

The Minister for Mines: Then it must be good.

Hon. P. COLLIER: While there should be no distinction, we should not go too far. The clause proposes to confer extraordinary power on the police. A child might be arrested in the home by a policeman and dragged before a police court to be tried. This savours too much of government by policemen. It would not be so bad if the power were confined to an officer of the department, but to extend it to policemen is far too drastic.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is inconsistent with Clause 7.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes; under Clause 7 there is not even power to summon a child until notice has been served. Officers of the department are selected because of their special qualifications to deal with children.

The Minister for Mines: I shall agree to strike out the words "or member of the police force."

Hon. P. COLLIER: The tendency of the Bill is to eliminate the policeman as far as possible, but I realise the difficulty that, in remote places, there is no officer of the Government, except a policeman, to take action. I move an amendment—

That in lines one and two of the proposed new section 119a, the words "or member of the police force" be struck out.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Clause 25 is merely an extension of Section 23 of the Act. It is almost impossible to administer such a measure in a large State like Western Australia, without the assistance of the police. What I object to is that the police may arrest any child liable to be tried for an offence and yet, under Clause 7, a summons cannot be issued without notice first being given. I have heard it said that the later section of an Act prevails; if that is so, Clause 7 would be ineffective.

Amendment put and passed.

(The Chairman resumed the Chair.)

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move a further amendment—

That in line 5 of proposed new Section 119a the words "to have committed and to be liable to be tried for any offence, or" be struck out.

My reason for asking the Committee to delete these words is that while we provide for arrest in this proposed section, in Clause 7 we provide that a summons shall serve the purpose.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The whole clause requires some consideration, and as the member for North-East Fremantle intends to submit a number of new clauses for the consideration of the Committee, I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and passed.

(The Speaker resumed the Chair.)

Progress reported.

## TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to inform the House that I have appointed as temporary Chairmen of Committees Mr. Foley, Mr. Munsie, and Mr. Piessie.

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 27th August, 1919.

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

## QUESTION—WHEAT POOL, CAPITAL OUTLAY.

Mr. HARRISON asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Is the West Australian wheat pool under any obligation in the way of capital outlay to any other State wheat pool? 2, If so, what is the nature of the liability and the approximate amount due? 3, Does this State share in any cost concerning State wheat pools other than in the sale of wheat?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. 2, A special grant of £1,000 was made by the Australian Wheat Board to the South Australian Wheat Scheme for the carrying out of experiments in regard to weevil extermination; this State's share is approximately £100. 3, Outside of the £100 mentioned above—No.

### QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL SHOWS, JUDGES.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Is it a fact that he has issued instructions which will prevent his expert officers from acting as judges at agricultural shows? 2, If so, what is the reason for issuing such instructions?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, Yes; except that of the Royal Agricultural Society. 2, This has been a rule of the department, except in cases of emergency, since 1908, although some relaxation was allowed during the period of the war, owing to difficulties in obtaining judges elsewhere. Judging at country shows places in a wrong position, and in an undesirable relation to producers, departmental officers, whose primary function is to give advice and information to the man on the land. It also takes up too much of their time. These considerations do not equally apply in the case of the Royal Show.

### QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, BUSSELTON-MARGARET RIVER.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Minister for Works: In view of the urgent necessity for affording access to the metropolitan markets, will he state the Government's intentions towards the construction of the Busselton-Margaret River railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Due regard will be paid by the Government to the importance of the Busselton-Margaret River district in relation to the provision of farm products for the metropolitan markets, when the railway policy of the Government comes under review.

### QUESTION—IMMIGRATION OFFICER.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Has the appointment of an Immigration officer, to be attached to the Agent General's Office in London, been made? 2, If not, will he take into consideration, in the best interests of the State, the desirability of appointing an officer who possesses an exact knowledge of the farming conditions of Western Australia?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Colonial Secretary) replied: 1, No. 2, Yes.

### QUESTION—STATE SAWMILLS, PRICE OF TIMBER.

Hon. P. COLLIER (for Mr. O'Loughlin) asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has the State Sawmills Department increased the price of timber supplied by them during the past fortnight by 10 per cent.? 2, If so, what is the reason for such increase, in view of the fact that the Government refused to increase the wages of the employees?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

### QUESTION—INDUSTRIAL AGREEMENTS.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Works: 1, When is it his intention to finalise the various agreements, in the interest of industrial peace; with the various unions whose members are employed on works controlled or administered by him? 2, Seeing that some considerable time has elapsed since application was made by various unions for new agreements to be mutually arranged, will he make those agreements retrospective? 3, If so, from what date?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, There are still some unions which have been unable to interview the Minister owing to pressure of business. It is not the intention of the Minister to deal with any union until all have been seen and the award in connection with the Railway Department case, now being heard, is given. It is felt that, so far as possible, the conditions as to privileges and holidays in the Government service should be the same. 2 and 3, Consideration will be given to this, with due regard to the financial position of the State.

### QUESTION—PERTH SEWERAGE RATE.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Water Supply: 1, Has the sewerage rate for Perth been increased by one penny in the pound for the present financial year? 2, If so, what is the reason for such increase?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY replied: 1, Yes. 2, The accrued deficit on the sewerage system to 30th June, 1919, was £75,728. The loss during 1918-1919 was £10,001, and estimated loss for 1920 was £12,485, against which the increased rate of one penny will realise £3,240.

### QUESTION—MINING COMMODITIES: COST.

Mr. GREEN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is he aware that the price of mining commodities has increased during the war, so that the treatment of ore has increased on the Eastern Goldfields 7s. 3d. per ton from the year 1913? 2, In order to assist the mining industry, will he take into consideration the desirability of the Government acting as direct importers of these supplies, so that they may be sold to those directing the industry at the lowest possible rate?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, The Minister is aware that there has been an increase in the cost of mining commodities; also, from figures supplied by the Chamber of Mines, that the average working cost per ton of ore treated has increased from 1913 to 1918 by over 5s. per ton. There are no Government statistics from which an average increase in cost could be arrived at. 2, No. The mining companies should be well able to protect their own interests in this regard.

## BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

## 1. Kalgoorlie Friendly Societies' Investments Validation.

Introduced by Mr. Green.

## 2. Land and Income Tax.

## 3. Perth Mint Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Premier.

## 4. Anzac Day.

## 5. Merchant Shipping Act Application Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Attorney General.

## MOTION—QUARANTINING OF VESSELS, TO INQUIRE.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [4.47]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that an inquiry be held into the quarantining of the North-West steamers "Minderoo" and "Bambra" and the quarantine regulations at present operating on the North-West coast.

The necessity for moving this motion is not now quite so great as it was when I gave notice. In fact, the quarantine regulations have been materially altered since then, not only as regards North-Western shipping, but as regards shipping throughout the State. The motion hardly goes far enough, because in the near future it will be necessary to hold an inquiry into the entire system of quarantine. I am under the impression that the quarantine arrangements in this State did infinitely more harm than good. The North-West is the only part of Western Australia which is now declared by the Commissioner of Public Health to be free of influenza—a fact which in itself would prove that the quarantining of the steamers was a serious blunder. However, I do not regard the present time as suitable for a general inquiry. I omitted to say that in my opinion the Medical Department and the medical faculty are doing their best to combat the influenza. Later, a more comprehensive motion may be required. In the meantime I suppose I must move this motion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.49]: I was pleased to hear the mover say that he thought the suggested inquiry ought to be extended at a later date. In my opinion there has undoubtedly been a good deal of laxity in the matter of quarantine, and I am sorry the State Government have seen fit to make such conditions of quarantine as have obtained in the Eastern States. A great deal of the suffering that has been and is being experienced in Fremantle is due to relaxation of the quarantine of shipping. Lumpers are dying every day in Fremantle. There have been more deaths amongst the Fremantle lumpers than in any other section of the community. I have heard of a case—it has occurred since the relaxation of the regulations—where a coloured man on board a ship at Fremantle was supposed to be ill and was taken off. There can be hardly any doubt that the man was suf-

fering from pneumonic influenza. Over 30 lumpers working on that ship have since gone down with influenza; and I have been informed, though I cannot vouch for it, that six of them have died. Since the relaxation of the regulations there has been in Western Australia a more severe type of influenza than that in the Eastern States. The death rate from pneumonic influenza here has been very high indeed. Perhaps the member for Pilbara will feel justified in moving for a more extended inquiry later, though from the manner in which he has moved this motion I gather that he desires to have it defeated. He said he supposed he had to move the motion. There is no necessity for any member to move a motion unless he desires to do so.

Mr. Underwood: But I wanted to have a word on the subject.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Does the hon. member want the motion defeated?

Mr. Underwood: You can please yourself.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I hope the Government are not going to allow themselves to be smoothed over by the tongue of Willie Watt, a man who says "You are a jolly good fellow" and the week after tries to cut your throat. The Federal authorities have at last been able to impose their quarantine regulations on the Government of this State, and our State regulations have been set aside altogether.

The Minister for Mines: Our regulations have nothing to do with shipping.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, they have.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is so. The other night here I read the instruction issued by our Public Health Department that no ship was to be allowed into the port of Fremantle for seven days after leaving an infected port. The time is now three days, under the Commonwealth regulations.

The Minister for Mines: We had an infected port 12 miles from Fremantle.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, after the State regulations had been withdrawn. Until our State regulations were withdrawn, Western Australia was clear of pneumonic influenza.

Mr. Underwood: Nonsense!

The Minister for Mines: That is not so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There was only the ordinary influenza.

Mr. Underwood: There were deaths from pneumonic influenza at Woodman's Point before last Christmas. Soldiers died there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not need to be reminded of that fact by the hon. member. Those were cases landed in quarantine. I am dealing with the State outside the quarantine area, and I say there was no pneumonic influenza in Western Australia up to the time of the State Government's withdrawal of their own regulations.

Mr. Foley: Before the State regulations were revoked it was reported to the City health authorities that there were cases.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have been told definitely and distinctly and authoritatively that if there had been any signs at all of pneumonic influenza, quarantine would have been imposed for the safety of the general public. Our State has had to suffer owing to the substitution of the Federal regulations for the State regulations. I trust the hon. member will carry out his intention of moving a further motion in this connection.

On motion by the Minister for Mines debate adjourned.

#### MOTION—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AND GENERAL INSURANCE.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [4.57]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the Government establish a general insurance fund in connection with the Workers' Compensation Act.

I feel sure this motion will appeal to the good sense of hon. members. Upon its being carried, I hope the Government will give effect to the desire of the House by introducing the necessary Bill. For many years I have been of opinion that legislation on these lines should be enacted. I believe that really the matter has been merely overlooked by previous Governments. Notwithstanding the condemnation by Chambers of Commerce of State enterprise, it is the duty of any community, being convinced that a service can be more economically provided through the State than by private enterprise, to adopt State enterprise for that purpose. There is ample evidence in other countries to support the contention that a State insurance scheme will be able to effect a great reduction in premiums, and that the workmen will receive better treatment from a State fund than from a private insurance company. Let me remind hon. members that we have in this State a fund for the insurance of Government employees under the Workers' Compensation Act. That fund was established by the Scaddan Government about six years ago.

Mr. Munsie: It shows a nice profit, too.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It has a credit balance to-day of about £35,000. Bearing in mind that the premiums were reduced by nearly 50 per cent., we can compute that by the establishment of that fund the State has up to date saved something in the neighbourhood of £100,000. The fund has been administered most liberally towards the injured person. Moreover, during all that time, it has never been found necessary to go to court or employ lawyers.

Hon. P. Collier: And many payments have been made which would not have been made by private companies.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is so. The Government have all the machinery for carrying out insurance of this description in every part of the State. We have our officers everywhere. Even the men in charge of

police stations could accept premiums and give receipts.

Mr. Smith: Would you pay them extra?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is a matter for the Public Service Commissioner to consider. It would be part of their work for the officers in the small towns, whereas in the big towns special officers would deal with it. Again, in every town we have a medical officer subsidised by the Government, who would be the Government's representative in considering cases under the Act. In Britain there has been an enormous number of cases under the Act, and it has become the practice of the insurance companies to fight every case in which they have a possible chance of winning. They offer in settlement possibly not half of what the injured person is entitled to, and they keep on trying to beat him all they can, unless he has behind him somebody who can threaten to go to law. With a State fund this would entirely disappear.

