

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—MARRIED WOMEN'S PROTECTION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [6.6]: I have perused the Bill carefully and I must congratulate the Government on having introduced it. The measure, it appears to me, will have a beneficial effect so far as women are concerned.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Constitution of court:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Clause 12 makes provision for a special magistrate to vary or discharge an order and it would be wise to provide for a special magistrate as well as a police or resident magistrate in this instance. I move an amendment—

That in line 3 "or" be struck out and after "resident" the words "or special" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Special magistrate may vary or discharge order.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I consider this a very necessary and much-required Bill. Clause 12 creates almost a new departure in that it allows the same court to re-hear a case. This can be done under the State Children's Act and it has proved a very useful provision.

Progress reported.

BIILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. Dairy Industry.

2. Geraldton Racecourse.

Received from the Assembly.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 25th October, 1922.

	PAGE
Assent to Bill	1197
Questions: Art unions and lotteries	1197
Group Settlers, delays in transport	1198
North-West Shipping Service	1198
Primary Producers' Association and the Government	1198
Mable Case	1198
Licensing Bill, alleged reflection on Parliament	1198
Returns: Hides, export	1198
North-West, assets, revenue, etc.	1198
Bills: Dairy Industry, 3a.	1200
Geraldton Racecourse, 3b.	1200
Dairy Cattle Improvement, report	1200
Perth Markets, 2a., defeated	1200
State Trading Concerns Act Amendment, 2a.	1212
The Perpetual Trustees, Executor and Agency Co. (W.A.), Ltd. (Private), 2a.	1213
Closer Settlement, Com.	1213
Motions: Narrogin-Dwarka Railway, to inquire by Select Committee	1211
Oil prospecting	1213
Midland Railway Coy., acquisition of concession	1213
Annual Estimates: Votes discussed, Public Service Commissioner, Government Motor Cars, Printing, Tourist and Publicity Bureau, Literary and Scientific Grants	1214
Papers: Auditor General's report and Public Accounts	1224

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 2), £650,000.

QUESTION—ART UNIONS AND LOTTERIES.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that a decision has been arrived at by Cabinet with regard to the privileges of art unions and lotteries? If so, will he state the nature of such decision? 2, Has a distinction been made between churches and racing clubs in favour of the former? 3, If so, how does he justify such distinction in view of the fact that the former stands for condemnation of the practice whilst the latter constantly endorses it?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes, raffles, sweeps, and art unions which are held in aid of charitable and other worthy objects with the approval and support of a large section of the public are being permitted, as it was considered if they were entirely suppressed it would mean the closing of many channels of benevolence and departing from a rule followed by previous Governments. 2, It is not considered racing clubs come within the scope of charitable objects, nor yet are they an object for benevolence. 3, Answered by Nos. 1 and 2.

QUESTION—GROUP SETTLERS, DELAYS IN TRANSPORT.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that there has been considerable delay and expense has been imposed upon group settlers by failure in transport to convey wives, families, furniture, and personal effects from Busselton to the groups? 2, Is he aware that in consequence settlers have been compelled to go into debt to defray such expenses? 3, Does he propose to recoup settlers for such expenses?

The PREMIER replied: There has been some delay and possibly a little expense, but the department are not aware of any considerable amount. Further, field assistance has been provided to enable improvement of transport organisation. Group settlers receive much more assistance in this direction than ordinary selectors. 2, No. 3, Answered by (1) and (2).

QUESTION—NORTH-WEST SHIPPING SERVICE.

Mr. McCALLUM asked the Premier: Is it a fact that the State Government have agreed to a private shipping company running a vessel on the North-West coast and that such vessel is to be manned by coloured labour?

The PREMIER replied: This is a Federal matter, but the Government supported the running of another boat on the coast for passengers, cargo, and cattle.

QUESTION — PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION AND THE GOVERNMENT.

Mr. McCALLUM asked the Premier: 1, Have Mr. Colebatch and Mr. George been second and third senior members respectively of the Cabinet since his Government was formed in June, 1919? 2, Is it a fact that the executive of the Primary Producers' Association subsequent to their conference held in August made a demand that a Minister representing their association be appointed second senior member of the Cabinet? 3, Is the announcement correct which appears in Tuesday's "West Australian," altering the order of precedence, which disrates the Minister for Education and the Minister for Works and makes the Minister for Agriculture their senior?

The PREMIER replied: 1, 2, and 3, The whole matter has already been made public, and there is no further information to give.

QUESTION—MABLE CASE.

Mr. HARRISON (for Mr. Johnston) asked the Premier: 1, What action has been taken by the Government to give effect to the resolution of the House (carried at the instance of the present Colonial Secretary) in regard to an adequate compassionate allowance for Mr. Thomas Mable? 2, What amount has been offered to Mr. Mable? 2, What amount

was claimed by him in his action against the Crown in the Supreme Court? 4, Was Mr. Mable's claim exclusive of the value of his five years' labour on his farm? 5, Does the claim similarly exclude compensation for his five years' illegal detention in the Claremont Asylum? 6, Will the Government make a full statement of their intentions in this matter?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The matter is under consideration. 2, £100. 3, £2,710 5s. 3d., plus (a) allowance for five years' work on farm; (b) interest on capital invested in farm; (c) allowance for each of five years' detention at the asylum. (4 and 5, Answered by No. 3. 6, Yes.

QUESTION—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Alleged reflection on Parliament.

Capt. CARTER asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the following statement appearing over the name of Mr. Jas. Mather in Monday's "Daily News":—"Had he (Archbishop Riley) been in the galleries of the Assembly during the past four weeks, when the Licensing Act Amendment Bill was being considered and seen how the liquor interests from the Speaker's gallery controlled Parliament, he would not have held the above opinion, 'That Parliament wishes to do what is right'?" 2, What action does he contemplate taking to protect Parliament from such malicious and unfounded statements?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The matter has been referred to the Solicitor General for advice.

RETURN—HIDES, EXPORT.

On motion by Mr. MANN, ordered—That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing:—1, The number of shipments of hides from Wyndham to London. 2, The number of hides in each shipment. 3, The price per lb. f.o.b. Wyndham. 4, The price per lb. and the number sold landed weights London. 5, The number sent on consignment. 6, The net price per lb. realised for the latter after deducting all expenses of transport from Western Australia to London.

RETURN—NORTH-WEST, ASSETS, REVENUE, ETC.

Mr. DURACK (Kimberley) [4.40]: move—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing:—1, The value of all assets belonging to the State, in the portion of the State North of 26th parallel of South Latitude, standing in the Government records at the 30th June 1921. 2, The reserve, by way of depreciation and sinking fund against the cost of these assets, if any, and the amount. 3,

The amount of depreciation and sinking fund so provided for, if any, allowed for in valuation of assets as per No. 1. 4, The total revenue derived by the State from all sources in that portion of the State North of 26th parallel of South Latitude for the ten years ended 30th June, 1921. 5, The revenue derived in the two years ended 30th June, 1921. 6, The cost of upkeep, working expenses, cost of collection of revenue, and all other revenue expenditure for the ten years ended 30th June, 1921.

My object in moving this motion is to find out what our position is with respect to the North-West.

Mr. Harrison: Do you want a new State there?

Mr. DURACK: The motion may lead up to that point. There was a conference held in Albury on the 5th July last of representatives of the New States movement. In the proceedings of that conference as published in the "Age," there appeared a telegram from Carnarvon, which practically commits the people there to the new States movement. Before we, however, bind ourselves to any proposition we want to know where we are. The New States movement is growing and becoming stronger and more pronounced each day. That is evidenced by Mr. Hughes in his speech published in this morning's paper, wherein he makes reference to the growing desire on the part of people for smaller States in order that they may control their own areas.

Mr. Marshall: There is an election coming on.

Mr. DURACK: The telegram from Carnarvon to which I have referred reads as follows—

The supporters of the New States movement in the North-West of Australia wish best success to the All-Australia New States conference in their endeavour to formulate a workable scheme to bring about the subdivision of the large areas of the present States, which they are satisfied is essential in the task of developing and populating Australia. North-West Australians are labouring under particularly great disabilities through being governed by Southerners, whose outlook and interests are Southern and metropolitan. Our isolation from the seat of Government aggravates the disabilities which all country districts in large States necessarily suffer.

The telegram is a long one and concludes as follows—

Amongst many of those who favour subdivision, however, there is a fear that it is practically impossible of realisation. We expect the Albury conference to dispel that idea, and to give a new stimulus to the movement here and throughout Australia.

We talk about the potentialities of the great North-West, but we often talk in platitudes. If it is a great North-West, we should establish its greatness. It may be great in the immensity of its area, but it has not a great

population. If it is great, and possesses the resources to make it even greater, we should take steps to have more money spent there in order to bring this about. Before committing ourselves to the New States policy we should know where we stand. This movement is not a novel one, and to some extent is contemplated under our present Constitution. Section 63 of the Constitution Act (Part VI., Financial) says—

Whenever any portion of the colony is about to be separated therefrom the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury may, if requested by the Governor-in-Council on report and accounts furnished by him, declare what portion of the public debt of the Colony has been expended within the territory about to be separated, and the interest and sinking fund, if any, upon the portion of the public debt mentioned in any such declaration shall be a reserved charge payable to the Government of Western Australia by the Government of the separated territory, and due provision for such reserved charge shall be made in any Act regulating the Constitution of the separated territory. Provided always that nothing herein contained, and no declaration or provision as aforesaid, shall in any way prejudice or affect the security of any debentures which may have been issued by the Government of Western Australia before the separation of any such territory.

If we are to become a separate State in the North, we shall have to carry out certain responsibilities. The policy of the Country Party to which I have the honour to belong means that we are practically committed to the new State movement.

Mr. Underwood: Do you call it an honour?

Mr. DURACK: Certainly.

Mr. Harrison: We are not pledged to the smaller State movement in this State.

Mr. DURACK: I will not say we are committed to it, but the principle has been affirmed.

Mr. Harrison: In the Commonwealth?

Mr. DURACK: No, in this State. I think it was decided at our last conference.

Mr. Underwood: Your conference decides these questions!

Mr. DURACK: Some time ago an attempt was made to get out a return of this nature, but it was put aside, as more important matters were pressing at that juncture. This is an important question and we are entitled to find out our position. A lot of figures regarding Government assistance in the North-West were prepared by the Under Treasurer when he was attempting to get out the return to which I have already referred. I will not deal with the figures in detail, but I will draw attention to the statement to show that it sets out that the Government have spent in 10 years on public works in the North-West including hospitals, buildings, police quarters, and so on, but not including jetties, about £1,230,000. The assets or profits derived by private companies and trading companies in the North-West have been set down at about

£1,000,000. I do not know what taxation would be necessary, but I presume it would be about 2s. 6d. in the pound, which would mean a return to the State of about £125,000, representing the taxation that comes annually from the North. When we ask for the expenditure in the North-West, we are told that money is not available. Possibly that money is not available, but if we are providing more revenue than is being expended in the North-West, we are entitled to ask for that increased expenditure. We are entitled to ask for this return.

Hon. P. Collier: This return will take more revenue to get it out than you have paid in during the last 10 years.

Mr. DURACK: If that is so, I think we are talking in platitudes when we refer to the great possibilities of the North-West. If that is true, we must pursue some other policy. We are entitled to know what our position is. We should know what we have to face. That information would be required by an ordinary business concern. We must look around and see whether we cannot introduce some better system, if the North represents a losing proposition.

Hon. T. Walker: The Leader of the Opposition did not say it was a losing proposition.

Hon. P. Collier: I did not say anything to indicate that.

Mr. DURACK: The Leader of the Opposition led me to conclude from his remarks that we were not getting anything out of it.

Hon. P. Collier: I said this return would cost more than you have paid in to the Treasury.

Mr. Underwood: Yes, during the last 10 years.

Mr. DURACK: We hear a lot about the wonderful possibilities ahead of us in the North-West. The New States movement is coming to the fore, and before we consider that aspect we want to know where we stand and whether we can meet our responsibilities. For that reason, I submit the motion to the House.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Dairy Industry.

2, Geraldton Racecourse.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—DAIRY CATTLE IMPROVEMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—PERTH MARKETS.

Second reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th October.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pillara) [4.55]: I have not much to say regarding the Bill. I

have been convinced for many years past, that we require better marketing facilities than we have at present. I am not agreeing with all the clauses in the Bill.

Mr. Harrison: I should think not.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There are many clauses with which I disagree, but at the same time I recognise that what is most required in Perth, and I think also in Fremantle, are open markets. I have travelled round the country recently as a member of a select committee. I have also travelled round the country previously, and wherever one meets growers of fruit and vegetables, one finds those persons have great difficulty in marketing their produce. We find that the producer or grower gets very little for his produce, yet the consumer has to pay reasonably high prices for that produce.

Mr. Harrison: More than reasonably high prices.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I agree with that, too. In my opinion, we would remedy that position to a great extent by establishing open markets in Perth, which is the only capital city in Australia that has not open markets for the disposal of produce of that description. From my experience of Melbourne and to a more limited extent, of Sydney, I am convinced that by means of open markets the producer gets nearer to the consumer, and some of the middle men and commission agents are cut out. When it comes to a question as to who is to be in charge of those markets, I am convinced that the best people to look after them, are the representatives of the city or the area which is to be served.

Mr. A. Thomson: What about the producers being represented?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is a matter for the Committee. I do not know that the question of the producers being represented on the body controlling the markets, has ever arisen in connection with the Melbourne establishment, yet they are the best in Australia. They are managed by the Melbourne City Council. I know of no one else who could manage them better. I have always held the opinion that this is not a question for the Government nor one that affects outside country centres, such as Northam or Kellerberrin, for instance. It affects only the people of the metropolitan area who consume the produce and those who grow it.

