds provided by the local authorities of from 2 to 4 per cent. The member for Coolgardie referred to the necessity for tramway extensions. Those who raise their voices against tramway extensions in the metropolitan area do so without giving the matter the consideration it deserves. The people we have here must be provided for. So long as there is no cost to the country, and the concern is paying its own interest and other charges, and there is no debit against the Treasury, it is not right, fair or just that the people in the metropolitan area should be denied the necessary tramway facilities in order that the

money may be expended in some other direction. There are several thickly populated centres and others that are likely to be opened up for settlement within the metropolitan area that are at present denied transport facilities. They must have means of communication, and the cheapest way of giving it to them is by means of a tramway service, the cost of which will be borne entirely by them. Why should any objection be raised to such a scheme?

The Minister for Works: Why should not the Claremont scheme go on? It will pay as well as the Como extension?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am taking the metropolitan area as a whole. We know that the Premier cannot at all times get money for all parts of the State.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: What are you going to do about water supplies for the country?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: So long as the people concerned are prepared to pay, why should they not have their supplies? There is no reason however, why members should oppose tramway extensions in the metropolitan area so long as the general taxpayers are not called upon to foot the bill.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: I am not opposing your scheme but putting forward the claims of the country people.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not opposed to water supplies being given to any country centre where they are required.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: Water supplies are badly needed in the country.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No one could have done more for the country in that respect than did the Labour Party.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: We hear so much about the metropolitan water supply, but nothing about the country supply.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Members should see that transport facilities are given to people in the metropolitan area so long as they are willing to meet the liabilities incurred. I trust members will not unreasonably oppose extensions along these lines. They will not make any difference to the country areas. The man who lives in the metropolitan area, and represents a metropolitan district, if he opposes the just requirements of the country districts, and thus prevents their development, will not be serving his electorate but be acting detrimentally to the interests of those he represents. I ask country members to see that justice is meted out to the metropolitan area. The member for Coolgardie, and some members in another place, appear to think that the agreements which have been entered into by Perth and Fremantle for electricity supply should not be renewed. From experience I can speak of Fremantle. Our contract with the Government is for 25 years at .35d. per unit. We are supplying current at from 3d. to .9d. per unit according to the quantity taken. Reference has been made to the rope works at Cottesloe. For up to 500 units these works are paying 1.6d., between 500 and 1,500 units 1.5d., between 1,250 and 3,500 units 1.35d.,

between 3,500 and 9,000 units 1.23d., between 9,000 and 22,000 1.17d., between 22,000 and 50,000, 1.12d., and for 50,000 units and over 1.09d. These are the prices after the current has passed through the Cottesloe mains.

Mr. J. Thomson: It is the poorest light of any in the metropolitan area.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The power supplied for the lighting is not poor. It is the fault of the insulation.

The Minister for Mines: It is your own wire that is at fault.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The power is the same as we get in this Chamber. The one object of Fremantle has been to keep the price low in order to encourage the establishment of industries. True, the charge for lighting is 5d. per unit, but for power it has been made as low as possible.

The Minister for Mines: And the cost of supplying is cheaper because you carry a greater quantity of current over one wire.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know it has been said by certain people that we have been making large profits out of the municipalities. That is not the case. But they fail to realise that we had to put in plant to supply them before they had the Government power. They should pay their share of the scrapping of the plant which was put in. Claremont had to scrap its plant, and the Claremont rate-payers had to bear the cost of that. But neither Cottesloe nor Fremantle nor the road board had plant. Therefore the plant required to supply them could be put in at a cheaper rate than they could generate for themselves. As regards our railways, the time has arrived when the Minister should look very carefully into the question of rates to the goldfields. I am informed that the Commonwealth, with their usual fairness to Western Australia—

Hon. M. F. Troy: Whose usual fairness?

Mr. Willcock: Is that sarcasm?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am informed that the Commonwealth have again begun to carry goods at a very low rate from Adelaide to our goldfields, which is detrimental to the traders of this State.

The Minister for Mines: We also could fix very low rates if we had the Commonwealth secret of wiping out capital cost.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But we have to bear our share of the losses on the Transcontinental line.

Mr. Davies: Were not those low rates fixed by the Commonwealth at the request of Kalgoorlie residents?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know. If the Commonwealth want to enter into unfair and unjust competition with the State Government, then the State Government will have my support in doing likewise. If the Commonwealth cut, let us cut. This state of affairs has arisen because we have in the city of Perth numerous agents representing Eastern States firms, and those agents can pass their orders direct over to the Eastern States. They do not care for Western Australia. They are the very

people who advocate the closing down of our State trading concerns. Their object is to get the trade to Adelaide. Our aim should be to keep the trade in Western Australia. Therefore, if the Commonwealth cut, let us cut. Let us give the traders established in Western Australia an opportunity of doing the trade of Western Australia. I hope the Minister will look into this matter. Let me give an instance. Not long ago a firm started to supply a certain article here, and they supplied it in most places in the metropolitan area. But their competitors on the other side, through their agents here, were induced to get to work on the Commonwealth, with the result that rates on the Transcontinental Railway were reduced to such an extent that the Western Australian firm cannot supply on the goldfields at all. Although the firm in question spent thousands of pounds in establishing the manufacture of the article here, their trade on the Western Australian goldfields is gone. That is not fair to the State, and it is not fair to us, who have to bear our share of the loss on the Transcontinental line. I go so far as to say that if the Commonwealth cut we must cut, and that if the Commonwealth carry for nothing we also will carry for nothing. I trust the Minister will give this matter his attention, so that our people may have fair railway rates.

Mr. MANN (Perth) [3.21]: The criticism which has been levelled at the Commissioner of Railways by the Royal Commissioner, and the reply of the Commissioner of Railways, are so voluminous that one cannot deal with them as exhaustively as one would like. In my opinion, the Royal Commissioner dealt in harsh terms with the matters upon which he had to report regarding the administration of the Railway Department. The language of his report was such as to suggest more or less a feeling of vindictiveness. I do not suggest that the Royal Commissioner was not anxious and eager to serve this country and to remedy defects in railway administration, but I consider that his report might, in the interests of the State and of the Railway Department, and of the Royal Commissioner himself, have been couched in other terms. I consider that the Commissioner of Railways has done very well. Since taking office he has had innumerable difficulties to overcome, and he has overcome them very well.

Hon. P. Collier: Many of them he has overcome only with the aid of the advice given by the Royal Commissioner.

Mr. MANN: That is to his credit.

Hon. P. Collier: Try to be fair.

Mr. MANN: I do not wish to be unfair.

Hon. P. Collier: The Royal Commissioner's report has already saved scores of thousands of pounds to the State, on the Government's own admission.

Mr. MANN: Still, it might have been couched in different language.

Hon. P. Collier: Possibly, but there is merit in having saved the country tens of thousands of pounds.

Mr. MANN: Since taking office the Commissioner of Railways has had to meet increases in the price of coal and in wages, and also decreasing tonnage and decreasing revenue. Notwithstanding all those things, he has been expected to make the railway system pay.

Mr. Willcock: The decrease in tonnage followed on increased rates.

Mr. MANN: That may be so in a few instances.

Hon. P. Collier: The Commissioner of Railways has not been asked to make the railways pay, but to stop the drift—a different thing altogether.

Mr. MANN: I shall deal directly with the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. Collier: But you are making a defence before there is any attack.

Mr. MANN: The position is that the Commissioner of Railways has been pressed by the Government to make the railways pay as nearly as possible.

Hon. P. Collier: To show an improvement.

Mr. MANN: I am not altogether in agreement with some of the methods adopted by the Commissioner of Railways. I refer now to the cartage of goods from Fremantle to Perth. When the Minister was introducing these Estimates, I questioned, by interjection, the policy which permitted motor owners to get a large share of the trade in goods between Fremantle and Perth. The Minister, in reply, said that the Railway Department had to consider the cost of carriage, and that the cost by motor was cheaper than the railings cost.

Mr. Willcock: No. There are two or three handlings saved by the motor.

Mr. MANN: There is not so much in that as appears at first sight. When goods come up by rail from Fremantle, the trucks are run right alongside the boat, and the goods are taken out of the boat and put straight into the trucks. When the goods come up by motor, they are taken out of the hold of the ship and landed and wheeled into the shed, and then the motor has to be backed into the shed, where it is loaded. So there is an extra handling at that end for the motor. Certainly there is an extra handling at this end in the case of the trucks. The railway officials have very kindly placed at my disposal a file showing that while last year they transported some thousands of tons less from Fremantle to Perth than in the year before, yet their financial returns from the traffic were several thousands of pounds more than in the previous year. The argument put up is this. The railway officials are asked to make the railway ledger balance as nearly as possible. Then, are they justified in increasing rates for the purpose of securing a greater profit? The motor lorries are paying their way, and with further reduction in the price of petrol, which is sure to come about, the lorries available for the traffic will increase in number. Will it then be the policy of the

Railway Department still to increase freights in order to keep up their revenue? In my opinion the Commissioner of Railways has adopted a wrong policy by increasing freights in order to increase revenue, rather than enter into serious competition with the motors on the road. I am not in agreement with the Minister's idea of constantly increasing freights and fares in order to balance the ledger. As regards the traffic from Fremantle to Perth, there surely is a way of capturing the trade which at present is being done by motor owners and by lorries running between the capital and the port.

The Minister for Works. We have not been able to capture the water trade, and that is 30 years old.

Mr. MANN: But the Government are losing thousands of tons of goods every year in this connection.

The Minister for Works: A man can get his stuff up by lorry from Fremantle in an hour and a half, and as a rule he cannot get it up by rail in less than a day.

Mr. MANN: On the various occasions when I have found it necessary in the interests of an industry or an association to interview the Commissioner of Railways, he has done his best to meet the wishes I submitted to him. The member for North-East Fremantle spoke of the reduction of freights on the Transcontinental line. Last year both bullocks and sheep were being railed from Port Augusta to Midland Junction at a cost less than our Railway Department were charging from Mullewa to Midland Junction. The result was that the yards at Midland Junction were being flooded with stock from South Australia to the detriment of our stock owners. I was requested to move in the matter, and I put the facts before the Commissioner. He arranged that where sufficient stock was forthcoming to permit of a train being run over a distance of more than 200 miles, he would make such a reduction as would enable the local growers to compete with the South Australian exporters. The charge for transport of sheep from Port Augusta to Midland Junction was about 3s. 9d., and the charge from Mullewa to Midland Junction was 3s. 7d.

The Minister for Works: What were the railways getting between Kalgoorlie and Midland Junction?

Mr. MANN: I understand there was an arrangement by which the sheep were carried right through. At all events, the Commissioner of Railways met me in the matter in such a way as to enable the local growers to compete with South Australia.

Mr. Teesdale: It is not possible to get stock from South Australia at all now.

Mr. MANN: We do not want competition of that kind.

The Minister for Mines: It is not always the grower that is inconvenienced by such competition; there is sometimes a ring.

Mr. Hughes: Sometimes? Practically always.

Mr. MANN: I also interviewed the Commissioner with regard to the carriage of cream. A special preference rate was brought into operation for country cream, and it was considered detrimental to any butter factories. The Commissioner pointed out that it was the policy of the Government that if the cream was carried at a cheaper rate the butter factories in the country would have to pay a higher rate for the carriage of their butter to the city. In that respect the country people were at a disadvantage as compared with the city butter factories. His argument was sound, and I did not press the matter further. In passing I wish to say that on every occasion on which I interviewed the Commissioner, I was received with courtesy. I wish to deal with the case of the clerk Connolly, referred to by the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) last night. When the officer received notice of his retirement, he approached me, and I saw the railway authorities. The case they put up to me was that Connolly was an excess officer, and that they had no further use for him, because he was incapable of advancement. I was satisfied with the explanation. I find, however, that the Railway Department have not acted justly in connection with this matter. If Connolly was retired because he was an incompetent officer, he should have been so charged, and I have no doubt that the railway people would have had very little difficulty, according to the file, to prove the fact.

Mr. Hughes: You have heard only one side.

Mr. MANN: It might have been possible to prove before the board that he was not competent, and consequently could not be placed in any other position. Apparently the railway authorities followed the line of least resistance, and dismissed or retired him as an excess officer. The Commissioner has stated that Connolly was diligent. Therefore I fail to see how the Government can avoid paying the man his pension. If he is not entitled to a pension, he should have been retired or dismissed for incompetence. Then he would have had the right of appeal, and the case would have been heard on its merits. The Railway Department did not follow that course. The Commissioner having said that Connolly was diligent and did his work satisfactorily, there remains no alternative but to give him his pension.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not the way the Minister for Works would have dealt with it.

Mr. MANN: I suggest that the Minister for Mines should inquire into this matter.

The Minister for Mines: That is not my duty.

Mr. MANN: Well, then, whose duty is it?

The Minister for Mines: There is a Railway Act, and it is a matter for the pensions board.

Mr. MANN: It has not been before the board.

Mr. Hughes: It has never been beyond the Commissioner.

Mr. MANN: It has not been before the board.

The Minister for Mines: It has.

Mr. MANN: Let me read what the Solicitor General had to say in reply to a letter from the Secretary of Railways, and who stated that the Commissioner regretted that his efforts to get the Public Service Appeal Board to deal with the matter had been unsuccessful.

The Minister for Mines: I said the pensions board.

Mr. MANN: I commend the position of this case to the Minister. The Leader of the Opposition told us that the Royal Commissioner had been the means of saving the Government thousands of pounds.

Hon. P. Collier: I said scores of thousands of pounds.

Mr. MANN: I will accept scores of thousands of pounds. That being the case greater publicity should be given to the fact. At the same time, it surely stands to the credit of the authorities that they have taken advantage of the recommendations contained in the report and saved the amount stated by the Leader of the Opposition. The Royal Commission served a good purpose.

Mr. A. Thomson: Undoubtedly.

Mr. MANN: I do not see that there is any occasion for undue criticism of the Commissioner of Railways if he has adopted the suggestions made by the Royal Commissioner.

Hon. P. Collier: There has been no criticism worth while on the Railway Estimates this year.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You are breaking the lance before it is necessary.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [3.40]: The Commissioner of Railways has always had my sincere sympathy in the position in which he has found himself. We know that when he took charge of the railways the rolling stock had been run practically to a standstill.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And it is said that he is running the rolling stock to a standstill to-day.

Hon. P. Collier: Sixteen years ago the rolling stock was in a better state of efficiency than had been the case for 20 years before.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Royal Commissioner's report does not bear that out.

Hon. P. Collier: Show me where it does not.

Mr. A. THOMSON: He states that certain works should be done. Some of the difficulties which the Commissioner of Railways had to face include instances such as were quoted by the members for Perth and East Perth, and the Commissioner has not the power to act in the manner he may consider necessary. We should take that into consideration. If a private employer is desirous of dismissing a man, he dismisses him, and there is no appeal court, no pension, nor anything else.

Hon. P. Collier: An appeal board can be expected to take a fair view of all the cases.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition was once Minister for Railways and he must remember the difficulties he had to contend with while occupying that position. His was not altogether a bed of roses and he must know that neither he nor the Commissioner was able to do what might have been considered to be in the best interests of the State. I had a rather strange matter brought under my notice recently in connection with the fares to Albany. The excursion rate from Perth to Albany is 55s. 11d. If one wishes to join an excursion train at Katanning and travel to Perth—a distance of 115 miles less, or a total from Katanning to Perth of 230 miles against 345 miles—one is compelled to pay 61s. 5d. Why should not the people living in the Great Southern district get a pro rata reduction? They should not have to pay more than those people who are travelling 115 miles further on the same train.

Mr. Johnston: We would like to get similar excursion rates from Narrogin.

The Minister for Mines: You get a good deal at Narrogin.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Why should not the people joining at Katanning, the excursion train from Albany to Perth, receive the benefit of the existing excursion rate?

Mr. Davies: Why not take a ticket from Albany?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I doubt whether that would be possible. The Royal Commissioner's report represents money well spent. Mr. Stead has rendered the State good service. I trust it will be the policy of the Government to put into effect many of his recommendations. Mr. Stead reports that there is no warrant for the employment of six engineers and assistants in the way and works branch, that the working and management of the branch are not economical. In fairness to Colonel Pope I must say he has been out for economy and efficiency, and I have always found him willing to listen to practical suggestions. I commend to the Minister Mr. Stead's suggestion in respect of the ways and works branch. Again, in the traffic branch, Mr. Stead says the manning of the head office is out of all proportion to the volume of traffic. Dealing with coal consumption, Mr. Stead makes an excellent recommendation which I hope will be adopted, namely, that a bonus system should be introduced with the object of effecting economy. I agree with that. The men ought to be given some inducement to economise in the consumption of coal. Give a man inducement, and he is bound to respond. I am sorry the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) is not here just now.

Mr. Heron: You pick your time well, while he is away.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Certainly not. I would say what I am about to say even if he were here. The Royal Commissioner de-

clares that coal from the Premier mine is not suitable for locomotives, and that if it be the desire of the Government to foster that mine, better results would be obtained by mixing other coals with its product. I have always maintained that the Commissioner of Railways should be free to purchase the coal which will give him the best results. When the Government compel the Commissioner of Railways to use unsuitable coal we cannot expect the Commissioner to render that economical administration which we all desire.

Mr. Teesdale: But it is the best coal for fuel.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No, it is not. There are better coals, and the Commissioner of Railways should be entitled to purchase the best available. He is not free to do that. That is one of his difficulties. There is in Collie coal which would give much better results.

Mr. Teesdale: Perhaps the union will not let us use it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We are paying the Commissioner a large salary to administer the railways, and we should give him a free hand in his task. It was suggested last night that we should have three Railway Commissioners. I do not agree with that. However, if we were to appoint ten, and continued to administer the railways as they are administered to-day, we should get no important improvement.

The Minister for Mines: The Royal Commissioner advocates the setting up of a State coal mine.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have advocated that myself. Considering the enormous quantity of coal used by the railways, they should have their own mine. They have a timber mill of their own; what is the difference between having a timber mill and a coal mine?

The Minister for Mines: There is a very big difference. If we had our own mine we should have to pay for the coal consumed just the same.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Surely it would not cost so much per ton! However, we expect the Commissioner of Railways to administer his department economically; yet, according to the Royal Commissioner's report, there is room for many new economies. Some of his recommendations are very valuable.