Mr. Smith: What guarantee have we of that?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The guarantee that it has disappeared in countries where they have this fund. It has disappeared entirely in our own State. It has disappeared entirely in Queensland. I find it very difficult to get any information as to what profits the insurance companies are making in this State. In the pocket year book for 1917 in regard to the employers' liability and workmen's compensation insurance, the revenue was £56,000, the losses, less re-insurances, amounted to £29,000, commission and agents' charges reached £6,000, while other expenses of management totalled £14,500. We do not know where the "other expenses" went to, but I am prepared to say that the insured did not get any more than the companies cared to give them. After the war had been in progress for some time it was found by the British Government that the insurance companies were making considerable profits, and in consequence Britain established her own insurance, taking all risks, even those from bombardment and aeroplanes; and the latest report in regard to that shows a profit of £17,000,000. When we talk of national re-organisation, I think we are compelled to consider this question of insurance. In New South Wales the Chamber of Manufactures found that they were paying what they thought to be too high a price. I have here a copy of the "Bulletin" of 24th July last, giving the figures of the Manufacturers' Mutual Accident Insurance Association, Limited, Sydney. Starting in April, 1915, they have paid in bonuses to insurers something like £26,000, and have built up a reserve of £19,000. The "Bulletin" refers to the enterprise in this way—

Five years ago the Sydney Chamber of Manufactures decided that the insurance companies were on too good a wicket so far as workmen's compensation policies were concerned. So this little mutual office was formed to hold on to some of the pro-

fits for policy holders. The table indicates how successful the enterprise has been, though it tells only part of the story. For workmen's compensation isn't quite as sweet a thing as it used to be. To begin with, two years ago a new Act, providing considerably increased advantages, superseded the old one. At the same time the proprietary concerns, instead of increasing their tariff to meet the additional risks, got cold feet, partly as a result of the Government monopoly created by the Queensland Act, and partly because of the operations of this and other mutual companies, and rates were actually reduced by about one-third. The Manufacturers' Mutual also adopted the new standard rates; and the result has been a higher loss ratio and a smaller margin of profit.

As a matter of fact, wherever there has been State insurance or mutual insurance, it has been found that the premium rates can be reduced by pretty well fifty per cent. I understand there is at Kalgoorlie a mine which does its own insurance and which is showing a very solid profit in regard to insurance. The Queensland Act was passed a couple of years ago. I have here the report of the Insurance Commissioner of that State, from which I take the following:—

Establishment—The sum of £20,000 appropriated under Section 5 of the Workers' Compensation Act, 1916, for the purpose of establishing the State Accident Insurance Office was duly paid over by the Treasury, but, having been repaid immediately, is omitted entirely from the attached accounts.

Parliament voted £20,000 for the purpose but not a penny of this has been used. The report continues—

The actual outlay incurred by the Department of Justice for the establishment of the office up to and including 30th June, 1916, was £3,570 12s. 4d., the whole of which has also been repaid.

I will not read any further. The report shows a reserve of well over £50,000, and they have there a system of rebate to insurers. The Insurance Commissioner, writing in answer to inquiries from Western Australia, said—

No State which opens a State insurance department under proper control need have any fear regarding the success or popularity of the venture, and if arrangements can be made between the various Governments to work in with one another in the question of re-insurance, then the existing State offices will be immensely strengthened, and will in turn be of much assistance to newcomers. I look forward with confidence to the not far distant time when every State in Australia will have its own State Government insurance office, transacting a large proportion of the business of its own State and re-insuring its excess co-operatively with the other States.

Hon. P. Collier: In Queensland the premiums have been materially reduced.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is so, and they have established a system of rebate. Finding they were making a huge profit they have refunded it in the form of bonuses, as this mutual company in Sydney has done. State insurance against accident is known over the whole of the English speaking countries of the world. It is in operation in several States in Canada, in many States of America, in New Zealand, in Victoria, and in Queensland. I have here a few notes which I have collated in regard to the movement. In the States of Washington and Wyoming insurance is a monopoly of the State fund and is compulsory. In Nevada, Oregon, and Porto Rico, the State funds are also monopolies, but in those States the acceptance of the Compensation Act is elective for many employers. In the States of Colorado, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, State funds are organised in competition with other forms of insurance. In the majority of States where competition exists, all bodies transacting business are required to make contribution for expenses of the State Commissioner, which among other duties collects statistics and has power to fix rates. That is how far they have proceeded in America. Here, of course, we have no such law, and the insurance companies can charge just as much as they think the employer is likely to pay. I have said that we have in our State departments the machinery for transacting insurance business all over the State. We have in the Public Service a man well capable of establishing this fund.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He has a scheme out already, has he not?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not know. I am referring to Mr. Bennett, who has the existing scheme in hand and, no doubt, he is quite competent to organise the proposed scheme. There may be some who would say that this can be accomplished under corporation, that is to say, that the Chamber of Manufactures may establish a fund, the mill owners may establish a fund, and the Chamber of Mines may establish a fund. But that plan would leave out many small employers who could not get into the combination, and therefore it is essential that the State should take up this matter. By bringing in legislation such as I propose, we shall be able to reduce the cost of insurance very materially to employers and will be able to give the injured workers a considerably better deal than they get to-day.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

#### PAPERS—FREEZING WORKS, FREEMANTLE, LEASES RESUMED.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Freemantle) [5.15]: I move—

That all papers regarding the resumption of leases of land granted for the purpose of obtaining lime, etc., and resumed for the purpose of granting them to a

company in connection with the erection of freezing works, etc., at Fremantle, be laid on the Table of the House.

My main object is to ascertain whether an injustice has been done to those who held the leases prior to their resumption. If an injustice has been done, I intend to ask the House to order an inquiry.

The Minister for Works: The lessees agreed upon a sum and were paid.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This land was granted on a five years' lease and, when the leases were resumed the Government, according to my information, merely paid the cost which had been incurred to put in machinery for working the leases. A certain amount of money was borrowed by the lessees—working men—for the erection of kilns, etc., and to work the leases. When the leases were resumed, the men were compensated only to the extent of their outlay, and received nothing whatever for their probable losses during the period of the leases. So far as I can learn, the men who held the leases received not a penny. The amount paid by way of compensation had to be devoted to repay the money borrowed for erecting the kilns, etc. These men had made arrangements for the five years' working of the leases and had entered into contracts to supply lime, etc., ahead.

The Minister for Works: I understood they were paid fair compensation and were satisfied.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The papers will show whether that is so. If the facts are in accordance with my information, further action should be taken.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [5.18]: I have no objection to making the papers available so that the hon. member can see what has happened. Probably he will find that his information is not quite correct.

Question put and passed.

#### PAPERS — INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BOARD, SUSTENANCE ALLOWANCE.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [9.15]: I move—

That all papers connected with the granting of sustenance allowances to farmers by the Industries Assistance Board be laid on the Table of the House.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [5.20]: I have no objection to laying the papers on the Table.

Question put and passed.

#### PAPERS—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT, ESTATES PURCHASED.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.21]: I move—

That all papers relating to the purchase of estates for the purpose of soldier settlement be laid on the Table.

I understand the Government offer no objection to this motion.

The Premier: Do you mean estates repurchased for subdivision?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes.

Question put and passed.

#### MOTION—HOSPITAL FOR INSANE, TO INQUIRE.

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [5.22]: I move—

“That in the opinion of this House a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into:—1, The conditions of employment of the staff at the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. 2, The methods under which patients are admitted into and detained in the hospital. 3, The fitness of Dr. Anderson to hold the position of Inspector General.”

The conditions prevailing at the Claremont Asylum have received so much ventilation during the last 12 months or so that most members are fully aware all is not well at that institution. Last session I endeavoured to secure the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the conduct of affairs at the Hospital for the Insane, but, owing to the urgency of dealing with the Andinach case, the inquiry was restricted to that particular matter. Since then many facts have been brought to light by the newspapers, particularly the “Sunday Times” and lately the “Call.” Not only this institution, but the whole State, is working under difficulties owing to quarantine regulations. The whole of the Hospital for the Insane is quarantined and the attendants are unable to leave the institution. The conditions under which the staff are quarantined deserve more than passing mention. Some little time ago the Inspector General for the Insane thought the hospital should be placed in strict quarantine, and immediately prohibited any attendant from leaving the institution. It was some considerable time after he himself decided on this that he brought the matter before the Medical Board which, naturally being an agreeable sort of trade union body, agreed with him. However, for three weeks, on his own responsibility, he had quarantined the institution. At that time several things happened. An attendant, a returned soldier named Edwards, received news that his wife had to undergo a dangerous operation, and I believe Dr. Atkinson telephoned him that he ought to see her before the operation was performed. Edwards saw the Inspector General and undertook that, if he were allowed to go out to see his wife, he would forego all pay during the time he would be in isolation after his return. Dr. Anderson refused to allow him to go. Another returned soldier had an important appointment at the divorce court. He, too, offered, if he were allowed to go, to bear the expense of isolation on his return. Again the doctor refused to grant permission. Both these men, returned sol-

diers who had fought for their country, displayed the same spirit in dealing with Dr. Anderson as they did in dealing with the other Kaiser. They simply walked out of the institution, and were not allowed to return. Not merely has this man Anderson refused to allow them to return to the Hospital for the Insane, but he has dogged their footsteps ever since by endeavouring to black list them and prevent them from obtaining employment in any other department. Evidence of this can be produced when necessary. Later, a number of the attendants, being thoroughly fed up with the conditions, decided to walk out. Nineteen of them—eleven returned soldiers—walked out, refusing to stand the quarantining any longer, and were not allowed to go back. The whole of those nineteen attendants have been blacklisted by the Colonial Secretary's department, although trained attendants have been required, and they have been refused work in other jobs they could perform.

The Minister for Works: What evidence have you of that?

Mr. JONES: The fact that they applied for positions under the quarantine department and were told by the officer in charge that they are not to be employed in any capacity by the department. Further, one man was appointed to a position at the Old Men's Home and has been dogged deliberately and personally by Dr. Anderson, who has endeavoured to get him sacked.

The Minister for Works: Of course you vouch for that yourself?

Mr. JONES: When a commission is appointed I shall produce the evidence.

The Minister for Works: You are giving hearsay, not facts.

Mr. JONES: I have no desire to romance; I simply wish to quote the facts before me, in order that the House may realise the need for appointing a commission. As members may know, the attendants have filed a citation in the Arbitration Court, with a view to getting better wages and conditions. At present they are prevented from proceeding owing to the quarantine arrangements imposed by Dr. Anderson. Whether those restrictions are necessary or unnecessary, I do not know, but the fact remains that the staff is absolutely seething with discontent. Whilst they are compelled to stay in the institution, the doctor himself is running in and out as he pleases; and the milkman, coalman, Swan Brewery driver and various other tradesmen are passing in and out freely without any restriction whatever. I suggest that in considering the position, either all should be placed in quarantine, or none at all. The half-way measures are hitting the attendants, while so many other people are allowed to go in and out at their will. The existing system under which patients are admitted to the hospital is also a matter that a Royal Commission can investigate, and perhaps suggest an amendment to the law as it stands. Let me take the famous Andinach case. We find that that unfortunate individual was sitting on his

verandah one morning apparently free and happy. I might have come along, or a medical man might have passed and declared Andinach to be a harmless and contented man on that particular day, but two policemen appeared on the scene—and policemen have no more medical knowledge than I have—and removed the man to the cells. Subsequently they took him to the mental ward of the Perth hospital without a doctor having seen him. That sort of thing goes on all the time, and that is a condition of affairs which requires to be investigated with a view to an alteration being brought about. When a doctor is not called in in such circumstances, it is not to be wondered that many cases similar to that of Andinach occur and are smothered up by the authorities. In submitting a similar motion to the House some twelve months ago I stated that there were many cases of cruelty at that time in the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. Many of the patients, I stated, were suffering from broken ribs, broken arms, and bruises. That sort of thing is still going on. Hon. members will understand that it is practically impossible to submit complete evidence, but I have enough to show that I am not talking from imagination. Perhaps the most startling thing which has been brought forward is the way in which the Inspector General of the Insane deals with refractory cases. The matter was fairly fully ventilated in a local paper, "The Call," only this week. We find that patients who have been found guilty of striking attendants are admonished, but in those instances when they have got near enough to strike or attempt to strike Dr. Anderson, the punishment which has been awarded has been such in its cruelty as to compare with the worst form of torture which we know was resorted to in mediæval times—torture that could only be inflicted by an inhuman and devilish being. I refer particularly to the medicinal part of the torture. When I last submitted a similar motion I stated that the methods of restraint adopted at the Claremont asylum were obsolete, and I also said that in addition to those methods it was a common thing to give patients what was known as "whitehouse." I did not then go as far as I should have done. The member for Pilbara, who was then acting for the Colonial Secretary, pointed out that "whitehouse" was harmless, that it was a medicine any hon. member could take without it affecting him. As pointed out by the paper to which I have referred, the punishment meted out to refractory patients by Dr. Anderson consists of the administering of a deadly Indian oil known as croton oil. Had I been aware that the motion which I am submitting would have come up for discussion to-day, I would have brought a sample along for the benefit of hon. members, so that they might form some estimate of the inhuman mediæval methods used by the Inspector General of the Insane. Three drops of that oil are enough to kill any ordinary man, and as much as five spots of it have been given to a patient. No medical

man with a spark of manliness in him would allow such a thing to be done. Yet these unfortunate beings, who have unhappily attempted to strike his high and mightiness, the Inspector General, have been sentenced to seven days solitary confinement on bread and water, and to sleep on the floor with one piece of canvas as sole covering, in addition to which they have had administered the croton oil. I do not wish to go into details, but I would request hon. members to ask any medical man the effect of that poison on the lining of the stomach. If the debate is to be adjourned, I will, when replying, give hon. members some idea of the harm which follows the taking of the oil. Patients with their intestines practically hanging out have undergone solitary confinement after having had administered to them the deadly oil by that inhuman creature the Inspector General. We should not for a moment allow a man of that description to continue to have control of mental cases, and a stringent inquiry should be carried out in order to determine his fitness to occupy the position he holds. When I get a chance to reply, I will be able to deal with the matter more fully, and will submit proofs of the statements I have made. Although I have introduced the subject briefly, the facts which I have quoted are true, and if necessary I will supplement them at a later stage.