Mr. Harrison: You must not forget the latter.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Whatever may be in the Bill, I am convinced that the best people to run the markets are to be found in the City Council. We have heard something about impossible and incompetent bumbles. I have heard a great deal and read a great deal about incompetent Parliamentarians. I have never considered that that criticism was quite correct. As a matter of fact, there is a tendency apparent in the British race to have a safety valve, and it seems to be a right to abuse public men. It is not so much that the

public men are wrong; it is a safety valve through which dyspeptic people can blow off.

The Minister for Agriculture: Cannibalistic.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is more a question of digestion. Those people speak about public men and criticise them, and call them incompetent bumbles—they call Parliamentarians worse than that. It is purely a question of digestion.

The Premier: It is a fair exchange, anyhow.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The food those people consume turns sour in the stomach and they have to blow off that sourness on somebody. When we consider the proposition as to who shall run the markets, the people who are producing the material and those who consume it are concerned. The people of Marble Bar, however, are not concerned in the conduct of markets in Perth. It is the people of Perth who should be interested, and when I speak of the people of Perth, I speak of those whom we have elected to represent us. There are some complications with regard to the position as to where these markets shall be situated. A previous Government resumed land, and in my opinion that land was resumed in the right place for the building of markets. The City Council offered to take that land from the Government and build markets there, and take all the responsibility of paying. I am of the opinion they should have been allowed to do so. If we can amend the Bill in Committee to bring about the establishment of markets, and provide that the Government shall lose no money, while the markets are situated in as convenient a place as possible, then I see no reason whatever why the House should object to the Bill.

Mr. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [5.5]: If the Bill becomes law the only alteration that I can see that will be effected on existing conditions is that the City Council will erect buildings in which the marketing will be done, instead of, as is the case at the present time, in premises that are privately owned.

Mr. Mann: And scattered all over the place.

Mr. McCALLUM: I cannot see how it can be argued that the Bill will have the effect of bringing the producer and consumer closer together. The only difference will be that the City Council will erect premises and they will allot spaces to the different firms and auctioneers, and business will be conducted under one roof instead of in various parts of the city.

Mr. Mann: There will be spaces to which the producer can take his goods and sell them direct to the consumer.

Mr. McCALLUM: The producer now has that opportunity in premises of his own in the city. But under the Bill, instead of having premises of his own, he will lease them from the City Council. So, how can it be argued that the Bill will bring the producer and consumer closer together?

Mr. Mann: Have you seen the system in the Victoria markets, Melbourne?

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes, and in Adelaide. The Adelaide system is entirely different from that which is proposed under the Bill. The Victoria markets are practically deserted.

The Premier: Not the Eastern markets.

Mr. McCALLUM: The markets at North Melbourne. I have two other objections to the Bill going through, and the first is on account of the manner in which this august body, the City Council, have carried out the functions that are already theirs. Consequently, I do not favour giving extended powers to this or any other local governing body unless the franchise is considerably democratised, and those local bodies are made more representative of the people than is the case to-day. If the City Council are to be entrusted with wider powers, if they are to be given authority to deal with matters such as are contained in the Bill, it is right that we should inquire into their existing powers. If we want to see a monument of the incapacity of the City Council, we have only to look around. Nature has been very kind to the city of Perth and its surroundings, but the City Council have absolutely defaced nature. Instead of benefiting by the mistakes made in the older cities of Australia, they have followed the worst examples set by those older cities. In Perth we are reproducing slums, which, in a few years' time, will equal those to be found in older cities elsewhere. Perth is the last of the Australian capitals to be developed, and yet it has fewer parks and fewer greens, open spaces and playgrounds than any other city in the Commonwealth. The reserves which the City Council now possess it is suggested should be disposed of. Proposals have been submitted to the municipal authorities for building on the reserves.

Hon. P. Collier: And they have decided on that too.

Mr. McCALLUM: What have the municipal people done to make the city beautiful, and one that the citizens might be proud of? They talk glibly about "the city beautiful," and that is the end of it. Look at the state of the roads and footpaths, not only the by-ways but the main streets. In fact wherever one goes he will find monuments of incapacity. As to the business side of the undertakings they control, how have they treated the taxpayers? We need only instance the manner in which they have handled the disposal of electric current.

Mr. Mann: In a very business-like way.

Mr. McCALLUM: I will give one or two instances to show the business-like way in which they have dealt with this trading concern. It is here that we find disgraceful profiteering.

Hon. P. Collier: Their profiteering is the very acme of business.

Mr. McCALLUM: We find that current which they purchased from the Government for £29,000 was sold to consumers for £134,000. On that £29,000 purchase they made a profit on the year's transaction, after charging up

all legitimate and imaginary costs, of over £40,000.

The Premier: What do you mean by imaginary costs?

Mr. McCALLUM: Costs that should not be a legitimate charge against the concern. They debited everything they could possibly imagine to try to reduce the figures, until they could not possibly charge up anything else. And yet they showed a profit on the year of £40,000. If we go out of the City Council's boundary, say Subiaco, we can get current much cheaper than in Perth. Even at Kalamunda it can be purchased at a third the price it costs in Perth. Yet this middleman, the City Council, comes in and levies a huge toll. Although the current is produced and used within the city boundary, the City Council come in and declare that they will collect their dividend out of it.

Mr. Mann: You are forgetting what they spent in buying out the old company.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is all allowed for, and yet they make a profit of £40,000 in the year. They say they are going to insist on being the middlemen, and by the profits that they have made it is clear that they are not representing the people. Australia is now, I believe, the one and only country on earth which has retained plural voting in connection with municipal government. I do not think there is another country outside Australia where that prevails. In Perth one individual has as many as six votes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, four is the maximum.

Mr. McCALLUM: Well, four is high enough. Four votes to another man's one, and yet the people who support that plural system are the same people who go outside and say that proportionately there are more Australians who own their homes than anyone else in any other part of the world. If that argument is right there is less reason for plural voting in Australia, and yet Australia is the one country that has stuck to the system.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Only a portion of Australia; it has been abolished in Sydney.

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes, and in Brisbane. It is obvious why it is retained here; it is because they are able to use a business concern like that for supplying electric current to all property owners to permit those property owners in the main street to avoid carrying their fair share of taxation. No wonder it is desired that the system shall continue, and that every little cottage shall be made to pay more than its full share. The City Council are levying an unfair tax on every industry within the city boundaries. The factories have to pay a heavy tax in order that the proprietors of city property with their four votes may dodge their fair proportion of taxation.

Mr. Mann: You are not justified in saying that.

Mr. McCALLUM: It is done for the purpose I have stated. If the hon. member

wants further proof let him read the appeal made by the Mayor of Perth to the residents of North Perth in opposition to their declared intention to pull out from Greater Perth. He said to those people, "We are going to get the right to run a tramway to North Beach and we shall later be able to run the city without any taxation at all." It is his intention to tax the people through other channels so that the big land owners shall escape. Those are in effect his actual words. Now they want to say not only to the citizens of Perth, but to the producers and consumers from one end of the country to the other, that every article sent into the city of Perth must pay toll. They want to say to the market gardeners of Spearwood, to the producers in the wheat belt and the fruitgrowers of the South-West, that every pound's worth of produce sent to the city for sale must bear a tax before it can reach the consumer. The City Council will extract its pound of flesh.

The Premier: They can go to the consumer direct.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not under this Bill.

Mr. McCALLUM: It is questionable whether a truck of chaff sent to Bunbury from Northam would not be levied upon in the same way.

Mr. Mann: This applies to produce coming in for sale.

Mr. McCALLUM: That would be for sale.

The Premier: It would be sold direct.

Mr. McCALLUM: Is there any reason why producers in my district or in any district outside the city of Perth should pay toll to the City Council? Why should the fruitgrowers or market gardeners of my district who do a great deal of business in the city, be asked to relieve the big property holders of Hay-street of their taxation? Why should the fruitgrowers of Bridgetown or the wheat growers in the wheat belt be asked to do likewise? Why should people outside the city of Perth be asked to relieve these people of the share of taxation they should rightly bear? The City Council want the same right over the food supplies of the people that they are now exercising over the electricity supply. Let me mention another point in connection with the electricity supply to indicate what a profiteering concern the City Council are. When the change-over from the direct to the alternating current was effected, the City Council gave an undertaking to the citizens that they would supply new globes free of cost. They bought 120,000 globes for a shade over 1s. each. Then they sold them for 1s. 9d. to the agent who imports them, and the agent retailed them to the people at 2s. 6d.

Mr. Pickering: That is what they call giving.

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes, and in order to dodge their responsibility, they had the current raised gradually so that all the globes would not blow out at once, but would gradually wear out. By these means they avoided

a public outcry and the possibility of a crowd of people assembling outside their offices one morning and asking for new globes. That is an example of the profiteering methods of the City Council.

Mr. Marshall: Direct sabotage.

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes, absolutely.

The Minister for Mines: They ought to be called upon to disgorge.

Mr. McCALLUM: There is no doubt about that. I am not prepared to give another monopoly to a body who have acted towards the citizens like that in connection with a monopoly they already hold. Where would the producers and consumers of this country be if the City Council had a monopoly of the markets? It would be a poor look out for both producers and consumers if this Bill were passed.

Mr. Mann: You do not suggest that markets are not necessary?

Mr. McCALLUM: No, but I have never heard of such a cheeky proposition as is contained in this Bill.

Mr. Mann: You can amend it.

Mr. McCALLUM: It is up to the House to teach the City Council that they must not put up such an outrageous proposition and ask for such outrageous powers and then suggest that the House should amend their proposals. We should tell the City Council to put up a reasonable proposal first and not send down such an unreasonable proposition as this, relying on Parliament to knock it into shape. We should reject this measure on the second reading and teach the council to put up something reasonable.

Mr. A. Thomson: The City Council are evidently satisfied with it. They do not want it knocked into shape.

Hon. P. Collier: In their minds it is perfection itself.

Mr. McCALLUM: I hesitate to believe that even the City Council for a moment expected to get such a Bill passed. Notwithstanding dictionaries, notwithstanding ordinary trade custom and all the learned interpretations since time immemorial, the City Council propose to reserve to themselves the right to say what is merchandise, and their decision will be final. Fancy asking Parliament to agree to that. The member for Perth says we can knock it into shape. There is to be no limit as to the charges to be imposed in respect to certain space, and the interpretation of what is merchandise is to be left to this most august body to determine.

Hon. P. Collier: They have been watching for years for an unsophisticated member to come along and the member for Perth fell right in. For years they have been trying to get this Bill in.

Mr. McCALLUM: Instead of giving the City Council new powers, we should examine the powers they have. Their action over the electric light globes is a scandal and should not be permitted to continue.

The Minister for Mines: We are examining that.

Mr. McCALLUM: I hope some action will be taken as a result of the examination. We

are asked to hand over the control of marketing so that the City Council may levy taxation on practically every article sold for consumption in the city. The City Council will be middlemen. Instead of bringing the producer and consumer closer together we are to drift back to the dark ages when one could not use a road, bridge or footpath without paying a toll. Talk about this Bill being something new or advanced! Why it is a reversion to a system which has become discredited in the oldest country in the world.

Mr. Mann: Do not you pay a toll in all markets?

Mr. McCALLUM: It is not even suggested that there should be any limit to the charges to be imposed. The Council can charge anything they like, and the toll must be paid before the goods are delivered. There is only one good feature in the Bill and that is it is not proposed to prevent markets being shifted out of the city boundaries into one of the suburbs. There would be nothing to prevent the Subiaco Council setting up markets and dodging the toll. That is the only good feature of the Bill. It is a wonder the City Council did not ask for control over a radius of 20 miles from the Town Hall, but they have been modest to that extent. However, they have gone so far as to suggest declaring that the City of Perth shall be the metropolitan area. Within that there is to be no limit if Parliament is foolish enough to give them these powers. Instead of listening to any appeals to redraft the Bill or refer it to a select committee—

Hon. P. Collier: That is an impudent suggestion.

Mr. McCALLUM: We should tell the City Council that their action in putting up such a Bill warrants for it one fate and that is to pass the measure out on the second reading.