Mr. Marshall: And some of them very rotten, constituting a reflection on his mental capacity.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is pretty rotten of the hon. member to make such reflections on Mr. Stead. I knew that gentleman when he was in the Railways, and I can say the Government showed considerable discrimination in appointing him Royal Commissioner. I should like to hear from the Minister in his reply whether Mr. Stead's recommendation that a fully qualified accountant possessing a knowledge of railway accounts should be engaged temporarily to reorganise this and the stores branch, is to be given effect to.

The Minister for Mines: I am not going to answer the question. If you did not care to be here when I was making my statement, I am not going to repeat it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I was here.

The Minister for Railways: Well, I made reference to that particular recommendation.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am sorry I did not hear it. I hope the Minister is going to put that recommendation into effect.

The Minister for Mines: Certainly I am not going to repeat myself. Look in "Hansard" and you will see what I said on the subject.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Mr. Stead says the salaries of the stores branch are excessive, and he recommends that tenders should be invited in the other States for the purchase of stores and stationery. I did not hear the Minister make his speech, and when I read it I did not notice in it any reference to this recommendation. I hope the Minister will allude to it when replying to the debate. The Royal Commissioner states that throughout the history of the Government Railways it has been found that new lines handed over to the Working Railways have been in an unsatisfactory condition.

The Minister for Mines: You had better tell that to the Minister for Works.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Mr. Stead says the construction of lines should be placed under the Commissioner of Railways. It has always puzzled me why the Public Works Department construct railways which should be constructed according to the standard of railway engineers. I commend to the Minister the Royal Commissioner's recommendation that in future our railways should be constructed by railway engineers. This would mean economic reform and the abolition of an extraneous set of officers in another department. I have no intention of casting any reflection on the officers of the Public Works Department; I am objecting merely to the duplication. The Works Department construct the railways, and the Working Railways, after taking them over, have to spend additional money upon them.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Works Department cannot be doing their job.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The trouble is that the railways are not up to the requirements of the Working Railways.

The Minister for Works: They are never discourteous to the Works Department.

Mr. Teesdale: The point is your department is inefficient.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I hope the Minister will make some reference to this in his reply.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Get your executive to prod him up a bit.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The railways require to be re-graded. Between Wooroloo and Chidlow it is often necessary to have a back engine to push a train up. It would be sound economy to re-grade many of our lines so that the engines would be able to haul bigger loads. The Minister should consider the recommendations of his own Commissioner. At Badgubup, on the Nyabing

line, a small amount of gravel was required. There is plenty of gravel adjacent to the line, and one would have expected the department to send out a gang to pick up the gravel on the spot. Judge of the astonishment of the people in the Katanning district when they found that three trucks of gravel for the job were dragged all the way from Pingelly. I would like to know who was responsible for such a foolish act. There is a pumping station out Lake Grace way where wood was required. Seeing there is plenty of virgin forest in the vicinity, one would have expected the wood to be obtained locally, but no, it was brought from Collie. The same thing applied at Ongerup. I hope there will not be a recurrence of this sort of thing. Those of us who are here next year to review the railway estimates will look anxiously to find whether some of the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner have been carried into effect.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [4.4]: The Royal Commissioner appointed by the Government to inquire into the management of the railways did his work well. We may not agree with all his recommendations, but many of them have been approved by the Commissioner of Railways, and only lack of funds precludes him from giving effect to them. The Minister agreed that a good deal of re-grading was necessary. Heavier rails are required on main lines, but lack of funds prevents this work being undertaken. New engines are also required. We know this from our experience on the Murchison line. The trains are supposed to run according to the schedule, but the time table is practically a joke. Most of the trains run two or three hours late, due to a lack of engines. The engine leaving Perth goes right through to Geraldton, and then another engine from Geraldton takes the train right on to the Murchison. When engines are run long distances, we know that the life of such engines will be very short indeed.

Mr. Marshall: The Royal Commissioner did not recommend new engines.

Mr. CHESSON: Yes, he did.

Mr. Marshall: No; it was the Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. CHESSON: Anyhow, experience shows that new engines are required. The engines employed on these long distance runs have also to do the shunting at the stations en route. The train due at Cue at a few minutes to two o'clock in the morning often does not arrive until daylight. Some of the trains leave Perth behind schedule time. This should not happen. The Royal Commissioner urged the need for use being made of the land alongside existing railways. Such land not being put to profitable use should be taxed in order to compel the owners to work it. If a tax were imposed and portion of the proceeds were earmarked for the benefit of the railways, it would be a good thing. We have adopted a development policy in connection with our

railways. The people who go out back keep the city going, and they should not be penalised to the extent they are at present. There is no inducement for people to go out and pioneer the back country. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) dealt with some anomalies in connection with the railways. He specially referred to the difference in freight over the Midland line as compared with the Government line. The railrage from Perth to Geraldton via the Midland railway amounts to £3 10s. From Geraldton to Meekatharra for a similar quantity of goods costs £11 0s. 1d., or over 200 per cent. more for a difference in distance of only 18 miles, and yet the Government railways are not paying. The freight on five tons of coal ordered at Fremantle cost 52s. 3d., whereas only 34s. 2d. was charged for six tons. The five tons cost in all £13 1s. 3d. and the six tons cost £10 5s. Therefore it cost £2 16s. 3d. less for six tons than for five tons. There is something wrong when anomalies of that kind exist. This information was published in all the Murchison papers. It was supplied by one of the firms down here.

The Minister for Mines: Which firm supplied it?

Mr. CHESSON: I can obtain the name.

The Minister for Mines: You ought to give it, because you are making an attack on the administration.

Mr. CHESSON: I shall get it.

The Minister for Mines: That is not fair. You are publicly making a statement which reflects on the administration. Why not name the firm?

Mr. CHESSON: I shall obtain it and hand it to the Minister. I do not think any firm would make such a statement if it were not correct.

The Minister for Mines: It is not correct.

(Mr. Angelo took the Chair.)

Mr. CHESSON: The "Murchison Times" recently made an effective reference to the railway service. It stated—

The Murchison folk have ever been long-suffering with an erratic service. One or two recent and more outstanding facts are worth noting by the powers that be: The through train from Perth on Saturday, 23rd ult., whistled into Cue station at 5 a.m., instead of about 2 a.m., only some three hours late. Of course, this is not uncommon, running to time being the exception rather than the rule. As this was the last train on the Murchison line prior to Christmas, it probably carried double the quantity of parcels and perishables, which made it impossible for the guards on their sections to handle and keep near to time. Extra assistance for the trip would not, perhaps, have been amiss, and Meekatharra—the head of the line—had passengers and goods "delivered" half a day earlier. Then there is the old complaint of delays of goods on

the line. One case in point is sufficient to show the need for action on the part of the responsible officers of the Department: A truck of timber consigned from Geraldton on the 6th ult., reached Cue on the 19th ult. In this instance a teamster was delayed at Cue nearly a fortnight, incurring considerable expense. Another matter that may be looked into is the need for additional seating accommodation on the local station platform.

There are continual complaints on the Murchison. Goods are sometimes over a week in transit. There must be something wrong with the system when that sort of thing occurs. It is said that the Government desire to encourage the starting of industries in outback centres. A little while ago in Cue and Yalgoo a syndicate started a wool-scouring business. They wrote to the Commissioner of Railways asking for a rebate of freight to Fremantle of £3 per ton. They found that the freight on scoured wool was £3 2s. 6d., but that on greasy wool was only £3 per ton. They were prepared to pay £5 2s. 6d., but their application was refused. Every encouragement should be given to people who are prepared to put their own money into an industry of this nature in outback centres. The paper also dealt with this subject, and showed that in greasy wool there was at least 10 cwt. of dirt to every ton. It continued—

Apparently wool carried under the special rate does not pay the Railway Department to handle, notwithstanding there is a minimum of a 4-tons condition. If it does pay, then the rate for other wool is an extortion, as a glance at the figures will show. On the presumption that the special rate is not a paying one, would it not be a much better proposition if the Railway Department were to allow a rebate of say £3 per ton on wool scoured inland? Instead of getting £3 6s. 1d. as now, the department would be getting £5 2s. 1d. for clean wool. If this rate would not show a profit it certainly would show about £2 a ton less loss on a smaller tonnage, and the assistance thus given to those carrying on the industry would be considerable. Any industry carried on inland is of benefit to the State generally, and it is the duty of those in power to give every encouragement to such industries. In this instance that encouragement should be given seeing that the State will be a gainer and not a loser by doing so. We believe the members of the syndicate made an application to the Railway Department but were promptly turned down on the ground that they enjoyed the same privileges as any other wool-scouring industry. This is not correct, for everyone must know that the cost of living is higher and cost of any material required—higher at Cue than at the seaboard, and this chiefly is brought about by the high ruling railway freights on commodities. The Railway Department should know this well enough. Further, the wool after being

scoured is still an inferior wool, which will not bear as high a freight as fleece wool. People who attempt to establish industries outback should be afforded every encouragement. We know what an effect the high freights have had in the direction of closing down some of our low-grade mining propositions. The rates should be fixed on the zone system, with the object of assisting industries needing help. It is only by people going outback and opening up the country that we can develop it. Commercial travellers are now using motor cars and competing against the railways because of the excessive fares. They are travelling throughout the Murchison by this means and find they can travel more cheaply by motor than by rail.

Mr. Davies: Over long distances?

Mr. CHESSEON: Yes. Most of the goods required by pastoralists are now being sent through the parcels post and the Commonwealth are deriving the advantage from the extra postage. The Federal authorities should not be allowed to benefit at the expense of the State, because freight is kept from the railways on account of the high rates. I appeal to the Minister to give greater assistance to those who are pioneering the outback parts of Western Australia.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [4.23]: I can scarcely credit the statement of the member for Cue that motor transport is cheaper over long distances than railway transport.

Mr. Chesson: I was only referring to the passenger fares.

Mr. DAVIES: In the metropolitan and suburban areas the railways stand no chance against motor transport. It is not possible for ponderous and slow trains to successfully compete with the modern and up-to-date machinery found in motors. The Commissioner of Railways cannot alter the position because it is one that prevails throughout the world. I have been personally acquainted with the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Stead, for many years, both at the time when he was a State railway officer and at the time when he was general manager of the Midland Railway Company. I have always regarded him as a careful administrator and a man of high integrity, but I think he went out of his way and exaggerated the position when he said there was an entire lack of confidence in the management of the Western Australian railways. If I did not know him, I would be inclined to say the statement was mischievous in the extreme. It has been disproved by the Commissioner's report. He pointed out that 999 out of every 1,000 customers of the railways preferred to send their goods at owner's risk rather than at Commissioner's risk. This shows that only one person out of 1,000 lacks confidence in the management of the railways. I agree with the member for Katanning that the period during which the present Commissioner has been in charge of the railways has been the most difficult in the history of the State. It followed immediately upon the war when everyone was more

or less unsettled. The Commissioner was raised to the position from a subordinate office in the service. We know the feeling that is sometimes displayed in this House when members, who are presumably possessed of high intelligence, have sometimes found fault with the leader of their party when he has made some particular appointment. There are 7,000 men working in the Government railways, and when one of these is chosen for a high position there must be hundreds of critics in the service who would claim that they could have selected a better man. Colonel Pope was appointed over the heads of several high officials. Whilst I do not think there was any lack of loyalty towards him, there must have been a feeling in the railways when he was first appointed that some other officer should have been selected.

The Minister for Works: There would have been a great many disappointed men.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes, and that must have helped to disorganise things in the service and must have been reflected throughout the management. In my dealings with the present Commissioner I have always found him to be a gentleman, ever ready to listen to suggestions made to him, and always prepared to treat his customers with courtesy. No one can find fault with the hearing the Commissioner has given to him. Sometimes complaints do not reach him, because they are dealt with entirely by other officers in the service; but once they do reach him, though they be from the humblest members of the service, he is prepared to deal with them fairly and squarely. I was disappointed in the Minister's remarks concerning the Royal Commissioner. I am at a loss to know why one was appointed. Mr. Stead was offered the position of Chief Traffic Manager in the Government railways, but the Midland Railway Company, by whom he was employed, declined to allow him to accept that position, though I understand they were prepared to let him go provided he was offered the Commissionership. Anyway we know that Mr. Stead did not take up the appointment that was offered to him by the Government of the day—Mr. Scaddan's Government, I think. Let members reflect for a moment. Here is Col. Pope, the appointee of the present Government. The Royal Commissioner was offered by Mr. Scaddan, when Premier, the post of Chief Traffic Manager with probably the subsequent appointment of Commissioner of Railways. Then Colonel Pope was appointed by Mr. Scaddan, and I dare say Mr. Scaddan also concurred in the appointment of Mr. Stead as Royal Commissioner. Is it reasonable to expect, unless there is some personal feeling between those two gentlemen—and I think everyone will come to the conclusion, after reading the two reports, that of the Commissioner of Railways and that of the Royal Commissioner, that there was some personal feeling—

Hon. M. F. Troy drew attention to the state of the House.

The CHAIRMAN: I have counted the House and I find there is a quorum present.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Where is it?

The CHAIRMAN: Within the precincts of the Chamber.

Mr. Marshall: It is disgraceful that this side of the House should have to maintain a quorum.

Mr. DAVIES: I was dealing with the personal feeling between the Commissioner of Railways and the Royal Commissioner, but on reflection I think the less said about it the better for all concerned. All that we desire is that there shall be co-operation in the service. I think the Commissioner is assured of that now, and from what one can see the staff are working well with the Commissioner. There is a matter which should be stressed during the debate and it is the question of superannuation for railway employees. Previous Commissioners did something to help in this direction. For instance, I think it was during the Commissionership of the present Minister for Works that the Death Benefit Fund was established. I believe that one can call that an unqualified success seeing that it means so much to the family that is left behind.

The Minister for Works: Something like £200 in cash is paid over.

Mr. DAVIES: At the same time a sick and accident fund was brought into existence.

The Minister for Works: The foundation of that was laid.

Mr. DAVIES: I was a railway employee myself and I know of the benefit to be derived from funds such as these.

Hon. P. Collier: We have had nothing very beneficial since.

Mr. DAVIES: Something should be done by the present Commissioner in co-operation with the staff in bringing about a superannuation fund in connection with the railways. The matter has been before the Commissioner for a number of years but it does not seem to have got any further forward.

The Minister for Mines: Negotiations have been proceeding.

Mr. DAVIES: But what I am concerned about is that negotiations should not cease.

The Minister for Mines: They have not ceased.

Hon. P. Collier: Appoint a Royal Commission.

Mr. DAVIES: I would not suggest that. I notice the Royal Commissioner had very little to say on this particular matter, and it is a matter on which he could very well have expressed some views. He had something to say in regard to almost everything else. Reference has been made to the number of men retrenched from the service. Members must know that the most appalling spectre that faces the working man is that of retrenchment and the fear of unemployment. The fear is trebled when a man reaches the age of 60 or 65 years, and especially if he has been a railway servant for 20 or 30 years. Such a man cannot get other employment; he has given the best years of

his life to the State and through no fault of his own finds himself in a penniless position.

Hon. P. Collier: Do you not think that the question of superannuation should apply to members of Parliament also? It would be pretty handy just now.

Mr. DAVIES: I am not in a position to appreciate it.

Hon. P. Collier: There are others who are.

Mr. DAVIES: Possibly something should be done in that regard.

Hon. P. Collier: Political death, you know, comes as surely as the other.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes, to everyone. We find that even a man like Mr. Asquith, after representing Dundee for 37 years, was dismissed at the last elections. After such a happening the life of a politician may be said to be precarious. Seriously speaking, the Minister should do his utmost in the direction of bringing about superannuation for railway employees. He told us that negotiations had not been broken off between the Commissioner and the men, but something tangible should be done so that a man may have a little to look forward to.

Mr. Hughes: It is possible to do something, but the Minister is able to nullify it.

The Minister for Mines: Railway employees can come under the Act, but they cannot be compelled to contribute.

Mr. DAVIES: A man at the age of 60 or 65 should be able to say, "I am retiring, and I can rest satisfied that what I am about to receive is not charity, but something I have earned during the time I have been in the service."

Mr. Teesdale: What about the pick and shovel men? Let the railway men save from their wages.

Hon. P. Collier: What about the legislator who was defeated last week; there is no pension for him?

The Minister for Mines: The man who has had 25 or 30 years constant employment is in a better position than the man who has been working as a miner.

Mr. DAVIES: I subscribe to a system of national insurance. I believe that a man who works in gold mines or coal mines, is entitled to help from the State on retirement through old age. But when it comes to a question of superannuation for one section only, like the railways, some difficulty might be experienced in getting such a proposal through this House.

Mr. Heron: Oh no.

Mr. DAVIES: Would it be reasonable to ask the member for Forrest who represents timber workers, or the member for Collie who represents coal miners, to agree to a superannuation scheme for railway employees, a scheme which would leave out the timber workers and the coal miners?

Hon. M. F. Troy: Why not a scheme of general insurance?

Mr. DAVIES: I am urging that some action should be taken regarding the bringing into existence of a superannuation

scheme for the railways. I cannot now discuss the broader question of national insurance. I wish before concluding to say a few words in regard to the locomotives in use on the railways. Hon. members will recollect that a visit was paid to the Midland shops some months ago, and it was seen there what those shops were capable of turning out. The Royal Commissioner recommended that the locomotives which were about to be built should not be proceeded with. It may be news to members to know that over half of the locomotives that are running on the railways are 20 years old.

Hon. P. Collier: And the other half were bought when we were in office. We spent £500,000 on rolling stock in 1912-13.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member for Boulder knows that the most efficient engines today are those which were bought during his term as Minister for Railways. I refer to class E and class F engines. Only one class has been added, and that is class D, which is running on the suburban lines, and which is just as good as classes E and F. What I wish to point out, however, is that if we desire the railways to carry freight successfully we should have modern engines. That fact cannot be stressed too strongly, and the Commissioner should be allowed sufficient money to bring his locomotives up to date. In the circular which he issued in reply to the statement of the primary producers he made pointed reference to that. I hope the Minister will do his best to co-operate with the Commissioner of Railways, and see that the rolling stock is brought up to date. The Royal Commissioner discussed the question of super-heating. That is a technical matter, and I do not think any good would result from dealing with it on the Estimates. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) said he would like to see the trams extended. So should I. It is due to the metropolitan area that many of the lines should be extended. The Royal Commission on tramways made certain recommendations, and I would be glad if the House agreed to them and ordered extensions to be constructed immediately.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Provided the metropolitan people are prepared to pay for them.