On motion by the Premier the debate adjourned.

#### PAPERS — ONGERUP SETTLEMENT, AGRICULTURAL BANK TRUSTEES' VISIT.

On motion by Mr. Thomson ordered: "That all papers in connection with the visit of the Trustees of the Agricultural Bank to Ongerup be laid on the Table of the House."

#### MOTION—STATE SMELTING WORKS, TREATMENT OF ORES.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [5.40]: I move—

That Subclause (2) of Regulation 16, for the treatment of auriferous copper ores at the State Smelting Works, Phillips River, under the "Mining Development Act, 1902," and laid upon the Table of the House on the 31st July, 1919, be disallowed.

The motion is a harmless one. It is intended to prevent great harm being done to one of our languishing industries. It is well known that mining in the Phillips River district has been a precarious industry for some time past. Since the commencement of the war the necessity for copper as a metal largely used in the prosecution of the war, gave an opportunity to the owners of mines in the Phillips River district to re-open some of their shows and take advantage of the increased price that was being paid for the

metal. The Government went to the assistance of those mine owners and they proceeded to, and in fact did, carry out smelting for the mines, which were able to produce sufficient ore for that purpose. It is necessary of course, that smelting operations should be carried on under a certain set of regulations. I understand that although smelting started two or three years ago it was only on the 4th April last that the regulations for the conduct of the work were gazetted. For some time before that period dissatisfaction existed between the owners of the mines and the Government who had been carrying on smelting operations for the owners, and that dissatisfaction has led to litigation. I understand that several cases are pending, and that the owners of the mines are claiming a large sum from the Government on account of overcharges in some way or other. I have not the information as to how the owners arrive at their claims, but I am informed that the Government have been treating them unfairly by charging them exorbitant fees for smelting. They have consequently built up big claims against the Government, which of course will be settled in due course in the law courts. The fact remains that in April last the Government drew up regulations for the conduct of smelting operations, and they saw fit to make one of them retrospective. That is the regulation I am now asking the House to disallow, because in my opinion it is unfair that the Government should adopt this course of making the regulations retrospective so as to cut away whatever right the mine owners may have had and put them out of court in regard to their claims. The regulation of which I complain is sub-clause 2 of regulation 16, which says—

For the purpose of such advances interim charges will be made as follows—

(a) Up to the end of the year 1918, etc.—

This means that the regulation will operate from the time the Government started smelting for the mines, which, I understand, will take them back three years. In other words, the owners of the mines are to be bound by these regulations, in the framing of which they have had no say whatever. Members will see that this is a most unfair way of treating customers. If the Government have made a mistake they should stand to it. It is an unheard of thing for the Government to rectify some mistake they have made by gazetting regulations that will prevent the unfortunate mine owners from obtaining that to which they are justly entitled. Most of these mine owners, I understand, are working men who have joined together in small syndicates. It will be a real hardship if they are compelled to pay this arbitrary price for smelting their ores. They take strong exception to this. Apart from the individual merits of the case I protest strongly against the action of this Government, in this or any other connection, by which they make their regulations retrospective and deprive the citizens of the State of their rights.

On motion by the Premier debate adjourned.



**MOTION—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT, RE-PURCHASE OF "MARYBROOK" ESTATE.**

**MR. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.50]:** I move—

That all papers in connection with the repurchase of a portion of E. R. Bunbury's estate known as "Marybrook," and situated about nine miles from Busselton, be laid upon the Table of the House.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It appears to me that a motion, which has been carried earlier in the afternoon, as moved by the member for Boulder, covers the motion of the member for Sussex in so far as the papers asked for are concerned.

**MR. PICKERING:** But I should like to say a few words on this motion. A great deal of dissatisfaction exists throughout the State over the prices that have been paid for repurchased properties. It appears that the main question to be taken into consideration has been rather the satisfaction to be given to the men who sell the land than to the men who are going to use it. I have had given to me a largely signed petition from the Donnybrook district from persons who protest against the price that has been paid for certain land which is not in my electorate. As many of the residents of my electorate, however, have inspected this land, they have asked me to bring the matter under the notice of the Premier. The papers to which I refer in my motion are in connection with the estate of Mr. E. R. Bunbury, known as "Marybrook." The land in question is the worst in that particular block. It is a portion which has had scarcely any improvements effected upon it since it has been in the possession of the present owner. His whole efforts have been confined to the better class of land, which lies quite apart from that which has been resumed for returned soldiers.

**Hon. P. Collier:** He has stuck to that.

**MR. PICKERING:** It is not in the deal. This is the practice which is generally adopted by those who are selling land for returned soldiers.

**Hon. P. Collier:** They retain the good portion.

**MR. PICKERING:** Yes, and dispose of the more or less indifferent portions for repatriation purposes. The only improvements that have been made on this land, up to within the last two or three years, comprise ringbarking and fencing. The result of the ringbarking has been to make this land practically an impenetrable forest. Settlers on this land, therefore, are immediately confronted with all this timber and undergrowth before they can avail themselves of the land. The improvements which have been effected here are really non-existent. I have also received another petition asking that I should move in connection with the resumption of certain other land adjoining this particular property. Although I am prepared to concede that the

land, the resumption of which I am asked to request the Government to make, is much of it first class land, I am afraid the improvements effected upon it are not sufficient to bring them within the meaning of the word "improvements" as they affect our repatriated soldiers. A small area has been cleared, the fencing is in an indifferent condition, whilst the other improvements consist only of ringbarking. The price paid for this "Marybrook" estate was, I understand, £3 per acre. I am convinced that the owner of the property would not have sold it at that price had he not been satisfied with what he was getting. My fear, however, is that this price will be taken as the basis upon which land adjacent to it will be offered for sale. Anyone who wishes to sell land for the settlement of our soldiers should regard the transaction in the light of how it will benefit those who have done so much in their interests. The motive that should actuate the seller should be to dispose of his property at the lowest possible price he can afford to take for it.

**Hon. P. Collier:** Whilst not impugning the honour of the members of the board, I say that the fact of their being large land owners in the vicinity of this land naturally means that they will not fix a price which will depreciate the value of their own land.

**MR. PICKERING:** That is the assumption. A fair basis of sale would be to take the purchase price, and add the value of the improvements and reasonable interest for the period during which the property has been lying idle. When it is considered that this land is being bought for the settlement of our returned soldiers, I do not think any benefit should accrue to the vendors from the fact of a survey being made for the Busselton-Margaret River railway, and from any unearned increment that might come from the improvement in the value of the land owing to its proximity to a national railway.

**The Minister for Works:** Is this land on the route of the proposed railway?

**MR. PICKERING:** Yes.

**The Minister for Works:** How would it be affected if I deviated the line from the proposed route?

**MR. PICKERING:** If the line were deviated in the way I have suggested previously, this land would be within five miles of it.

**The Minister for Works:** It is now on the line?

**MR. PICKERING:** Yes, the line would pass through it. I understand that the Premier agrees to place these papers on the Table of the House.

**Hon. W. C. Angwin:** Has this property been purchased for subdivision?

**MR. PICKERING:** Yes. It comprises 500 acres and will be divided into three homestead farms. These soldiers will go on to what is practically unimproved land.

**MR. Angwin:** The Government gave £3 odd per acre for an unimproved property?

Mr. PICKERING: It has been ringbarked and fenced, but that is all.

Mr. Smith: Who bought it?

Mr. PICKERING: The Government.

Mr. Smith: Who was responsible?

Mr. PICKERING: I am not yet able to say.

Hon. P. Collier: It must have been bought on the recommendation of the board.

Mr. PICKERING: When I have seen the papers I shall know more about the matter. There is a possibility of a larger area adjoining this particular property being resumed for the soldiers. It is good land, and I should like to see it resumed provided the price asked is a fair and reasonable one. I am not going to be a party to any deal in which I consider the interests of the seller are placed above those of the purchaser. I am sure this is the attitude of the House in this connection.

Mr. Johnston: You do not want any more land in that locality bought at the same price?

Mr. PICKERING: I want it bought at its true value, and not at a price which will make it impossible for the soldier to make good. I know the desire of the House is that every soldier who takes up land, whether it has been repurchased or is Crown land, should have every prospect of making good without undue labour to himself.

Question put and passed.

#### MOTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION PRIORITY.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [5.58]: I move—

That the resolution passed by the House to the effect "That the first railway to be constructed shall be the Esperance Northwards line," be waived to allow of the provision of the few miles of railway to Bruce Rock, necessary to remove the disabilities of the large number of settlers on the Kuminin and Wadderin areas.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No railway has yet been passed for Bruce Rock.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: So far as the length of railway is concerned, it appears to me to be easiest for the Government to carry out this small piece of work. I asked the Minister for Railways the other day as to whether rails were available or when they were likely to be, and suggested the probability of getting rails either from Newcastle or Great Britain. I was told in reply that there was not much likelihood of this.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They procured 14 or 16 miles of rails for Lake Clifton.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: When looking through the report of the Commissioner for Railways I saw that certain relayings of lines had taken place. It struck me that it should not be a very difficult thing to manage the laying of the 19 miles of line, which would be all that would be necessary to connect these people with means of transport.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It might be a difficult matter to get a Bill through the House for its construction.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I also asked the Minister for Railways if he was aware of the disabilities of the people at Emu Hill through having to pay freight over something like 100 miles of railway on all their produce going to and coming from Perth? I asked whether steps were likely to be taken to remove the disability, and was informed, in the good old Government phrase, that the matter was under consideration.

Hon. P. Collier: What distance is this proposed line of yours?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Nineteen and a-half miles. Seeing that it is not likely to be possible to get the necessary rails promptly, I asked whether a flat rate would be granted to these settlers; and I was informed that there were other settlers in the same position and that financial considerations prevented the granting of a flat rate. The people of Kuminin are located on one of the best wheat areas in Western Australia, but they have been subjected to continual disappointment. The railway as originally surveyed was to go right through the centre of their area. This was while the member for Northam was Minister for Lands, but a new Minister for Lands came in, Mr. W. D. Johnson, and a dispute arose as to whether the line should be taken more to the westward. Two select committees inquired into the matter, and brought in conflicting reports. In the end, the railway was taken some 20 miles to the westward of where these settlers are situated, and they are in just as bad a position as before the building of the line. Even those nearer to the new railway have a long stretch of lake country to cross, over which carting is at times almost impossible. Eventually, after a deal of agitation, the line was carried through from Kondinin to Narembeen; so that really there are two railway lines now supposed to be serving the district. In order to get their products to Perth and their goods from Perth the settlers have to pay an additional 100 miles of railway freight; and, as regards the goldfields market for chaff, the circuitous route means an additional 170 miles of haulage.

Hon. P. Collier: Are the hardships of these people worse than the hardships of the Esperance settlers?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Presumably the leader of the Opposition believes in the greatest good for the greatest number. Here we have one of the best wheat-growing districts in the State, and a thickly populated district, labouring under heavy disabilities.

Hon. P. Collier: But surely settlers who have no railway at all labour under a greater grievance.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Undoubtedly. I have to-day received a telegram reading—

The following resolution was to-day unanimously carried by a large meeting of the Emu Hill settlers: "That your Gov-

ernment be asked to continue the railway from Narembeen to give settlers railway facilities, leaving to your Government the question of route."

Mr. Lambert: Now will you read a wire from the Esperance settlers?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The hon. member can do that. The Emu Hill settlers in the first instance had to cart from Doodlakine, which was the nearest town, over a distance of 68 miles. When the railway was carried through from Greenhills to Bruce Rock, they thought things were improving for them. They then saw within reasonable distance a line which had been promised to them from the very beginning of the settlement of their area. But they were again disappointed. The railway has been taken to Narembeen. To-day the Emu Hill settlers certainly have a railway, but it is subject to the doubtful privilege of paying 100 miles' extra freight in one direction and nearly 170 miles' extra freight in another.

Mr. Foley: What was the reason for the shifting of the townsites?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I cannot say, any more than I can give the reason for the conflicting reports of the select committees, one committee appointed by the Upper House and the other by this Chamber. I do not think I need say much more.

Hon. P. Collier: You have made out no case at all.

Hon. T. Walker: None whatever.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It suits hon. members opposite to say that. They look at the matter only from their point of view.

Mr. Johnston: Would the route to Merredin suit the hon. member?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes, either to Bruce Rock or to Merredin. It is not a question of route, but a question of getting those settlers connected with the railway system to the north. The settlers have expressed themselves as indifferent in regard to the question of route.

Hon. T. Walker: Who signed the telegram?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Mr. W. Cairns, the secretary of the local railway league. The only reason why Bruce Rock is suggested is that this route will involve but a short length of construction, in the absence of enough rails to carry the line through to Merredin.

Mr. Foley: What argument have you put up for building this line before completing the Esperance railway?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: There is hardly a soul in the Esperance district to-day.

