

money in the construction of roads. Too much of the time of settlers is taken up in transporting their produce to market over bad roads. The great need is feeder roads. It may perhaps be looked upon as non-productive work, but it is one of the soundest and best investments the Government could make.

On motion by Hon. J. W. Hickey, debate adjourned.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message returned from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Council.

BILL—LOAN, £3,763,000.

Second Reading.

Order of the day read for the resumption, from the 6th December, of the debate on the second reading.

On motion by Hon. W. Carroll, debate adjourned.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Architects Act Amendment.
 - 2, Road Closure (No. 2).
 - 3, Brookton-Dale River Railway.
- Received from the Assembly.

BILL—THE WEST AUSTRALIAN TRUSTEE, EXECUTOR, and AGENCY CO., LTD., ACT AMENDMENT (PRIVATE).

Returned from the Assembly with amendments.

House adjourned at 11.49 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 11th December, 1923.

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

QUESTION—SANDALWOOD, PULLERS' STOCKS.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM asked the Premier: Having regard to the fact that the Government have been issuing permits to pull sandalwood during the last few months, and that in pursuance of such permits the pullers have accumulated large stocks of sandalwood at various stations or sidings on the Eastern Goldfields line, these stocks being at present unsaleable, is it the intention of the Government to arrange to assist the pullers by either purchasing the stocks or advancing money thereon pending sale, so as to enable the pullers to live until they are able to realise their stocks?

The PREMIER replied: No licenses or permits for the pulling of sandalwood were issued between 30th June and 1st November, 1923. The matter will be considered.

QUESTION—STOCK DISEASE, BELMONT.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Minister for Agriculture: At what date did his department become cognisant of the outbreak of disease in cattle at Belmont?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: On the 22nd November, 1923.

QUESTION—STATE HOTEL ADMINISTRATION, PAPERS.

Mr. HICKMOTT (without notice) asked the Colonial Secretary: Will he before Parliament adjourns lay on the Table of the House for the information of members all papers dealing with his inquiries into the administration of State hotels?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The papers will be laid on the Table again. They have been on the Table already, but were taken away. They will be brought back tomorrow.

BILL—ROAD CLOSURE.

All Stages.

Introduced by the Premier, and read a first time.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: The introduction of this Bill is due to a desire on the part of the people at Collie to establish a croquet court on a block of land now held by the local trades hall, adjoining a sports reserve. The Collie people have already established on their reserve a bowling green and a tennis court. It is the custom of the House to encourage sport whenever an opportunity presents itself. The making of the proposed exchange will be a help to the people at Collie, and the proposal is supported by the Collie Municipal Council. In order that the exchange may be effected, it will be necessary to close part of a street known as Patterson-street. That street is 150 links wide, which is an unnecessary width; and the proposal now is to reduce the width by 50 links, which will be added to the reserve that is to be given to the trades hall in exchange for the site to be surrendered. The area to be given the trades hall is a little larger than the site to be surrendered, but it is a very awkward piece of land. I see no objection whatever to the proposal. I am afraid that in most of our town areas we reserve too small an area for sports grounds. Nowadays our people go in for sports a great deal more than they did a few years ago. While I approve of encouragement being given to sport, it means that I often have to come to the House to obtain authority for dealing with land in that connection. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Architects Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

2, The West Australian Trustee, Executor, and Agency Co., Ltd., Act Amendment (Private).

Returned to the Council with amendments.

BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 6th December.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.45]: I should like hon. members to consider the reason why the Bill has been introduced. The Bill, if introduced at all, should have been introduced by the Government as a Government measure. But the Government have not seen fit to introduce it and so, for some reason or other, the member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) has taken it on himself to do so. Those associated with the hon. member were to a large extent responsible for having inserted in the Bill of 1916 the provision that no trading concern could be handed over to a purchaser or lessee without the approval of Parliament. Nobody more strongly supported that provision than did the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston). Presently I will read to the House some of the statements he then made. To-day he is supporting the Bill now before us. A few years ago the Minister for Works handed over to the Westralian Farmers' Ltd. the sole agency for the sale of agricultural implements made at the State Implement Works. The political organisation with which some of my friends on the cross benches are connected were then greatly in favour of the Bill of 1916. There was no suggestion that the State Trading concerns should be disposed of. But, for some good reason, the Minister for Works had to cancel that agreement. He explained here that he felt the country was not getting fair play under the agreement for the sole selling agency, that the terms of the agreement were not being complied with. Immediately that agreement was cancelled, the general manager of the Westralian Farmers' Ltd. got to work with the Farmers and Settlers' Association.

Mr. A. Thomson: Your imagination is exceedingly vivid.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am relating the facts. The general manager, addressing the Farmers' and Settlers' Association, used some strong language against the State trading concerns, and showed reasons why they should be disposed of. He said the Government had no right to go on trading.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not wish to embarrass the hon. member, but I hope he will not try to discuss the whole ramifications of State trading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I expected that. Before I came to the House, speaking to a

friend in the street, I said, "I'll bet the Speaker will try to block me if I endeavour to show the reasons why the Bill has been introduced."