Mr. Clydesdale: They are, and always have been.

Mr. DAVIES: I think they are prepared to pay for them, and to take over the full management of them. There was a difference of opinion between the members of the Royal Commission on the question of whether the trams should be handed over by the Government to the local governing bodies. The extensions, however, should be undertaken at the earliest possible moment. This session there has been little or no criticism of the Commissioner of Railways. When we refrain from indulging in carping criticism, I hope the example set will be copied outside, not only as regards our railways but the management of all our concerns. The same criticism is going on in other directions. When the

member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) vacated the office of mayor of South Perth, the district was turned into a road board, and soon after that occurred, the people were looking for the execution of the chairman of the board, and he resigned.

The Minister for Mines: They could still become a progress association.

Mr. DAVIES: Progress associations and those who indulge in criticism have no responsibility. Possibly the ex-chairman of the South Perth Road Board will join the progress association and criticise those in power. We ought to stand by those who are administering affairs so long as they give good service. Unless this is done we shall be storing up heaps of trouble for ourselves. Next year another Government may be in power, but regardless of what political party hold office, the services of the country must be maintained, and people should be content to indulge in honest criticism calculated to assist the administration of the day. The railways in the United Kingdom are run under the joint board system, on which workmen and shareholders are pretty evenly represented, but notwithstanding that, the railways are a losing proposition. Amalgamations are taking place in the attempt to stop the leakages and reduce the cost of management. When this occurs in such highly organised industries as the railways of the United Kingdom, it is not to be wondered at that we have a deficit in this State. To overcome our difficulties will need the best attention of Parliament. If we work with the administrators, there is a chance, but if the criticism indulged in outside of Parliament—not inside—is continued, there will be no hope. With proper co-operation I think the prospects for the year 1923 are bright.

Hon. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [4.50]: The member for Guildford (Mr. Davies) spoke about the difficult times which the Commissioner of Railways has had to face. I do not question his statement, but though the Commissioner of Railways has had to administer the railways under difficult conditions, he has also had an opportunity to take out of the pockets of the people a considerable sum of money which has placed the people in difficult circumstances. On every occasion when costs have been increased the Commissioner has been able by administrative authority to increase freights and fares to an extent that more than recouped him for his additional outlay. One of the reasons why the back country is being depopulated and why the mining industry is being closed down is the excessive charges on the carriage of commodities over the railways.

Mr. Teesdale: Some classes of goods.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Most of the classes.

Mr. Teesdale: What about superphosphates?

Hon. M. F. TROY: I am speaking of the goldfields. If anyone on the fields were asked to place his finger on the greatest

handicap to mining development, he would point to the excessive charges of the railways on commodities required for living and working on the fields. We cannot too often stress this point. While people are deploring the fact that the back country is being depopulated—and this is a bad omen, because that country cannot be developed by anyone so well as by those who know it—the Government to date have given the goldfields people no consideration whatever in the matter of railway charges. I have a letter from the Minister in which he replies to a statement made by mining men during his visit to Mt. Magnet. These men left their homes near Perth and went to Mt. Magnet to carry on mining operations. They took up an abandoned mine and worked it; so far they have been successful. They pointed out that whereas a settler going from the goldfields to the agricultural areas received a concession in freight on his household goods, the settler going to the goldfields from the coast received no such concession but was charged the full rate. They asked why such a distinction should be made. The Minister forwarded a statement which is not a reply. In his letter dated the 9th June he referred to the increases made by the Railway Department but evaded the point raised by these men at Mt. Magnet during his official visit. The people of the back country have a just grievance if distinctions such as I have mentioned are made, and of which the Minister has not given a satisfactory explanation. The Government have made excuses regarding the heavy increases imposed on the people in the back country. They have claimed that the wages of the railway employees have been increased and that, in order to meet the demands imposed by arbitration awards, they have been compelled to increase the railway charges. In my opinion, and I do not think it can be contradicted by the department or by the Minister, the increased awards of the court have been taken advantage of by the department not only to levy such rates as would recoup the department for the extra expenditure, but to bring in a little more revenue, and thus help to swell the income of the Railway Department.

The Minister for Mines: The increased costs have not been solely due to railway awards.

Hon. M. F. TROY: To what other awards?

The Minister for Mines: Every award. Take coal. We have had to meet bigger coal bills.

Hon. M. F. TROY: But the Railway Department have always taken advantage of these awards in order to put their hands still deeper into the pockets of the people.

The Minister for Mines: There is not much opportunity to do that when you are about.

Hon. M. F. TROY: If the Minister wants to develop the goldfields, he will sooner or later have to reduce the railway charges.

The Minister for Mines: I hope it can be done soon.

Hon. M. F. TROY: One of our great difficulties, to which frequent reference has been made, is that we have too great a mileage of railways for our population.

The Minister for Mines: You are stating it the wrong way about. We have insufficient population for our railways.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Minister may have it as he will.

The Minister for Mines: But it is a different proposition.

Hon. M. F. TROY: What strikes me is that the Government, who are well aware of this fact, are bringing in Bills to further extend our railways. Will this relieve the position? No, it will make it more acute. This session the Government brought down a Bill to provide for a railway which will cost a considerable amount of money. Unquestionably the charges against that capital outlay and the expense of running that railway will make the position more acute. Therefore the Government appear to be closing their eyes to the fact that our present mileage is too great in proportion to our population, and are pursuing a policy which will make the position worse instead of better.

The Minister for Mines: We got a recommendation from the Royal Commissioner on that question.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Then why not act upon it?

The Minister for Mines: What, pull up the Sandstone line?

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes.

The Minister for Mines: You are not serious.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Of course I am not, but I would not be surprised if it was proposed to act on that recommendation. I was surprised at the outlook of some members who suggested the adoption of that course. One would imagine that we were about to hand the country back to the black fellows.

The Minister for Mines: Did you hear the decision of the Government on that matter?

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes, and I was pleased to hear it. But some members favour the pulling up of that railway, and those members are not on the Government side either. Anyone who suggests that course is lacking in outlook. In his opinion, apparently, the country begins and ends with the present generation, and there is no future for it. I could imagine that if Sandstone were a dead-end the Government might say, "If the place does not provide traffic, we will take up the railway." But when one realises that there are hundreds of miles of pastoral country beyond Sandstone, on the eve of great developments, one cannot have much respect for the opinion of a Royal Commissioner who advocates the taking up of the Sandstone railway. I do not know what the Royal Commissioner's instructions were, but in my opinion he went beyond his instructions when he made recommendations regarding Government policy. In my opinion it was not the Royal Commissioner's business to recommend Government policy.

It was his business to report just how the existing railways should be maintained and administered to the best advantage of the country. I consider that he exceeded his instructions when he gave advice to the Government regarding the pulling up or the laying down of railways. I am glad that the Government have determined not to pull up the Sandstone railway. Events have justified that decision. The Royal Commissioner spent a few hours at Sandstone. He apparently made no inquiries at all regarding the country around the district, or the settlement taking place. If he had done so he could never have made that recommendation. Neither could he have condemned the erection of stock yards at Sandstone. On that subject his report states—

New Stock Yards, Sandstone.—It is almost incredible that work costing £931 should have been undertaken quite recently at the above station. These yards are the same size as those at Meekatharra, in addition to which a very long siding has been constructed. From a return furnished by the Railway Department, the following stock has been dealt with for six months:—

Despatched.	Received.
15 horses.	—
46 cattle.	—
1,880 sheep	2,976 sheep.

These figures speak for themselves and prove that there was no necessity for this large expense.

Within a few months of the giving of that report, the stock received at Sandstone more than doubled itself; 39 trucks were sent away in the period referred to by the Royal Commissioner, and a few months later 68 trucks were sent away. The Royal Commissioner said that smaller yards might have been erected; but how could smaller yards deal with 300 or 400 cattle? The cattle are not sent away a truck or two at a time, but in hundreds, because there is a fortnightly service. The Commissioner fell in my estimation by making that recommendation. Had he made inquiries, he would have discovered that the best country available for pastoral settlement in this State to-day is that beyond Sandstone. There has been more settlement in that district during the past two years than in any other part of Western Australia, and settlement is proceeding apace. Dingoes are being destroyed there at the rate of a hundred a month. Latterly they have been destroying sheep, but apart from that the country is some of the best sheep country to be found in Western Australia. Water is to be found at shallow depth.

Mr. Davies: What stopped the settlement of that country before?

Hon. M. F. TROY: The dogs. On one station, Dandarragan, 100 dingoes were destroyed within a month. For five years, I have been told by someone connected with Dandarragan, the station never marked a lamb. But severe measures have now been taken against the dingo.

Mr. Clydesdale: That country is equal to any in Australia.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Absolutely. Moreover, there is great prospect of a mining revival in that district, and I hope to see that revival within 12 months. I am not in a position to criticise the Royal Commissioner except upon facts within my own knowledge. I was always assured that he was a very competent railway man, but when I read his report I could not help feeling that he had entered into some matters in a very pettifogging spirit. Some of the things he magnified were very minute matters, and ought not to have received the consideration he gave them in his report. It was shown, too, that he accepted statements which were not verified—statements, for instance, regarding the building of houses at Mullewa, on the construction of which it was said the men had been loafing. Subsequently it was shown that the men supposed to have been loafing were not employed by the Railway Department. Had the Royal Commissioner taken care to know his facts, he would not have made such errors. His errors have, in my opinion, weakened his whole case. No doubt the Government could easily make the railway system pay by pulling up a number of lines which are not paying.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It would be a very foolish thing to do.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes. The Government that would do such a thing would be a Government which had abandoned all hope, and had no faith in the future of the country, and ought to be put out of office as speedily as possible. But the Government have recently brought in a measure for the purpose, we are told, of encouraging settlement along the Eastern railway, for the purpose of insisting upon increased settlement on lands along that railway. I fear, however, that the Government's Bill will have very little effect in that direction. If the Government were to insist upon the carrying out of the improvement conditions on conditional purchase leases, they would be doing a great deal to make the railways more profitable than they are to-day.

The Minister for Mines: The improvement conditions are being enforced.

Hon. M. F. TROY: When travelling along the Wongan Hills railway line one cannot help being struck with the fact that land which was virgin country when the railway was built, eight or nine years ago, is still virgin country to-day. The member for Cue (Mr. Chesson) and the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willecock) and I were travelling over that railway when it was being constructed, eight or nine years ago. The member for Geraldton was driving the locomotive, and he pointed out to the member for Cue and myself a certain piece of land as the nicest bit of agricultural country along the line. That particular piece of country is now almost in a virgin state, as it was when the line was built. Inasmuch as the Agricultural Bank are making advances for the

development of agricultural lands, the people who hold such lands ought to be asked to make reasonable improvements on their properties as defined by the Land Act, by virtue of their obligation to make which they hold their lands. I know that on some of this land the Agricultural Bank will not make advances, but that is a very recent policy. I understand that the Agricultural Bank have turned down what they call York gum propositions. In that connection I know numbers of people who have recently been refused advances. The sooner we know the policy of the Government in this regard, the better. It is no use asking people to take up country of this character adjacent to the railways unless the Government are prepared to say, "We will help you to improve your properties." Perhaps I should not discuss this matter now, but it has a relation to the question of railway policy. The Lands Department say those lands are worth so much money, and the Agricultural Bank say they are worth nothing, or not sufficient to entitle the bank to accept them as security for advances. That is the sort of thing which is retarding development. The Government's policy in this respect should be defined one way or the other as soon as possible. This is not exactly the time to discuss the policy of the Lands Department, but it has a bearing on railway policy, and on the question why our railways are not paying, and therefore I refer to it. If the Agricultural Bank officials will not take the responsibility, the Government must take it. Otherwise these railways can never pay, but will always be a burden on the country. Whilst I am not prepared to say that the Royal Commissioner has been correct in all his condemnations of the Railway Department, I wish to state that there is more mal-administration in the department than there ought to be. I saw an instance at Mullewa the other day. The train came into Mullewa before time, and did not get away from Mullewa for nearly two hours. I inquired into the cause of the delay, and was told that there ought to be a body of men to do the shunting, but that the body of men had been sent away. I told the Minister about the matter, and he promised to make inquiry. I understand he did inquire and found that my statement was correct. That sort of thing should not occur. There is a gang of men kept to attend to shunting at an important junction like Mullewa, and somebody is in error when the men are sent away. And that sort of thing has happened more than once. The two hours of delay to the train have to be paid for by the department, and in addition there is the inconvenience and also the cost to the travellers. Another matter may be mentioned. On the Geraldton-Mullewa section the Railway Department proposed to relay the sleepers, and they carried over the railways a large number of sleepers, and dropped them on the line. Then the department changed their minds, and carried the sleepers to Geraldton. That was an unnecessary expense. I

want to know how the Commissioner of Railways can justify administration of that sort. Again, notwithstanding the need for economy, there has been a tendency for one official to travel around the country in the Commissioner's car. I have seen a train dragging that car hundreds of miles, when the official could very well have travelled in an ordinary compartment. That is being done by officials who ought to set an example.

The Minister for Mines: They are out on inspection work.

Hon. M. F. TROY: No. When there is inspection work, a body of men go along. As I say, I know of instances of one official having a whole coach and a steward to himself. That sort of thing is deserving of censure. Reference has been made to the erratic service on the Murchison line. A few years ago we had a magnificent train service there. Today, despite a slight decline in the passenger traffic, the traffic as a whole has actually increased, and the department is charging exceedingly high rates for stock. A population giving such material help to the railway system ought to be afforded a decent railway service. The department apparently is experimenting with the service, changing it every few months.

The Minister for Mines: No, only twice a year.

Hon. M. F. TROY: They alter the time table, and recently they have cut out trains and so caused much inconvenience to travellers. The trains frequently run late. There are occasions when they run to time, but very rarely.

Mr. Chesson: Very rarely.

The Minister for Mines: It is better now than it has been for many years past.

Mr. Chesson: It is worse than ever.

Hon. M. F. TROY: We have two trains per week. Usually they are crowded with passengers, yet those trains cannot be run to a time table. Recently the locomotive which runs from Meekatharra was taken off at Yalgoo and replaced by another which took the train on to Mullewa. I learn from the Mullewa men that the strain on the locomotive running such long distances without attention is a prime cause in the delay. Moreover, it means doubtful economy, because it entails a very short life for the engine, while it is a serious inconvenience to those travelling long distances over that line. When the department is after economy, it should be economy with efficiency. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) rebuked some country members because of their opposition to tramway extensions in Perth, and said that so long as the people of Perth were prepared to pay for their trams there should be no opposition. I say there will not be.

The Minister for Mines: There has been opposition to tramway extensions generally. You have been among the most bitter.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I admit it. The great danger in this House is the city influence. If the city had no Parliamentary representatives at all, it would still have more influence

in the House than would 10 country constituencies.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The best representatives we have are the city men.

Hon. M. F. TROY: So they ought to be. They complain about the bad water in Perth.

Mr. Clydesdale: They are justly entitled to do so.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yet 75 per cent. of the people in the country have to cart water nine and ten miles.

The Minister for Railways: It is not because we do not try to cater for them. All our dams are empty.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I know one well with a windmill and storage tank. Both windmill and storage tank are out of order, and in consequence people have to cart their water eight and nine miles.

The Minister for Mines: We provided an expensive dam in a certain locality and the people there allowed the roof to fall in and then asked us to send a man to fix it up. I suppose you want the same.

Hon. M. F. TROY: No, I do not. If in the city the Government provide a supervisor of water supply, they ought to have one in each country district, as in New South Wales. It is wrong that any private person should have the responsibility of attending to the water supply in any district. As I was saying, if the city had no representation here at all, it would still get more than its rightful due. Frequently I hear men in tramcars criticising those cars. They are lucky to have cars at all.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are one of the bitterest opponents in the House to the provision of facilities in the city.

Mr. Money: That is only right when we cannot get money for country roads.

The Minister for Mines: If we provide a road for you you do not pay for it, whereas the users of the trams do pay.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Hon. members should not get excited.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Your invariable policy is nothing for anybody else, but everything for yourself.

The Minister for Mines: Give city men some consideration. How are they to get to their work without trams?

Mr. Clydesdale: He would have them walk.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The resources of the country are not sufficient to give advantages and comfort to everybody. If there be anybody who has little to complain of in this regard, it is the people in the city. I am saying that without any antagonism at all. It is merely a statement of fact. City people get advantages because of their numbers.

Mr. Clydesdale: Frequently they have to pay for what they don't actually receive.

Hon. M. F. TROY: For all administration of Government the country pays. Without the country the city could not exist.

Mr. Clydesdale: That applies all over the world.

The Minister for Mines: It does not alter the fact that you must have your city.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I am speaking without any antagonism to the city.

Mr. Clydesdale: Still, you speak in the same strain every time.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Provided the city people are prepared to pay for their tramways I have no objection. My objection is that under pretence of paying they get the Government to build tramway lines at the expense of the country.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, they do not.

Hon. M. F. TROY: They say it is a paying proposition, and the Minister says, "Put people out into the suburbs."

The Minister for Mines: They are there. That is the trouble. The worker is the man who is suffering.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Como, for instance.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, Como.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The land agents who have blocks of land to sell in these districts, and whose properties are enriched in value by reason of the trams, are the people who are suffering. Between Perth and Midland Junction there are large areas of vacant land alongside the railway upon which homes could be built.

Mr. Money: Hundreds of acres.

Mr. Clydesdale: That applies everywhere.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Here is an opening for the Government.

Mr. Money: There is land between Bayswater and Midland Junction.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Government are building tramways into new districts—

Mr. Money: And competing with the railways.

Hon. M. F. TROY: To enrich the land agent and a number of gentlemen in Perth, who form themselves into syndicates, buy areas of land, and subdivide them for sale.

Mr. Clydesdale: That is done all over the world.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Of course.

Mr. Clydesdale: You must have just wakened up.

Mr. Money: Two wrongs do not make a right.