Hon. T. Walker: Many of the settlers have been driven away by what is really persecution, and you want to drive the rest of them away.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It is not a matter of persecution, but of what is best for the State as a whole. On the one hand there is a large number of settlers, whilst on the other hand there are practically no settlers to use the railway when built.

Hon. P. Collier: There never will be many settlers in the Esperance district until we give them the railway.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No one is more ready to help those Esperance people than I am. But is it a business proposition for the State at present to build the Esperance railway while we have all these settlers at Emu Hill, Wadderin, South Kuminin, North Kuminin and Kondinin awaiting proper direct railway facilities, with freight available? In the one case we are asked to build a line where there is practically no settlement, in the other case we are asked to build a very short length of line to serve a great deal of settlement.

Mr. Lambert: Do you realise that the building of the Esperance railway will facilitate the business of 30,000 people to the extent of saving them 200 miles of railway freight?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do.

Mr. Lambert: Then you ought to sit down.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I will not sit down. I will stand up to prevent the settlers whom I have mentioned from being heavily penalised by unnecessary railway freights.

Mr. Lambert: The Esperance people have been penalised for 30 years.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Coolgardie must keep order.

Mr. Lambert: But we have a right to correct the hon. member if he is wrong.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Coolgardie has no right to interject. I have already allowed too much interjection.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am rather pleased at the hon. member's interjections, because they bring out certain facts which help my case.

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

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Before tea I was discussing the Narembeen siding. I will now give a few facts and figures regarding it. The mileage from Perth to Narembeen, via Narrogin, is 232 miles, and via Bruce Rock 190 miles. The sidings affected are Kondinin, South Kuminin, East Kuminin, Central, Emu Hill, North Kuminin, Wadderin and Graball. This is a great district, and it has to pay from 70 to 90 miles extra freight on every bag of wheat, every ton of chaff and every head of cattle. In addition there is a heavy tonnage of super, machinery, building materials and general merchandise from the metropolis representing from 80 to 100 miles additional freight. The additional mileage is practically wasted—an economic waste. I approached the Railway Department when the member for Yilgarn was Minister and asked for the figures in regard to the tonnage of wheat and general stores carried over that railway. The hon. member furnished me with the figures for the quiet six months of the year, June to October, when the big tonnage of wheat was not being shipped. In respect of those sidings during that period 4,255 tons of freight were carried over the line. Those figures deal only with wheat and chaff, and do not take into consideration cattle, sheep, pigs, and other stock. That tonnage runs into a considerable sum of money. I am sure the Treasurer will sympathise with me, par-

ticularly when I refer to the Industries Assistance Board, which a little time ago complained that they had to find half a million of money to keep their settlers going. That department has to pay this waste of freight on all that tonnage. One department pays it to another, practically robbing Peter to pay Paul. We talk a lot about economy, and I maintain that, in view of the fact that the State cannot afford to waste any of its capital, this question should be taken into consideration, remembering that the Government have to finance those farmers, and remembering also the infernal city drift which we ought to be attempting to stop. The resolution which I propose should be waived, is a foolish one. I voted against it because, while sympathising with the Esperance railway project, I think it unwise, at a time like this, to say that we shall build no other railway until we get the 120 miles of rails for the Esperance railway.

Hon. T. Walker: You are misrepresenting now.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Well, it is of no use building the line for 60 miles without finishing it. The few miles of rails required for this agricultural line might easily be found. Last season 63,000 bags of wheat went from this district, extra freightage having to be paid on the whole of it. Moreover, 15,000 bags of wheat had to be carted in from the northern area, a cartage which might have been saved. Also there were 1,500 tons from Koolberin siding, which had to pay 170 miles of extra freight to get to the goldfields. The reply the Minister for Railways gave me in regard to the impossibility of getting rails might very well be qualified. When I visited Newcastle they were busily engaged in providing structural steel required for shipbuilding, and for the time being orders for rails were put on one side. But the great urgency in regard to shipbuilding has now passed, and consequently there should be an opportunity for getting rails from Newcastle, if not from the Old Country. If the resolution is waived to enable this small length of railway to be built, it will be best for the State as a whole. Are we to hang up this small length of railway until we can get rails for the Esperance line, when there is such extreme difficulty in getting rails at all?

Hon. T. Walker: You said just now that the difficulty had passed.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: To an extent it has. I wish to see Esperance get its railway, but at the same time I contend that, in the interests of the State, this small length of railway should be built, the want of which is entailing such hardships on the people already in the district, whereas Esperance has not the people.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.40]: I move an amendment—

That all words after "be," in line 4, be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"reconsidered, and that all autho-

rised railways should, in the opinion of the House, be constructed in the order authorised by Parliament."

I should have the support of the member for Kanowna in this. While I congratulate the member for York on his laudable desire to see his district served by the proposed railway, it must be remembered that the proposed railway has not yet been before the House, while there is or should be in my district one which was authorised on the 18th February, 1915. I quite admit that this is opening up a big subject, in view of the number of railways that have been authorised. There are in my district settlers who, 14 years ago, were definitely promised railway communication, and who, 30 miles from the head of the existing railway, are still awaiting that communication which was promised by the Labour Government.

Hon. P. Collier: We made good progress in building railways.

Mr. THOMSON: You did, and if the then Minister for Works (Hon. W. C. Angwin) had been able to carry out his promise, there would have been no necessity for my amendment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That railway would have been built now had we remained in office.

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member introduced the Bill in 1915. It had been passed by this House during the term of my predecessor, but was thrown out in the Upper House. The Lefroy Government, which included the present Minister for Works, were not quite sincere when in 1918 they supported the resolution regarding the Esperance railway at the instance of the member for Kanowna. It was only a pious resolution. The Government could have built any other railway—

Hon. P. Collier: What, treat it as a scrap of paper! Are you advocating that?

Mr. THOMSON: If the leader of the Opposition is in favour of the construction of railways in the order in which they were authorised—

Hon. P. Collier: I am in favour of the sanctity of pledges.

Mr. THOMSON: When it suits you.

Hon. P. Collier: Always.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The time for the discussion of motions has expired.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

Mr. THOMSON: I feel confident the amendment will have the support of the leader of the Opposition. I would direct his attention to the remarks he made according to "Hansard"—

He dissented entirely from the principle of constructing railways in the order of their passage through the House.

Therefore, I take it he is not altogether bound to observe the order for constructing the Esperance railway. We know the Government constructed an extension from Konidin to Emu Hill and, despite the very great

shortage of rails, rails have been procured for the construction—I understand by the Railway Department—of a line from Lake Clifton to the South-West Railway.

The Premier: That is very important.

Mr. THOMSON: The Government are not altogether sincere when they say rails cannot be procured.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are they using 60lb. rails?

Mr. THOMSON: I do not know.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A while ago the department said they had only 60lb. rails in stock.

Mr. THOMSON: I have no objection to the Lake Clifton line.

Hon. P. Collier: It is being constructed by private enterprise.

Mr. THOMSON: That might be so.

The Minister for Works: The Government have not supplied one dog-spike or one penny of money for that line.

Mr. THOMSON: But the Minister is constructing the line.

The Minister for Works: No, the company are constructing it.

Mr. Munsie: Then the Minister is managing it.

The Minister for Works: We are not.

Mr. THOMSON: It is being constructed, and the Minister's officers are supervising it. I repeat that the motion carried at the instance of the member for Kanowna, that the Esperance railway should be first constructed, is only a pious resolution.

Hon. T. Walker: It was the opinion of this Chamber.

Hon. P. Collier: A deliberate vote of this House a pious resolution!

Mr. THOMSON: The leader of the Opposition knows this House has no control over the expenditure of public money.

Hon. P. Collier: We have full control.

Mr. THOMSON: This House cannot direct how public money shall be expended.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, we can turn the Government out if we are not satisfied.

Mr. THOMSON: Probably the hon. member would like to do so. "May" states—

Resolutions of this nature are permissible because, having no operative effect, no grant is made or burthen imposed by their adoption.

Hon. P. Collier: Excepting our pledged word according to our vote.

Hon. T. Walker: Do not forget we have an Act of Parliament authorising its construction.

Hon. P. Collier: And a vote of Parliament that it shall be constructed next. What more do you want?

Mr. THOMSON: I want the Katanning-Nyabing extension.

Mr. Smith: Would not the best way be to start all the railways at once?

Mr. THOMSON: If the Treasurer had the funds and material, no doubt he would be willing to start them to-morrow. I want the House to reconsider the position, and I trust my amendment will be carried. Circumstances may arise in which the Government may pro-

cure 20 miles of rails. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) is requesting the construction of a railway, approximately 19 miles long, which has never been considered by the House. The railway I am advocating is of 21½ miles, and has been authorised by Parliament. If the Government found they had 20 miles of rails, why not construct this line? The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) when Minister for Works stated clearly that this line would be the next constructed after the Lake Grace railway. The Lake Grace line has been completed. He promised that the rails for this line would be taken from the Great Southern railway. Unfortunately those rails were required on the goldfields. Settlers were induced to go into the Pingrup area, and they are now being forced to leave their holdings because they cannot profitably cart their produce over 30 miles of bad roads. Surely these settlers are entitled to as much consideration as those referred to by the member for York. I have no desire to stop the construction of the Esperance railway.

Hon. P. Collier: The trouble is the Government have no desire to start it.

Mr. THOMSON: The Government are looking for land and the Commission, after inspecting the Esperance district, reported in favour of the railway, so members need have no fear that it will not be constructed. However, it is not fair to other portions of the State that the Government should take advantage of their inability to complete the Esperance line.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why not? That was the first in order.

Mr. THOMSON: If 20 miles of rails are available and there are insufficient to go on with the Esperance line, would not it be sound policy to complete a railway elsewhere with the material on hand, instead of carrying on the Esperance line another 20 miles and stopping again?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You would soon want your 20 miles extended.

Mr. Foley: Are you voting against the motion of the member for York?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, and I hope the amendment will be carried.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [7.56]: I regret having to tear up this scrap of paper regarding the Esperance railway, but the alternative is to support the amendment, inasmuch as the carrying of the motion submitted by the member for York would mean the indefinite postponement of a railway in which I am very much interested—the Busselton-Margaret River railway. This railway has also been promised and passed by Parliament, but, whereas the railway which the member for Katanning advocates is to serve settlers who have been waiting twelve years, the railway I advocate is to serve one of the oldest settlements in Western Australia.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Seventy years.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes. The people there cannot do without a railway. The district has been kept back for want of such con-

munication. Another point is that the Government purchased a railway from Millar's company, and there are several miles of track lying useless which could be connected with Busselton and the main line and made remunerative. Consideration should be given to the Busselton-Margaret River railway before constructing such lines as that suggested by the member for York.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fre-mantle) [7.57]: I do not know the object of the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) in moving the amendment. Parliament has decided that the next railway to be constructed is the Esperance line. When the Bill was before the Legislative Council an amendment was moved as follows—

The construction of this line shall not be commenced or proceeded with until the completion of the following authorised railways:—Wyalcatchem - Mt. Marshall, Wagin-Bowelling, Bolgart extension, and Kukerin-Lake Grace.

All those railways have been completed, and the Esperance line is the next on the list. That amendment was withdrawn because it was definitely and distinctly stated those lines would be first constructed and the Esperance railway would be the next. It is true I promised the hon. member that the Nyabing extension would be the next railway, because the Esperance line was then under construction. A portion of the work in connection with the Esperance railway has been carried out. It was stopped, not because there were no rails, or because at the time there was no money but it was stopped for the express purpose of trying to condemn those who were administering the affairs of the State at the time when the Bill was passed, and who were accused of misleading Parliament. All that is implied by the motion it is now proposed to rescind is that the Esperance line shall be recognised as the first railway to be constructed. There is no doubt that at a later period it was impossible to get rails. We are told by the member for Katanning that the rails were taken from there to the goldfields and that those who were responsible for that action had no right to do it.

Mr. Thomson: I did not say they had no right to take them there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Those were the words the hon. member used. From an economical point of view the Railway Department decided that it would be preferable to build the Wagin-Bowelling line with the heavier rails. The department said that it would be cheaper to work the line with those rails owing to the class of engine which would be used to run over them. There were no 60-lb. rails available and it paid the department to take up some of the lines on the Northern goldfields where 60lb. rails had been laid and replace them with lighter rails the heavier ones being used on the Wagin-Bowelling line. After that period the hon. member assisted to turn us out and to put in another Government who used the balance

of light rails in the construction of another line. But there was some justification even for that. It is rather difficult sometimes to find justification for anything that was done by a previous Government. In this case, however, it did exist. No one anticipated that the war was going to last so long; no one thought that it would be so difficult to get money or rails and it was to suit the farmers at Emu Hill that the 20 odd miles of railway were built there to enable the stacks of wheat which were in that district to be removed. The loss of that wheat would have meant a sum of money which would have been more than the amount involved in the construction of the line.

The Minister for Works: It saved £10,000.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was in the interests of the Government to construct that railway to remove the wheat.

Mr. Thomson: It saved £10,000 but it ruined a lot of settlers in my district because they were not given the facilities which were promised.