Capt. CARTER (Leederville) [5.23]: During my remarks on the Address-in-reply I referred to this Bill which I knew at that time was coming forward. While I agree in the main with what the previous speaker has said, it has been my lot, in common with every other citizen of Perth, to suffer many disabilities, the blame for which I think might be largely laid at the door of the City Council on account of the policy they have adopted. On the other hand, all of us agree that anything which means a betterment of the marketing system should be encouraged. I go so far as to say that in the main principle of drawing all our marketing into the one area, this Bill is a good one, but I cannot say it is a good one in any other respect. It has been my privilege with other members of this Chamber on two or three occasions to confer with the markets committee of the City Council at their invitation, and it has struck me that the whole attitude of the council has been one of endeavouring to draw a blind over the eyes of members who have a perfect right to be interested in the Bill. They have not been frank, and this Bill is an indication that they think their bluff is going to carry them to the extent of getting the Bill passed

at least partially in its present form; or else the City Council have some idea which I cannot fathom. There is a saying flat if one aims at a star he might hit a tree. Probably the City Council have asked for these monopolistic powers in the hope of getting one or some of them. If the House considers the Bill, I hope members will keep in mind the fact that there is a great and clamant need for the centralisation of all produce in one market. Members while working on a select committee from this Chamber recently came across fresh evidence of the need for a better marketing system. That evidence is manifested wherever producers are gathered. It has been made apparent in my own district where the major part of the vegetables consumed in the city are produced. The growers would welcome some system which would better the conditions, but with the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum), I fail to see how the conditions will be greatly improved under the arrangements the City Council have begun to make. Nothing is said in the Bill regarding the site, but I want to inform the House that the site of the proposed markets has already been fixed. A large area of land, which the City Council consider necessary, has already been resumed. To my knowledge there has been no reference of the matter to the ratepayers, but many thousands of pounds—how many I was unable to ascertain, although I asked the question—have been spent on valuable city property in East Perth, with the idea of establishing markets on the other side of the bottle-neck formed by the Beaufort-street bridge. I was interested in a deputation which waited on the works committee on the question of the site. I wish to point this out as a further illustration of what the member for South Fremantle has tried to prove, namely the incompetency of the City Council in handling business propositions. At the present time three sites have been suggested. Over a period of years there have been various reports sent forward by engineering authorities. Members will recollect the reservation of the area running as far as the West Perth station from the present goods assembling yards in Melbourne-road, and the surveying of them as a site for prospective markets. On the other side of the West Perth area, there is site No. 2 which at the present time is a big open space not being used, but which engineers have placed in the category of desirable sites as No. 2, the Marquis-street site being easily No. 1 and the most preferable from every point of view. The third and very bad last of the sites is the East Perth site and I wish to draw special attention to this. To adopt the East Perth site would mean that every truck-load of produce which comes through the Beaufort-street bottle-neck into the distributing yards would have to be again shunted across the main Perth-Fremantle line on to the up line and through the bottle-neck to East Perth or some other new assembling yard which the City Council presume the Government are go-

ing to build, shunted across the Perth-Midland Junction main passenger line as a goods train and brought into their particular market area. That, in my opinion, condemns the whole of their scheme, for this very reason, that the whole trend of business in the city of Perth is gradually coming westward. In view of the natural features of our city, the trend cannot very well be eastward for many years to come. The great majority of those who cart their vegetables by road come from the north-west portion of the city from Osborne Park, Njookenboroo, and other parts of the Leederville area. Therefore, it is only reasonable to suggest to the gentlemen who have this project in hand that they should adopt the nearest possible site for those growers to cart their produce to. It is most desirable that those heavily laden carts should be kept out of the city area as much as possible. If the House passes the second reading of the Bill, I shall move that the measure be referred to a select committee, because it contains many novelties which should be considered very carefully.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [5.32]: I agree with most of what has been said by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum). It seems to me that by this Bill the Perth City Council are trying to get a monopoly of marketing all the products that come into the city. After they have got this Bill, if they get it, they will most likely want to put a toll on export wheat going to Fremantle. Since I have been in this Chamber I have never known a Bill anything like so avaricious in character as this one. The thousands of truck loads of chaff that come annually to Perth to various agents and representatives are then distributed to the timber mills and elsewhere outside the metropolitan area; but everyone of those truck loads would have to pay toll to the Perth City Council, according to my reading of the measure. Not only that, but the council also take in hay and straw, and wheat for poultry farmers. Again, as regards nearly all our perishable lines we are in a different position from either Adelaide, Melbourne or Sydney. A large proportion of the perishable products, such as vegetables and fruit, used by those Eastern States capitals are grown in their vicinity; and I believe the same thing applies to Sydney. There the produce is distributed in market centres. Members who have recently visited the Eastern States speak of the Victorian Market in Elizabeth-street, Melbourne.

Mr. Mann: The selling there is done early in the morning.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is done all day long.

Mr. Mann: Only the retail portion.

Mr. HARRISON: The Perth City Council want everything to pay toll to them, even if it does not go near their market. As the member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) has said, all the shunting charges and other

disabilities which are involved in the site where the council propose to place their markets are bound eventually to come off the return to the producer. It is the producer who will be mulct in those extra costs every time.

Capt. Carter: And the site is declared to be impracticable.

Mr. HARRISON: Even were it practicable, the extra charges would eventually come back on the producing public. The result must be to increase heavily the present cost of living. The Bill, instead of helping us to attain our objective of a better position as between the metropolitan consumer and the outside producer, would tend to make things very much worse. I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [5.37]: I also propose to vote against the second reading of the Bill, and I do hope the House will not refer it to a select committee. We have had too many select committees. Let us accept the responsibility so far as this measure is concerned. I have one great objection to the Bill, and that is the impertinent proviso which insists that the producer shall send into this market controlled by the Perth City Council every part of his produce which exceeds in value £1 sterling. It means that by this Bill we are asked to put on the shoulders of the producer and on those of the consumer an additional burden. That is all the benefit to be derived from the Bill. In addition to the costs which the producer now pays, he will under this measure have to pay additional costs to the Perth City Council and that body's officers. The purpose of the Bill is to enable this cormorant council to have further opportunities for fattening and batten- ing on the people of this country.

Mr. Mann: I think that is unjust.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It is absolutely true. The Bill gives the Perth City Council power to impose a toll on every article of produce exceeding the value of £1 that comes into Perth from any part of Western Australia. Ninety per cent. of the produce of this State is sent into Perth.

Mr. Harrison: And by the truck, too.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes. There is no sea-board communication here as in the Eastern States, New South Wales and Queensland particularly, where the produce can come in from the ports. Ninety per cent. of the produce here goes into the city. Under this Bill, even the inferior wheat which comes in to feed the poultry farmers' fowls and the pig farmers' stock will be subject to a toll in order to fatten up the city of Perth, which is already existing on the country community. That is my great objection to the Bill, and I do not think this Parliament should make the slightest attempt to amend it in Committee. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) has introduced some extraordinary legislation into this Chamber, and it will be a lesson to him

if we throw out this Bill on the second reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.40]: We have heard a good deal about the marketing facilities of the city of Perth for some years. I believe the last two or three Governments have discussed the subject. It has been generally agreed that the establishment of suitable markets on a suitable site in Perth would be of advantage both to the producer and the consumer. It being common ground that markets are necessary, I think they should be established by the municipality. In a small way there are the kerbstone markets, which have done a great deal of good.

The Minister for Mines: They are only retail. This will be a wholesale market.

The PREMIER: Not necessarily. At the kerbstone markets the consumer gets his fresh vegetables at a reasonable price, and the grower of the vegetables receives a return that satisfies him. I was once there, and saw the market in operation. However, this Bill goes too far altogether. Under it, everything coming into Perth would have to pay toll.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes; wheat, chaff, firewood, and everything else.

The PREMIER: Produce that never went into the market would have to pay toll. The House would never agree to such a proposal. When the Perth City Council first produced their Bill, I told them that it would never become law.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The producer has no control over the officers of the Perth City Council.

Hon. P. Collier: He has not even the privilege of voting them out if they do wrong.

The PREMIER: We could protect the producer under this Bill. The producer is not by any means satisfied to-day. He is getting far too little for much of his stuff. If hon. members heard the complaints, as I have heard them, of the producers of perishable stuff, they would know something about the matter. I believe markets would be a decided advantage to the producer.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The advantage of an additional burden.

The PREMIER: No. He must to-day pay for marketing; and, more than that, he pays to-day for cartage, which would be saved if the markets were in a properly equipped situation. There should be a siding to carry the produce into the market. Surely it is more desirable to concentrate the sales than to spread them over a large area. We have to consider the expenditure of money by people who are doing the work of marketing to-day, and we have to consider them before the Bill becomes law. If we pass the second reading and submit the measure to a select committee, all parties would be heard, including the producers; and then Parliament could make such amendments in the Bill as are necessary in order to meet every interest that is concerned. I cannot understand that

there should be any objection to a market properly run and imposing only reasonable charges. But the Bill before us is entirely another matter. Under that Bill everything coming into the city, unless it be sent direct to the consumer, would have to pay toll. That is asking far too much. There is no justification for levying a charge against produce sent direct to the retailer. Every member knows full well how vast a volume of trade there is between the wheatgrower and the citizens of Perth. Then there are the chaff merchants of Perth, who purchase that commodity and also oats from the grower. There are the potato growers and others. Their products now do not go through markets, and occupy no market space, and mean no cost to anybody in that respect. At present there is every facility for direct trading. If I sold my chaff at Northam at so much per ton and were told that for every ton coming to Perth there would be a deduction of, say, 1s. per ton as a marketing charge, I should very strongly object. On the other hand, of course, I should have no objection at all to paying for services actually rendered. And I do not think the great body of producers would object either. In such a market there would be control over the sellers, and the interests of the producers would be watched.

Hon. M. F. Troy: By whom?

The PREMIER: By inspectors appointed by the City Council. After all, the local authority ought to be able to do the work very well. I cannot see any great difference in control by the City Council and control by the Government, except that the Government are elected by the people of the State, whereas the City Council are elected by the people of the metropolitan area.

Hon. M. F. Troy: But there can be no check on the City Council.

The PREMIER: Oh, yes there is.

Mr. Munsie: The people in the country have not any check over them.

The PREMIER: Of course the people in the country have not votes for the City Council, but they would have the right to make themselves heard on questions relating to the market. Of course, we should never give any authority power to do more than charge for the produce that goes through the markets. The grower could protect himself. If the House would pass the second reading and refer the Bill to a select committee, it ought to be possible to get a satisfactory measure. I will vote for the second reading.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.47]: I do not propose to waste time in adding to the expressions of general scorn which have met the Bill, except to say I agree with every word of condemnation uttered in respect of it. I should not have spoken were it not that there appears to be in the minds of some members a feeling that, while the House is strongly opposed to the Bill in its present form, it would be advisable to pass the second reading with the object of referring the Bill

to a select committee in order that it might be moulded closer to the desires of hon. members. I hope the House will do nothing of the kind. In the first place, this is a private Bill introduced by a private member. It is not a function of the House to take a private Bill and knock it into shape, to re-cast it to meet the wishes of the House. When a private Bill is introduced we are entitled to assume that the persons behind it know what they want, and know that the measure contains the provisions which they think it ought to contain, and nothing else. If it contains anything more, if it has provisions which are not really desired, but have been put in as a try on, then the Bill and the motives behind it are entitled to no consideration at all. We are assuming that the people responsible for the Bill know what they want. Therefore, seeing that it does not meet with the approval of any member of the House, there is only one thing to do with it, namely, throw it out. Then let those who desire a Marketing Bill recast it and bring it to the House in a more acceptable form. It is not for the House to appoint a select committee to draft a Bill for some outside body who apparently do not know what they want.

The Premier: They know only too well, I think.

The Minister for Mines: So do we know.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And if we were to waste time in referring the Bill to a select committee and get it recast, in all probability the City Council would say, "That Bill is no good to us. We are not going on with it," and so our time would be wasted. If we had an assurance from the City Council that they would accept such a Bill as might be recommended by the select committee, we might be justified in spending time dealing with it. But we have not that assurance; in fact we have every assurance that the City Council would say, "You can throw it in the waste paper basket. It is no longer of any use to us." There is only one thing to do with the Bill, namely, reject it and let the City Council reconsider their attitude in the light of the debate which has taken place. Let them spend a few profitable hours reading "Hansard" and getting a correct idea of the views of hon. members. Having done that, they ought to be prepared to come down with a Bill which, from their perusal of members' speeches, they would know to be acceptable to the House. Let them set to work and draft another Bill, or better still, devote their talents to a more worthy object. I hope the House will not entertain the idea of referring the Bill to a select committee, but will simply put it in the waste paper basket, where it ought to go.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.50]: There is no doubt that central markets are absolutely necessary. In considering this astounding measure placed before us, it occurs to me there are others besides the City Council who are desirous of having markets. There seem to be only two courses open, namely either to

establish municipal markets or to pin our faith to Government markets. Municipal markets mean what is expressed in the Bill, whereas Government markets would mean control by representatives of the producers and the consumers, of the agents and of the Government. Under the Bill the only interests represented are those of the city. The Primary Producers' Association have had several conferences with the City Council, the object being to get a Bill that would be acceptable to all interests. However, the ideas put forward by the representatives of the primary producers find no place in the Bill. I cannot agree with those clauses dealing with the toll on the produce. Also I am opposed to the power to be vested in the City Council, power to make regulations which must be inimical to the best interests of the people this party is representing. Then again, the site adopted is unsuitable, that submitted by the Government being very much better. What with one thing and another, I cannot support the second reading. The record of the Council's operations in other directions is not calculated to instil confidence in the primary producers. It should be one of the conditions of the proposed markets that the interests operating in that market should have proper representation on the board of control. Under the Bill the City Council are to have power to raise certain moneys for the construction of the markets. Of course, the Council should have a voice in the running of the markets for the cost of which they are responsible, but they should be prepared to allow other interests full representation.

Mr. Mann: The Council find the money, and the others control the markets.

Mr. PICKERING: No. I agree that the Council should have some representation, but at the same time they should not refuse representation to the interests in the markets. They have never shown in the conduct of their own affairs that efficiency which would induce primary producers to repose confidence in them. On the board of control there must be representation of the primary producers, of the agents and of the consumers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: From the view point of the City Council, that is a ridiculous proposition.