Hon. P. Collier: You should see the bungalows of the working man around Como.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, there are dozens of them, and you will not mind having the votes of those men later on.

Hon. P. Collier: It will be a haven of retreat for some of you fellows.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. M. F. TROY: My object is to stress this evil.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You think you can change an old-established custom, do you?

Hon. M. F. TROY: I am going to vote against this sort of thing. So long as the city people agree to pay for their own trams I will not oppose them, but I shall oppose any subterfuge, any pretence, that a tram-line will be paid for when in actual fact it will be a charge upon the State.

Mr. Clydesdale: You could build a tramway to any terminus, and it would pay at once.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Let the people establish a board to take over the whole system, provide their own capital, and build their own lines.

The Minister for Mines: If I brought down a Bill for that purpose you would oppose it.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Minister should not assume too much.

The Minister for Mines: It would be the policy of your party to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. M. F. TROY: It is not possible for the railway system to pay whilst we have such a large mileage for so small a population. The Government should not proceed with the construction of new railways until existing lines have been placed upon a proper basis. They are adopting a suicidal policy, one that will only bring calamity to the country. We ought to make the most of the railways we have, and insist upon land owners situated alongside them producing as much from their land as they can. No Commissioner could make the railways pay whilst this policy of railway construction is continued. The people of the back country will be unable to carry on their industries so long as the only way of relieving the railways is to increase the burdens placed upon those people.

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

Mr. HERON (Mt. Leonora) [5-35]: I do not altogether blame the Commissioner of Railways for the present position. The blame lies rather at the door of the Government. They have not laid down their policy. The Commissioner has done his best, but he has the Minister forcing him on the one side, and politicians and the public forcing him on the other. His is not a bed of roses. Fares have been increased right through the service to such an extent as to make the railways unpopular. In the outer suburban areas there is a class of people the Government cannot afford to starve into the city. People have gone out there because they can get more land at a cheaper price, and because by growing their own vegetables they can reduce the cost of living. It is also healthier for their families to live out of the city. Some five or six years ago the fare to Cannington was 7d. return, whereas to-day it is 1s. 4d. The Minister cannot justify that increase of over 100 per cent. He is forcing these people to come into the city because they cannot afford to pay such high fares. Friends of mine have been looking for a house in the city for weeks because of this position. The city is already overcrowded, and people should be encouraged to keep away from it.

Mr. Clydesdale: They need a tramway extension.

Mr. HERON: If any district warranted a tramway extension I would not vote against it. Cheap transport facilities must be provided to help along these outlying districts. The member for South Fremantle asked a question about the deposits on season tickets. It is not fair to forfeit these deposits in the case of a person who has lost his season ticket after about a

week's use. The deposit is held for all time. If a person loses his ticket he has to pay 1s. for a declaration to that effect, and 10 per cent. fine on the amount that has already been paid for the ticket. That is unfair. It cannot cost the department all that money to issue a new ticket. This amounts to a penalty imposed upon those who want to live out of the city. There is no doubt that motors are competing with the railways. Over short distances the motor transport is completely cutting out the railways. One firm in the city is arranging to run a goods service to Armadale, in preference to sending the goods by rail. The Commissioner is not to blame for this because his hands have been forced in an endeavour to make the railways pay. He should not be asked to do this with such a small population; the general taxpayers should make up the difference. Many firms in the city do not use the railways at all. If they want their goods brought up from Fremantle they either use their own motor lorries or pay for others to bring them. When, however, they send stores to outback centres it is the people who receive them who have to pay. These big firms do not contribute anything to the railway revenue. They should be made to pay a special tax in order to reduce the cost to people living out further. The Minister should go into every item of freight and see if reductions cannot be made in the case of those who live long distances from the city. I am in favour of the adoption of the zone system. I admit the freight is not heaped upon those who live a long way out in the same ratio as it is upon those who live a short distance out, but there should be a greater difference in the total freights charged. I have already made reference to the Eulaminna copper mine which has been closed down because of the excessive railway freights. They have been sending their ore to Cuming, Smith & Co., at Guildford, where it is used in the manufacture of superphosphates. Five or six years ago the freight on this ore was 12s. 6d. a ton. It was then increased to 14s. 10d., and last year rose to 22s. 10d. The mine is now closed down and the employees are looking for work elsewhere. It was intended by the management to spend another £1,000 in further sinking the shaft. They went to the expense of putting in a new boiler and getting new cisterns underground to pump water cheaply to the surface, and after all the arrangements had been made the news came along from the Commissioner at the last minute that a reduction could not be made. Therefore the mine was closed down and to-day it is idle. I hope the Minister will give the matter his attention. Another subject which was brought under the notice of the Minister when he was touring through the back country had reference to children living a long distance from the metropolitan area and the advisableness of granting them cheap fares to Perth.

The Minister for Mines: We cannot differentiate.

Mr. HERON: Yes you can, and the people of the back country are broad-minded enough not to take exception to anything that may be done in that direction. Take Wiluna, which is 210 miles from the rail head. If parents wish to send their children to Perth there is a motor

car trip over that immense distance to the railway before the train journey is undertaken, and that is where the Minister could assist those people who are so far outback.

The Minister for Mines: What is the motor charge?

Mr. HERON: If the Minister would grant a concession on the railways I am satisfied that the people in the outback centres would send a car load to the train. With reference to the Leonora service, I hope it will be possible to put another train on shortly. I was at the Kalgoorlie station on Monday week when the train was going out and when the temperature was 104 in the shade. There was only one carriage on the train and 50 persons were being crammed into seven compartments of that carriage. Of course the railway officials realised that there was not enough room in that one coach and put another on. At the same time those 50 people had been provided with only three water bags. The other car was added only because I kicked up a row and the officials were then good enough to supply one more water bag. Four water bags for 50 people! At the present time the regulation is that three bags shall be provided for each coach. That, however, is not enough for people who are travelling long distances in the back country. I can quote an instance where a person travelling down from Leonora with a sick child could not even get a drink on the way down. That is carrying things to extremes. The Minister should remember that these are not corridor cars. To assist outback centres the Minister and the Commissioner should do all they possibly can in the direction of reducing freights and fares, and also assist children to visit the coast once a year or perhaps once in every two years. Another matter to which I wish to refer is in regard to excursion tickets. Twelve months ago I interviewed the Commissioner on the subject of cutting down the period of the availability of excursion tickets from three months to two months. The Commissioner promised that where a request was made for the extension of three months it would be granted, but as we know it is not always convenient for women with children to bother about applying for that kind of thing. Last year the period of three months was permitted to remain, but this year the Commissioner has reverted to two months. Another matter on which complaints are made is that travellers by rail from, say, Leonora to Perth, are not permitted to break their journey at Kalgoorlie. If they take a ticket at Leonora they must travel to Perth by the first connecting train, regardless of the fact the traveller may have covered a distance of perhaps 500 miles before arriving at the head of the line. It is not a fair proposition. The Commissioner, of course, is afraid of ticket scalping, and he suggests that a person could easily take a ticket to Kalgoorlie from Leonora and then purchase another from Kalgoorlie to Perth. That, however, would not enable a person to avail himself of the excursion rate. A break of at least one day at Kalgoorlie should be permitted. I trust the Minister will deal with requests I have made, and give them favourable consideration.

Mr. CLYDESDALE (Canning) [5-55]: I have been surprised since entering this Chamber at the opposition that has been shown to anything connected with the metropolitan area. That opposition is not confined to the other side of the House. One would be led to believe that all the concessions are being granted to people residing in the metropolitan area. If we study the figures so far as railways are concerned hon. members will see that the deficit is being contributed to by the carrying of freights over our railways at rates that cannot possibly pay. Liberal concessions are granted to farmers. Of course it is a right and proper policy to grant concessions to farmers when they are starting operations, but I fail to see why the State should carry fertilisers for the benefit of those who are well able to pay.

Mr. Latham: How are you going to discriminate?

Mr. CLYDESDALE: By making those pay who can afford to pay; by assisting, say, the returned soldier who is starting on the land. Let us take the carriage of fertilisers in this State and compare the charges with those of South Australia and New South Wales. We charge 4s. 1d. per ton for the first 100 miles. In South Australia they charge 8s. per ton and in New South Wales the rate is 6s. 9d. In Western Australia we carry fertilisers 150 miles for 5s. 2d., whilst in South Australia the rate is 8s. 1d. I merely quote these figures to show that all the privileges are not being given to the metropolitan area.

Mr. Money: Have you the New Zealand figures?

Mr. CLYDESDALE: No; the figures I have are quite sufficient for my purpose. In New South Wales the carriage over 150 miles is 7s. 7d. In Western Australia we carry fertilisers for the first 200 miles at 6s. 2d. per ton, whilst in South Australia the charge is 13s. 9d.

Mr. Mann: What did they charge in South Australia 20 years ago when the farming industry was being developed?

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Does the hon. member mean to tell me that in places like Bruce Rock, Merredin and Katanning, where farmers have been on the land for years, that those farmers are not in a position to pay higher rates?

Mr. Latham: How many years have they been there?

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Long before the hon. member started farming. There are any number of farmers in this State who should not be receiving the privileges they are getting to-day. The point I wish to make is that we are always complaining about our railways not paying. Do we want them to pay or do we not want them to pay? We are giving the farmers a bonus of anything up to £400,000 and yet the people who are condemning the Commissioner of Railways are themselves farmers.

Mr. Hickmott: What is the cost in Victoria?

Mr. CLYDESDALE: In Western Australia we carry fertilisers 200 miles for 6s. 2d. and in South Australia the charge is 8s. over 100 miles, or 25 per cent. more than our charge and for half the distance. Yet we hear complaints from members representing farming constituencies about the privileges being granted to the metropolitan area.

Mr. Wilson : And they complain because they pay too much for coal.

Mr. Mann : What do they charge for coal ?

Mr. CLYDESDALE : I will give that later on. Take a train load in the other States as compared with Western Australia. An engine in Victoria would haul at least one-third more than an engine here. Consider also the tonnage carried. One would expect freights to be a little higher here, but we find that our railways are carrying super 200 miles for 6s. 2d., whereas in South Australia 8s. is charged for a distance of 100 miles. The farmers here have nothing to complain about.

Mr. Harrison : What is a train load in Victoria ?

Mr. CLYDESDALE : I have not the actual figures, but I am informed that 80 tons as an average train load cannot be carried here for less than 2d. per ton per mile. I know members of the Country Party do not like these figures, but they are always complaining about the metropolitan area.

Mr. Latham : And the metropolitan area is always complaining about the country.

Mr. CLYDESDALE : The people of the metropolitan area are doing all they can to assist the country, and the country people give them no credit for it.

Hon. P. Collier : The member for York should take his guel.

Mr. CLYDESDALE : We carry wheat 100 miles for 10s. 11d., whereas in South Australia the charge is 11s. 5d. and I suppose for every ton we carry, 10 tons are carried in South Australia. In Victoria the charge is 10s. 10d., and in New South Wales 11s. 6d. For a distance of 150 miles we charge 12s. 6d., South Australia charges 12s. 7d., Victoria 12s. 10d., and New South Wales 13s. 7d. For 200 miles we charge 14s. 1d., South Australia charges 14s. 1d., Victoria 14s. 4d., and New South Wales 14s. 5d.

Mr. Mann : Do you suggest that we should raise the freights to the goldfields ?

Mr. CLYDESDALE : No, because the goldfields have had to carry the farmers and the State for years. The goldfields have now reached a stage when they are in need of some assistance.

Mr. Mann : You suggested that.

Mr. CLYDESDALE : I visited the hon. member's farm and found that the railways carried a truck of livestock from Nungarin to Perth, a distance of 190 miles, for 33s. I suppose the hon. member would not contend that that was a payable proposition. Yet members complain of the treatment they are receiving from the Government.

Mr. Latham : The object is to give you cheap food supplies.

Mr. CLYDESDALE : The hon. member is more deeply interested in what he can get for himself. The farmers make as much as they can for themselves, and do not trouble about the other chap.

Mr. Harrison : That is your policy.

Mr. CLYDESDALE : What is happening in the metropolitan area ? The Commissioner of Railways knows that there are only a certain number of people to travel in the trains and he has increased the fares in some instances by 100 per cent. Why has that been necessary ?

To pay for the privileges granted to the farmers. I do not say that this is a wrong policy.

Mr. Harrison : You said the farmers are riding on the backs of the people in the goldfields areas.

Mr. CLYDESDALE : Yes, otherwise the farmers would not be as well off as they are to-day.

Mr. Munsie : The farmers are getting many more privileges than the goldfields people.

Mr. CLYDESDALE : I doubt whether any commodity carried for the farmers is carried at a profit.

Mr. Harrison : What has made the cost so heavy ?

Mr. CLYDESDALE : Victoria is charging up to 2d. per mile, but owing to political influence the charge here has been reduced. The more wheat and produce we carry on our railways, the greater is the loss.

Mr. Harrison : That is nonsense.

Mr. CLYDESDALE : The hon. member is all right in getting pigs carted for 3s. each and realising 50s. for them in the market. Recently I was bemoaning to a railway officer the fact that on the Wongan Hills line the people were having a bad season. He replied that he was sorry for the people's sake but he added, "Thank goodness it will save the department money." I expressed astonishment at his statement, and he added, "The more wheat we carry, the greater is our loss." That is the position throughout Western Australia to-day.

Mr. Latham : I would like to know the name of that railway official.

Mr. Munsie : The Commissioner of Railways himself says wheat is not a payable freight.

Mr. CLYDESDALE : Of course it is not. In fact, the carriage of most commodities from the agricultural areas is not paying. I take exception to members of the Country Party blaming the Commissioner and the officials, because produce is being carried at a non-paying price. Not one commodity is charged up to 2d. per ton.

Mr. Mann : Who is blaming the department ?

Mr. CLYDESDALE : The hon. member, in addition to a great many other people. The farmers are blaming the Railway Department. The Royal Commission was appointed because the farmers considered the Commissioner of Railways was to blame. Take any commodity which is being carried to-day. Coal, of which 221,000 tons was carried last year, is paying 1-23d.

Mr. Latham : What about the stuff carried out of the metropolitan area ?

Mr. CLYDESDALE : I am dealing with stuff carried into the metropolitan area. Chaff is carried at 1-43d., wheat at 1-09d., firewood at 1-77d., fertiliser at 54d., ores, minerals, bricks, etc., at 1-61d.

Mr. Latham : What about wool ?

Mr. CLYDESDALE : On the tonnage carried, it is estimated that the farmers are receiving the equivalent of a bonus of £400,000 a year from the railways. If members want the Commissioner to make the railways pay, they should be fair and permit him to add that £400,000 to his figures, and strike a balance on that. That would be only a fair and reasonable proposition. I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am not opposed to the farmer.

Mr. Hickmott: Cut him out altogether.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: We do not want to cut him out. No one has done more in his own humble way for the farmer than I have.

Mr. Harrison: You would not have had such a good cut had it not been for the farmer.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Never mind that. Fares in the metropolitan area have been raised to a considerable extent to meet the demands made by the farmer. Take the Northam district where farmers have been settled for many years. Should we carry fertilisers for them at the special rate?

Mr. Hughes: To the Premier's farm?

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Yes. Should we carry fertilisers for those farmers for 4s. 1d. per ton? Is that a fair and reasonable proposition when they can afford to pay the full rate for it?

Mr. Latham: The short distance farmers pay all right.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: A good many farmers who are in a position to pay are receiving privileges they have no right to receive.

Mr. Harrison: Why not differentiate in your rates for the metropolitan area?

Mr. CLYDESDALE: On an ordinary day a man can travel two miles on the suburban line for 6d., but if he wishes to attend a sports gathering on Saturday, he is charged 2s. 8d. Would the hon. member like to increase that rate?

Mr. Hughes: That is the day you set out to be fleeced.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Perhaps so.

The Minister for Mines: That is not equal to the charge made in the East.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Then I would have no objection to it being increased provided the farmers are brought up to the same rate.

Mr. Munsie: It is the dearest ride in the world.

The Premier: People do not pay as much to go out to a meeting as they pay to get through the gate.

The Minister for Mines: The dearest ride in the world is through the racecourse turnstile.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Members have been trying to cast blame on the Commissioner of Railways. It has been suggested that the position might be improved by the appointment of two or three Commissioners.

Mr. Latham: One of them could watch the farmers.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: If they were all as slippery as the hon. member, they would need some watching. If it is desired to make our railways pay, the Commissioner should be given a free hand for 12 months to fix his own rates.

Mr. A. Thomson: And fix his own wages, too?

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Yes; I doubt whether he would desire to reduce any of them.

Mr. A. Thomson: Give him a free hand over the lot.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: I would not be afraid to do that.

Mr. Munsie: He has pretty well a free hand now.

Mr. A. Thomson: No, he has not.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: If it is the policy of the country to assist people on the land by not asking them to pay the full rates, members should be fair to the Commissioner of Railways and should

refrain from reiterating that all the privileges go to the metropolitan area. The people of the metropolitan area pay for everything they get. They cannot go half a mile without paying a tax, but they are not crying about it all the time.

The Minister for Mines: They do not cry, but they ring up on the telephone and keep me awake half the night telling me about it.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: It does not appear to affect the Minister very much. If it is the policy of the Government to run the railways at a loss, the Commissioner should be given credit for the concessions allowed. After what I have stated it might seem inconsistent to suggest that the tramway fares charged in the metropolitan area should be reduced.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Are you going to squeal a bit now?

Mr. CLYDESDALE: I have never been known to squeal. The hon. member has done all the squealing I have heard this afternoon. It would be good policy to abolish the additional charge of 1d. charged for travelling on holidays and Sundays. There was a lot of squealing about the construction of the Como tramway. There was hardly a newspaper in the country which did not assert that the line would never pay. Why do the people go to Como in such numbers? It costs 2s. to 2s. 6d. to go to Cottesloe and for a man with a family the outlay is in the vicinity of 10s. To go to Como costs only 5d.

The Premier: But Como is not Cottesloe.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: The Government should adopt reasonable fares, and encourage the people to indulge in the healthy recreation they are looking for. If the fares to Cottesloe were reduced, the revenue would be greatly increased. I am aware that owing to the opposition from members of the Country Party we are short of rolling stock. Every time the Commissioner wanted to build a tram there was a howl from the Country Party, "You must not spend any more money in the metropolitan area. It will not be a payable proposition."