Mr. Harrison: That might apply to a lot of districts.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Labour Government who always had the farmers' interests at heart more so than any other Government, agreed to take wheat from those farmers who had no means of conveying it to the market. They advanced money on the wheat and the wheat was stacked. If it had not been shifted, the State would have suffered a loss. Therefore, the Government in power at the time were justified in constructing the 20 miles of railway referred to. The Royal Commission approved of the construction of the Esperance line and as the need for its construction was made so apparent, it is our duty as soon as the opportunity presents itself to carry the pledge into effect.

Mr. Thomson: That is all I want done for my people.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then there is no need for the hon. member's amendment. It does not make any difference to me whether it is the Esperance or the Pingrup railway, but as I pledged myself at the time by my vote, I say I would be doing wrong if I went back on it now.

Mr. Thomson: Do you not think, if the Government can get 20 miles of rails, they should construct the railway I am advocating?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I too want a railway in my district and I want a bridge also. I commend the member for York for the electioneering speech he made to-night.

Hon. P. Collier: Not an unusual thing for him.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have been through the district referred to by the hon. member and I might say that before the construction of the line from Emu Hill to Kondinin I was in favour of the construction of a light line in the direction suggested. The officers of the department, however, definitely laid it down that Bruce Rock was not the place where the line should junction.

The Minister for Works: When did they lay that down?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I read this report to the House on the 16th December, 1914—it is by Mr. Babington, the engineer who surveyed the line—

Although this line is the shortest to construct of the various proposals, and also would serve the Arrowsmith, Emu Hill, and Wadderin districts, I cannot recommend its consideration, because a large area of country to the east and north already thrown open for selection would not be benefited, and if this proposed extension to Bruce Rock were adopted, it would make it difficult at some future date to accommodate this unserved area with railway facilities in a favourable manner from a railway financial point of view.

The Minister for Works: I do not think he would give you such a report to-day.

Hon. P. Collier: Have you influenced him since?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If ever I sent an officer to report on such a matter, I always accepted his opinion. I noticed to-day in the "West Australian" a condemnation of a report by the Engineer-in-Chief.

The Minister for Works: I have not done with it yet.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because in politics it is declared that certain action should be taken, and it is not taken, the engineer is condemned. All the time I was Minister for Works I never interfered with an officer; I asked him to express his opinion and accepted that opinion. When the Government are in a position to construct railways, it will be cheaper to carry out the proposals in the order Parliament has already decreed. The member for Katanning in urging the construction of a few miles for a small centre, is doing wrong to others who are not so favourably situated. There are those who are much further away from railway communication than the settlers at Emu Hill. It is true that at the present time they have to rail their produce a little further than they would do if the suggested line were built, but there are other districts, the settlers in which cannot rail their produce at all. The hon. member spoke about the people at Pingrup. They have to cart their produce 40 miles. There are others who have to farm a considerable distance from a railway, while the people at Esperance have no railway at all. It is almost heart-breaking to see the work that has been done in that district and to see what the settlers there have expended to develop that part of the State without any practical result, on account of the absence of railway facilities.

Mr. Thomson: That is the pity of it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A certain and definite promise was made to those people and by a side issue and an unjustifiable action, the Government did not fulfil the promise. It is our duty now to carry it out as soon as possible. I hope Parliament will let the position stand as it is.

Mr. Thomson: Support my amendment; you say it makes no difference.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is no need for it. I am even doubtful whether the member for York would support it. The people in the Esperance district have been very patient, and the treatment it is now proposed to mete out to them is not fair. I trust the Government will not countenance the proposed action, but let the motion stand as it was originally passed. The Minister for Works, who has never broken his word so far as I know, will lend his assistance to that end. Without being egotistical I can say that all who have occupied the portfolio the hon. member holds, have been honest men. The Minister has declared that it is his intention to proceed with the work as soon as he can get rails and as soon as the Treasury will give him the money.

The Premier: There is a reservation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He cannot do it without money from the Treasurer, and if we do not get the money from him we will move him out. Parliament has adopted the right method in its action in this respect. The people now in the Esperance district should not be fooled any longer. If it is not the intention of Parliament to construct this railway let us buy the people out of the district. I am afraid that a State which has to pay £6 odd per centum for its loans cannot afford to build railways at all.

Mr. Thomson: The country cannot be developed without railways.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The last loan from the Federal Government cost us £6 2s. per centum, and we are lending money at 5½ per cent. Is that being economical?

Hon. P. Collier: I suppose it brings business to the State.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is no wonder the Chairman of the Perth Chamber of Commerce says he does not believe in the Government trading. I trust the motion and the amendment will be defeated.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [8.17]: Unfortunately I cannot at the present time advocate the construction of a railway for my own electorate, and I am, therefore, unbiassed in this matter. I intend to vote against the motion and the amendment, but I would be in favour of a motion reading, "That the resolution passed by the House, to the effect that the first railway to be constructed shall be the Esperance northward railway, be rescinded." The motion giving priority to this line was carried, I believe, owing to the eloquence of the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker). I voted against that motion on the ground that at that time neither the House nor the Government could say that the country was in a position to build any railways, and that by the time the Government could do so some other district, not then perhaps heard of, might demand and deserve a railway more than any other part of the State for which a railway had been authorised. The time was not propitious for any promise of this

kind to be made, and that condition of affairs still holds good. I do not think the Government should at present construct any new railway. When they are in a position to do so, they should decide and advise the House as to what railway they consider to be most necessary. In the meantime we have no right to embarrass the Government with any promise that has been made in the past. I should be glad to support any motion that follows on the lines I have indicated.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [8.20]: I should like to move an amendment on the amendment in the following terms:—

That all the words after "rescinded" be struck out.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will have to wait until the amendment, now before the House, is disposed of, but he is in order in indicating a further amendment.

Mr. HARRISON: My reason for desiring to move this amendment is that neither the motion nor the present amendment would be in the best interests of the State. We know that the motion moved some time ago by the member for Kanowna, and passed by this House, has very largely tied the hands of the Minister for Works. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) has just said that when that motion was carried we did not know what the future held for us, or how the State might subsequently best be served by any new railways that might be constructed. In my opinion we cannot serve to advantage the agricultural lands around Esperance by a railway extending north from Esperance. If the extension was from Norseman towards the south, there would be something in such a railway from this point of view. I would rather favour the construction of a railway southward from Norseman to serve this area of the State than I would support the building of a railway from the other end. Another point is that if this railway can be constructed more cheaply from the Norseman than from the Esperance end, it is more in the interests of the country that this should be done from Norseman. Material and rails can be moved by locomotive power on construction work direct from this end.

Hon. P. Collier: The Royal Commission recommended that this should be altered.

Mr. HARRISON: We are going the wrong way about it, and by remedying this position we can better serve the interests of the farmers in this area. What is the use of urging the construction of this railway until there is an opportunity of getting it right through to Esperance? The object of this line is to enable the people of the goldfields to reach the coast at the cheapest possible cost. There are other parts of the State in need of railways. Why should this Esperance northward railway be the means of blocking the construction of lines that are required in other districts? Our desire should be to get the best results possible from any capital expenditure the State may incur.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What other district requires a railway more urgently than the Esperance district?

Mr. HARRISON: There may be many districts.

Hon. T. Walker: There may be!

Mr. HARRISON: I could name one or two districts where the traffic and the population are very much greater than in the case of the Esperance district.

Hon. P. Collier: What has that to do with it?

Hon. T. Walker: Perth to Fremantle!

Mr. HARRISON: I say that the construction of this line starting at Esperance does not serve the interests of the State in the best way.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [8.24]: If there be any sincerity in the professions of the members of the Country party, they must go in for absolute decentralisation, and unselfishness in the administration of the affairs of the State. The speech we have just heard from the leader of the Country party is the direct antithesis to the spoken policy of that party.

Mr. Harrison: In what way?

Hon. T. WALKER: He requires that his own particular district shall be served, a district which is nearer Perth where the population is thick.

Mr. Harrison: I did not mention any district.

Hon. T. WALKER: The hon. member was careful not to do so, but he did mention places where the population was great and the traffic was great. The object of railway construction is to develop the country, and to take the population away from those places where the traffic is great to other places where it is necessary to create traffic. That is how America has been built up.

Mr. Harrison: Would there be any more traffic in the place of which you speak?

Hon. T. WALKER: I am not holding a conversation with this mighty leader of the Country party. It is the way all great nations have been organised in modern times. A railway is taken through a forest and over a desert in order that population may follow it. We cannot expect a population at Esperance, or in the district to be served by the railway, after the treatment which has been meted out to these people. From the days of the zenith of the late Lord Forrest's popularity, when he was Premier of this State, a railway for the Esperance district has been promised. People have been induced to take up land there, and to establish a small town at Esperance with the assurance of that statesman. Public money was spent there, and public buildings erected there on a scale commensurate with the great ideal of that time.

Hon. P. Collier: And a great deal of land was bought and sold there, too.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, and the very track the railway was to take was shown on maps to the citizens of the State.

Hon. P. Collier: And even the post office.



Mr. Harrison: Did he go to Norseman?

Hon. T. WALKER: I imagine sometimes, when I listen to the demosthenic utterance of the leader of the Country party, that I am back in my school-boy days, listening to the little urchins of the third form trying to make their maiden speeches. I do not see any value in these interruptions. They are of no assistance to the House, to the hon. member himself, to me or to the public. The hon. member now says that if the line went from Norseman he would support it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If it was proposed to do that he would vote against it.

Mr. Harrison: You cannot prove that by any vote of mine.

Hon. T. WALKER: The schoolboy again! Before I was the representative for this particular part of the State, at the time when the electorate of Kanowna did not embrace the Esperance district, and when I went no further in that direction than the immediate purlieus of Coolgardie, I advocated the construction of this line from Esperance to Norseman. When the line constructed to Norseman was advocated and was passed by this Chamber, I advocated that it should go on further, to Esperance. I had no material or political interest to serve by that. I was speaking for the good of the State. I had no dream that ever I should represent Esperance in this Chamber. As a mere matter of justice to the State, as a mere matter of development of the State, I advocated the line right through from Coolgardie to Esperance. And why was it not taken from Norseman on to Esperance? Because members on the other side of the House, whom the leader of the Country party now supports with his vote and interest, objected to that. They objected to joining on to Norseman. Why? Because ever since this railway was first mooted by resolution of this Chamber, there were those who feared that if Esperance got a railway joining with the goldfields, other districts of this State might not have the same chance of a monopoly of trade.

Mr. Harrison: Was that ever supported by a vote of mine?

Hon. T. WALKER: No, of course not. But I want the hon. member to bear in mind that he is supporting the crowd that did it, that he is sitting behind that crowd, and voting with that crowd on every occasion. That is why the line was changed. And how was it that the line went only 60 miles from Esperance northwards? Because the gentleman who is now Premier said he had no objection to a mere agricultural line, and other members supported him. They said that if it was to be a purely agricultural line they would vote for it. That was also said in the Legislative Council. The Government then in power took those gentlemen at their word and said, "We will build an agricultural line."

Mr. Harrison: It was your own diplomacy.

Hon. T. WALKER: I have said so. But every member knows that if the line was taken 60 miles northwards from Esperance, it must sooner or later link up with the other portions of the State railway system. We took the half loaf rather than have no bread. Now, here is the iniquity. The people who have settled in the Esperance district have suffered immensely by reason of failure after failure on the part of those in authority to keep their word, to be bound by the bonds of honour. They are suffering still. The Royal Commission said it was impossible to work that country profitably without a railway, and they recommended a railway because they considered the country could be worked profitably with a railway. What I object to is the use of every possible excuse to delay the construction of this railway, which has been promised ever since the days of Lord Forrest. People who are capable of any human feeling must realise that they are doing a wrong to the Esperance farmers that is cruel beyond the power of words to express—families starving, families with their hearts broken. No braver class of settlers have ever tried to open up a country than those in the Esperance district.

Mr. Harrison: How many of them are there?

Hon. T. WALKER: How wise this owl of the evening is! Is it not a wonder that there is one settler left in the Esperance district, in view of the treatment those people have had? Everything that can be done has been done to drive those people away, not only by depriving them of their railway, but by offering them something like bribes, inducements to go anywhere but stay at Esperance. Returned soldiers who left Esperance to fight for their country, when they have applied in the first instance for land to settle on in that part of the State, have been advised not to go there, have until recently been told that they would get no assistance in that part of the State, but that if they would go elsewhere they would be assisted. That has been part of the policy of some of the officers concerned in the administration of the lands of this State.

Mr. Harrison: Does not that apply to all districts without railway facilities?

Hon. T. WALKER: No. Especially has Esperance been singled out. Especially have intending settlers there been warned. And even to-night there has been uttered a species of warning, that it would be cheaper to pay the Esperance people to leave.

Mr. Harrison: Who said that?

Hon. T. WALKER: The leader of the Country party.

Mr. Harrison: No; it was the member for North-East Fremantle.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If the Government are not sincere as regards building the railway, they must take the settlers away.