Mr. PICKERING: That may be so, but the City Council's proposition, as put to us, is equally ridiculous.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Seaddan—Albany) [5.55]: One phase of the matter which ought not to be forgotten is the site. Any member who has given thought to the subject will at once admit that we are long past the time when central markets should have been established in the metropolitan area. The site, of course, is the first essential. The next is suitable control. Markets are required for two definite purposes: one to serve the producer who has to rail his products beyond his control for sale, and the other to serve the consumer. Both those interests, not the interests of the landlord, must be paramount. In existing conditions the pro-

ducer in the country is largely at the mercy of individual auctioneers and agents, and is not getting that just treatment to which he is entitled.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The markets will not alter that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, they will, so long as they are under satisfactory control. In existing conditions we have small markets scattered about all over Perth. It is impossible for a producer to forward his goods in such quantities to each of those different centres as to obtain a price according to the demand of the moment. One auction room may be over-supplied, while another is under-supplied. As a result we have the spectacle of one auctioneer, who is acting as agent for country producers, going along to another auctioneer's establishment and bidding against consumers for supplies, not for his own consumption, but to pass through his own establishment! That condition is ascribable to the number of small markets, or apologies for markets, which we have. But we ought not to mix up wholesale operations with retail operations. Small retail markets, such as the kerbstone markets established in Perth, are very necessary and desirable. Many of those who are selling on the kerbstone markets to-day are producers selling direct to the consumer. These are mostly commodities that could be retailed direct to the people at any time. Central markets are not essential for the purpose of enabling the suburban producer to get rid of his produce, or for the consumer to get proper treatment in regard to that class of goods. The man who is producing, say, 300 miles from the centre of distribution, is unable to follow up his goods, and he finds that many others are sending in for sale goods of a similar nature and he is frequently landed in the position of having to pay something more in order to make good the commission and other charges involved in the disposal of his products, instead of being able to make a profit. That amounts to a waste, and is a hardship upon the producer. It is largely due to the fact that we have not central wholesale markets established side by side with storage accommodation. The essential thing is to establish storage accommodation for perishable or other goods at or immediately in the vicinity of central wholesale markets. If it will then suit for a certain number to conduct retail operations on the same premises, they can be so carried on there. That, however, would not be entirely desirable. Goods ought to go to a central point of distribution, and supplies should be drawn as the demand has to be met. I want to know whether the Bill will help in any one of these directions.

Mr. Munsie: It will not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Will the producer be benefited by the establishment of a suitable market? While the site chosen, the old gas works site, and the land adjacent, may be suitable from the point of view of a retail or kerbstone market, or an ordinary retail market, such as is seen in other capital

cities of Australia, it is entirely unsuitable for wholesale markets and storage accommodation.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The accommodation is not there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Everyone, particularly the producer, has been clamouring for these markets, not the markets that have been suggested here, but markets adjacent to proper and up-to-date storage accommodation. Many of the goods submitted are to-day being bought under what might be termed a forced sale. They cannot be satisfactorily held. They have to be re-handled if they are to be taken to satisfactory storage. In order to avoid any additional expense or risk, the agent puts the goods under the hammer and says to the public "Take them." In this way a great amount of the produce is sold for very much less than the cost of production, and often less than the cost of handling. Someone must pay for this. We must establish things on a different basis. We must commence on the wholesale principle and the retail operations will follow later. The City Council, through the member for Perth in 1916—I refer to the present Agent General, Sir James Connolly—approached the Commissioner of Railways with a view to obtaining certain information. It is interesting to know what the then member for Perth put up on behalf of the City Council. On the 16th October, 1916, the then member for Perth wrote to the Commissioner of Railways as follows:—

Re City Markets.—It is mooted that the City Council are thinking of making application to take over the control of the city markets and cool storage.

The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) should listen to this, because he said something about the Marquis-street site not having been made available for the purpose of a market. The letter continues—

They seem to have an objection to the site that was resumed for the purpose, namely, at Havelock-street.

This matter was submitted to the Commissioner of Railways for his opinion.

It has been suggested that the James-street area—where certain private markets are now situated—would be a more central site for markets. It has also been suggested that the Roe-street market, between William and Lake-streets, be closed, so that sidings may be run into this area for market purposes. It is further suggested that the gas and electric light works in Wellington-street could be used for the purpose of markets as both the gas and the electric light works will be removed from there very shortly. Will you please let me know briefly whether you think either of the propositions is feasible from a railway point of view, and whether a siding could be put in at either site.

At the outset the City Council were doing nothing except to avoid the site that had been chosen for the purpose of not merely establishing a retail market but a wholesale

market with proper and up-to-date storage accommodation. The matter was submitted to the Engineer for Existing Lines, and on the 31st October, 1916, Mr. Light wrote as follows:—

Yours of 18th inst. In regard to paragraph No. 1—

That is the question of taking over control of the markets and cool store.

if this applies to the market at corner of Wellington and William-streets, this is all required for the extension of the goods yard accommodation.

Some members will recollect that when the Marquis-street site was purchased for a central market, the railways were pressing for additional accommodation at the goods yard. It was said that a market at the corner of Wellington-street and the cool storage established there would have to be removed and another site made available. Marquis-street was accepted, as the Wellington-William-street corner was required for the extension of the goods yard accommodation.

Paragraph 3—Not any site on the north side of station can be supplied with a siding as all trucks will have to be shunted across the main line.

Paragraph 4—The gas works site will not be available for a market siding as all trucks will require to be run through Perth passenger station.

After going through the Perth passenger station, the traffic would have to be again run out through the station to the bottom end.

Paragraph 5—The only suitable sites are at Havelock-street—

This is what we term the Marquis-street site, as referred to in No. 2 paragraph, or at East Perth in the ground north of Kensington-street between Claisebrook-road and the Swan River. The former can be easily worked from the goods yard direct, and the latter from East Perth goods yard where trucks can be put off both the main eastern and south-western lines without coming into Perth station.

The City Council were advised of the railway point of view in 1916. Eventually we received a communication from the City Council, after the death of the Engineer for Existing Lines (Mr. Light), advising us that Mr. Light had informed them that he could very well work the goods on to the siding they had selected, known as the gas and electric light works siding. We wrote to them two or three times asking them to give us evidence to that effect, seeing that we had no information on the subject. The only evidence we had was that which I have read, and which is contrary to the views of Mr. Light as expressed on the official records. Following that a number of conferences were held. I believe the City Council conferred with some of the produce merchants. They said they had been obliged to confer with all and sundry. They had evidently made up their minds that they would not accept the Marquis-street site and were determined to force the site

they had selected, unknown to us, and in complete opposition to the advice tendered by the railway expert in regard to the suitable working of the traffic, namely the gas and electric light works site. The Commissioner of Railways advised me on the 17th of this month that before the City Council proceeded with this site as a market site, they should know that it was unsuitable from every point of view, and that the Marquiss-street site was the most acceptable for railway working, for convenience, and for the speedy handling of perishables required to go into store. I am asked to make that clear before the Bill is passed giving the City Council power to establish markets upon a site which, from the railway point of view, is entirely unsuitable. Quite a number of producers in my own electorate, who have to depend entirely upon the handling of their produce by agents, are at one on the point that central wholesale markets, with suitable storage accommodation ought to be provided, and should have been provided years ago.

Mr. Pickering: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They complain further about the possibility of handing over the control of their produce to an authority over whom they have no hold, and over whom, under this Bill, no one else would have any control. They therefore ask that, if markets are to be established, they should be established on the basis that any action taken by the authority controlling them should be subject to the approval or disapproval of those who represent the producers, as well as the sections living in the metropolitan area. One thing that struck me on first perusing the Bill was that in the interpretation clause the boundaries of the metropolitan area are given as the boundaries of the city of Perth. As a matter of fact, the city boundaries do not comprise one-tenth of the metropolitan area. The bulk of the produce that would go through a market established within the boundary of the city of Perth would be taken for the use or consumption of those outside of the boundary of the city municipality. To use the term metropolitan area, therefore, as meaning the boundaries of the City Council is absurd, and shows an endeavour to usurp something to which the City Council is not entitled.

Mr. McCallum: It is to make them appear big.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I believe it is necessary to establish markets, not from the point of view of the ratepayers of Perth, but from the point of view of the consumers of the metropolitan area and the producers in the country. These are the two essentials, and the only interests which ought to be considered. If an authority such as the Perth City Council is requested and feels disposed to provide the capital necessary to establish such markets for the convenience of these two bodies, the producer and the consumer, they must of necessity

recover the cost of such markets from those who make use of them. The astonishing thing is that the objection raised is not so much to the charges that are levied but to the waste that occurs owing to the concentrated community of markets in the metropolitan area. These places levy a sufficient toll upon the producer, not only to pay any capital cost that may be incurred by the provision of necessary buildings for markets, but to pay a sum that would represent a good living for the producers. I refer to the money that is extracted from the producers by the way of commissions and tolls such as are proposed to be levied by the City Council. I am sure if we can get the wholesale marketing of produce in the metropolitan area, plus suitable control, which might involve a monopoly in the disposal of such goods as are required to be submitted to auction, and if the auction of the goods were controlled by a proper authority, and suitable and up-to-date storage accommodation were made available, not only the producer but the consumer would benefit.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How can you control the auctioneers?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: How is that done in other parts of the world? They are controlled by direct appointment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The City Council cannot make their own appointments.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We could give them power to do so if that were desirable.

Mr. McCallum: They do not want it; they do not propose to do business in that way.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is one of the weaknesses of the Bill. Any goods that are sent in to be auctioned ought to be auctioned as the Government conduct their auctioneering to-day. The Government have one auctioneer. At all events the auctioneer should be able to deal with each of the particular lines of commodities he has to handle. To-day we have all and sundry coming in and handling the produce of the men who cannot follow it up as it passes through the various channels. In many cases the producer is called upon to pay out more than he receives.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I had practically concluded my remarks at the tea adjournment, and I now desire only to bring before the attention of hon. members the question whether it is not desirable that at an opportunity of this kind, with a Bill before us treating of the question of central markets, we should endeavour to obtain some additional information on the subject from those who are able to supply it, in order that Parliament may decide whether this form of control should be permitted, or whether some other kind of control, better in the opinion of hon. members, can be devised. I do not know that it matters very much whether this

is a private member's Bill. The present system of marketing is unquestionably bad.

Hon. P. Collier: The best thing would be for the Perth City Council to confer with Cabinet and try to agree on a Bill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The City Council are not alone concerned. They are only something in the nature of a middleman.

Hon. P. Collier: They are concerned because you cannot get the markets without them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I admit that. But if the present position is bad, as it is admitted to be, and if members take the view that the Bill as now submitted is equally bad—

Mr. Corboy: It is worse.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Then we are not going to get any further forward by permitting the existing bad conditions to prevail, and merely throwing out a Bill which tries to improve those conditions. In my opinion, the better course would be to let the second reading pass and send the Bill to a select committee to inquire into the conditions prevailing, and into the intentions of those desiring a change, with a view to arriving at a satisfactory proposal. Then at least something can come before the House which will enable us to redraft the Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: When the House refers an ordinary Bill to a select committee, we practically agree to accept the select committee's recommendations; but upon a private Bill the House can waive aside the select committee's recommendations.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so. If the House rejects the select committee's recommendations, we are in no worse position than at present. It is certain that we cannot allow existing conditions to continue indefinitely, and this Bill affords at least a basis for having the matter thoroughly investigated, all sections heard, and something recommended to the House that may be acceptable to the City Council and also to those more directly concerned, namely the producer and the consumer who will use the market.

Hon. P. Collier: The City Council would refuse to have anything to do with your Bill.

Mr. Underwood: The City Council do what the citizens tell them to do.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: But the City Council boundaries do not include the whole of the metropolitan area.

Mr. McCallum: The City Council say so in this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and to that I take strong exception. What we as representatives of the consumers and the producers are concerned about is to see that the whole of the metropolitan area, which must depend upon central wholesale markets, is properly served as regards each of its various interests. I am afraid that under this Bill such would not be the case. Members on the cross benches directly represent the producers. Take my own case: I represent the fruit-growers of the Mt. Barker district, and also vegetable growers who send their produce to

the metropolitan area. In the circumstances I say those sections of the people should be heard.

Hon. P. Collier: The final say is with the City Council. The City Council will throw your Bill into the waste paper basket.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The present position is that the City Council have submitted a Bill and that we say it shall go into the waste paper basket. Let us have an inquiry amongst the sections of the community most nearly concerned, and then let us draft a Bill. I do not know exactly what is the position as regards the City Council, but I know it is in our power to have an inquiry.

Hon. P. Collier: And it is in the power of the City Council to ignore the result.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If they do so, then it is in our power to establish other markets, and to place them under entirely different control. The present position is as bad as it can be. Therefore let us have an inquiry for the purpose of arriving at a more satisfactory and more definite basis.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.38]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is there any seconder? The motion lapses for want of a seconder.

Mr. MANN (Perth—in reply) [7.39]: When I introduced the Bill, I did so fairly. I shall now reply fairly to the criticisms levelled at the measure. Every member who has spoken on it has admitted that markets are necessary, and has also admitted that markets cannot be operated without some authority controlling them. Most of the speakers on the Bill have admitted that no authority is better fitted to control the markets than the Perth City Council.

Mr. Lutey: No.

Mr. MANN: Most members have admitted that that is practically the function of the City Council. The only bone of contention is that certain clauses of the Bill do not meet with the approval of certain members. This is not the first Bill which it has been found necessary to amend in Committee or by reference to a select committee; and I fail to understand why members adopt such strenuous views against the measure passing its second reading in order that it may be further dealt with, either in Committee here, or by reference to a select committee. The Perth City Council are sincere in their desire to establish markets for the betterment of the growers and for the betterment of the producers. In proof of that, I may refer to the fact that the City Council of their own volition established kerbstone markets.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot permit the hon. member to break new ground in his reply.