Mr. Latham: No one made that statement.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: It is quite a general cry from the Country Party that no money should be spent in the metropolitan area.

Sitting suspended from 6-15 to 7-30 p.m.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Mr. CLYDESDALE: I support the remarks of the member for Guildford as to the necessity for further tramway extension in the metropolitan area. I know the argument will be adduced that the money could be expended to greater advantage in other parts of the State. But that argument will be used for the next hundred years. We must not lose sight of the fact that the people are in the metropolitan area, and that they are prepared to pay for these services, as I have always stated. They are likewise prepared to pay their share of the general burdens of the State without complaining. They do, however, complain about not getting what they pay for, especially as regards water. The

Government could extend the tram lines from every terminus in the metropolitan area for a reasonable distance, and show a profit. Railway extension in the country costs a considerable amount of money, and will not pay for a number of years. We do not complain of that, because it is developmental policy. I hope many more railways will be constructed in the country.

Mr. Johnston: We have railways authorised in 1914 and not built yet.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: We have tramways promised 30 years ago, and further off than ever. Take the Inglewood extension. There are a thousand people in that locality who have to walk while they are prepared to pay for the necessary extension. Before the Royal Commission on tramway construction it was stated that they were prepared to guarantee interest and sinking fund on the cost of the extension. They know full well they will not be called upon to fulfil the guarantee. Again, the people at Belmont, numbers of whom are tilling the soil, were promised a tramway twenty years ago. The Belmont farmers are just as much entitled to consideration as are farmers outback. Before long we shall have a period of unemployment, such as proved so serviceable in connection with the Como tramway. A period of unemployment must come, and we should make provision for it. Between seasons numbers of people are out of work, and they are better employed on reproductive work than on unproductive work. If the Premier will order sufficient tramway construction material, they can be employed on reproductive work. Apart from the Como extension, there has been only four miles of tramway extension in the metropolitan area during the last nine years. I give the Premier warning now that unemployment is bound to come along again, and that we should make preparation for it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany—in reply) [7.37]: There is little calling for reply, because hon. members who introduced new matter, were dealing with subjects which have been thrashed pretty well threadbare during the last 10 or 15 years, to my knowledge. It is not astonishing that hon. members travelling about the country—and members of Parliament necessarily use the railways a great deal—should now and again come across something which they consider is lax in the railway service. At the same time, a member is not in a position to decide straight away how the difficulty arose. From merely seeing the outside he may jump to the conclusion that there are blunders being perpetrated by everyone from the Commissioner of Railways to the humblest servant of the department. Necessarily, a system employing 7,000 men cannot possibly be managed to absolute perfection. Other criticisms indulged in by some members—only some—were really in the nature of demands that in replying on the general discussion I

should duplicate what I said when introducing the Estimates. When hon. members know that the Estimates of so important a department as the railways are coming up for discussion, it is hardly right for them unnecessarily to absent themselves from the Chamber while I endeavour to make a comprehensive statement with regard to the system. The member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson), for instance, sees something on the railways that he thinks ought to be elucidated. Accordingly he asks me in making my reply to deal with a subject which I mentioned when introducing these Estimates. The hon. member should have stated whether he agreed or disagreed with what I said. I do not propose to repeat myself with regard to matters that I have already dealt with comprehensively in my introductory remarks. I object to members making a public criticism of a public official like the Commissioner of Railways merely on the strength of a statement by some outsider—who may or may not be an interested party—without first satisfying themselves that the statement is well founded. Certainly, members should not give publicity here to foolish and irresponsible statements. I refer particularly to such a statement as that made by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall), and repeated by the member for Cue (Mr. Chesson), that some merchant or trader in Perth, upon being asked by a resident of Meekatharra or Cue to quote for five tons of coal, replied that it would be better for the customer to obtain six tons, because it would cost more in railway freight to forward five tons than six, the reason being that five tons would not fill a truck. In point of fact, that is not correct. The five tons would have been accepted as a truckload, in compliance with the railway regulations. The statement in question could never have been made by a responsible trader, and it ought not to have been repeated to the detriment of the Railway Department until substantiated. If not substantiated, it ought not to have been mentioned here at all. Again, the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) and the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) and two or three other members, either by interjection or otherwise referred to a concession being given to the wife and family of a farmer but not extended to the wife and family of a farm labourer. I said at the time that I did not believe such was the case, but that I thought it would apply to the farm labourer's wife and family in the same circumstances. As a matter of fact, the concession does so apply; and there is not a single instance on record where an application for this concession from a farm labourer's wife and family has not been granted, and quite without question, in the same way as the concession is granted to the wife and family of a farmer. In the case mentioned by the member for South Fremantle, the files referring to the application nowhere disclose that the concession was being sought on behalf of the wife of a farm labourer. It is true

that the application was made on behalf of the wife of a person residing in an agricultural town; but that fact of itself would not bring the applicant within the terms under which the concession is granted. If the Railway Department had been advised that the concession was sought for the wife of a farm labourer employed in farming operations, it would have been granted to her in the same way as to a farmer's wife. All I can say is that it does apply and will continue to apply to the farm labourer's wife and family as well as to the farmer's wife and family. But it will not apply to the labourer himself, any more than to a business man carrying on business in a country town; because he can take advantage of the ordinary excursion rates. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) said a good deal about the period occupied in bring down livestock from the Murchison. Delays have taken place and will, I expect, take place in future when it is impossible to avoid them; but it is not quite as bad as the hon. member suggested. One or two instances of undue delay have occurred. The case he mentioned in particular was brought under the notice of the Commissioner, and the Commissioner readily conceded that there had been delay which might be avoided in future. There has been no complaint since.

Mr. Marshall: It has been repeated since.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The other case mentioned by the hon. member was that certain trucks had been put off and replaced by trucks of rags, bones or bottles. That was not quite a fact. What happened was that, due to heavy consignments of livestock, there was certain delay. After a deputation waited on the Commissioner he pointed out that whereas previously the journey for livestock from Meekatharra to Midland had occupied from 42 to 46 hours, a variation had been made until the journey now occupies only 33½ hours. Taking into account the distance and the conditions, the department did very well in getting it through in that time.

Mr. Marshall: Do you mean to suggest that they bring a stock train through to Midland in 33½ hours?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: Well, the person who gave you that information is an impostor.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: At the present time stock from Meekatharra is carried to Midland by mixed train in 33½ hours. This is the fastest stock transit in Australia. The hon. member says he gave day and date in order to have no misunderstanding, and that four bogies of cattle were cut off at Nannine on the 25th October last and four others taken on in their place; that the cattle arrived at Midland 18 hours late and, in consequence, missed the Wednesday sale, due to bad administration. As a matter of fact no livestock was put off the Nannine train on the 25th October, because the 25th October was itself a Wednesday. Evidently the hon. member meant the 23rd. However, that does not matter. The facts were these: An order was lodged by a firm to load stock on the 22nd

October. Owing to heavy loading the department was unable to accept that date, and Messrs. Clark and Phillips were advised that stock would be accepted on the 25th, subject to the animals being attended to at Cue, as it was impossible to advise through transit. The owners agreed, and signed with full knowledge. No trucks of bottles, bags, bones or anything of the sort were put on at Cue in place of the trucks taken off. I have already admitted that these difficulties and delays will arise in the future as in the past. We cannot entirely avoid them, for with such big operations they must occur. But, taken in the gross they do not occur any more on our system than on any other system. I could produce a photograph showing the removal of livestock on the Queensland railways, a railway system expected to be as up to date as any system in Australia in point of carriage of livestock. They have had to unload scores of cattle and sheep en route and kill them in order to save the skins, because of the time occupied in transit. Would anyone say that because that has happened they have failed and that everything is wrong? I cannot help thinking we do just as well as is done in most other places, and that in respect of the shifting of livestock we do somewhat better. Then there was the question of the dispensing with the services of Connolly. I knew nothing about it until the case was mentioned here. I then sent for the file. Connolly had 25 years' service. A man who can remain 25 years practically in the same position, never getting past the point of minimum adult rate, has not shown very much diligence.

Mr. Hughes: The Commissioner said he was diligent.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, according to his ability.

Mr. Hughes: And to the satisfaction of the Commissioner. Whom else had he to satisfy?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: At a time when, because there is no adult work available for them, we are dispensing with youths who have reached the adult age, youths who have given evidence of progress, passing all examinations, we are not entitled to retain in our service men who merely want to hang on for 25 years doing their work indifferently. I do not care what happened in the past in respect of other Commissioners or other officers, when we actually discover that a man is hanging on to his position in the railway service, merely sitting there to qualify for an old age pension, we must pass him out.

Mr. Mann: Why was he not charged with being incapable and passed out on that score?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He was charged.

Mr. Hughes: He was not charged. If he was, why did you not give him a chance to answer the charge?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In my opinion the best course was adopted, even from Connolly's own point of view, except of course that he wanted a pension.

Mr. Hughes: He was entitled to it under the Act.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He was not entitled to it. If he could not obtain from anybody in a responsible position a certificate of diligence, he was not entitled to a pension. In 1916, after a number of complaints in the department had been made against him, he was reduced in status. He appealed to the appeal board, upon which sits a representative of the union. That appeal board dismissed his appeal, which is evidence that there was ground for the charge brought against him. I want to tell the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) that there are hundreds of men for whom he has been fighting in the labour ranks, who have been tipped out with less consideration than Connolly got, who did not get a year's salary in lieu of notice of dismissal, and about whom nothing has been heard. But we have reached that stage in administration when anybody aggrieved in the Public Service can get plenty of men to take his case to Parliament while more deserving men in the mining industry and other private employment can get no champion. The State does not exist for the purpose of benefitting public servants alone. I say that Connolly obtained absolute justice, having regard to the services he rendered to the State.

Mr. Underwood: No, he did not get justice. He got mercy. He was treated very mercifully.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I regret that the case was ever mentioned in Parliament. Members have asked that I should hold an inquiry. I am not going to do it. If members imagine they can get me to act as a court of appeal to deal with every grievance held by railway men, they are coming to the wrong man.

Mr. Hughes: Is there not a big principle involved?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The principle involved is this: The Commissioner went into Connolly's case and declared that he could not give the necessary certificate; but he said "I have approved of his receiving 12 months salary."

Mr. Underwood: That is where the mercy comes in.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The union took up the case and saw the Commissioner. The Commissioner, desiring to be fair to Connolly, said he was not against Connolly's case being reviewed by the Public Service Appeal Board. The matter was submitted to the pensions board, consisting of the Solicitor General, the Under Secretary for Law and the Public Service Commissioner. The Solicitor General was definite in saying that Connolly could receive a pension only under Section 6. Under Section 6 it was necessary that Connolly should have a certificate, as set out in Section 7. The Solicitor General said that in view of the opinions expressed on the file by officers under whom Connolly had been

working, he did not see that it was possible for such a certificate to be given.

Mr. Hughes: He did not hear what the Commissioner for Railways said.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And again the Commissioner said, "Let him go to the appeal board."

Mr. Hughes: He knew that Connolly could not go there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: All I can say is that if Parliament is going to waste its time in considering no better case than can be presented for Connolly, we shall waste a lot of time and a lot of the taxpayers' money. I say that Connolly received fair treatment at the hands of the Commissioner. He was given 12 months salary.

Mr. Underwood: It was a shame to give it to him.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He has not much to complain about.

Mr. Hughes: It was a gross repudiation of a contract.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nothing of the sort. Having dealt with one or two cases of neglect or unfair treatment of members of the railway service, may I come to the paramount question before us, namely the policy controlling the operations of our railway system? We have reached a stage in our railway history when for the moment we are not quite clear as to what should be the policy underlying the operations of the system. On the one hand members on both sides of the House, particularly on the cross benches, are prepared to declare that the policy of the railways should be that they shall recover from the users of the system sufficient to pay working expenses plus interest on the capital outlay. On the other hand the same members are prepared to declare that in certain directions our railway system shall be operated for the purpose of assisting in the development of our industries. That sentiment will be re-echoed by members on all sides of the House, but it is not practicable. We cannot have both things. We cannot use our railway system for the purpose of developing industries and at the same time compel the users to pay the cost of operating and interest charges on the capital outlay, any more than we can ask the farmer and others who are using our high roads to pay sufficient by way of tax on vehicles using the roads, not only to make them but to maintain them and provide a sinking fund for their repairs. In the circumstances if we are to use our railways to assist in the development of our industries we ought to declare to what length we are prepared to go. We should do this in fairness to the staff which is operating the system, from the Commissioner to the porter. The Commissioner certainly does not load coal. He has men to do this. The complaints made by some members opposite are really made against those who are providing the labour which is operating our system. They will blunder just as the Commissioner may blunder, but in the interests of those who are running the sys-

tem we ought to say in what direction we are prepared to use our railways for development purposes. Having done that we ought to say we will permit a certain amount to be levied against the general taxpayer, or to be made up by the Treasury to assist in that direction.

Mr. Willcock: That is what we have said all along.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: For the information, particularly of members occupying the cross benches. I would point out that we are to-day facing a great difficulty with regard to water supply in some of the agricultural districts, principally between the Murchison and the Eastern Goldfields lines, and along the Wongan Hills line. The Railway Department must from the nearest point available obtain water either from the goldfields scheme or from any public or railway dam. They must carry that water where it is required by the settlers who last year had an insufficient supply. We know that if the taxpayer were to pay the ordinary charges for their water at the point of supply, plus the rate of hauling it to the point of delivery on the regular basis laid down in our rate book, we might just as well ask the settler to leave his holding, come to Perth and drink the metropolitan water, because he could not afford to pay for it.

The Minister for Works: And he does not do so either.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Would members charge it against the Commissioner at the end of the year that he had been at fault because he had supplied water at less than cost? It would not be a fair charge to levy against him. The proper thing to do is to arrange with the Minister for Water Supply to first of all supply the water. Then it is our duty as a Railway Department to carry it, and it is the duty of the two departments representing the State to deliver it at a price that the settler can afford to pay, to remain on his holding and produce something from it next year. The difference between the price he can pay and the cost to the railway system should be made up by the Treasury. That is, the department should get credit for it. We ought to do that in respect to other industries. If we did, the general taxpayer and Parliament would know where they stood, and what is was costing us to subsidise some of our industries. The railway system, too, would be placed on a basis that all railway systems should be placed on, to enable us to understand where we were.

Mr. Willcock: It is not only the cost of the water, but the railways may be running short themselves.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That will arise in some cases. For the purposes of providing the immediate requirements of settlers we have sometimes used water in our railway dams, and had to take water from a greater distance and at a heavier cost for locomotive purposes. We are not asking the

Railway Department to be recouped from the Treasury for that. All we say is that if we render these services to the general community, which are not required in ordinary railway operations, the difference between the price we should be able to demand from the taxpayer and the cost of providing the service should be recouped to the Department which renders it. This year the demand for water has become such that we have had to make it a general policy of understanding between the two departments, so that if applications are made they can be dealt with expeditiously, and no difficulty can arise. I notice that even members on the other side of the House have different opinions regarding some of the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner, just as members of the Government have. It can be fairly claimed, therefore, that nothing can be urged against the Government because we do not accept in their entirety the recommendations of Mr. Stead. In many directions the recommendations can probably be put into effect with good results, and in some cases, when funds are available and the material can be obtained more cheaply than at present, the work can be undertaken with advantage to the system and the State in general. I now come to the point raised by the member for North-East Fremantle, namely the electrification of portion of our railway system and the effecting of a saving in the process. I have no hesitation in saying that this is quite possible. The best evidence that such is the case is afforded by other railway systems in the world. Notwithstanding that they have passed through a period similar to that which we have gone through, and that most of the systems are held by private companies, they are still prepared to find huge sums of money to change over from steam to electricity. Even in South Africa the Government have spent between four and a half and five million pounds in changing over parts of their system from steam to electricity, because it is the only method known at the moment of economically working the railways. Railway systems throughout the world are to-day up against the problem of reducing the cost of carrying commodities which must reach the world's markets.

Mr. Lambert: They have water power in South Africa from the Victoria Falls.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are not using that alone. The water power which would supply electricity from the falls could not be carried economically to the parts of the system it is proposed to electrify. If this is necessary in the case of other countries, where goods have to be carried over short distances, it is all the more necessary in Western Australia where our producers have to transport their commodities long distances to the seaboard and then have to enter into competition with other countries where the haulages are over short distances. The competition in the world's market is keen. We must, therefore, turn our attention to methods by which we can place our producers on the

same footing as those of other countries. The only method I can see of introducing an early economy in this direction is by electrically operating our railway system, which would be of benefit not only to our producers, but to the State in general. I am speaking at present of course of only a portion of our railway system.

Mr. Johnston: Would you operate in that way outside the suburban area?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Mr. Lambert: Radiating from Collie?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have no hesitation in saying that once we commence, the benefits accruing not only to the metropolitan area, but to the country districts, will be of such an outstanding nature that we shall not cease to change over until the whole of our system from Fremantle to Merredin and from Northam to Albany and throughout the South-West is provided with electricity. It will not be long before the northern portion of the State follows suit.

Mr. Clydesdale: Would you keep to the present gauge?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. In South Africa they have a 3ft. 6in. gauge and have not changed it. They have performed a better service with electric power on a 3ft. 6in. gauge than they can on a 4ft. 8½in. or 5ft. 3in. gauge with a steam service.