Hon. T. WALKER: Undoubtedly. But, having by neglect reduced the settlement in the Esperance district, the Government make that reduction their excuse for further penalising the district. It is the most iniqui-

tous kind of conduct that can be conceived, and it has never been heard of in any other part of the world. Is Parliament totally destitute of honour? Have we now come to that stage when we publish ourselves either imbeciles incapable of knowing our own minds for two sessions together, or else deliberate liars and hypocrites? Within the life of the present Parliament we have declared that Esperance must have its railway in the order of precedence of authorisation by Act of Parliament; and now the leader of the Country party, the great and mighty leader of the Country party, says, "No matter what we have declared, no matter what Acts of Parliament or what resolutions we have passed, it is only a pious wish." Such is his conception of piety—treachery and falsehood. The position is that we have not only passed Acts of Parliament and resolutions, but have done part performance. We have started to fulfil the contract which the State made with the Esperance people.

Mr. Harrison: How did you do it?

Hon. T. WALKER: We have begun what was authorised by the solemnity and sanction of law.

Mr. Harrison: Begun by wheelbarrows, or how?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Avon must not interject.

Hon. T. WALKER: Have we no dunce's stool, or fool's cap, that we could utilise on occasions like this?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. T. WALKER: As I am reminded by the member for North-East Fremantle, this railway was started not only in obedience to pledges but in the order that Parliament had dictated—dictated not by a mere pious resolution but by a solemn Statute. It was in its proper order. The lines authorised before it were commenced, and some of them had been completed, others being still unfinished. But this line was in its exact and proper order. What stopped the line? Not want of money, as has already been pointed out by the member for North-East Fremantle. Not want of material. We had the material. Moreover, 60 miles of rails had been ordered in special contemplation of the completion of this work.

Mr. Harrison: When was the order delivered?

Hon. T. WALKER: That order was delivered whilst the Labour party were in office.

The Minister for Works: It is not delivered yet.

Hon. T. WALKER: The order was delivered, I say. Moreover, portion of the 60 miles of rails has arrived, but has been used for other purposes, has been taken away from Esperance. There have been works, on no gigantic scale, I will admit, but some works, undertaken since then. It was, therefore, an honourable duty to stick to the contract, which had not only been agreed to but partly performed. When it was stopped it was stopped for political rea-

sons—let us be under no mistake about it—to get a temporary political advantage, to try to win an election. Of all the froth that then flowed from the platform of the so-called National party this was the most frothy. They deliberately falsified to the people, saying that we had suppressed facts as to the danger of the construction of such a line; that, having on the files reports that indicated the presence of salt, rendering that country unfit for agricultural purposes, we had in spite of that, for political ends, begun that line of railway. That was the accusation against us. We did nothing of the kind, as is now known. The files were upon the Table; everything was made clear to any eye that liked to look. But then we were to be beaten at any cost; and in order to make it dramatic, in order to make a spectacular display, straightway this railway was stopped. A whole district was to be penalised to beat political opponents; in order that the Labour party then in office might be overthrown, a whole district was to be rendered sterile and useless. That is the course that was taken. Events came quickly. A Royal Commission was appointed, and the Commission gave the lie to those who had stopped the line, absolutely proved that they had no foundations for their statements and representations, and recommended, not only the country, but the construction of the line. Then came elections quickly afterwards. Members of that Ministry were seeking election at Kalgoorlie. The promise was given that that line should be recommenced as soon as the Commission reported. Several Ministers, the late Premier, the Minister for Works, and the late Attorney General, promised that the line should be recommenced when the Commission reported. The Commission was long in reporting, but when it did report it upheld the construction of the line. And, repeatedly, from his place in the House, the present Minister for Works, in answer to me, said he was ready to go on with the line when the Commission should report. But the months have passed and we are still waiting. We passed in 1918 a resolution as follows:—

That in the opinion of this House the first railway to be constructed in pursuance of the programme of railway construction authorised by Parliament shall be the Esperance-Northwards line.

We passed that resolution by 27 votes to 15. To-night we are asked, first of all, to waive the resolution—as if it were of no value whatever, as if the House did not know its own mind from one day to another, as if it had voted irresponsibly and callously on the spur of the moment to suit the mere whim of the hour. We are to swap policies and promises just as fast as we swap Premiers. We are first asked to waive it, and then we are asked to rescind it. What is the purpose of rescinding? The resolution is that the line should be built in accordance with the programme of railway construction authorised by Parliament.

Mr. Thomson: Suppose they can get only 21 miles of rails.

Hon. T. WALKER: Suppose we build all the 21 miles and the nine miles and the ten miles in the country—must Esperance wait till everybody else is served? It is the longest on the list. Before the district mentioned by the member for Katanning was settled at all, Esperance had been promised this line. People settled there even at that time are still patiently awaiting the line.

Mr. Thomson: It is not my fault.

Hon. T. WALKER: No, but look at hon. members' selfishness now! It does not matter so long as they get their nine miles, or their ten miles, or their 20 miles, Esperance can go hang. This is the high altitude taken by politicians in the twentieth century. This is the National policy. "Give me my 20 miles, and any time afterwards you can have yours. Give me my nine miles and in the sweet by-and-by you can have yours." In that way is the country being run by the narrow, pump-handled politicians of the Country party. Not all of them, but some of them. All for their little parish, all for their little area. I say their areas ought to be looked after, and get their due development and their railway lines. In everything that has facilitated their settlement they have had my help to the utmost.

Mr. Thomson: Well, I voted for your railway.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am not blaming the hon. member. He has admitted that it should be constructed. I am merely pointing out to him that his amendment goes no farther than my resolution.

Mr. Thomson: If it does not, then support my amendment.

Hon. T. WALKER: If your amendment goes no farther than the resolution of the House, why should the House stultify itself and make itself look ridiculous by rescinding the resolution and then re-enacting the same thing in an addendum? We are not children. We have common sense enough to read the meaning of words. My resolution is the amendment. The hon. member would rescind what he wants in order to again assert it, which is a foolish, stupid way of going about things. Without his amendment my resolution gives the hon. member all that he wants. If his railway is next in order to the Esperance line as authorised by Parliament, he comes into his own. But must Esperance be set aside to put him into his own? Must not we have some spirit of fair play, of common justice in the administration of affairs? The hon. member gets all he wants under the resolution.

Mr. Thomson: No.

Hon. T. WALKER: If he does not, then of course he seeks to gain an advantage upon Esperance. If his line is authorised by Act of Parliament, it gets its order under my resolution. If the lines were not authorised in that order, if Esperance, according to that order, does not come first in the list,

then that resolution is of no value. But it does come first, and now to gain an advantage for those in their own constituency, they will ignore the advantage the law has given to Esperance, and try to annul the resolution and even the law passed by both Houses and assented to by the representative of His Majesty in this State. Laws are nothing to them. The declaration of this Assembly is nothing to them. Their own little vote-seeking popularity is all they can see. It fills them with a gas that inflates and uplifts their balloon-like brains into the airy nothing of confusion. I want the House to preserve the traditions of a British Parliament. We have seen the goriest, the most terrific war the world has ever known. For adherence to a pledge men have crossed oceans, themselves vermillioned with blood, in order that they might vindicate the solemnity of a pledge. How little in this Assembly we appreciate that noble, that magnanimous, that glorious spirit, is seen by the conduct of men in this House to-night. This scrap of paper—tear it up! Pious resolution, nothing more. Pass resolutions and rescind them, just as the mood comes, as changeable as the weather. If we wish to win the respect of the community, if we desire the support and the confidence of the citizens, we must show that we can be trusted, that we are deserving of confidence. And we can only do that by adhering to what, after consideration, we have asserted right. We are adhering to this. Why, then, should we seek to rescind it without anything having happened in the interval? Why should we show how shallow we are, how unstable, how unreliable, how untrustworthy, how dishonourable we are. Parliament is to win the future, to reconstruct the land, to build up the higher citizen of the State. And we propose to do it on this low, immoral foundation. It is immoral, it is indecent, it is disgraceful, it is dishonourable. It would be all these to a public-house club, to be so vacillating, so unstable, as the rescinding of this resolution to-night would show us to be, especially when the rescinding of it and the addition practically place us back in the position in which we were. The amendment does nothing more than assert the construction of lines as authorised by Act of Parliament. We show our futility and absolute incapacity to understand common plain English, our utter unfitness to be members of a great assembly and representatives of a great people by trifling with language in the manner suggested by the member for Katanning. I trust the House will adhere to what is right and just, that is to say the resolution it has passed, not only for the sake of the honour of this House, but for the principle represented by the Country party—decentralisation. In that great district, we have an area of land that might welcome the toilers who seek to escape from the pressure of population in the Motherland. We could build towns and cities by the industries that could be created from the produce of the soil of that great district, the largest area of uniform country

that has been investigated in Australia, fertile as the mallee lands of South Australia and Victoria and much larger in area, only awaiting the industry of man and the facilities for reaching market. To turn that country with its immense wealth into practically a desert is not to be national but to be anti-national. It is to crush, to cripple and help to ruin the nation of which we are part. It is cruel to the whole of the people, for the wealth created there would become not the wealth of selfish people in Esperance, but part of the wealth of the whole State that would help to build up a happy, contented people spread over that great area and help us to fill up our wastes as has been so often urged. The cry is, "Fill your waste spaces," and yet we are asked deliberately to keep this fertile portion of Western Australia nothing but a waste, to drive its inhabitants from it and to frighten others from going thither and, in every sense of the word, to mark it out as a spot, deserted, silent and forgotten. Turn the other way and it must create wealth; the produce must create our commerce, the commerce will create shipping and the shipping a happy interchange of thought and wealth throughout the State. It is for the good of Western Australia I plead for this land; it is for the good of every citizen I am advocating the cause of the people of Esperance; and especially for the good of this House and the honour of Parliament, I ask members to hesitate before they tear up its treaties like a scrap of paper.

On motion by Mr. Smith debate adjourned.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

#### MOTION—BASE METAL INDUSTRY.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [9.5]; I move—

That in the opinion of this House, in order to encourage production and revive the base metal industry in Western Australia, it is necessary that the embargo placed by the Federal Government upon the export overseas of ores or concentrates be removed, or if the policy of refining same within the Commonwealth be maintained, that until such time as efficient treatment provision is made within this State it is necessary to provide a bonus to local producers, owing to the additional cost entailed by shipment for treatment to the Eastern States.

Feeling that I shall have the unanimous support of members on this motion, I desire, when it is passed, to add that the motion be brought by the Government under the notice of the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. It is scarcely necessary to dwell upon the facts that the lead-mining industry of this State has been absolutely closed down, first through the suspension of operations by the Fremantle trading company which necessitated the closing of the mines at Northampton, and then owing to the Federal embargo that shipments overseas must cease, and

ore or concentrates must be forwarded to either of the two smelting works in the Eastern States for treatment and refinement. When refined, that ore had again to pass through the port whence it had come, on its way to the markets of the world. When I mentioned this subject on the Address-in-reply, I was pleased to hear an interjection by the leader of the Opposition that he thought the State Government would be justified in absolutely defying the Federal restrictions in this respect. The lead-mining industry has given employment to 500 or 600 men in the Northampton district, and the sudden closing down has caused grave distress throughout my electorate—distress which has affected the whole State. The prospectors in the Northampton mineral district show a better record of production than those engaged in copper production, encouraged and developed by Government assistance, in the Ravensthorpe district.

Mr. Hudson: Why not speak of base metals generally?

Mr. MALEY: I am speaking from the point of view of my electorate. The Federal embargo and the operations of the war profits tax have prejudicially affected the development of the industry. The Surprise mine, owned by Green Bros., which has produced ore to the value of £70,000 or £80,000 by developmental work alone, has returned barely £5,000 to the owners, notwithstanding the magnitude of their operations. They have been crushed by the war profits tax and now, owing to the restrictions on export overseas and the lack and cost of shipping to the Eastern States, their enterprise has been restricted, and they have had no chance to build up any reserves whatever. Short as shipping has been during the last 12 months, I am given to understand that brokers would have been prepared to advance against the ore awaiting shipment at Geraldton, which would have enabled the mine to keep going in a partial manner. Regarding the closing down of the industry, the Minister should tell the House just what the agreement was between the Fremantle Trading Company and the Government as to the smelting works at Fremantle. If the agreement had been carried out, would it have been possible to treat the ore raised by prospectors? The Government have great interests at stake in connection with the lead mining industry, as well as in regard to the copper mining at Ravensthorpe, owing to the amount of assistance furnished, not only to the company, but to individual prospectors under the mining developmental vote. Greater endeavours should have been made to keep the industry going if only in a partial way.

Mr. Duff: By spending some of the unexpended £50,000.

Mr. MALEY: Yes, and also by pooling supplies during the period of the shipping difficulty and granting assistance somewhat similar to that given to the producers of perishable goods. This would have been in keep-

ing with their slogan, "Produce, produce, produce."

Hon. P. Collier: It was started before the "Produce" Government came into office.

Mr. MALEY: That is so.

Hon. P. Collier: And stopped when they came in.

Mr. MALEY: Before the Prime Minister left for England about 18 months ago, it was the policy of the Federal Government that base metals should be refined in the Commonwealth. Events have moved rapidly since then, and it is now fitting to inquire whether this policy is practical in application. I am of the opinion that the policy of to-day is to allow raw materials to be supplied to Germany to keep her industries going in order to enable her to meet her obligations.

Mr. Lambert: You had better say that in a whisper otherwise they will call you a Bolshevik.

Hon. P. Collier: The treaty terms provide for that.