Mr. MANN: I merely wish to show, Sir, that the Perth City Council are sincere, and so I refer to the establishment of the kerbstone markets. The toll there—and much

has been made of the matter of tolls under this Bill—is in the form of a rent, which has been reasonable, and with regard to which there has been no complaint. Most of the criticism here has been directed at Clause 6. But under Section 356 of the Municipal Corporations Act the City Council have powers almost parallel to those asked for under Clause 6.

Mr. A. Thomson: But not quite.

Mr. MANN: That is just the point I was coming to. If hon. members say, "We are prepared to let the City Council have the powers they already have under Section 356 of the Municipal Corporations Act," Clause 6 could be amended in keeping with that. The City Council would be prepared to let the Governor-in-Council fix the regulations controlling the charges.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The council have to do that in any case.

Mr. MANN: If that is so, what need for anxiety?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Governor-in-Council has the right to accept or reject.

The Premier: But not under the Bill.

Mr. MANN: If the Governor-in-Council has that right, what cause is there for anxiety? I am advised that the City Council are willing that the Governor-in-Council should fix the scale of charges. The Bill contains some things which should not be there, and some things which should be there. What are we here for if it is not to amend errors in the drawing up of a Bill? I fail to understand the universal hostility displayed towards the measure. The member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. P. Troy) was so severe in his criticism as to attack me for bringing forward the Bill, and said that every measure I have introduced here was of a similar character. This is the first Bill I have introduced.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then the member for Mt. Magnet was right.

Mr. MANN: I do not wish to weary the House by reading out the powers conferred by the Municipal Corporations Act. I will only say that the City Council have, with only two exceptions, under that Act the powers asked for in this Bill. One exception is that the City Council desire to secure a monopoly of marketing within the municipality of Perth before they lay out a quarter of a million in providing market facilities. Surely that is reasonable.

Mr. Harrison: Both wholesale and retail?

Mr. MANN: Yes, certainly.

The Colonial Secretary: They do not ask for the retail rights?

Mr. MANN: They are asking for markets to control the sale of produce. The member for South Fremantle referred to the use of the term "merchandise." If that is offensive, the Bill can be amended.

Mr. McCallum: I want to pass the whole measure out.

Mr. MANN: That is not in keeping with the hon. member's usual foresight. I have known the hon. member to tackle bigger problems than this and tackle them with success. I am surprised that he should adopt such an

attitude. If he applied his ability to the consideration of the Bill, he would help to make it a success.

Mr. McCallum: That is a job for the City Council. I am not going to do their work.

Mr. MANN: It is part of the hon. member's duty to assist in making the Bill such as will be of service to the City Council and to the country.

Hon. P. Collier: Decapitation is the only remedy.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member is not sincere in that interjection. Another authority asked for by the City Council that is not contained in the Municipal Corporations Act is the right to float a loan.

Mr. Munsie: No, the right to float a loan without consulting the ratepayers.

Mr. MANN: That can be explained.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member should have explained that in moving the second reading of the Bill. I have allowed the hon. member a lot of latitude.

Mr. MANN: All that I have to say in reply is that the City Council have brought forward the Bill in the sincere hope of doing good to the producer and to the consumer. If the Bill does not meet with the desires of hon. members, it can be amended in Committee or referred to a select committee. I appeal to hon. members not to oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and negatived.

Bill thus defeated.

MOTION—NARROGIN-DWARDA RAILWAY.

To inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 5th October on the following motion by Mr. Hickmott—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the advisability of constructing the Narrogin-Dwarda railway and that all work on that line be suspended pending the report of the committee.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [7.50]: I support the motion because I think that all capital expenditure in connection with railway construction should be governed in Western Australia by the greatest good to be served by the railway facilities afforded, by the largest area from which traffic can be provided for the railways and the greatest number of settlers already on the land who are to be served. I wish to place before the House some figures in support of my contention. They have been taken from two recent reports submitted by railway advisory boards, each report having been signed by the same members. No. 1 report refers to the Narrogin-Dwarda railway, in connection with which the area to be served represents 130,000 acres. No. 2 report refers to the Ucarty-Yorkrakine-North Baandee railway which will serve an area of 448,500 acres. The occupied area referred to by No. 1 report is 86,800 acres, while the area alienated

or in process of alienation referred to in No. 2 report represents 289,900 acres. The area reserved and vacant in the Narrogin-Dwarda area is 43,700 acres, as against Crown lands available in the Ucarty-Baandee country of 158,600 acres. The area of cleared land and uncleared land respectively in the Narrogin-Dwarda area totals 29,816 acres and 31,625 acres, whereas similar areas in connection with the Ucarty-Baandee line are: cleared, 126,529 acres, and uncleared 96,584 acres. In the area to be served by the Narrogin-Dwarda railway there are 48 land holders who have raised produce aggregating 2,000 tons up to the present time. As against that, the bags of wheat and oats already forwarded from the Ucarty-Baandee area number 192,502. The settlers in the Narrogin-Dwarda district total 78 as against 226 settlers in the Ucarty-Baandee district. The estimated cost of building the Narrogin-Dwarda line is £4,000 per mile, whereas, according to the advisory board, the cost of the Ucarty-Baandee line will not reach £2,000 per mile.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That line has nothing to do with this motion.

Mr. HARRISON: I am aware of that, but I wish to back up my statement that the capital outlay involved in railway construction should be where that capital will have the greater earning power, where it will deal with the larger number of people and where it will benefit a larger area to be served.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Ucarty-Yorkrakine-North Baandee line has not been passed by Parliament yet.

Mr. HARRISON: I am aware of that. It should have been passed by Parliament at the same time as the Narrogin-Dwarda project. It is needed just as much as that line, and it was needed just as much when that line was agreed to by Parliament. I am surprised that when the Labour Government were in power, this was not one of the lines authorised by that Administration, especially seeing that one of the then Cabinet Ministers knew the conditions obtaining there, what the land was, and what it was capable of producing. Since the reports I have referred to were issued, a large number of additional settlers have gone to the Ucarty-Baandee areas, while repurchased estates there have resulted in a number of soldier settlers being placed on the land.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are taking up a "dog in the manger" attitude.

Mr. HARRISON: I am doing nothing of the kind. I spoke about certain resolutions that were before Parliament some time ago. I pointed out that the amendment moved by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) was not carried, but was actually defeated by a large majority on that occasion, and thus the principle of railways being constructed in accordance with the order of their authorisation, has not been approved by this Chamber. I am supporting the motion on the ground that whatever capital we spend in connection with railway construction at the present juncture should be such that every sovereign spent should do the greatest good

for the particular district to be served. These are facts which should carry weight with this Chamber, hence my support for the motion.

On motion by Mr. Pickering, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.56] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is a short one.

Hon. P. Collier: You have jumped my place.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I wish to express my sincere thanks to the Leader of the Opposition for moving the adjournment of the consideration of the Bill when it was before the House last.

Hon. P. Collier: I want to go on with it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will give the hon. member an opportunity later on. I regret that I was absent when the Bill was last before the Chamber. I thought I had made arrangements with other members to look after the measure in my absence, but unfortunately they, too, were absent. There have been so many agricultural shows lately that it has been difficult for country members to be in their places in this Chamber. The Bill does not deal with State trading concerns. It does not go into the merits of the question as to whether State trading concerns are good for the State or otherwise. It merely provides an amendment, formulated by a member in another place, to give the right to the Government to sell any of the trading concerns should they so desire. The House will be well advised to pass this small Bill. It is absolutely absurd to expect any Government to sell State trading concerns in the face of such a provision as Section 25 of the State Trading Concerns Act, 1916. That section sets out that, subject to provisions mentioned in the Act, the Minister may sell or lease any State trading concerns for such amount and upon such terms and conditions as may be approved by the Governor-in-Council. Parliament inserted a proviso, however, which read—"Provided that possession shall not be given to the intending purchaser or lessors under a contract of sale or agreement or lease until the approval of Parliament has been obtained." That is the proviso which the Bill seeks to remove. The Bill merely seeks to amend the Act by omitting that proviso. Members will agree that it is a reasonable suggestion. Parliament sits only from four to six months in the year, and during the remaining six months the Government of the State is exclusively in the hands of Cabinet. Most of our trading concerns were brought into existence, not by a vote of Parliament, but at the wish of the Government then in power. That Government were justified in initiating the trading concerns, because they had a mandate from the country. But no matter what Government may be in power when an advantageous offer comes for

any of the trading concerns, the Government should be in a position to accept it. Past Governments who initiated trading concerns without consulting Parliament had to accept on the floor of the House the responsibility for their action. So, too, if Cabinet were to do anything wrong in disposing of a trading concern, such as selling it for less than its value, the House would have its remedy.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is very lame.

Mr. Corboy: Locking the stable door after the steed has gone.

Mr. A. THOMSON: To-day we are in the unfortunate position of shutting the door after the horse has gone; there is that business over the "Kangaroo."

Mr. McCallum: That is the fault of the present Government.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Quite so. The present Government will not always be in power. Future Governments may wish to dispose of the trading concerns. As a general rule, I do not believe in trading concerns. At the same time, I do not believe in the Government being tied to them. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary, debate adjourned.

MOTION—OIL PROSPECTING.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from 12th October of the debate on the following motion by Mr. Underwood—

That in order to encourage prospecting for mineral oil, this House is of opinion that the Minister for Mines, in pursuance of the powers conferred upon him by Section 7 of "The Mining Act Amendment Act, 1920," should cancel all prospecting licenses which are not being efficiently worked, and that in future no prospecting license shall be granted for an area greater than 1,000 square miles.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

MOTION—MIDLAND RAILWAY COMPANY.

Acquisition of Concession.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from 12th October of the debate on the following motion by Lieut.-Colonel Denton—

That in the opinion of this House, if an equitable arrangement can be made, the lands and railway of the Midland Railway Company should be acquired by the Government of this State, and that a valuation of both the railway and the unalienated and partly alienated lands be made as soon as possible.

On motion by Mr. McCallum, debate adjourned.

BILL—THE PERPETUAL TRUSTEES, EXECUTORS, AND AGENCY COMPANY (W.A.), LIMITED (PRIVATE).

Second Reading.

Mr. MANN (Perth) [8.6] in moving the second reading said: The report of the select committee, to whom the Bill was referred, has been presented to the House. That report is unanimously in favour of the provisions of the Bill, with the exception of Clause 29 which, when in Committee, will be the subject of a motion for deletion. Clause 29 was the only contentious provision in the measure. The Bill asks for no powers other than those granted to a similar company in Perth to-day. The new company merely asks for the necessary authority to establish itself. It has complied with all the requirements. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. M. F. Troy, debate adjourned.

BILL—CLOSER SETTLEMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from 18th October; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Postponed Clause 7—Acquisition of land:

The PREMIER: I postponed the clause because I found it would not be workable. If we were to take the whole of a man's land, the clause would serve; but it is not proposed to take the whole of any property. For taxation purposes land is valued on the average, and not by specified sections of a property. The Midland Railway Company first brought up this point for consideration. They have a large area of land. We do not require to take the whole of it, but if we desired to take a portion, the unimproved value could not be fixed, and so the clause would not operate. The same difficulty will obtain in respect of many other estates. Therefore the clause, as printed, would be scarcely workable. I have consulted the Solicitor General, and he suggests that we strike out the reference to the unimproved value. I do not see what else we can do. I am anxious only to acquire such land as is not being worked. I propose to strike out paragraph (a) of Subclause 3 and insert "on the unimproved value of the land." Paragraph (b) would stand and then I propose to add "Provided that the amount at which the unimproved value is assessed for the time being under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907, with 10 per cent. added thereto, shall be prima facie evidence of the unimproved value of the land." I move an amendment—

That paragraph (a) of Subclause 3 be struck out.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have been unable to follow the Premier's statement. Seeing that this clause has been postponed for more

than a week in order that the Premier might have an amendment prepared, I regret that the amendment has not been placed on the Notice Paper. We are really in no better position to deal with the clause to-night than when it was last before the Committee. It is not possible for members to grasp the purport of the amendment merely from the reading of it. The clause is an important one, and it would be only fair to place the amendment on the Notice Paper and give members an opportunity to study it.

The PREMIER: I have no objection to giving members an opportunity to study the amendment. This clause is the most important in the Bill.

Progress reported.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1922-23.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 18th October; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Premier's Department (Hon. Sir James Mitchell, Minister).

Vote—Public Service Commissioner, £2,718:

[Mr. A. Thomson had moved an amendment—"That the vote be reduced by £1."]

Hon. P. COLLIER: The proposal to reduce the vote, I take it, will not preclude discussion of the items.

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the member for Katanning will withdraw his amendment, allow the Committee to discuss the items and then move his amendment, we shall be following the practice which has been laid down. I understand the amendment precludes discussion of the items.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Shall I be in order if, after the discussion of the items, I move for a reduction?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, you can move to reduce the total vote without speaking to it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is the trouble.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Well, you have spoken.

The CHAIRMAN: Until the hon. member withdraws his amendment, the discussion must be confined to the amendment to reduce the vote by £1.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But I should like to say a little more.

Mr. Corboy: You can say it on the item.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I want to say it on the general discussion.

Hon. P. COLLIER: You cannot speak any more. You have already spoken on the general discussion.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I understood I could speak as often as I liked in Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: You can speak only once on the general discussion.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There was no general discussion. The only two members who spoke were the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am referring to the general discussion on the division.