Mr. Wilson: Where would you generate the electricity?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It would be generated at the place where it could most economically be done. Subject to the water condensing being satisfactory I believe it should be produced at the point where our coal is produced, so as to dispense with coal haulages. There are other questions than coal to be considered, and I will not therefore pledge myself on that point. The electrification of the railways would be a benefit not only to the Treasury but to the users of our system. Were this applied between Perth, Fremantle and Nogham it should pay handsomely. Not only would we pay interest and sinking fund charges on the capital outlay, but we should, I understand, show a profit as against steam operations. We should also get over one of the difficulties we shall presently be faced with. There will be an enormous traffic to be carried over the line between Northam and Fremantle. It is becoming so heavy that it will be very costly to operate the line, and there will be a demand for duplications. By electric hauling we can carry 100 per cent. more on the line without any duplication than we can under steam. That ought to be considered by public men and those interested in our future welfare. In the circumstances I declare that we should profit by the experience of other countries, which show that there has not been a single failure in the electrification of railway systems. We are making such progress that the time is not far distant when instead of having a driver in our locomotives we shall have him sitting in an arm-chair and conducting the operations of the locomotive by wireless. The

Minister for Works smiles. To-day submarines are being operated by wireless without a single man being on board. Although I am not a submarine myself, there are times when the wireless is used to direct my course. To me it appears to be the only way to relieve our people of much of the burden they have to carry. I believe that in the process of electrification it will pay the State handsomely. With respect to tramways—

Mr. Lambert: Now you are coming back to earth!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not at all. We are talking development to-day for the purpose of populating this State. We cannot develop our industries unless, side by side with the older established countries, we adopt up-to-date methods. There are big factories in the Old Country that are fighting for their existence, factories which have been held by the present owner's grandfathers and great grandfathers. Their sons were able, before the war, to say, "This was good enough for my great grandfather; it is good enough for me." To-day they are scrapping everything and introducing new methods. Some of the big firms have men doing nothing else but travelling to ascertain the latest methods. When I was in England in 1913 I visited a firm in Cornwall known, doubtless, to the member for North-East Fremantle, which firm was throwing out machines which we would have thought modern enough, but which they had discovered were not, the object being to introduce more economical methods of operating. We must do exactly the same thing in this country if we wish to progress. We must find out what are the latest methods in other places to meet the difficulties which exist here, otherwise we shall handicap our people. If we can find examples elsewhere, let us follow them if they are worthy of being followed. We, too, should have our men travelling to find out everything that there is to learn, and on being satisfied that it will be of advantage to us to adopt those ideas, we should not hesitate to take the risk and introduce them, so that we might make substantial progress. Regarding the tramways, I will admit that no comparison can be made between that system and the railways. The tramways are essentially a public convenience to enable the people to carry on their daily avocations and not to help to develop any particular industry, primary or secondary; but I do say that if the Government desire to own and maintain a system, the utility of which is recognised in all civilised communities, to permit people to move about from point to point, the labourer to get to his work, and to avoid the establishment of slums in the cities, then we should face the position and find the necessary funds with which to carry out extensions that are demanded. But we must satisfy ourselves that we are going to levy the charges that will be involved from those who are going to get benefits from the service. To date the tramways have paid all the charges including operating costs, overhead charges, interest and sinking fund, and payments to the local au-

thorities by way of 3 per cents. for the use of our public highways—this to the extent of £40,000—leaving £53,000 to be paid into the Treasury. Then to say that we must not have extensions is to say something which is absurd. I do not mean that we should strain our resources by finding money to make extensions to every place. We should have a definite policy of extensions to make up what we have lost during the period of the war. Let the extensions be only four or five miles a year and they will not be a burden on the community. Rather will they pay us handsomely. With regard to the electricity supply, hon. members opposite know quite well that the works were not established for the purpose of a Treasury benefit, nor from the pounds, shillings and pence point of view. The works were established because it is a modern method of supplying power easily and cheaply to encourage the establishment and operation of industries. We have not to any extent shown a loss but we have had many difficulties to contend with. We entered into an agreement to establish that central station, not knowing of course that the war was going to occur. But we faced the position. To Mr. Taylor, the general manager, I give due credit for trying to find out means by which he could reduce the cost per unit. Mr. Taylor has done so. He has found a method by which we can use native coal and save a considerable sum of money. He hunted the world for a method by which he could do this and to-day we have a new unit in that station together with new boilers fitted with Sandford-Riley stoker which have been the means of effecting a saving of no less a sum than £950 in our coal bill in one month.

Hon. P. Collier: Is that what you would call doing something for Collie?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I may inform the member for Collie that while we are effecting that saving it does not mean that we shall be reducing our coal consumption. As a matter of fact the coal consumption will increase because we shall be able to assist in the establishment of industries and use up more coal for that purpose. The consumption of current from the station has increased by leaps and bounds. The Leader of the Opposition knows that when the matter of the establishment of the power station was being considered, Merz & McLellan advised us that the station would meet our requirements for 10 or 12 years. That was in 1913. That period has not yet expired, but we have had to increase the plant by about 60 per cent., as there has been such a heavy demand for current. We are to-day extending benefits not to the person who wants light in his residential quarters, nor to the shopkeeper in the city, but to those districts where dairying and other operations are being carried on. I was only recently assured by one man running a dairy and orchard that in a short period he effected a saving of £15 a month by pumping with the aid of current supplied by the power house. We are extending operations wherever we possibly can and the modern system of operating industries must be in-

troduced, otherwise those who are carrying on those industries cannot be expected to compete in the world's markets against those who are more favourably situated in other parts of the world. I extend my appreciation to members for the manner in which they have discussed the Railway Estimates. I anticipated that, in view of the happenings of the last 12 months, the criticism would have been fairly severe, but I can tell hon. members honestly that during the past year, from the Commissioner to the porter who has recently been taken on, there has been the keenest desire to adopt every possible method to reduce the cost of our railway operations. I know of no railway and staff anywhere in Australia that is as loyal to the general community in the services they render than the staff of the Western Australian railways from the porter to the Commissioner.

Item—Secretary for Railways:

Mr. WILSON: Has the Minister any information to supply with regard to the case of Mrs. Grover of Bunbury?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Mrs. Grover was employed as a caretaker at the Bunbury barracks. She is a war widow with two children and recently, when a reorganisation was taking place, it was necessary to find a position for an incapacitated returned soldier and he was appointed in her place. I am prepared to discuss this matter with the Commissioner and see whether we can do something to assist this war widow.

Mr. WILSON: It does seem extraordinary that a war widow with two children should be removed from a position in order to place a returned soldier in it. I do not think the diggers would stand for that. This woman has a small pension and she is trying to make a bare living for herself and her children. She bought a home in Bunbury on the time-payment system and at a minute's notice she was discharged from her employment. If retrenchment is necessary, a war widow should not be singled out in the first place.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member, inadvertently I think, has not put the position quite fairly. While it is true this woman is a widow with two children, the man who replaced her is a partially disabled returned soldier with a wife and two children dependent upon him. He was previously employed at the powellising plant. The question is whether a man already employed in the service—

Mr. Willecock: He had lost his position previously.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He took the other job and tried to carry it out, but his health would not permit him to continue. Therefore, we gave him this position and the woman was retired. We shall endeavour to re-engage her or find another position for the man.

Mr. WILSON: The Minister might have mentioned that the incapacitated soldier receives a pension.

The Minister for Mines: So does the war widow.

Mr. WILSON: And so does the man's wife and children. The woman is suffering because she has been put out of the job.

The Minister for Mines: He would have been suffering if he had not been given it, so where is the difference?

Mr. WILSON: He was given the woman's job. I hope a situation will be found for this woman.

Mr. MONEY: As to excursion fares, travellers over distances exceeding 250 miles have been very much favoured. This may be accidental, and may not be due to the fact that the Minister is the member for Albany. On page 1 of the pamphlet No. 14, Albany appears at the head of the list.

Hon. P. Collier: That is its alphabetical order.

Mr. MONEY: I would not object if the alphabetical order were continued, but the next place is Denmark. If it is desired to give cheap excursion fares, equal inducements should be offered to the South-West as to the Great Southern and similarly east and west as well as north and south. I have not seen any special provision for travellers from Narrogin to its natural port of Bunbury. The people of Lake Grace and Newdegate require a holiday equally with those in the metropolitan area, who are within a stone's throw of the sea and merely desire to visit another portion of the coast. If people can be carried from Perth to Albany at the single fare plus one-third, we should be able to carry them from Perth to Bunbury at the single rate and a third.

The Minister for Works: And there is plenty of room in the trains, too.

Mr. MONEY: Yes. There are thousands of people who desire to make an excursion to the coast, but are unable to do so owing to the present excessive rates. It would be good service to the people and the railways to grant an excursion return at the single fare. Only people who are well off are able to go to Albany. It is the resort of the rich.

The Minister for Mines: We can hardly meet the demand on that line.

Mr. Teesdale: And the department give rebates.

Mr. MONEY: Yes, to those who could afford to pay full rates. If a rectification is not promised, I intend to move a motion that there be no differentiation between the seaports.

Mr. JOHNSTON: A through train from Narrogin to Bunbury is urgently needed during the summer months. The expense of travelling from Narrogin to Bunbury is accentuated by the fact that the trains stop at Collie and it is impossible to continue the journey on the same night. The service is very inconvenient. It is ridiculous that there should be such delay at Collie.

Mr. LUTEY: The service on the Brown Hill loop line is unsatisfactory owing to the insufficiency of trains. Will the Minister state whether the motor trains used in the

country are proving satisfactory and whether the Government intend to provide one for the Brown Hill loop line? I understand that trailers have been devised, and by means of these the department's difficulties could be overcome and a half-hourly service given. With the coming prosperity of the Golden Mile, coming in the near future, there will be an influx of population; and I hope that this time the Government will not wait until the bird has flown. The present train service hardly admits of improved returns.

Mr. PICKERING: I wish to impress Busselton's claims in this connection on the Minister. Busselton is an excellent holiday resort for families. All our seaside resorts should be placed on an equal basis as regards this concession.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As member for Murray-Wellington I wish to say, on this excursion question, that when I was Commissioner of Railways, about 20 years ago I tried an experiment which proved highly successful. That experiment embraced Albany, Bunbury, and Busselton, but not Mandurah, because there was no railway to that place. It would be an excellent opportunity to give our people a chance of getting a cheap holiday if the Railway Department saw their way to revert to that programme. At that time we took people from Kalgoorlie to Albany and back, 1,400 miles, for 50s. first-class and 40s. second-class; from Perth to Albany and back for 30s. first-class and 20s. second-class; and the excursion fares to Bunbury were 11s. first-class and 7s. 6d. second-class. Busselton was on about the same level as regards fares. The climate of this country is trying, and people require a change; and it would pay the State, even at some financial loss, to afford its citizens a chance of moving temporarily from one part to another. At the time of that experiment in cheap fares we were discussing the advisableness of abolishing the daily service to Albany, which daily service was necessary in order to keep the postal subsidy. Instead of cutting out the daily train, I decided to try the cheap fares, with the result that we carried about 10,000 passengers to Albany. However, the residents of the seaside resorts should not take every penny out of the pockets of the excursionists, but should provide cheap board. Then there would be a tremendous seaside traffic. It is not for me to dictate to the Commissioner of Railways his policy: but Western Australia will never be settled until by means of cheap fares we induce the people to travel about the country and see it. If the cheap fares induce only another hundred new settlers, they will be justified.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I wish to mention that there is another town in Western Australia almost as important as Bunbury. I refer to Fremantle, which has one of the best beaches in Western Australia, especially for children. The Minister for Works, in relating the experiment he made as Commissioner of Railways, mentioned every

port except Fremantle. Country people like to come to the city for a change. Those who have lived for months in the quietness of the bush want a little excitement, and it is not a great change for them to go to Bunbury, Busselton, or Albany; but the city does represent a great change to them. Therefore I hope Perth and Fremantle will not be overlooked in the matter of cheap excursions.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Although I have not the honour of representing a seaport, I still want to draw the attention of the Minister for Railways to a curious anomaly. There are excursion rates from Perth to Albany, and these rates are available to a passenger joining Saturday's train up to about Wagin. The train leaves Katanning at 2.30 or 3 a.m. Sunday, and a passenger booking from that station is not regarded by the Railway Department as entitled to the excursion rate. That is hardly fair.

The Minister for Mines: The train you refer to is the express.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes; but still a passenger booking at Katanning on Sunday morning should be entitled to travel to Albany at the excursion rate. Large numbers of people send their wives and children to Albany for a holiday, taking a furnished house or camp for them, and the husband likes to spend a week end with his family. He should be permitted to travel on that train. The Railway Department have said that the train is already overcrowded. However, seeing that it is practically all down hill to Albany, it would pay them to provide accommodation for a few more passengers.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will submit the representations of hon. members to the Commissioner of Railways. Of course I cannot intrude my own ideas in matters of this sort. If I could, probably I should provide a cheap excursion train to Bunbury, with all the tickets numbered, and give to the holder of the winning ticket a free trip to Albany, Bunbury and Busselton. I was deeply touched by the pathetic appeal of the member for Bunbury, and I was well nigh heartbroken at the sympathetic story of the Minister for Works concerning the pitiful position of the women and children of the metropolitan area with never a tramway or railway to convey them to river or ocean beaches. But we must draw the line somewhere. To grant an excursion rate from Wagin to Albany is a ridiculous proposal. The excursion rates are for those who have great distances to travel. I do not think any other community on earth travels about so freely as do the people of Australia. The statement of the Minister for Works that our climate is so trying that people have to move about, must be taken with a little grain of salt. I know in this State people 80 years of age and upwards who have never seen the sea coast, have virtually never been away from their own district, yet enjoy most excellent health. Admittedly the climate of Western Australia is one of the finest in the world. It is true that one

requires to get away occasionally from his daily routine. It is not a question of persuading people to go to Bunbury or Busselton or Albany; it is rather one of getting them away from a humdrum life day in and day out. It matters not at all which place they may go to, whether Bunbury or Busselton or Albany, so long as they go somewhere. I had not the remotest idea of the handbill quoted by the member for Bunbury until the hon. member produced it.

Hon. P. Collier: It does credit to the discretion of your Commissioner.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) talks of running a through train from Narrogin to Bunbury. It is in the hon. member's own keeping. If he can provide the traffic for week-end excursions, certainly we will run the trains, but we cannot run through trains to suit the convenience of a couple or three persons ready to travel once a month or once a year. It is entirely a question of what traffic is available. The one thing I am disappointed about is that the member for Collier has not seen the wisdom of drawing attention to Augusta and, in view of the growing popularity of that place, venturing the prediction that ere long it will have driven Bunbury, Busselton and Albany off the map.

Mr. MONEY: I am not surprised that the Minister should be prepared to disown this handbill. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that it does credit to the departmental officers and their active consideration for the member for Albany.

Hon. P. Collier: They are very tactful.

Mr. MONEY: This is a question, not of Albany, Busselton or Bunbury, but one of principle, the principle that there should be no differentiation whatever in the granting of excursion fares as between one seaside place and another. Now that the Minister is aware of this handbill, doubtless he will suggest to the Commissioner of Railways that those seaports should be placed on an equal footing. The Minister suggested that Augusta would drive Bunbury off the map. Following upon my admiration of the manner in which the Minister introduced these Estimates, there has come to me a feeling of keen disappointment at the frivolous manner in which he has dealt with this question of railway excursions. Despite all the talk about our healthy climate, I say again it is necessary that women and children should have a change once a year.

Capt. Carter: Why, they come over here from every State in Australia, and they all agree that ours is the best climate in the Commonwealth!

Mr. MONEY: Given a change of air every year it is the best climate in Australia, but without that change the health of our women and children cannot continue.

Mrs. Cowan: I support you in that.

Mr. MONEY: I hope this handbill will be rectified and that the minister will inform his departmental officers that it is not neces-

sary to give Albany such prominence on every handbill issued by the department.

Mr. LUTEY: I regret that the Minister should have been so carried away by the encomiums passed upon Bunbury, Busselton and Albany as to forget to reply to the question I brought forward. Despite the great allurements of our sea-ports, I still consider that my electorate is the most important in Western Australia. I should like from the Minister a reply to my question regarding motor coaches for the Brown Hill loop line.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I apologise to the hon. member for having been carried away by the pathetic appeals of the member for Bunbury and so overlooked the more important point involving the daily carriage of people to and from their work. I agree entirely that if we could place a motor coach on the Brown Hill loop line it would not only give improved facilities for those using the line, but economically also would present advantages. The hon. member knows that we obtained only three, which are now on their trial. If we could transfer one of these to the Brown Hill loop line I should be only too pleased to do so. If we cannot do that we will consider the question of obtaining an additional number of petrol-driven cars when we are quite satisfied with them, as appears will be the case.

Mr. MARSHALL: I insinuated by interjection that the officer who gave the Minister the information he offered to hon. members to-night was an impostor. The statement of the Minister implied that stock trains travelling from Meekatharra to Midland Junction beat the express train by half an hour. He says that these anomalies do not often occur. Some time ago I joined him and the Minister for Agriculture at Mullewa station. There were eight bogie trucks of cattle attached to the train, but owing to the weight of the train half the stock was left at Mullewa for 12½ hours. The producers on the Murchison have had many causes for complaint. For a departmental officer to say that a stock train will travel to Midland Junction half an hour quicker than the passenger train is a lie. The scheduled time for the express from Meekatharra to Perth is 34 hours less one minute. The Minister, however, said that stock trains did the journey in 33½ hours. That is incorrect. The time occupied is between 54 and 60 hours. I resent such a statement being made by any departmental officer, and defy him to prove its correctness. On one occasion a mining plant at Cue was hung up for three weeks because a quantity of cyanide was delayed by the railways for that period. The manager of the mine telegraphed to an official at Geraldton to find out where it was, but it took that official three days to obtain the information.

The Minister for Mines: The mine must have had a very short supply on hand.

Mr. MARSHALL: Owing to the action of the Commonwealth Government and other exploiters, our mining industry has suf-

fered greatly in the past and mine managers do not keep greater stocks than is necessary in order to prevent over-capitalisation. They certainly do not expect the Railway Department to hang up supplies for a period of three weeks. The commercial community of Meekatharra have offered to load one or two trucks, provided these trucks are sent through direct, but this request has been refused by the Railway Department. The department say the trucks must break their journey at Northam before they can proceed. Many large orders are sent down by the pastoralists, but the railways frequently deliver only a portion of these orders, several days or weeks elapsing before the rest of the goods arrive. It is a custom of the pastoralist to arrange with some teamster to receive the goods on arrival and cart them out to the station. It often happens that the pastoralist is notified of the despatch of the goods, and arranges with a teamster to meet them. When the trucks arrive they are often half-empty and only half the goods are there. The teamster has, therefore, to wait until the department send along the balance of the goods. This means that he has to be paid by the pastoralist whilst awaiting the pleasure of the department. The railway officials have at times endeavoured to charge storage on the section of goods that arrive first. This matter was brought under the notice of the Commissioner when he visited the district, so that he cannot say he is not aware of it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not dispute the statement of the hon. member, but I do not think any officer of the department would endeavour deliberately to mislead me or the House.