Mr. MALEY: Naturally they must do, but I do not wish to be drawn off my argument by irresponsible interjections such as that of the member for Coolgardie. I wish to point out that if this policy is maintained it will place the local producer of base metals at a great disadvantage as compared with the producer in the Eastern States.

Hon. P. Collier: It has placed him out of action.

Mr. MALEY: Absolutely. If we have to make such sacrifices something in the way of a bonus should be given to overcome the difficulties we have to contend against, such as the freight, and treatment at works in the Eastern States. I am sorry the member for Yilgarn should have thought that I was becoming parochial; I have no desire to create such an impression in the mind of any hon. member. I am convinced that the motion I have submitted is of such importance to the State that it will receive the unanimous support of members. There is no doubt that the time is opportune, now that the Prime Minister has returned and is gathering up the threads of departmental work once more—

Mr. O'Loughlen: Preparing for a big offensive.

Hon. P. Collier: Do you intend that the bonus shall be paid by the Commonwealth or the State?

Mr. MALEY: By the Commonwealth.

Hon. P. Collier: The motion does not say so.

The Minister for Mines: It could not be paid by the State.

Mr. Lambert: It will be acceptable to the Government.

Mr. MALEY: Convinced as I am that the motion will receive the support of hon. members, I submit it with every confidence.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [9.20]: As the hon. member who moved the motion stated, it is hardly necessary to stress the question, as practically every member is in favour of it. A deputation was introduced to the acting Prime Minister the other day

and a reply was given that he would be prepared to favourably consider the request which was made and to recommend the Federal Government to take into consideration the circumstances of Western Australia so far as the base metal industry was concerned, and to evolve a scheme by which the industry could again be set in motion. I have no quarrel with the policy of the Federal Government that base metals or raw products should be brought to a finished state before being exported from Australia. But so far as the particular industry in Western Australia is concerned, it has not had sufficient time to get properly on its feet and compete with the old-established lead mines of the other States. Consequently we in Western Australia have not been able to produce the ore cheaply enough to stand the unwarrantably high charges which accrue through the ore having to be sent from Western Australia to the other side of Australia for treatment.

Mr. Hudson: That is the real cause of complaint.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Certainly. But I do not think there is any possible way of getting out of these charges because freights are so high, and when we send ores from Western Australia to the Eastern States to be treated, and then have them sent back again and past our own port to other parts of the world—the heaping up of all the consequent charges on the industry becomes such a handicap that the industry has no chance. So far as Western Australia is concerned, if reasonable time were given us to reach the stage arrived at by the mines in Eastern Australia, we might possibly be able to compete with our neighbours. If the State or the Commonwealth were to establish an up-to-date smelting plant in some part of the State, preferably in Geraldton, which is the centre of the big lead-mining districts in the North, we might be able to submit to the embargo. Replying to the deputation which waited on him the other day, the acting Prime Minister said—

The argument was that as the treatment works for base metals were in the East, Western Australia had been geographically handicapped. Since the armistice he had been discussing with the metallurgical adviser of the Government as to how far they could, with safety to the interests of the Empire, relieve the pressure on Western Australia. If he could, by his representations, give encouragement to the big primary industry they had been discussing, he would unfailingly make them.

If the motion is carried, it will assist the Minister to make up his mind in the direction we desire, and that is to afford some measure of relief so that the industry may once again be started, and the lead mining districts of Northampton, Murchison River, and Geraldine be once more placed on a workable basis. Even if the Fremantle smelting works were in operation it is doubtful, owing to the increase in the cost

of treatment and the obsolete plant there, whether the industry could be placed on a profitable footing. We find also that the agitation is not confined to one part of the State. Public meetings have been held at Geraldton, where the gathering was representative of every section of the community, at Whim Creek, at Onslow, at Ravensthorpe, and at Greenbushes, and at all those places they cried out against the embargo imposed by the Federal authorities. The matter is a very important one, and if the industry can be started once more we shall be able to find employment for at least 1,000 men in the space of 12 months. As I said at the opening of my remarks, it is not necessary to stress the motion. I am sure it has the sympathy of every member, while the Minister himself has indicated his support.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [9.25]: It is time that the State demanded to know from the Federal Government their attitude and policy regarding these restrictions. It appears to me that the Prime Minister for some time has been experimenting in connection with the placing of the embargo upon the base metals of Australia, and now that the war is over it is nearly time we had some pronouncement on the subject. I suppose this is like many of the other restrictions which have been imposed under the War Precautions Act, but it seems to me that the plain duty of the Minister for Mines is to immediately ascertain from the Prime Minister whether he is going to continue on this course for any length of time. Not only the lead mining industry, but the copper mining industry is being affected to an extent that should not be tolerated for one moment longer than is necessary.

Mr. Hudson: There was justification during the war, but there is none now.

Mr. LAMBERT: The other day a report was published in connection with this all important industry in the Northampton district. I understand that report was called for some 12 or 18 months ago. It dealt in a direct or indirect way with the fortunes or misfortunes of the Northampton district, and it was regrettable to find the conservative attitude adopted by the advisers of the Minister. The report dealt more with the commercial success of the smelter at Geraldton, and did not pay much regard to the lead-mining industry. If the Federal Government are going to interfere with what are peculiarly the functions of the State Government, we should make a demand upon them to provide facilities whereby the industries so interfered with may continue their operations, and market their products. It is undoubtedly the function of the Federal Government if they are going to interfere with our industries, to in some way provide facilities within the State, either by way of bonus or some recompense for the interference. I hope the Minister will review the position so far as it affects Northampton and other lead producing centres in the North, as well as the copper produc-

ing centres in the South. There is a big scope there for men sufficiently interested and energetic to build up some of the secondary industries of the State. In the Northampton district there is a galena suitable for the manufacture of pigments. The Minister, in his dual capacity, could, in this regard, show what a profitable outlook there was for the employment of capital. Some time ago white lead was sold at as low a price as £24 a ton and to-day, I believe, it is £65 a ton. In America, under the latest methods, people are converting the galena direct into white lead and utilising it in the more advanced portions of the world. Although we have a galena in Western Australia suitable for this purpose, not a pound of it is being turned to account because of the embargo placed upon the base metal industry by the Federal Government. This is a matter into which the Minister might well inquire. I hope he will not be swayed by the report which apparently was before him only recently, and that he will look upon the industry not only from the point of view of the amount of money to be made out of it, or from the little loss that may be sustained by it, but that he will have regard to the fact that, in the Northampton district, we have one of the largest lead-bearing areas in Australia, possibly equal to Broken Hill. I trust the Minister will make the strongest representations possible to the Federal Government, and indicate that it is not the intention of the citizens of this State to tolerate very much longer the embargo that has been placed upon our base metal industry. It should not be necessary for us to send our raw products to the Eastern States to be smelted there. It is the duty of the Federal Government to assist this State in the establishment of smelters here, so that we can turn many of the base metals of the State into commercial articles.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [9.38]: After the fighting speech of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert), I feel diffident about discussing this matter. The Government did not require either the motion or its unanimous support by members to do what they consider to be essential in the interests of our base metal industry. I have no objection to the hon. member taking the opportunity of showing that he also is interested in this question. His frequent visits to my office indicate that he has devoted particular attention to this subject, as has also the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willecock), who worried me a little when I was in Melbourne in connection with the matter.

Hon. P. Collier: The motion should strengthen the hands of the Government.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not object to the motion. In fact, it has my support. Hon. members must realise, however, that it will not help very much. The Federal Government are well acquainted with the condition of the industry, for this was

brought under their notice by those directly interested, the mine owners, backed up by the Government. I also assisted the deputation which waited upon the Federal Treasurer to place the matter before him. An interjection was made by the member for Claremont (Mr. Duff), about which I should like to say a word or two. He made reference to the necessity for a bonus. I have not the slightest intention of endeavouring to administer the affairs of the Mines Department on the basis of how much I can spend each year. If hon. members suggest that I have to spend a sum of, say, £50,000, I would reply that I had no intention of doing anything of the kind. We frequently hear the statement made as to how much was spent on this or that matter, no regard being paid to the actual results achieved. I desire, if possible, to direct the activities of our various departments where the best results will be achieved, and not merely to show that a huge expenditure has been incurred in their administration.

Hon. P. Collier: It is often necessary to spend money to achieve results.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I realise that, but I will not be influenced in spending money by the continued demands of members to spend it irrespective of results.

Mr. Lambert: We will support you in that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I must first satisfy myself that the expenditure is being incurred in that direction where something will be achieved. Let us take the question of the bonus. We could give a bonus to all industries which are not paying their way.

Mr. Duff: I did not advocate bonuses.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is the only way that we can assist some of our industries at the present moment. We are in difficulties so far as the base metal industry is concerned. I have said before, and I said it at the deputation which waited on the Federal Treasurer, that we will not overcome our difficulties permanently or satisfactorily until we have provided in Western Australia works that will be capable of refining all our base metals. It is a heavy problem from the point of view of capital expenditure. If we go on tinkering with the matter, as we are now doing, we shall not be rendering any help to our base metal industry. We are tinkering about on the rich spots, owing to the cost of mining and the cost of treatment.

Mr. Duff: You have not spent much in the way of development.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. So long as we continue in the way we have been going in the past we shall not be able to bring about much development. The only way by which we can make any permanent headway in our base metal industry is by providing refining works in Western Australia. The smelting works at Fremantle are in difficulties at the moment, because the market for lead has fallen below that point

at which the metal can be successfully mined and subsequently treated.

Mr. Maley: That only refers to mining operations.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It refers to smelting as well. Smelting works must have a continuous supply of ore to treat, otherwise they do not pay. If they cannot work their own mines to get the necessary bulk of ore for treatment, they cannot run the smelters for the purpose of treating smaller quantities of ore from elsewhere.

Mr. Maley: I quite realise that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If we could provide a smelter, situated in such a place that it would be available to all our producers of base metals, and attach to it refining works which would treat not only lead and copper but many other of our base metals, we should be able to change over from one metal to the other until such time as the mines have so developed that it will be possible to run smelters for each of the different ores. I am sure we cannot do this at present. With regard to the Phillips River smelters, we have only obtained a certain proportion of the product from the ore treated. We then have to send that product to New South Wales for refinement, owing to the restrictions imposed by the Federal Government. I have no quarrel with the Federal Government, nor do I think have hon. members opposite, for introducing these restrictions. I believe they were necessary. The time has arrived, however, when both the Commonwealth and State Governments should introduce more restrictions, until the people of Australia are able to get the utmost benefit from their own raw material, and so that when the world at large requires the finished article it can obtain it from us. The question arises as to whether it is desirable, and essential to our interests as a nation that we should impose further restrictions. We have not sufficient commercial influence on the market in Australia, or outside it, to continue to place these restrictions on the smaller producer to the extent of compelling him to ship and re-ship from here to the Eastern States and thence to the markets of the world, or to impose upon him burdens which he cannot continue to carry.

Mr. Willcock: They are murdering the industry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They have had the effect of temporarily closing down some of these mines, another reason being that the market has fallen considerably since the armistice was signed.

Mr. Willcock: It is £5 or £6 above the pre-war rates.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That extra price is more than absorbed by the additional cost of mining. There is also the additional cost of treatment and of shipping. The pre-war rates of our base metals cannot be compared with the rates existing now. The margin is less from the point of view of the actual results achieved than it was then. Until we can get something approaching the pre-war cost of production, and of treat-

ment, we are not going to do very much in the way of assisting our various industries.

Mr. Duff: It is not very encouraging.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is very discouraging to us all, and to those interested in mining. It is no use hiding our heads in the sand. We have to face the facts. What we are trying to do is to reorganise the industry to meet the altered conditions. We have to reorganise all our industries in that way. I hope we shall not return to pre-war conditions. We have to reorganise our methods of mining, of treatment, and of handling our products, and realise that the rest of the world has awakened to the fact that it is not going back to pre-war conditions. We must also remember that all other countries in the world are in much the same condition that we are in this respect. When the markets of the world become more normal, I believe the State can do very much, with the assistance of the Commonwealth, to re-establishing our base metal industry. I want hon. members to realise that the problem is too big a one to rush into with our heads down. We have an opportunity of establishing works that will be able to refine our base metals and others we are not at present engaged in working. Under present conditions these other metals are lying idle, and we are losing the opportunity of employing men and assisting other industries as well. The member for Coolgardie knows that we have many deposits of minerals in this State very essential to our existence, as well as to some of our primary industries. At present we cannot put them to commercial use, largely because of the necessity for adopting more up-to-date methods of treatment. Our copper from the Phillips River, for instance, requires to be treated under the electrolytic process. There is practically only one plant in Australia where this can be effected, and that is at Port Kembla. At Phillips River we have to treat the ore up to a given point at tremendous cost, because we have to bring the coke required for smelting from the other States, tranship it at Albany, take it to Ravensthorpe, and then rail it to the smelters. When we take into account the balance of the copper deposits in Western Australia we must consider whether Ravensthorpe is the most economical place for these smelters. I am trying to get together sufficient information to warrant me in asking Cabinet and Parliament to give me the necessary capital to erect works that will enable all our base metal ores to be refined and the finished article disposed of to the best advantage in the markets of the world. We have cheap electricity in Perth at the moment. The trouble, of course, is that people will ask, why bring everything to Perth? But the point is that our policy should be to bring everything to the place where it can best and most economically be handled, in the same way as we do, for instance, our wheat to be gristed.