Mr. Underwood: There was none.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There was; I spoke on it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If we were dealing with one section of the Premier's department, the general discussion would have taken place on division No. 7 when the whole of the ramifications of the Premier's department could have been dealt with.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There has always been a general discussion on each division.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Since I spoke last week, the report of the Public Service Commissioner has been placed before us, and it contains quite a number of things upon which I would like to touch. If we now go on to items, shall I be debarred?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am in the same position; I have spoken.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The only way to get over the difficulty will be to move for a reduction of item No. 1 "Assistant Public Service Commissioner." I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Item—Assistant Public Service Commissioner, £850:

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Committee should have a thorough and complete understanding as to the nature of the duties performed by the Assistant Public Service Commissioner. In addition to assisting the Public Service Commissioner in the classification of the service and other duties incidental to that office, the principal work of the Assistant Commissioner consists of dealing with the wages and working conditions of a large number of Government employees, principally those who may be considered to be casual employees. The question of fixing the wages and working conditions of thousands of men is not the function of a man who himself is a servant of the public. It has been the policy of the Government to delegate to Mr. Munt the whole question of dealing with a large number of Government employees outside the operations of the Public Service Act. If a deputation waits on a Minister or requests are made to Ministers regarding conditions of employment of this section of employees, the party is referred to Mr. Munt. The actual living conditions of thousands of the citizens of this State involve a question too important to be left in the hands of any Government official who is not elected, and who is not responsible to anyone except the Minister.

The Premier: He was appointed under the Act.

Hon. P. COLLIER: As Assistant Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. Underwood: Which Act?

Hon. P. COLLIER: He was not appointed under any Act to deal with the wages and conditions of employees outside the Public Service Act. Mr. Munt has been a very convenient officer for Ministers. When I mention Mr. Munt, I wish it to be clearly understood

that I am not dealing with Mr. Munt as an individual. As an officer I believe he is very capable, conscientious and hard working. I am not dealing with the position in any personal way, but merely with the office of Assistant Public Service Commissioner. When the Premier was away a notification was issued by the Assistant Public Service Commissioner to the effect that the wages of a considerable section of Government employees would be reduced in order to bring them into line with a recent award of the Arbitration Court, and it was also announced that the hours of labour would be increased from 44 to 48 per week. A notice of 24 hours was given. The question of hours and wages is one for the Government to decide, and yet we find a Government official, a servant of the people whose wages he is seeking to reduce, is left to make the announcement. I believe the decision to increase the working hours was arrived at by the Government some seven or eight days before the announcement was made. It appeared that Ministers had not the courage to make a public statement themselves. It may be urged that they have not the time to devote to deciding the wages and working conditions of a large number of Government employees. I do not think there is any duty of greater importance upon which they can be engaged than that of dealing with the living conditions of the people of the State.

Mr. McCallum: They always have time to open bazaars.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I object to such important questions being delegated to a Government official. What kind of a democracy is it when wages and the conditions of employment can be fixed by Government officials? I want the assurance of the Premier that in future this officer will play a less important role in this respect than heretofore. If people desire to approach a Minister upon questions of this kind the Minister should deal with them and accept the full responsibility.

The Premier: I do not think they have refused to do so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The case in point was a shocking instance of evasion of responsibility on the part of Ministers.

Mr. A. Thomson: No doubt Mr. Munt acted under instructions.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course he did, but the Government should have made the announcement. It created so much consternation that for several weeks afterwards there was nothing but a series of deputations and interviews between the organisations concerned and the officer in question. It was only when the officials of the Trades Hall pointed out to Mr. Munt and to Ministers how far they could legally go that the proposal was dropped, and it is still pending. I object to a civil servant being given power to determine the living conditions of thousands of citizens of this State. It is work which Ministers are paid to do, and I hope the Premier will inform the Committee that in future they will take this responsibility upon their own shoulders. At present it is a difficult thing to get behind Mr.

Munt, for Ministers, having appointed him, naturally feel they must support him. It is almost impossible to persuade a Minister to depart from the decision given by this officer. Of course it would be idle to suggest that Ministers could examine in detail all the conditions of labour and all the circumstances surrounding the employment of a large number of men. There must, therefore, be some officer who can prepare a case and supply full information upon it, but it is then the duty of Ministers themselves to decide as to the hours of labour and take the full responsibility.

The PREMIER: I hope the Leader of the Opposition will not imagine that Mr. Munt is engaged in reducing wages.

Hon. P. Collier: I said he was dealing with them.

The PREMIER: The House agreed with me last year that it was impossible for any Minister to follow the various awards made by the courts, and that some official was needed to deal with the questions generally. Members are constantly seeing me on the question of employment, but there must be an official to follow these awards and note the conditions to which they are made to apply. There are about 5,000 men in Government employment who would be dealt with by this officer. These are working from Wyndham to Eucla on varying rates and under different awards. So much has to be paid for men working within a certain radius of Perth, and so much more in other parts of the State. All this has to be worked out. The railway award was adapted to others working in Government employment with considerable advantage to them. It was, therefore, easy for the Assistant Public Service Commissioner to imagine that the men would come under the second railway award. Wages are fixed by awards.

Hon. P. Collier: Many agreements are also made.

The PREMIER: If an agreement has to be made this official is the right man to negotiate it. Representatives of the men must argue their case with someone, and they find it convenient to do so with Mr. Munt instead of half a dozen Ministers employing men in various departments. Mr. Munt's duty is to see that the awards are applied and that the men are treated fairly.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not to fix the rate of wages.

The PREMIER: He does not fix them in any arbitrary fashion.

Hon. P. Collier: I know of a case where his word was final as to the rate of wage. That is not right.

The PREMIER: I do not know of any case where that has happened. I know, of course, that he has negotiated with representatives of the men. It will be agreed that someone should negotiate, and an official of this kind is the right man to do it. I know of no recommendation of Mr. Munt that has not been otherwise than fair, and in accordance with an existing award.

Mr. Underwood: If it is in accordance with an existing award, what necessity is there for it?

The PREMIER: Government employees are spread all over the State, and adjustments are necessary on account of extra cost of living, time required in getting to work, and so on. Every member who had to do with the question knew what the position was before Mr. Munt's present appointment; there were arguments as regards a few men employed by the Lands Department, a few employed by the Works Department, a few employed by the Agricultural Department, and so forth. Ministers are not shirking their duty in the slightest. Mr. Munt has very little to do as regards fixing wages.

Mr. McCallum: Who is challenging the present wages?

The PREMIER: The Government take the responsibility of challenging wages. I said so previously in connection with the railway awards. Mr. Munt protects the interests not only of the Government, but also of the men employed under various awards. The Committee should understand that the action taken by Mr. Munt is in accordance with the desire of the Government. It is the duty of Ministers to see that awards are observed and that the men are fairly treated, and Mr. Munt has been appointed for those purposes.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Premier was not in the State when the trouble arose. During the sitting of the Labour Congress the employees of the Government received a notice that "as from to-morrow" wages would be such and such and the hours 48 instead of 44. I was not a member of the deputation which thereupon interviewed Mr. Munt, but I believe that deputation convinced Mr. Munt that he was doing something illegal by giving that notice, and that although the awards had practically expired it was still compulsory to observe their conditions in the absence of a month's notice of termination from one side or the other. It took a deputation to the Acting Premier to get that month's notice. I was a member of all the deputations except the first. Our position was very awkward. As representatives of the men we were asked by Mr. Munt, "Have you drafted the schedule of wages that you require"? We had to admit that that had not been done so far. However, the men were not going to deviate from the then existing conditions until they had drafted a schedule. Mr. Munt gave us to understand that he could only discuss wages and conditions of work. On our pointing out to him that the hours were the chief question, he said, "I cannot discuss with the representatives of the unions the hours the men have to be employed. That is a matter of Government policy. You will have to see the Acting Premier as to that." When we got before the Acting Premier, he said that he could not discuss wages and conditions with us, and that the hours had been fixed by the Government as a matter of Government policy. How many people realise that it is Government policy in this State to-day to in-

crease the hours from 44 to 48? As regards the railway awards, to which the Premier frequently refers, I have to point out that the last railway award did not increase hours. But the Government, as a result of that award, want the men to accept not only reduction in wages, but also an increase of four hours per week to be worked for nothing. The court did not decide that. The court left all the railway men on 44 hours. Naturally, all the other men want the same hours. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that as regards employees of the Public Works Department the Minister for Works should take the responsibility. If an agreement can be negotiated with him, well and good; if not, there is a tribunal to appeal to. If the Minister for Works wants the employees of the Works Department to accept reduced wages and increased hours, the Minister for Works is the man to make that announcement. I want the people to note that the Government take the responsibility for increasing hours in this State, and that the responsibility is not Mr. Munt's. The Government employees have not had such an intimation.

The Premier: We take the responsibility of every action of Mr. Munt, and of every other official.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not object to Mr. Munt, but I do object to the dual control now existing. The Minister for Works was previously prepared to negotiate with us as to employees under his jurisdiction. Now he wants us to go to Mr. Munt, and before we go to Mr. Munt he wants to tie that gentleman's hands regarding hours. Such a state of affairs is very unsatisfactory. I happened to be in the Chamber when this matter was previously discussed; otherwise I would have had a good deal to say about the strike that is on. To talk about the men refusing to obey an award which has been made a common rule by the Federal Arbitration Court is absurd, because the Federal Arbitration Court has no power to make a common rule. For about a fortnight or three weeks we had a deputation almost daily to either Mr. Munt or the Acting Premier, and eventually we got the Acting Premier to agree that the whole matter should be referred to the court for decision. That was all we asked, and that is all we ask now for the engineers, concerning whom such a fuss was made here the other night. In that connection the Perth Municipal Council endeavoured to shirk their responsibility by handing the matter over to the Employers' Federation. I am a Perth ratepayer, and the Perth City Council are using my money to bring about reduction of the wages of men for whom I am seeking an increase. What right have the City Council as an elected body to be represented on the Employers' Federation at all? And the Government have no more right to throw their responsibility on Mr. Munt than the City Council have to throw their responsibility on the Employers' Federation. Parliament is an elective body and the Government are elected by the party representa-

tive of a section of this Chamber. The Government are elected to accept responsibility and they should not pass that responsibility on to anyone else.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not desire to enter into a discussion of any existing dispute. I have come to the conclusion that if Mr. Munt's position is one only to fix wages—

The Premier: No, that is not the only thing he has to do.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I have come to the conclusion that he is only the fifth wheel in the coach.

Hon. P. Collier: Mr. Munt is mainly doing that work.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Premier said that Mr. Munt had to go from Wyndham to Eucla in connection with this work. Take the case of Wyndham to start with. Who fixes the wages in connection with the Wyndham Meat Works?

The Premier: Mr. McGhie fixes them after negotiations have been completed.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Exactly. Mr. Munt is not consulted in the matter. When it comes to a question of fixing the wages for work on the jetty at Wyndham or Carnarvon, who fixes those? The Harbour and Light Department! Mr. Munt again is not consulted. Who fixes the wages of an engine-driver at Pilbara? The Arbitration Court fixes the award for a driver of a locomotive. If that engine-driver works, roughly, about 36 hours per week, he draws £10 a week. The driver at a State Battery, who works 48 hours a week,—if he does not work half a day, he does not draw any pay for it—gets £5 10s. a week. The Arbitration Court has fixed the rate for the engine-driver and the Mines Department fixes the rate for the driver at the State battery.

Mr. Willecock: That is not the driver's fault.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am not saying it is anyone's fault. I am simply pointing out that Mr. Munt is not doing this work. He does not come into much of it at all. I cannot make out what Mr. Munt is there for. The cases referred to by the member for Hannans arise under an award of the Arbitration Court.

The Premier: Absolutely.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Then why does Mr. Munt come into the question at all, if it is only an Arbitration Court matter? I supported the member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) when he moved a reduction in the vote, because I recognise Mr. Munt as an officer who should not be required in this position. It may be possible he is being employed by Ministers as a buffer, but in the general working of the department he is not required.

Hon. P. Collier: That is what he is—a buffer!

The Premier: Not at all.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £1.

When I last spoke on this matter I pointed out that in my opinion we were not getting service for the money we were expending. In support of that contention I drew the attention of hon. members to the report of the Public Service Commissioner which has just been issued. On page 5 they will see the following paragraph:—

The classification of the service was made by three commissioners each of whom had an intimate knowledge of one section of the service,—either clerical, accountancy, or professional. These officials were given an excellent opportunity of gaining a complete knowledge of their particular section of the work applying right through the service, and were able, after investigating all departments and examining the work done by officers, to relatively fit in and adjust the various values.

There is a second paragraph which contains what I might call a considerable kick against the board appointed by this Chamber. The Commissioner states—

After having gained this intimate and complete knowledge, these officials are overruled by a board, the members of which have not had an opportunity of studying the service as a whole, but who, nevertheless, on verbal evidence, alter and amend opinions based on such knowledge.

Later on he says—

Broadly speaking, a number of the decisions of the board have made satisfied officers discontented with their lot because other officers, on the principle of "something to gain and nothing to lose" have appealed, and to the surprise of their fellow officers have succeeded in securing increased classification or salary, or both.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They were well up on the top too.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That may be so. The Public Service Commissioner continues—

One of the difficulties to be contended with is the irresponsibility of evidence given by some witnesses called from outside the service. My representative may obtain excellent evidence as to salaries paid outside the service to place before the board, but is met with a refusal to allow information given to him to be used publicly, whereas appellants brought witnesses who had no hesitation—sometimes with very scanty knowledge of the officer's work—in expressing the opinion that the officer appealing was considerably under-paid. . . . The question is a difficult one and I do not desire it to be imagined that I am antagonistic to the right of appeal. In my opinion, however, the Public Service Appeal Board Act goes too far in this direction, and an effort should be made on the conclusion of the hearing of appeals against the recent classification of the service, to have the whole matter

of appeal thoroughly considered and proposals made either for the repeal of the Act or a revision of some of its provisions. We find this particular department is expected to look after the service and classify the positions of 1,500 employees, drawing salaries totalling £403,780. Yet this report shows that the two expert Commissioners, who were appointed to carry out this work, after putting up certain recommendations were over-ruled and their work was nullified.