Mr. Marshall: Do you say that stock trains do the journey more quickly than the express trains?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have given the information as it was given to me. Surely no officer of the department would be so foolish as to willingly mislead hon. members. If we have been misled it must be due to inadvertence.

Mr. Marshall: Is the scheduled time for stock trains shorter than for passenger trains?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know. The special stock trains are scheduled to run through from Meekatharra to Midland Junction in the time I have stated.

Mr. Marshall: That is a deliberate lie on the part of some officer.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If it turns out not to be so, I will express my regret to the hon. member. I will ask the Commissioner again if such is the case. If it is not, I will make a correct statement to the House.

Item—Chief Mechanical Engineer, £1,000:

Mr. WILLCOCK: For some 20 years there has been in the department an officer called an assistant coal inspector. This position has invariably been given to a man who has had locomotive experience, and who knows the difference between soft and hard coals and the

varieties of coals which make for the proper working of our railways. Several months ago the man who occupied this position was transferred to the ordinary running branch of the department and applications were called for the vacancy. The conditions required of applicants were set forth in the advertisement, but notwithstanding this a man was appointed who, I understand, did not possess the necessary qualifications. This has given general dissatisfaction to those working in this branch of the service.

Mr. Wilson: Who is he?

Mr. WILLCOCK: A man named Morris. I believe he has no locomotive running experience.

The Minister for Mines: Where was he engaged?

Mr. WILLCOCK: In Collie. When the coal comes out of the pits it is placed on trucks, and it is the duty of this officer to inspect it and pass it or condemn it as his judgment dictates. This is causing grave dissatisfaction amongst those who were competent to fill the position.

The Minister for Mines: So grave that I have not heard of it.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Minister should cause an inquiry to be made as to why this man was appointed, and secure a reasonable explanation. The Commissioner simply stated that the man had been appointed and there he must remain. He added, "As far as I know the man may have had some locomotive experience in France." It would have been better had he said nothing.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have not heard of the case until now. I shall ask the Commissioner for an explanation.

Item, Ways and Works, Chief Engineer, £938:

Mr. MUNSIE: What I believe to be an injustice has been done to a line repairer named Holland. This man had been in the service of the department for a considerable number of years, and was dismissed for being physically unfit to carry out his duties. He endeavoured to appeal against his dismissal and the reply received was that he was not entitled to appeal, as he had been dismissed for being physically unfit and there was no charge against him. He contended that he was physically fit. It took two or three months of negotiating between the Minister, the Commissioner and the union before any satisfaction could be obtained. Eventually, on the union agreeing to pay the whole of the costs if the decision went against them, the Commissioner agreed to the appointment of an independent board to inquire into the case. The board consisted of Mr. McGuigan, an inspector representing the Commissioner, and Mr. J. J. Elliott representing the union. They conferred at Northam on the 23rd September and agreed upon Mr. R. Johnston, assistant works manager of the loco. workshops, Midland Junction, as chairman. Prior to the Commissioner agreeing to the appointment of the board, he hinted through Mr. Hussey

that Holland had never attempted to get a medical examination. Holland immediately went to Dr. C. Joyce, Pinjarra, who said he was fit to carry out his work. The department were not satisfied and appointed Dr. G. W. Barker who gave Holland a better certificate than Dr. Joyce. Dr. Joyce stated—

I hereby certify that I have this day (2nd September, 1922) examined Mr. John Holland and that he is in good health and physically fit to perform a fettler's work. Dr. Barker's certificate read—

I beg to report that I have this day (22nd September, 1922) examined Mr. J. Holland as requested by you. I find from my examination, which shows that his organs including heart, lungs and kidneys are in good order, that he is in my opinion physically fit as far as I can see to carry out the duties of a repairer in one of the permanent way gangs on the railways. Of course I could not put him through heavy work, but after doing some rapid exercises, his heart behaved quite normally and his blood pressure is no higher than one would expect in one of his age and occupation. It was suggested to me that he suffered from rheumatism, which had incapacitated him, but at present there are no signs, although he acknowledges that he does get occasional attacks of rheumatism, but that he has not lost any time on this account.

The board met at Pinjarra on the 29th and 30th September and 10 witnesses were called, six by the union and four by the department. The board made a unanimous report as follows:—

The board find that ex-line repairer J. Holland was wrongfully dismissed from the service of the Railway Department on the 30/3/22 on the following grounds:—1, In so much as the plea of physical unfitness upon which his dismissal was founded was not supported by sufficient evidence. 2, Rule 11 of special instructions, which states a man must be warned by the inspector in writing, was not complied with. 3, The subsequent medical examination of Holland has proved conclusively that he is physically fit to carry out the duties of a line repairer. This board is unanimous in the opinion that, in cases of the physical fitness of a man being in question a medical examination should decide the point. We are also satisfied that the evidence does not disclose any suggestion of any underhand tactics on the part of the officer concerned.

The department had no alternative to reinstating Holland and this they did. He is working at his old job and giving satisfaction. Seeing that the department wrongfully dismissed him, what right had they to withhold his money during the period he was off duty? He was off duty for exactly six months. The union have done everything possible to get some satisfaction and have been unsuccessful. The Minister says it is a matter for the Commissioner of Railways. It was suggested to the Commissioner that the same board should inquire as to whether

Holland was entitled to his pay or not, but the Commissioner point blank refused. In the circumstances, there is no alternative to bringing the case before Parliament. The Minister went off pop over the case of the man entitled to superannuation, but this toiler is not entitled to any superannuation. I am quite prepared to take up the case of such a man as this, in the same way as that of a man entitled to superannuation.

The Minister for Mines: Your case stands out in bold relief after the other one.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have here a fairly large file containing the documentary evidence from beginning to end. I think I have read sufficient to prove that the man has not had a fair deal. Regulation 11 distinctly lays down that a man should be cautioned in writing. This man received no notification whatever of that kind; the first notification he received was his notice of dismissal. Against that he endeavoured to appeal in the ordinary way to the board. However, as his dismissal was on the ground of physical unfitness, it was ruled that he had no right of appeal. I have here a copy of a letter from the Commissioner of Railways to the secretary of the union inviting him to come along and see his, the Commissioner's file, when, the Commissioner said, the secretary would take a different view of the matter. However, the secretary, after seeing the file, was more convinced than ever that the man had been wrongfully treated. Another deputation waited upon the Commissioner, and, on condition that the union would bear the whole of the expense of an inquiry, the inquiry was held, with the result that the man was reinstated. Still, this man is unable to obtain a shilling for the period of his wrongful dismissal, six months. That period seems a long one, but hardly a day passed during it without an endeavour on his part to obtain redress.

The Minister for Works: Did he do no other work during the six months?

Mr. MUNSIE: No outside work that he was paid for. He has a home of his own, and probably he did some work on that during the six months. Moreover, he was continually in Perth pressing his case. Eventually he did get his grievance righted, but at a sacrifice of six months' pay. I hope the Minister will go into the matter with a view to remedying the wrong which the man has undoubtedly suffered.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I admit there is some ground for the attitude adopted by the hon. member, having regard to the finding of the board. On the other hand, I am not so satisfied as the hon. member is that Holland, up to the time of his dismissal, had been rendering that kind of service which he ought to have rendered to the department. That was the ground for dispensing with his services. The board only found that he was not physically unfit. Unfortunately, many men who are physically fit to do a day's work do not do it.

Mr. Munsie: If that was so, the man should have been charged with that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Those in contact with him considered that he was not rendering full service. The next point is as to the absence of the written notification warning him that he was not giving full service. That was a technical blunder for which the department had to pay by reinstating the man. The question of payment for the six months is one that should receive careful consideration. Personally I do not think the man should receive six months' payment. Perhaps a compromise could be arranged. If the evidence is conclusive that he was not rendering to the department the full service for which he was receiving full payment, then I think he should lose at any rate something for having placed the department in such a position.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am glad the Minister mentioned those points as to the man's capability and as to whether the man was carrying out his work properly prior to his dismissal. If the Minister intends to go into that matter, I want him to get a copy of the evidence given before the board of inquiry, at which there were 10 witnesses. I admit that certain reports were received by the department; I have them here. But there are reports both ways. I believe that the only witness who was asked the direct question as to Holland's work was a casual ganger in charge of him for some time. That casual ganger, being asked whether Holland had done his work well, and whether he had noticed any man who did not give general satisfaction, replied that if there was anyone who had not done his fair share of the work, it was, in his opinion, the ganger, and not Holland; that is to say, the ganger who, according to the file, had made complaints concerning Holland. The evidence given before the board was overwhelmingly in favour of the view that the man did his work during the whole of the time prior to his dismissal. There was a suggestion of some underhand work, of an endeavour to get Holland out and someone else in; but the board found there was nothing in that suggestion.

Mr. HUGHES: I would like to ask the Minister whether it is not possible to erect at the Wellington-street entrance to the Perth railway station, in the same way as at the Beaufort-street entrance, three dials showing the times at which the next trains will leave for the principal stations, Fremantle and Midland Junction. Similar dials are installed at Flinders-street station, Melbourne. Not much expense would be involved, and the convenience to the travelling public, especially visitors, would be considerable.

Mr. WILLCOCK: In this branch of the department considerable retrenchment is now in progress. A reorganisation is proceeding in the northern district more particularly, and a number of men are going to lose their employment. The one principle for which the unions have always stood in this respect is that the last man on shall be the first man

off. The scheme of retrenchment here in question, however, results in men of considerable experience, and men against whom, so far as can be ascertained, there has been no complaint, being put off. Such a system lends itself to something that has always been fought against by the men and by the unions, namely the practice of favouritism. Serious trouble is likely to result. I do not wish to make any threat, but there cannot be any reason why at this stage a principle which has operated in the department for 20 years should be departed from. I know one man dismissed who has been on the job for 15 or 16 years, giving good and faithful service. It is easy to indulge in retrenchment to such an extent that the service becomes unsafe. We had an experience of this in 1911-12, and I hope it will not be repeated, for it is a suicidal policy. At all events, if there is to be any more retrenchment, it should not comprise men with years of good and faithful service. Also we find that married men with families have been sent right out into the bush and there given notice of dismissal, thus being stranded in remote localities, the department refusing to take them and their families back to the centre whence they came. If the retrenchment were by way of punishment for offences there might be some justification for this policy, but in any other circumstances it is quite unwarranted. A man retrenched under a reorganisation scheme should be carried free to the nearest place where he is likely to get employment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The scheme of retrenchment is guided largely by an understanding arrived at between the organisations affected and the Commissioner.

Mr. Willcock: But that is not being strictly observed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think it is. The unions concerned do not allow variations to be made in such understandings without coming to my doorstep. There may have been some mistake in the information supplied to the hon. member, for I cannot believe that there has been any important variation in the understanding arrived at.

Mr. Willcock: They say they are weeding out the inefficient.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Well what would you have? Why should we maintain the drones who have joined the service merely with a view to hanging on for an old age pension, particularly when we have many young promising fellows for whom adult employment cannot be found? I do not believe that most of our railways staff busy themselves going about trying to do somebody an injury. It is nonsense to suggest that the Commissioner and his officers are anxious to injure those under their control. When it is necessary to reduce our staff we ought to place reliance on those whom we pay to carry responsibility. If good men of faithful service are retrenched it will not need ventilation in Parliament, for the

unions will soon be on my doorstep. However, I will have the matter looked into.

Mr. Willcock: What about the refusal to carry retrenched men back whence they came?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot pledge myself on that. The Government do not exist for the purpose of extending privileges paid for by the general community to men in the railway service while such privileges are denied to others employed outside that service.

Mr. Willcock: But you send a man out into the bush.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If a man wants to work in a mine at Meekatharra he has to get himself there, and if the mine stops work nobody attempts to send him back whence he came. There are on the Murchison and in other back blocks men who are carrying their swags. They do not ask the Government for a free pass over the railways.

Mr. Chesson: You run them in if they jump the rattler.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: As a matter of fact we often shut one eye to the jumping of the rattler. Men in the railway service are treated very well. There is no outside employment which can compare with it. It will require careful consideration before I urge the Commissioner to grant any further privileges.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Tramways, £208,000.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is only fair that we should have some indication as to the future policy of the Government in running the tramway system.

The Minister for Mines: Well here it is: Due regard to the taxpayers' interests and to the general convenience of the travelling public.

Mr. LAMBERT: That light and airy way of dismissing an important departure from established policy will not satisfy hon. members.

Capt. Carter: That is one of the Minister's epigrams.

Mr. LAMBERT: Some months ago a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into and make recommendations concerning tramway extensions. I have never heard whether these recommendations have been considered or any decision has been arrived at.

The Minister for Mines: There is nothing in the report dealing with the operations of tramways already constructed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This can be dealt with under the Loan Estimates.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Minister might have given some indication as to whether the Government intended to continue managing and controlling the tramway system under the Railway Department, or whether they intended to create a separate body to control the trams in the metropolitan area.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is nothing in the report dealing with that.

Mr. LAMBERT: If the Government have decided how the tramway system shall be con-

trolled the Minister should make an announcement on the subject. The Minister has spoken in a general way regarding the railway system, but so far he has said nothing about the tramway system.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: We have discussed the matter, but have not come to any definite conclusion on the question of the future control of the tramway system and other essential parochial activities of the Government. So long as there is a definite and sufficient public control of our utilities, such as there is in the case of our tramway system, and a system that will protect all interests concerned, there is no difference between such control and that of Government control. I am not very keen, as a trustee of the public interests in this matter, about handing over without question and without careful consideration our very payable tramway system. It is not a burden upon the community, but is adding, if slightly, to our revenue. There are other questions which must be considered. The City is divided into a number of local authorities having varying interests. It would be a simple matter to have such a state of conflict between them as would not be in the interests of the tramway system of the State. I am not one who believes we ought to hand over to local boards our paying propositions while retaining those which are losing propositions. This would be asking the general community to carry the parochial utilities which are losing money while the general community unloads those utilities which are paying their way. We cannot hand over that which is profitable while retaining that which is unprofitable. In any event our utilities could not be handed over in a piecemeal fashion. Furthermore, Parliamentary sanction would be required before anything like this could be done with our tramway system.

Capt. CARTER: Does not the Minister think the time is ripe, in view of the financial position of the Tramway Department, for effecting an alteration in the fares charged to the travelling public? A few months ago the Minister made forcible references to the fact that the Perth tramway system was essentially a charge upon the people of Perth. He made it clear that the people were enjoying and paying for the benefits they received. If the people are paying to such an extent as to create a surplus of revenue over expenditure they should receive the benefit of the difference between the expenditure and the revenue.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How would you divide up £3,000?

Capt. CARTER: Most members will agree that whilst there ought to be no loss made by the department, a reduction in fares would probably lead to a further profit. Many people have said the same thing. A reduction in fares would in all probability lead to a considerable increase in revenue. More consideration should be given to the travelling public on Sundays and holidays. I admit that the balance in favour of the tramways is not yet a great one.

Mr. Hughes: There is also a reduction of 6d. a day in the wages. That, too, will make a difference in the earnings of the department.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The question of tramway fares will be adjusted from time to time. Just as we had to adjust them when there was a loss, so shall we have to adjust them when the profit warrants it. We cannot call a profit of £1,000 in five months operations, a safe enough margin to enable us to revise our fares. When the time comes for a revision in that direction consideration will be given to it.

Mr. Hughes: How much a month will you save by the reduction in wages?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot tell the hon. member.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Can the Minister give us any information in regard to the wonderful invention relating to the numbers on the trams, and regarding the restoration of the destination boards. The present system is irritating, and a stupid and idiotic one.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I regret that the Leader of the Opposition should refer to the action of the manager of the tramways in removing the destination signs from the trams as idiotic. This was done when the trams were losing heavily. It was costing £500 a year for the material to maintain these signs. The public would not take the trouble to keep a destination card in their pockets. It was desired to reduce the cost of operating the trams. In order to maintain these destination signs it was necessary to obtain quantities of canvas.

Hon. P. Collier: You lost more than £500 a year in the delays that occurred through conductors advising people to get on or off the trams.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Not at all. It has been definitely decided that the destinations shall be shown on the cars. We cannot use a definite number of trams on definite routes as can be done in some of the other States. It is not desirable that we should do so. Our traffic varies so much that we must make our trams available at different times and along different routes, and change them over to other routes when required. Our trams must, therefore, carry movable destination signs. We have introduced a cheaper system than the old one, and have accepted tenders for the supply of the necessary material. As that comes forward, we shall provide the cars with destination signs as before.

Vote put and passed.

Vote, State Batteries, £63,994:

Mr. LUTHEY: I congratulate the department upon the erection of a State battery at St. Ives. This field should prove of great benefit to the State. The department has had bad luck over this battery, particularly in respect to water supplies. It was thought that sufficient water would be obtained from the shaft that was sunk under the lake, but there is so great a draw upon the supply that the battery has not sufficient for its own purposes. I hope the Government will either drive further and widen

the crosscut in order to increase the storage accommodation, or will find other means of ensuring adequate supplies of water. With regard to the Victory end of the lake I have gone further into the matter, and have ascertained that during one of the heaviest thunderstorms that ever visited the district the water, owing to defective drainage, did not run into the dam.

The Minister for Works: Have I not explained that before?

Mr. LUTEY: The Minister said I was mistaken in what I have said, but I find I was not mistaken. The department sent up plans for the making of drains so that the water could run into the dam. It was evident that it was left in a bad state, for the engineers asked the residents to form a busy bee and carry out the plan.

The Minister for Works: The rain just missed that particular dam. That is what I was informed.

Mr. LUTEY: Two of the most reliable men in the country, Tommy and Jimmy Nicholls, have told me that they were nearly up to their knees in water during that thunderstorm trying to turn the flow into the dam. The Minister remarked the other day that I was wrong. The fact remains that after the heaviest thunderstorm experienced there for a long time, the water did not run into the dam. Proof of that is to be found in the department's communication to the people. Plans were sent up for further drains, together with a request for the organisation of a busy bee to carry out the work. My impression is that the officers of the department must be misleading the Minister when they say the dam was left in a condition to catch the water.