Mr. Lambert: What about generating electricity at Collie and smelting at Bunbury?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know that that is necessary or desirable, in the circumstances. We must produce sufficient current to produce it cheaply, and we can do that in the metropolitan district because of the large local demand. But to establish a new generating station at Collie merely for the purpose of these works might not be payable. A new metal, known as alunite, has recently been discovered at Kanowna. At the moment we can apply to that metal only a primitive method of roasting, which yields only one commercial product of value, the rest of the contents being lost. Experiments will have to be made in the treatment of that metal, and those experiments will cost the Government something. On the question raised by this motion I ask hon. members to accept my assurance that the Government are desirous of assisting the mine owners, either by having the embargo removed, or else by obtaining from the Federal Government assistance in the form of capital towards enabling Western Australia to establish an up-to-date system of treatment.

Hon. P. Collier: Can you give an idea of what view the Federal Government take of your second alternative?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They do not commit themselves, but the Federal Treasurer has said that he realises Western Australia is for the time being at a tremendous disadvantage. He acknowledged so much, while he does not feel disposed, any more than I myself or the leader of the Opposition would feel disposed, to grant a bonus merely for the purpose of carrying on the industry under conditions that are not desirable. The proper form of encouragement would be to assist in the establishment of adequate treatment works. My own view is that we should do for the mining industry as we have done for other industries—grant advances towards the first capital cost of establishing the industry on complete and up-to-date lines. This scarcely ever results from the granting of bonuses. The bonuses grow to large amounts, and eventually the Treasurer finds himself unable to furnish the money, and so the whole thing drags. If the Federal Government felt disposed to grant a bonus in this case, the infinitely preferable course would be to capitalise the bonus and provide a lump sum for the establishment of treatment works.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the only solution I can see.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not offer the slightest opposition to the motion of the member for Greenough, but I do not believe the Federal Government would be prepared for a moment to consider the granting of a bonus. I do believe they would be prepared to consider the advisableness of granting some assistance, probably of a financial character, to enable this State to develop its base metal industry. I suggest a lump sum representing a bonus capitalised over a number of years.



Mr. Maley: The motion could be amended accordingly.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are so far removed from the seat of Federal Government, and so utterly debarred from sitting continuously on the doorstep to urge our demands, that Federal Ministers, who are unable to visit this State sufficiently, fail frequently to realise our conditions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Who has faith in the Federal Ministry?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have faith in my fellow man. I have faith in the Federal Ministers just as I have faith in the member for North-East Fremantle, whose word is his bond.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But there is nothing definite from the Federal Government.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have a definite promise of assistance in the matter of our base metal industry, and I believe the Federal Government will give the assistance if the matter is put to them in a proper way.

Mr. Willcock: Just as they do in the matter of repatriation of soldiers on the land.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Federal Government are finding all the money that the State requires for that purpose.

Mr. Willcock: But we have to provide the interest on that money.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: After all, the people have to provide the interest on the money. If the Federal Government render us assistance in the matter of our base metal industry, I do not think they should provide it for nothing. If they provide the capital at a reduced rate of interest, I think the State Government will consider the question of rendering the assistance which is essential to the industry. I desire to inform the member for North-East Fremantle, who is somewhat concerned at my remarks, that there is no intention of taking the smelter away from Fremantle.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am not worrying.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think the hon. member would worry if that were proposed. I also desire to assure the member for Geraldton that we are not refusing to establish a smelter at Geraldton. Further, I desire to assure the House, and through the House those interested in the base metal industry, that the Government are considering this matter very seriously, and that no step will be taken except after thorough inquiry, and not merely upon advice tendered by departmental officers, but upon advice obtained farther afield, from men of practical, up-to-date knowledge, so that when we do take a step, we shall be certain that we are taking it in the interests of the industry.

Mr. DUFF (Claremont) [9.56]: I move an amendment—

That the words "a bonus" be struck out, and "assistance" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough—in reply) [9.57]: I am satisfied with the Minister's assurance that the terms of this motion, as amended, will be brought before the Federal Government.

Question, as amended, agreed to.

#### PAPERS—RAILWAYS, WORKS AND SALES LEDGERKEEPER.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [9.58]: I move—

That there be laid upon the Table of the House all papers dealing with the occupancy of the position of works and sales ledgerkeeper, Chief Accountant's branch, Railway Department, by Messrs. Hall, Turner, Smith, and Scanlan, and the appointment to that position of Mr. R. Sundercombe; the evidence given before the Departmental Board, which sat on the 11th and 12th June, 1918, to inquire into the six charges made by the Railway and Tramway Officers' Association against the administration of the Chief Accountant of the Railway Department; and also the findings of the board, and the individual remarks of the members.

Without entering into details, I may say that I have heard a good many rumours regarding the administration of this branch of the Railway Department, and consider it necessary that some inquiry should be held, and possibly some alteration made, in the interests of the State. I am not prepared to express an opinion as to whether the rumours are well founded or not, until I can see the files dealing with the subject; and therefore I move for these papers. Several people directly concerned in the matter have made definite statements that certain persons in the Railway Department have received preference over other officers in the matter of this particular position. They go further and say that several of the men—I mention only a few, though there are a good many concerned—state that while they had the opportunity of filling the position of works and sales ledgerkeeper, the job itself was actually loaded, and that it was not possible for them individually, or for any other one man, to carry out the duties of the job as it was then constituted. Thereupon, they allege, a junior man to them, who is also mentioned in the motion, was put into the job, the conditions of which were made much lighter. If these statements are true, an inquiry is necessary. The matter extends back as far as 1916, when a deputation from the Railway Officers' Association waited on the Minister in connection with this, and from that date until 1918, both by deputation and by letter, they were almost continuously in negotiation with the Commissioner and the Minister. Eventually they succeeded in getting a board appointed to inquire into the matter. That board sat on the 11th and 12th June, 1918. Here they have a grievance, inasmuch as they say the board was con-

stituted of the various heads of the Railway Department, including the chief accountant, against whose administration the complaints were made. If that statement be true, the papers should be laid on the Table. The charges made by the union against the head of the department are to be found in the reply given by the secretary of the Railways, Mr. Rushton, to the secretary of the Railway Officers' Association as follows:—

1, That certain senior officers in grade 6 have not been given reasonable opportunities to make themselves conversant with the duties of higher positions (on the works and sales ledgers). 2, That officers have been put into positions in grade 5 and refused tuition in the duties of the position, and they in consequence have been treated as inefficient, and lost promotion. 3, That officers junior to the above have been afforded opportunities and tuition in the work of positions in grade 5. 4, That the work of positions in grade 5 has been loaded when the senior officer was placed on it and reduced when the junior officer was put in the position. 5, That the method mentioned has debarred senior officers from promotion and enabled junior officers to obtain it. 6, That senior officers have received harsh and overbearing treatment from the sub-heads of the branch.

The letter in reply to the General Secretary of the Railway Officers' Association stated as follows:—

After an exhaustive inquiry, the board is of opinion that none of the charges has been sustained.

This is the board constituted of the heads of departments, including the chief accountant, against whom the charges were made.

The Minister for Works: At all events he would have only one vote.

Mr. MUNSIE: He has no right to be there at all. It is not a correct procedure. The letter continues—

They are satisfied that when vacancies occur in the higher grades in the chief accountant's branch, every consideration is given by the chief accountant and his sub-head to the claims of all officers who by virtue of their position in the classification are entitled to be considered for any vacancy, and that the recommendations made by the chief accountant are in the best interests of the service. The head of each branch is responsible to the Commissioner for the proper carrying out of his branch, and if officers are to be given a trial in higher positions on account of seniority only, irrespective of whether they are in the opinion of the head of the branch properly qualified to fill such positions, the results would be disastrous.

On receipt of that letter, which is quite vague as to the request made by the organisation, the following application was made on 19th July, 1918—

Your letter of the 3rd inst. relative to promotions in the chief accountant's

office. I am directed to request that you will be so kind as to furnish me with a copy of the evidence given before the classification board.

To that the following reply was sent on the 22nd July, 1918—

In reply to your letter of the 19th inst., asking to be furnished with a copy of the evidence given before the classification board recently in connection with promotions in the chief accountant's branch, I am directed to say that written statements were handed in by most of the officers concerned and certain questions were asked them but no verbatim report of the proceedings was taken.

If the accountant's branch, after nearly two years of battling, eventually agree to hold an inquiry at which evidence is taken, a copy of that evidence should be kept, if we are to have contentment in the service. I believe a good deal of the evidence is to be found on the file. I have a copy of one of the statements put in before that inquiry. I intend to read certain parts of it which bear out the statements I have made, and which justifies my demand that the papers shall be tabled. This is a statement by Mr. Smith—

The volume of work in the departmental works and sales ledger is very large and varies considerably, and the quantity of work cannot be ascertained by the number of open authorities.

The witness goes on—

During my term I had a very large one for dunnage sleepers for the State Wheat Marketing Committee. Judging from the treatment received by Mr. Sundercombe, I imagine that had he been on the work at the time this authority would have been handed to Mr. Hall to do, in the same manner as the departmental authority in connection with the Trans-Australian railway was transferred from Mr. Sundercombe to Mr. Hall.

In answer to question 32 he says—

Since Mr. Sundercombe took over the position the Trans-Australian authority was transferred to Mr. Hall (with extra assistance to do it).

In answer to question 33 he says—

The balancing of the Commonwealth accounts was transferred from Mr. Sundercombe, and all the subsidiary cards in connection with postal work done by railway officers, charges for post office telegraph lines, were transferred from Mr. Sundercombe to Mr. Fitzgerald. The following duties were cut out of works and sales position subsequent to 22nd May, 1917:—Monthly duties Nos. 2, 3, 4, 9, 12 (a) to imprests officer; 12 (b) discontinued; 27, to ways and works ledger keeper. Quarterly duties No. 1 to imprests officer. Half-yearly No. 1 to imprests officer. Yearly No. 6 to imprests officer. These were cut out since Mr. Sundercombe took over the position.

If we are to secure contentment in our service, we cannot have such things as that happening without some inquiry being made.

I am not going to say that those things have happened, but I do say that the file should prove whether or not they did happen. I do not think the Minister can have any objection to laying the papers on the Table.

Question put and declared passed.

The Minister for Mines: But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I intended to move for the adjournment. I was waiting for the hon. member to read his motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member read his motion at the opening of his remarks.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You, Sir, have declared the motion carried.

The Minister for Mines: But it was under a misapprehension.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The motion was definitely carried.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member read his motion, every word of it, at the opening of his remarks.

The Minister for Mines: I was waiting for the hon. member to read his motion, when you put the question. The member for North-East Fremantle knows that I cannot lay the papers on the Table without having first perused them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The motion has been on the Notice Paper for some time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I must inform the Minister that I heard the hon. member read the motion at the beginning of his remarks. There is nothing in the Standing Orders rendering it compulsory on him to read the motion again at the conclusion of his remarks. I put the motion to the House and declared it carried.

*House adjourned at 10.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 28th August, 1919.*

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

### QUESTION—DISCHARGED SOLDIERS' DEPARTMENT, APPOINTMENT.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has Mr. N. Brazier been appointed to a position of inspector or other office in the department administering the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act? 2, If so, when was the appointment made, and what is the salary attached to the office? 3, Was the position advertised in any newspaper or other publication?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes, until August 31st instant. 2, September 1st, 1918. Salary £58 6s. 8d. per month, with an allowance of £3 6s. 8d. to cover the cost of providing horse and trap hire or other means of transport. 3, No; the position not being considered as coming under the Public Service Act.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It should have been advertised all the same.

Hon. P. Collier: You should have given every returned soldier a chance. It was a back-door appointment.

### QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVICE ACT, AMENDMENT.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (for Mr. Gardiner) asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to introduce an amending Public Service Act this session? 2, If so, will he consider the advisability of making provision for—(a) The fixing of salaries for permanent heads equivalent to those paid by private employers for like work and responsibility. (b) Such permanent heads to accept the same responsibility and penalties for their administrative actions as employees outside the public service. (c) A simple method of dispensing with any service which is proved unsatisfactory or unnecessary.

The PREMIER replied: 1, The matter is being considered. 2, These suggestions also are receiving consideration.

### QUESTION—DEFICIT AND SINKING FUND.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: 1, What was the accumulated deficit from 30th June, 1911, to 30th June, 1916? 2, What was the deficit on the 30th September, 1911? 3, What amount was contributed to sinking fund from 30th June, 1911, to 30th June, 1916? 4, Can this amount, contributed to sinking fund, be considered a saving and be deducted from the accumulated deficit on 30th June, 1916? 5, If so, why were the Government in office from 1911 to 1916 not credited with such saving? 6, If not, can Ministers who held office since June, 1916, credit themselves as to any contribution to sinking fund since 30th June, 1916, with saving such amount?

The PREMIER replied: 1, £1,374,263. 2, £28,994. 3, £1,264,179. 4, No. 5, Answered by No. 4. 6, No.