The Premier: Those were appeals against the classification.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I admit that, but I would like an expression of opinion from the Premier as to whether he will consider the recommendations brought forward by the Public Service Commissioner. If the whole of the appeals have been dealt with and the Civil Service has been put on a firmer basis, then the Public Service Appeal Board Act should be repealed. In moving for the reduction in this officer's salary, I have nothing whatever to say against the individual officer occupying the position. We have it on the evidence of the Premier himself and members of the Opposition that practically the whole of Mr. Munt's time is taken up with fixing and adjusting wages.

The Premier: I did not say anything of the sort. I said it was his duty to do that, but he deals with other questions as well in his capacity as Assistant Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is so, but practically the whole of his time so far has been taken up in dealing with these matters. I do not say that that constitutes the whole of the duties he has been appointed to carry out. The general powers and duties of the Public Service Commissioner are set out in Section 9 of the Public Service Act. I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the manner in which I consider we can get better value for the money we are paying in connection with the Public Service Commissioner's department. The Public Service Commissioner, in his report, says—

In this connection I would point out that good salaries should only be paid when there is good and efficient service. It will be readily realised that it is quite an impossibility for the Commissioner to be cognisant of the details of every branch of each department. It is imperative, therefore, that the heads of departments and branches should really be the "eyes" of the Government and the Commissioner. . . .

The Premier: That is so. They should be the managers of their departments.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We will admit that, but those of us who have anything to do with the Government departments know that there is not that co-ordination and co-operation between the various departments that there should be, and the consequence is that the departments are probably costing a considerable amount of money more than should be

the case. Probably there are duplications. The Commissioner should be in the position of an inspector, with the right to enter any department and see for himself that the State is getting value.

Mr. McCALLUM: While I agree that it is necessary that Ministers should have the advice of an officer who will make himself acquainted with the different awards in order that he may arrive at a sound judgment in dealing with employees of the department, I cannot agree with the Premier that the appointment of Mr. Munt is not a delegation of the responsibilities of Ministers to Government officials. I can quote instances. When the declaration was made that the hours of Government employees were to be increased from 44 to 48, the first intimation the employees received was by letter from Mr. Munt to the officials of the union. It was decided to send a deputation to the Government and I had to make the arrangements. I went to the Minister for Works. His reply to me was, "Thank God I have nothing to do with this. It has to be dealt with by Mr. Munt."

Hon. P. Collier: A shirking of responsibility.

Mr. McCALLUM: It shows that although the Government had declared in favour of increased hours for their employees, Ministers were not to deal with it. It was to be delegated to a public official. Another instance: During the discussion that arose between the union officials and Mr. Munt, one of the points raised was that after notice of retirement from an agreement was given, the Government were at liberty to enforce any wages or working conditions they chose, that there was no obligation on the Government to apply to the court. That declaration was made by Mr. Munt. In the House the other night, the Minister for Mines said he did not agree with that, and that Cabinet also was not in agreement with it. Yet here is a public official intimating that that is the condition which must prevail. Clearly the public official is overriding the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: Acting under instructions from them.

Mr. McCALLUM: How are the unions to know where they stand, when they are told by the official that they have to submit to altered hours and conditions, yet when it comes to facing public opinion, the Minister says he does not agree with it? Clearly the Government are shirking their responsibility in this way. At election time Ministers and members have to declare themselves; but here it is left to an official to make the declaration, and when the question is raised in Parliament, the Minister says he does not agree with the finding of the official. If that is not delegating Cabinet responsibility, I do not know what is. Will the Premier agree to any Government official receiving a deputation and deciding on the expenditure of public funds on any question other than wages? If I want a new school or some other work in my district, I have to go to a Minister;

but when it comes to the fixing of wages for working men, Ministers say they will not deal with it, that it has been handed to a public official. Why the distinction? It appears to me Ministers know it is unpopular to reduce wages and increase hours, and so, because it will lose them votes at the poll, they give it to some unfortunate public servant.

The Premier: Nothing of the sort. Mr. Munt was engaged in applying an award which meant a considerable increase in wages.

Mr. McCALLUM: But I object to a public official having the power to say what wages shall be paid to a man and what hours he shall work. I do not agree, whether it means increase or decrease; the principle is wrong. When we met Mr. Colebatch on this question he refused to discuss wages with us, declaring that we would have to go to Mr. Munt.

Hon. P. Collier: A nice attitude to adopt!

Mr. McCALLUM: The attitude of the Government was to force their decision on the men through Mr. Munt, who thus has the responsibility of saying how public funds are to be expended. The Premier argues that because the railway award gave a reduction, it was to be applied indiscriminately throughout the departments.

The Premier: When the court gave an increase, we made it apply without discrimination.

Mr. McCALLUM: But that was done as the result of a previous understanding. When it comes to forcing reductions, the union is not approached until they get the intimation that the reduction is to be made. Storekeepers in the Education Department were reduced to the amount provided under the railwaymen's award. It brought them considerably under the award for storekeepers among the shop assistants.

The Premier: But they were under an outside award.

Mr. McCALLUM: When we go to the court we have to face all awards. At the State Implement Works one does not approach Mr. Shaw on the question of wages, but has to go to Mr. Munt, while Mr. McGhie, who has control of the meat works—

The Premier: Mr. McGhie's position is very different.

Mr. McCALLUM: The activities of Mr. Munt are directed mainly to reducing men and women on wages. Only yesterday, or the day before, we had in the "West Australian" an announcement that heads of departments were getting increases up to £200 per annum, while in another column in the same issue Mr. Munt was arguing about paying school cleaners, widows, 1s. 6d. per week. Surely Cabinet will not tolerate that, even from Mr. Munt. Reductions should be applied all round, should not be confined to those people on wages. We have a declaration from the Premier to-night—made public for the first time—that it is the Government's policy to increase working hours.

The Premier: No, I said we stand by what has been done by public officials.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is hardly facing the position squarely. Are we to understand

that the decision was made by this official or by Government decision?

The Premier: The Government must take the responsibility.

Mr. McCALLUM: Who did it?

The Premier: I tell you the Government must take the responsibility.

Mr. McCALLUM: Who initiated the alteration? Are we to understand that a paid servant of the Government is to step in and increase hours? The Premier says he will stand by what this public servant has done. Where do the Government stand?

The Premier: Where do you stand?

Mr. McCALLUM: There is no doubt where I stand. The public are entitled to know where the Government stand. Was that a Cabinet decision?

The Premier: We are not discussing that.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Premier stated earlier in the evening that it was a Government decision. Now he is trying to get round it.

The Premier: You know it is before the court. Do you want to influence it?

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes; efforts are made by others to influence the court.

The Premier: Not by the Government.

Mr. McCALLUM: There is propaganda by the Press, by public men, and responsible citizens to create an atmosphere so that the court will be prepared for it. What was done in connection with the stacking of the Federal Court?

The Premier: What has that to do with this question?

Mr. McCALLUM: We are discussing the salary of a public servant and we want to know whether, if that office is continued, it will be used by the Government to dodge making a declaration on such an important question as the working hours of their employees.

The Premier: What has the question before the court to do with Mr. Munt?

Mr. McCALLUM: Everything, because it is on his initiation that the case is before the court. It is the result of a letter sent to all unions having men working for the Government. Do the Government stand behind what is being done or has the public servant himself done it?

The Premier: The case is before the court and you know it.

Mr. McCALLUM: It is idle for the Premier to say that he is following what the court has done. The Government have endeavoured to introduce something which the court refused. In the miners' and railway cases the court was asked to increase the hours from 44 to 48, and in both cases the court refused. Those who were on 44 hours were ordered to be continued on 44 hours. Now the Government are attempting to force 48 hours. Was this a decision of Cabinet or of a public official? If we are to look to a public official on these matters, should not we strike out this item and insist on the Government carrying their responsibilities? The thousands of employees of the Government are entitled to know the position.

The Premier: They are all trying to get into the Government service, anyhow.

Mr. McCALLUM: Whether they are desirous of getting in or out, they are entitled to know the position. The Government gave private employers the lead in increasing hours, and see where they have landed us. One industry is in a very parlous position, and might hold up thousands of employees. This arises from the lead given by the Government.

The Premier: That is unfair. You know it is wrong. There is not an atom of truth in it.

Mr. McCALLUM: I challenge the Premier to point to anyone who gave the lead to increase hours before the Government. Let the Premier name anyone. He cannot. The Government took the lead.

The Premier: You are making political use of it.

Mr. McCALLUM: I am stating facts.

The Premier: It is pure politics.

Mr. McCALLUM: It is my duty to point out where the action of the Government is likely to lead.

The Premier: If we reduced the hours to 20 a week, there would still be trouble.

Mr. McCALLUM: If the position as declared by Mr. Munt had remained—

The Premier: It did not remain.

Mr. McCALLUM: It was only after considerable discussion that we secured an alteration; if the position had remained there would have been chaos in every industry in the State. The Government were telling employers that they merely had to retire from an award or agreement and they could then do anything they liked.

The Premier: We did not tell them anything of the sort.

Mr. McCALLUM: You did. It cannot be denied. I had to take up the discussion with the acting Premier in the columns of the "West Australian"! I discussed it with the Solicitor General who pig-headedly supported the attitude of the acting Premier. Fortunately the President of the court has reversed that and told them they were absolutely wrong. If employers generally had followed the lead given them, there would have been turmoil.

The Premier: They have not.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Government should take the responsibility and not hide behind the skirts of a public officer.

The Premier: We do not hide behind the skirts of anyone.

Mr. McCALLUM: Since I have been speaking the Premier has shifted from the answer he gave the Leader of the Opposition. He said the Government were responsible for the declaration of hours and now he says he will stand by what a public servant says. If the Premier persists in that attitude and a public official has to shoulder the responsibility, our best course would be to strike out the item.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I intend to vote against the amendment. The officer is more to be pitied than blamed. He is carrying out the instructions of the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: Of course he is.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The officer should not be condemned for carrying out instructions issued to him. The member for Hannans put the position clearly. He was told by the acting Premier that the matter had been settled by the Government. It was the duty of the officer to carry out instructions. There is no necessity to refuse to pass his salary because of some act of the Government. The officer is in a difficult position. Higher paid officers have received salary increases during the last few months, and naturally the others want to know why their pay is likely to be reduced and their hours extended. This sort of thing tends to cause dissatisfaction. The Appeal Board decision will occasion more dissatisfaction than would have resulted if the board had never been appointed.

Hon. P. Collier: Certainly it will.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for Katanning wanted to know the attitude of the Government regarding the Appeal Board and whether they were going to carry out the advice of the Public Service Commissioner. When the Appeal Board Bill was before the House, the hon. member had nothing to say on it.

Mr. A. Thomson: It was a promise by the Government.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I admit it was a promise to settle the strike. Prior to that Parliament decided the question of salaries. This question has now been entirely removed from Parliament.

Mr. A. Thomson: There is no reason, now that they have done their work, why the board should not be abolished.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If action is taken in respect to the Public Service generally, similar to that taken in the case of the wages staff, the Appeal Board will shortly have to recommence their work.

Mr. A. Thomson: What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Eighty to 90 per cent. of the increases granted by the Appeal Board have gone to officers drawing higher salaries, and those drawing lower salaries have been put on one side.

The Premier: No, they all got some—£12.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That was a grade increase.

The Premier: No, they were raised from £252 to £264.

Hon. P. Collier: The Appeal Board did not grant that.

The Premier: Yes, the board gave them £12.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is about time the actual wage was fixed, not the grade, and then there might be some continuity. The Arbitration Court fixes the minimum wage but unfortunately the minimum becomes the maximum. We have dual control at present. The Assistant Public Service Commissioner's time has been taken up with the Appeal Board. He has not had time to carry out the work which the member for Katanning says he should do.

Mr. A. Thomson: But you think it should be done?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is the duty of the Public Service Commissioner to ascertain what is being done in the offices, and he has to be guided to a large extent by the heads of departments.

Mr. Pickering: Both officers?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. This officer has been carrying out duties imposed upon him by the Government, and we should not reduce his salary, which would amount to a vote of censure upon him.

Mr. A. Thomson: That was never intended.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I cannot vote for the amendment.

Mr. A. Thomson: I would get a shock if you did.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It would be much better if the hon. member would move to reduce the total vote. The Public Service Commissioner in his annual report makes the following references to the duties allotted to his assistant:

(a) Investigating all wages matters to ensure that similar rates of pay prevail in all departments for same class of work.

That is very essential. There is often a great difference in the conditions of employment of men, say, in the Public Works Department and those in the Water Supply Department. Discrepancies of this kind lead to dissatisfaction, and it is desirable that uniformity should be obtained.

(b) Dealing with all industrial matters regarding claims for amended wages or working conditions.

(c) Representing the Commissioner before the Arbitration Court, the Public Service Appeal Board, or on a wages board.

The new position was designed to afford assistance to myself and to relieve Ministers of all detail work in relation to industrial affairs, and to secure uniformity. A large number of industrial matters have been dealt with during the year, and it is anticipated that the current year will be a particularly strenuous one in this regard.

So long as Mr. Munt's work is confined to this he will be performing a useful function. All matters of principle, increasing or reducing wages, or hours of labour, should rest entirely with the Government. If I want to consult a Minister as to certain rates of wages I object to going to a Government servant and placing my case before him. I should refuse to do so, and would advise the unions to do the same. We are entitled to go to a Minister direct.