The Minister for Works: They would be very foolish to do that. If what you say is correct, and it is not in accordance with what they say, they will hear about it.

Mr. LUTEY: I cannot understand why they should have sent up plans and asked for a busy bee to construct the new drains. I feel sure the Minister has been misinformed as to the true state of affairs, but I am satisfied he will see that the defect is remedied. A dam full of water in that district is very valuable indeed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will look into this matter to-morrow and ascertain whether the information given to me is correct. The statement made to me was that the Victory dam is nine miles from St Ives. When the storm occurred the water took a defined course and missed the Victory dam.

Mr. Lutey: You are misinformed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am informed that a year or two ago the reverse was the case. A drain was built which partially filled the Victory dam and left the other dams empty. The statement is either true or untrue. There must be some explanation and that explanation I shall obtain. If the officers have wilfully misled me, I shall take good care to see that the Public Service Commissioner deals with them. I shall not tolerate coming here to

answer a legitimate inquiry and being given information which is false. If the information is false, the officers will pay for it, but before admitting that it is false, I must inquire into it.

Mr. MARSHALL: The department is fortunate in having Mr. Howe in charge of the State batteries. In fact, the staff throughout is competent and the administration is practically faultless. To the efforts of the staff is due to the small loss on the batteries this year. Considering the amount of gold produced through the instrumentality of the State batteries, the loss of less than £6,000 is small. I understand the Minister does not propose to alter the policy of the last few years in regard to the leasing of State batteries. He has also declared that he will not shift a battery from one field to another. I understand he still holds those views, which I consider agree with the views of members representing goldmining districts.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Cave House, including caves of the South-West, etc., £12,609:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The expenditure for 1922-23 is down as £172 less than the actual expenditure for last year. During the past year approximately 5,000 people were accommodated at the Cave House. Recently the place has been renovated internally and externally.

Mr. Lutey: It was needed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, and the improvement is marked. The institution is now under new management. Mr. and Mrs. Alexander, formerly of the Bruce Rock hotel, are now in charge, and without casting any reflection on previous managers, who were undoubtedly very good, I must say that the present manager and managers are doing remarkably good work. The general arrangements are beyond criticism, and good reports are coming to hand regarding the conduct of the Cave House. We have in view the provision of additional accommodation—a dining room and bedrooms.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That has been in view for two years.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I believe the work will now be done. Plans have been prepared, and an amount of £12,200 will, I believe, be provided for this purpose. In order to encourage visiting motorists, a small amount has been provided for giving another access to the ocean. This should have a very good effect. Last year was the first occasion when the operations of the Cave House covered both interest and depreciation. For the previous two years the profits met the full interest charges, but were not sufficient to cover depreciation. This year not only have interest and depreciation been met, but there remains a surplus profit of £746. With the added accommodation, the caves are coming into their own, and the Cave House will receive the patronage it undoubtedly deserves. If I may be permitted to refer to an assoc-

iated department, I would say that the Tourist Bureau is doing splendid work in popularising the Caves House. I hope that work will continue, and I trust that the people of Western Australia will obey the maxim to "See Western Australia first."

Mr. PICKERING: The long promised additions to the Cave House are very necessary. We have frequently been told that plans and estimates have been prepared, and I am glad that the Minister to-night is able to give the Committee the definite assurance that the work is about to be undertaken. The climate of Yallingup where the Cave House is situated, is not only a splendid summer climate, but is equable at all seasons of the year; and any advertising of the Cave House should be made more general in its application, so that, instead of having a crush at one season, the establishment should have continual patronage. That would make the conduct of the Cave House much easier. I join with the Minister in congratulating the management upon the various officers who have had charge of the establishment. I do not think it is necessary to make any comparisons in that respect. During the summer season undoubtedly there is a great demand on the accommodation of the Cave House, as was made evident to a recent Ministerial party which visited the establishment. Additional dining and bedroom accommodation is badly needed.

Capt. CARTER: There is a point which I have promised several citizens to bring before the House, and that is in regard to the inadequate accommodation provided for the sale of many necessary commodities to the people staying at the Cave House. I have never looked upon that establishment as an hotel; it is more a house of accommodation. When I was there at the end of November and the beginning of December last, it was impossible for a lady to purchase a bottle of sweets, or a man to purchase tobacco, unless the services of the manager were first procured to open the bar. This was highly inconvenient to the manager himself. At the time the house was being renovated, and he was very busy. Yet he was being continually called upon to go to the bar to sell a bottle of sweets or something of the sort. My suggestion to the Minister is that in some part of the splendidly spacious grounds available a small kiosk or store should be erected, and adequately stocked with sweetmeats and other things which people require when on holiday.

Mr. A. Thomson: And fruit.

Capt. CARTER: I am glad to be reminded of that. Strange to say, it was impossible to purchase fruit at the Cave House. There are many people who are charmed with the other aspects of the Cave House, but are astonished at the lack of business methods.

Mr. PICKERING: I had previously brought to the Minister's notice the necessity mentioned by the member for Leederville, but I did so under the guise of asking the Minister to grant a concession to applicants for a lease of a portion of the very large area of ground

surrounding the Cave House, so that they might erect a store. I am opposed to the extension of the business operations of the Cave House. In my opinion, it would be better if the Minister granted a lease to anyone prepared to put up business premises which would cater in the directions indicated by the member for Leederville. The Minister was unable to see his way to grant the concession, saying that the Cave House already made the provision required. A suggestion has also been brought under my notice that Colonial whisky should be stocked at the Cave House. Colonial whisky is cheaper than imported, and if people want it, it should be available for them. It should be sold as Colonial whisky, and not as any other brand. I hope the Minister will accept the suggestions which I have made.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I assure the member for Leederville that the matter of the supply of sweets and fishing-rods and all those other holiday necessities is being considered, and it is hoped that in a short time these will be provided. We have had applications for permission to erect a small kiosk store in that locality; but to permit that would be to encourage outside competition in an enterprise which the Cave House can legitimately manage itself. I hope the time is not far distant when the Cave House will supply the commodities referred to.

Mr. Mann: What about the whisky there?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is a very good brand. There have never been any complaints.

Mr. Mann: Are you blending Australian whisky?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is a blend of Scotch and Australian whiskies.

Vote put and passed.

Department of Minister for Lands (Hon. Sir James Mitchell, Minister).

Vote—Yandanooka Estate, £120—agreed to.

Sale of Government Property Trust Account, £111,776:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There are in the vote one or two errors which I should like to correct. For instance on page 122 in item "roads and bridges throughout the State" I wish to insert "and drainage." I move an amendment—

That after "bridges" the words "and drainage" be inserted.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I advise the Minister not to persist in the amendment if he can possibly do without it, because it will mean the reprinting of the Estimates. The Minister must have a fair copy to place before the House.

The Minister for Works: That is news to me. However, I will make inquiries.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Once before we amended the Estimates, and had to have the whole lot reprinted. Every member must have a fair copy of the Estimates as passed.

The CHAIRMAN: An amendment has already been made on page 63, the amending of a clerical error.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The original draft contained the words I desire to insert, but somehow they were dropped. Unless the words are inserted it will be impossible to use any of this money for drainage purposes, and I propose to use quite a lot of it in that way. I shall require another amendment to be made in Item 22. The amount there shown is £10,400, whereas it should be £9,400. Unless that amendment be made, the total of £107,000 will not be correct.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I should like some explanation why the Minister wishes to alter the character of this vote. In the past it has been used for roads and bridges in country districts. What is the class of drainage to be undertaken? Is it to be drainage connected with these roads and bridges, or does the Minister intend to carry out special drainage works away from the roads? If so, there will not be much money left for roads and bridges.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is impossible to give a list of the drainage works to be carried out. Frequently one is asked for money for drainage, and unless one has a vote for the purpose there is no money available. If the Committee desires that the amendment should not be made I have no objection, but they must not blame me if, later, it be found impossible to carry out the work.

Amendment put and passed.

Item—School buildings and quarters, including additions and renovations, £30,200:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) has had to leave to catch his train. In his behalf I should like to know from the Minister what schools it is intended shall come under this item. At White Gum Valley there is a school building which is nothing short of a disgrace. An entirely new building is required. The school is worse than the rough buildings that are provided on the group settlements. It is not fit for a school. I should like to know if the White Gum Valley school alterations are included in this vote.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What with the uncompleted items from last financial year, and the demands which have been made upon us by the Education Department we have practically exhausted the funds provided for this financial year. All the money has not been spent, but has been allotted. I have a list of school requirements here. Included in it is the Fremantle Technical School, fittings, shops, structural alterations, etc. This work is now in hand. Certain work at the Training College is also provided, and there are additions to the Greenmount school set down here. The member for South Fremantle is anxious about the Hamilton Hill school additions. Instructions were given for tenders to be called for this work, and it was found that we had overrun the constable. We therefore submitted the position to the Education Department and asked them to supply a list of the works which could be postponed. The Hamilton Hill school was one

of those that were deleted from the list. I wrote to the Minister for Education this morning drawing his attention to this school, and asking if he could secure funds from any source so that we could go on with the work. I know that it is a very necessary work, and I should like to be able to carry it out. I see no mention on the list of the White Gum Valley school, where additions are also required. I will make inquiries into the matter and let the member for North-East Fremantle know to-morrow how the position stands.

Mr. A. Thomson: Is there any provision for an additional school room at Katanning?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not on this list. Provision is made for additions to the Meekatharra school at a cost of £400. I cannot say whether this work can be carried out this year or not. If the money is available it can be put in hand. The demands made by the Education Department for schools and quarters are increasing every year. In the Public Works Department we have a list of schools and other requirements of the Education Department, all of which I understand are legitimate, and which will completely exhaust the sum set down in the Estimates. The demand for schools is growing apace.

Mr. Marshall: That is a good sign.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot build schools without money. Members talk about squaring the ledger and cutting down expenditure, but I fail to see how we can do that when we have these persistent requests for schools.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It does not affect the revenue.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can only build schools when I have the money for the purpose.

Item: Claremont Old Men's Home, Renovations, etc., £600:

Mr. MARSHALL: I regret that provision is not made for additions to this home. It is intolerable that these old men should be obliged to put up with what they call their little Monte Carlo. This is a dilapidated, unbecoming and filthy building and does not stand to the credit of the Government.

The Colonial Secretary: [Has anyone complained about it?]

Mr. MARSHALL: I had occasion to interview the late Colonial Secretary on the matter, but I have no desire to go into the question of complaints now.

The Colonial Secretary: Can we rectify the trouble? Shall we have a look at the building?

Mr. MARSHALL: All the information that can be procured concerning it is in the hands of the visiting board.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall inquire into the matter. Portion of the amount provided is for water supply. The bore has failed again and I have had to get funds to lay a bigger pipe.

Item—Hospital buildings generally, including additions and renovations, £5,000:

Mr. LUTEY: This item is £577 less than the expenditure last year. I do not know whether the Kalgoorlie hospital is included, but it is time

that building was renovated and painted, particularly the older portion. An earlier item provides £800 for hot water service reinstatement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The £800 for the hot water service is the result of a decision not to allow important things of this kind to be tinkered with by men with the best of intentions but without experience. We have placed these services under the control of Mr. Shaw, manager of the State Implement Works, and we shall have at Kalgoorlie and also at Claremont, systems which should give satisfaction and have long life. The history of hot water services during the last 20 years does not make nice reading. I have every confidence that we shall obtain better results in future. As to renovations for the Kalgoorlie hospital, I shall make inquiries. If I could get £150,000 tomorrow, it would not be too much to enable me to deal with public buildings which need renovation and attention. They have been left without painting year after year, and their condition is not too good.

Item—Wooroloo Sanatorium, new hall, £1,400:

Mr. CHESON: What progress has been made with the erection of the new hall?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The contract is let and the work is well under way.

Item—Police stations and quarters, including additions and renovations generally, £14,000:

Mr. PICKERING: I must direct the attention of the Minister to the state of police quarters, particularly at Donnybrook. On my latest visit I was informed that for two years requests had been made to have the roof attended to, but nothing had been done. Urgent repairs of this description should receive attention.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Donnybrook quarters are not likely to escape attention. The Commissioner of Police is constantly bringing under notice of the Minister controlling that department and of myself various things required at police stations. This item provides £14,000 for stations and quarters including those at Bunbury, Esperance, Harvey, Kulin, Meekatharra, Mullewa, Nannup, Nungarin and Wongan Hills. I have to-day authorised the expenditure of £7,000 for four sets of police stations and quarters which are needed. I shall make inquiries regarding Donnybrook and advise the hon. member.

Item—Rearrangement of Government offices including extensive alterations and additions, £500:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I should like an explanation of the extensive alterations which the Minister contemplates making at a cost of £500.

Hon. P. Collier: Prices must be coming down.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot tell the hon. member where the money is to be spent. During the last few years there has been a considerable rearrangement of different offices. I expect this is a pious provision towards what might be required in future.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The works might become expensive later on.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Probably so.

Item—Sewerage connections to public buildings, Perth and Fremantle, £10,400:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I desire that the amount "£10,400" be struck out and "£9,400" inserted in lieu. It is a clerical error and must be corrected; otherwise the totals will be wrong.

The CHAIRMAN: Members may regard it as a clerical error and alter their copies of the Estimates.

Mr. PICKERING: Does this item include sewerage for the Public Works and other buildings?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The principal item is £3,500 for drainage at the Fremantle Gaol, and various sewerage connections for the goal which will cost £2,700. This work is essential in the interests of health. There are also new latrines for the Public Works Department. The old ones, which have stood for many years, have been done away with as they were not healthy. The balance is for the purpose of connecting up other Government buildings in Perth and Fremantle with the sewerage system.

Mr. LUTEY: There is an item for flags, regarding which I desire information.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no amount against that item.

Mr. LUTEY: From whom were the flags purchased? Did somebody make use of them and then put the expense on the Government?

The CHAIRMAN: That is an item of last year, and cannot now be discussed.

Item—Junction (Gascoyne) police station, water supply, £500:

Hon. P. COLLIER: This seems a large item for supplying water to a police station.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Unfortunately, the North-West Department have not furnished the Public Works Department with particulars.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If the police station is at Carnarvon, there is a water supply there.

The CHAIRMAN: It is 132 miles away from Carnarvon, and a mile of piping is required.

Item—Purchase of Motor Car for Agent General, £800:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Without questioning the need for a motor car in connection with the London Agency, I do think it is peculiar to purchase a motor car out of loan funds, for that is what this amounts to, the Sale of Government Property Trust Account representing property originally purchased from loan funds. The money should surely come from revenue.

The Premier: The sale of old motor cars covers this amount.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It would take a good many old motors to realise £800.

The PREMIER: I entirely agree with the hon. member's financial contention. However, in this case the London Agency sold two motor cars, one for £600 and the other for £200. Thus the sale of the old cars covers the cost of the new one.

Hon. P. Collier: Six hundred pounds for a second-hand car?

The PREMIER: Yes. It was a good touring car, and was formerly used in connection with immigration, which matter was taken over by

the Federal Government, so that this car was no longer needed.

Vote put and passed.

This concluded the estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year.

Resolutions passed in Committee of Supply granting supplies not exceeding £4,905,893 were formally reported.

BILLS (2) RETURNED.

- 1, Agricultural Lands Purchase Amendment
- 2, Busselton-Margaret River Railway Deviation.

Without amendment.

House adjourned at 11.28 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 11th January, 1923.

	PAGE
BILL: Northampton Reserves, 2a.	2520
Kojonup Agricultural and Horticultural Society's Land, 2a. Com., report	2520
Jarnadup-Denmark Railway, recom., further recom.	2521
Industries Assistance Act Continuance, 2a., Com.	2522
Federal Referendum, 2a.	2523
Interpretation Act Amendment, 2a.	2524

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

BILL—NORTHAMPTON RESERVES.

Read a third time, and passed.

BILL—KOJONUP AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S LAND.

Second reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill similar to several others which have been presented during recent sessions enabling local agricultural societies to substitute for an unsuitable piece of land a suitable piece of land. For some time past the Kojonup Agricultural and Horticultural Society has held the Crown grant of Kojonup lot 20, shown in green on the at-

tached plan, for the purpose of an agricultural hall site. They also held vesting orders under Section 42 of locations 19 and 21 for the purpose of a show ground. These blocks were considered too small for the purpose, and the society acquired other land from the Crown. Under the impression that they held the title for the three blocks, they sold them to the Kojonup hospital committee for £200. The hospital committee purchased the land for the purpose of erecting a hospital, but decided that they only required lot 19 for that purpose. They in turn sold lots 20 and 21 for £400, which money has been paid to the National Bank, Kojonup, in escrow. The Kojonup Lodge of Freemasons, who purchased lot 20, again sold same to Mrs. Margaret Norrish for £250, which amount is also held in escrow. The hospital committee have retained lot 19 on which they have let a contract for the building of a hospital. Since these transactions became known to the department the Crown grants of lots 19 and 21, with the approval of the Executive Council, have been issued to the Kojonup Agricultural and Horticultural Society, so they are now the proprietors in fee simple of lots 19, 20 and 21; and in order to validate all the foregoing transactions it will be necessary for a Bill to be passed by Parliament granting the trustees of the said society power to sell and transfer such land freed and discharged from any trust, and for that purpose the Bill is submitted. The Bill provides that the proceeds of the above sale shall be applied towards the improvement of the new site. This site has been approved by the members, vested in the society under Section 42 of the Land Act, and has been improved and is being utilised as a show ground. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.39]: This form of legislation is becoming somewhat monotonous. There seems to be a boom in these exchanges. Seeing that legislators are liberal in this regard, a general rush has set in. Only yesterday we had a similar measure in connection with a block of land at Northampton. To-day we are asked to repeat the dose for Kojonup. It is about time the attention of the Government was drawn to the fact that we are getting tired of this sort of legislation. It is about time a stop was put to this sort of legislation. However, I do not see that we can very well refuse to pass this Bill. We are likely to have every centre throughout the State taking advantage of altered conditions and using them to its particular advantage and perhaps to the disadvantage of other people.

The Minister for Education: What makes you say that?

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I am not au fait with the conditions as regards the blocks. However, these changes are following on, and appear likely to follow on. We may be benefiting one set of individuals to the detriment of others.