The Premier: They all do that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When a deputation representing the organised labour of this State required to discuss a question of wages they were told by the Acting Premier that he was not going to discuss a subject of that nature with them, and that they must see Mr. Munt. That was a wretched evasion of duty and responsibility. Deputations have the right to demand the attention of a Minister on a question of this sort.

The Premier: They get it, I assure you.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They did not get it from the Acting Premier. On the other hand, Mr. Munt says, "I cannot discuss wages with you, because I have instructions from Cabinet." It is, therefore, waste of time to go to him upon such a matter. For the last nine months I have been trying to get a settlement regarding some women cleaners in my district, but at the present rate of progress the refusal of a miserable 1s. 6d. per week for these women will have cost in correspondence more than the total amount involved. I refuse to see Mr. Munt on a question of this nature. Some line of demarcation should be drawn between the general principle of the working conditions, and the details which the assistant public service commissioner is required to go into in order to secure uniformity. It was never intended that a government official should be set up as an arbitration tribunal to fix the rates of wages. Ministers should receive all deputations, though it is quite right that this officer should advise them and prepare cases for them. If I am ever concerned in any wages dispute, I shall insist upon my rights as a member to see the Minister controlling the department in which the employees concerned are engaged.

The Premier: No member has ever been denied that right.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Acting Premier did so.

The Premier: I am sure he did not do that in the way you suggest.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He said, "You must discuss the question of wages with Mr. Munt." If this question is not put right at once Ministers will continue to evade their responsibilities and the power of the holder of this office will increase from year to year. That would be wrong. Mr. Munt's work should be confined to that which legitimately comes within his sphere and function. He should not undertake the duties which properly and legitimately belong to a Minister.

The PREMIER: I have already explained that almost all our Government employees work under arbitration awards. I have been approached more than once in connection with questions of employment, and my reply has always been, "You must have your wages fixed by the Arbitration Court." I have never negotiated a rate of pay with men employed by the Government in any capacity, nor varied such a rate. Questions of that kind are before the court now. We have adopted the award given in the railway case, and applied it to our other men. Wages were on the increase, and wages were always based on the cost of living, which was bound to lead to trouble. A man is entitled to be paid on the results of his work, not merely on the actual living cost. The Federal Arbitration Court has increased the hours. When the cost of living comes down, the employers, having in mind arguments for increase of wages based on the cost of living, apply to the court for wages to be fixed accordingly.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If the cost of living is coming down, why did the Appeal Board put up salaries?

The PREMIER: I do not know. In reply to the Leader of the Opposition I wish to say that no member of Parliament has ever so far as I know, been refused the right to discuss any question with any Minister. I know I have been interviewed two or three times in the course of a week by union representatives.

Mr. Munsie: That was not in connection with Government employees.

The PREMIER: I have had such a deputation at midnight. Mr. Munt cannot do more than recommend. There must be uniformity, and the awards must be applied fairly to all the men. In many cases Mr. Munt's inquiries regarding wages have been of advantage to men. Mr. Munt is not there with power to increase or reduce wages, but to make the awards fit in as regards all the departments. If six Ministers fixed wages for six departments, we would have the same tangle again as we had some years ago. The Chamber need not fear that the Government will shirk their responsibilities. The case which has been dealt with to-night at such length is now before the Arbitration Court, and should be left to the decision of the court.

Mr. PICKERING: I made some inquiry previously as to the nature of the work falling on the shoulders of this officer. I said I could see no provision for such an appointment. On referring to the Public Service Commissioner's report of last year, however, I find the following under the heading "Industrial Matters":—

In view of the increasing responsibilities placed on the office of Public Service Commissioner, I have for some time felt the need of assistance in order to carry out the functions of my office satisfactorily. This assistance became absolutely essential when the responsibility of investigating and reporting upon industrial matters was placed on my shoulders. My views were accepted by the Government, and Mr. C. A. Munt, Under Secretary for Public Works and Trading Concerns, who had obtained valuable information while acting as Assistant Commissioner in connection with the reclassification, was on my recommendation promoted to the new office of Assistant Public Service Commissioner created under Section 37 of the Public Service Act. Mr. Munt's duties include such matters as (a) being responsible for investigating all wages matters, and seeing that similar rates of pay prevail in all departments for the same class of work; (b) dealing with all industrial unions regarding claims or re-arrangements of wages and working conditions; (c) representing the Commissioner before the Arbitration Court, Public Service Appeal Board, or on a wages board.

It seems to me that the very duties to which the Leader of the Opposition and the member for South Fremantle have taken exception

are those to which this gentleman was specially appointed. The report for the year ended on the 30th June, 1922, states—

In my last report I referred to the appointment of Mr. C. A. Munt (late Under Secretary of Works and Trading Concerns) as Assistant Public Service Commissioner, with functions as under . . .

Paragraphs (a), (b) and (c), which I have already quoted, are here repeated, and the report proceeds—

The new position was designed to afford assistance to myself, and to relieve Ministers of all detail work in relation to industrial affairs, and to secure uniformity. A large number of industrial matters have been dealt with during the year, and it is anticipated that the current year will be a particularly strenuous one in this regard. Mr. Munt reports that the majority of the awards or agreements applicable to Government workers having expired some considerable time, the Government decided, towards the end of the year now under review, that the time was opportune for reversion to the 48-hour week. Under the railway award delivered by the State Arbitration Court in May last, the basic wage was reduced from 80s. to 77s. per week, and it was therefore also decided to frame the 48-hour week schedules on the new basis.

It seems to me clear that the intention is that this officer shall have the duty of deciding on labour questions. From the report it appears that his duties are likely to be even greater this year than in the previous year. In view of that, I fail to see how it is possible for Mr. Munt to act on the lines indicated by the member for Katanning. It seems to me, however, that the Public Service Commissioner, having been relieved of all those duties and responsibilities, should find time to make the inquiries suggested by the member for Katanning.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He does.

Mr. A. Thomson: In his report he says it is impossible.

Mr. PICKERING: The Public Service Commissioner says—

During the past 12 months comparatively little has been done in the way of reorganisation, owing to the demands of the appeal board and the necessity for devoting a large proportion of the time at my disposal to ordinary administrative duties requiring my attention.

I hope that instead of giving his attention to extraneous matters, the Public Service Commissioner will henceforth perform the duties for which he was specially appointed, rather than trust to the Under Secretaries.

The Premier: They must manage their departments.

Mr. PICKERING: There has been evidence of lack of management by the Under Secretaries.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Public Service Commissioner must be guided by the Under

Secretaries, who are the managers of the departments.

The Premier: Apparently they have no responsibility at all.

Mr. PICKERING: From his last two reports it appears that the Public Service Commissioner's attention has been devoted not to the Public Service but to the wages section of Government employees.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Government Motor Car Service, £1,164:

Mr. A. THOMSON: Cannot the Premier give any explanation of this vote? Surely there are some particulars.

The Premier: What particulars do you want?

Mr. A. THOMSON: We have here large expenditure.

Mr. Davies: But less than last year.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Still, there is no harm in knowing how the money is spent.

The PREMIER: There is no harm in asking for that information. The member for Katanning knows as well as anybody else how the money is expended. He knows that in connection with his own business motor cars must be used. The same thing applies to the Government service. We have quite a number of departments using the cars and involving trips of inspection and so forth.

Mr. A. Thomson: Are they all out of this?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is useful information.

The PREMIER: Where else could it come from?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Cannot the member for Katanning see that there are recoups from the other departments?

Mr. LUTEY: Are reports received from the various departments as to the distance travelled, expenses and so forth?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. LUTEY: Are the police department cars separate from this list?

The Premier: Yes, they are separate.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Printing, £70,584—agreed to.

Vote—Tourist and Publicity Bureau, £1,597:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would like some information regarding the activities of this department. Judging from the advertisements in the newspapers this department is branching out in a most liberal and, I should say, expensive method of promoting its work. I suppose it is right that there should be a director. Every State devotes a considerable amount of publicity to its tourist resorts, and there is the desire to make out resorts attractive, not only to visitors but to our own people as well. I am not too sure that this department is not attempting to get ahead of itself. It would

appear that there is an attempt to force tours upon people. Many towns have been visited by the director during the year and their beauties and attractions have been emphasised.

Mr. Davies: Very often those visits have been at the request of the various towns.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No doubt the towns will request anything that means Government expenditure and no expense to themselves. Some towns in Western Australia live by robbing people for about three months in the year. The only source of income they have is derived from robbing visitors during the holiday season.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is done all the world over.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no doubt about that. I do not like to mention any towns, but I have one or two in mind. I do not know that the financial position at present warrants the spending of any money in scouring round looking for hills and dales, lakes or rivers that may be attractive to people during the holiday season.

Mr. A. Thomson: It is better to keep the money in the State than to allow people to go to the East.

The Premier: We have mixed bathing at South Fremantle!

Hon. P. COLLIER: We have heard a lot about what are described as triangle tours.

The Minister for Agriculture: Four days for a "fiver".

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are organised by the Tourist Department and we sometimes see that after advertising them for a fortnight, they have been abandoned as the patronage was not sufficient.

Mr. Davies: There was good reason for the abandonment of the last tour.

Hon. M. F. Troy: What was the reason?

Mr. Davies: A dry season in the North for one thing.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Why not let the people see what a dry season is like in the North?

Hon. P. COLLIER: We might pay attention to those holiday resorts that are accepted by the people as desirable places for holiday purposes, but I do not know that we should increase our expenditure in an endeavour to open up new holiday resorts that may be costly. I want to be assured that the expenditure in connection with this department is justified.

The PREMIER: I think the money involved is well spent and that people should know more of the advantages and beauty of their State. It is astonishing that people do not know of those beauties. Very few people know how beautiful some parts of the district surrounding Fremantle really are. The Swan River is attractive and provides a great deal of pleasure for very many people but all cannot be accommodated there. The money expended by the department is more than recouped by the additional railway revenue, derived not only from visitors but from our own people. There are many beauty spots in Western

Australia that are worth visiting and I think the people should realise the advantages this State possesses. They should be encouraged to spend their money in Western Australia instead of going elsewhere.

Mr. PICKERING: I wish to devote a word of praise to the officer controlling the Tourist Department. I am satisfied he is fully seized with the beauties of the electorate of Sussex and the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition apply in no way to Busselton.

Hon. P. Collier: Oh, no!

Mr. PICKERING: The yearly increase in the number of visitors to that resort is a sufficient refutation of such a statement. If the townspeople of Busselton acted as the Leader of the Opposition indicated, we would not have our accommodation over-taxed. In developing the beauty spots of our State, we are keeping in line with the Eastern States and New Zealand. The Tourist Department is warranted by the increased revenue brought to the railways and other public conveniences.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have no fault to find with the officers of the Tourist Department. In Western Australia we have some of the finest pleasure resorts to be found in the Commonwealth, but we have some of our best resorts that are absolutely neglected. Has the Premier any information to give the Committee regarding extra accommodation to be provided at the Cave House, where, as soon as the warm weather sets in, the manager has to refuse applications for accommodation.

The Premier: That will always be so.

Mr. MUNSIE: Two years ago, we discussed this matter and promises were made that alterations would be effected at the Cave House. Can the Premier inform the Committee whether anything has been done? It seems to me that the officers of the Tourist Department are trying to popularise unpopular trips as against doing something to popularise further the more popular resorts that we have.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I should like to know if this department is responsible for defacing the railway carriages with a lot of cheap advertisements.

The Premier: No, that is done by the Railway Department.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Well, the placards, or some of them, are advertising the Tourist Department. Railway carriages ought not to be disfigured in that way.

Hon. P. Collier: It displays the taste of an aborigine. They have somebody's beer advertised all over the dining cars.

The PREMIER: I agree that it amounts to a defacement, but the responsibility is with the Railway Department. I will mention it to the Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There is one direction in which the department might extend its activities. A large number of passenger steamers come to Fremantle, and people getting off those boats for a few hours know not where to go for a little trip. I have had the pleasure of directing some of them to Point Walter

and other agreeable places. If a little tourist literature were distributed on those boats, it would be an advantage. The expenditure incurred in printing would be more than recouped in railway and tramway fares.

Vote put and passed.

Vote, Literary and Scientific Grants, £9,250—agreed to.

Progress reported.

PAPERS—AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT, PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I should like to know when the report of the Auditor General will be made available. I think we ought to have it before we proceed very far with the discussion of the Estimates. Also, the Premier might tell us when the Public Accounts, usually presented with the Estimates, will be made available.

The PREMIER: I will inquire, and will let the hon. member know.

House adjourned at 10.36 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 26th October, 1922.

	PAGE
Question: Geraldton Boat Slip	1224
Geraldton Jetty, experience of "Bambra"	1225
Hospital Nurses, Hours of Duty	1225
Midland Railway Coy., Land Settlement	1225
Bills: Companies Act Amendment, 3A.	1225
Geraldton Racecourse, 2A., Com., etc.	1225
Dairy Industry, 2A.	1226
Wyalcatchem-Mt. Marshall Railway (Extension No. 2), 2A., Com. report	1231
Dairy Cattle Improvement, 1A.	1234
Married Women's Protection, Com.	1234
Attorney General (Vacancy in Office), 2A.	1234

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

QUESTION—GERALDTON BOAT SLIP.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY asked the Minister for Education: 1, In view of the fact that the answers given to the questions asked by the Hon. J. Mills in connection with the Geraldton boat slip are in direct opposition to the statements made by local residents, will he state the source from which he received his information? 2, Is he aware that two or more boats are absolutely prohibited from going