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think that under the Bill I can allow the hon. member to discuss the principles of State trading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am giving reasons why the Bill was introduced. The general manager of the Westralian Farmers' Ltd., as soon as he lost the sole agency, got to work with the Farmers and Settlers' Association, and endeavoured to induce that political party to oppose State trading.

Mr. Pickering: Was it an individual who had the sole agency?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, it was a company, but this individual was the manager of the company. At the first subsequent meeting of the Farmers and Settlers' Association it was resolved that the State trading concerns should be disposed of. This was done under the influence of the general manager of the Westralian Farmers' Ltd., who, by the cancellation of the agreement with the Minister for Works, had lost his commission on the sale of State implements.

Mr. A. Thomson: Your imagination is very vivid.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I see the member for Williams-Narrogin has left the Chamber. The Minister for Agriculture. He knows when to get away.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When the Bill of 1916 was in Committee, Mr. Scaddan, the then Leader of the Opposition, moved—

That the proviso be struck out and the following inserted: "Provided that possession shall not be given to an intending purchaser or lessee under a contract of sale or agreement to lease until the approval of Parliament has been obtained."

Considerable discussion ensued. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) said on recomittal:—

I am sorry the Government cannot see their way to accept this proviso. In view of the decision of the Committee that a trading concern shall not be started without the approval of Parliament, it is only consistent to provide that no State trading concern shall be sold without the approval of Parliament. Having regard to the tremendous amount of capital invested in these concerns, and of their undoubted utility, in at least some respects, I feel very strongly on this point. I am also of opinion that possession of these huge enterprises should not be handed over until Parliamentary approval has been obtained.

On the second reading the member for Williams-Narrogin said—

If we give the Government power to deal with these huge concerns without the approval of Parliament, I fear that we are opening the way to further charges or secret contracts being hurled across the floor of the House.

During the previous session there had been a good deal of discussion about secret contracts,

and Parliament had passed a resolution that no contract should be entered into secretly. Parliament denounced secret contracts. This Bill provides for secret contracts; provides that the Government may, if they so desire, secretly sell any or all of the State trading concerns. Therefore the Bill is opposed to the decision previously arrived at by Parliament.

Mr. A. Thomson: Hundreds of thousands of acres of land have been leased without the approval of Parliament.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. The member for Williams-Narrogin dealt with that also. He said—

During the past couple of sessions we have had a number of small Bills brought down by successive Ministers for Lands to secure the approval of Parliament for leases being given of small reserves. In those matters Parliament could well say that it would trust the Minister for Lands to make the best possible deal for the people of the State. But what is the use of Parliament if we are going to hand over to the Government the right to dispose of, by sale or lease, the huge trading concerns without any reference to the elected representatives of the people? In regard to the Implement Works there is no doubt they have been the means of keeping down prices of agricultural machinery. They have succeeded in keeping in the State a good deal of money which would otherwise have gone out of it, and farmers have been able to secure great relief. I trust nothing will be done in the way of disposing of these works without some reference to Parliament. At any rate I am not prepared to sign an open cheque for the Government to fill in to dispose of these trading concerns without reference to Parliament and I trust the Government will accept an amendment to this effect when the measure is in Committee.

That is a very pronounced statement made by the member for Williams-Narrogin. But at that time the Farmers' and Settlers' Association had not decided, at the behest of Mr. Murray, to vote against State trading concerns. That is the difference. We have here the hon. member's private opinion, expressed on behalf of his electors, which is now reversed in accordance with the desire of the political organisation he stands for. It shows conclusively the influence that has been brought to bear, and why the Bill was introduced.

Mr. A. Thomson: You are entirely incorrect.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Government do not require the Bill. If they had wanted this provision they would have introduced legislation accordingly. If the Government find something that will prevent them carrying on the affairs of the State in the best interests of the State, it is their duty to introduce legislation to remove the obstacle. But the Government have not introduced such legislation. That being so, it will become a private member to dictate to the Government

the policy to be pursued. It has been stated as an argument why the State trading concerns should be sold, and why the Government should be entitled to sell them without reference to Parliament, that the trading concerns have cost the State a considerable sum of money. The trading concerns have been provided for principally out of loan and trust funds. It is very difficult to find out the exact cost. Any losses made have been added to the capital expenditure, but without access to the books of the department it is difficult to ascertain the actual capital cost. As nearly as I can get it, the total cost of the State trading concerns, including the Wyndham Meat Works, has been £2,450,000. I get that from the balance sheets up to the 30th June last.

The Premier: It should be £2,580,000.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is the total capital expenditure from all sources, and includes the suspense account and the losses on the Wyndham Meat Works. It is right that members should ascertain whether the State has been losing through the expenditure of this money, whether the taxpayers have had to put their hands in their pockets to provide interest and sinking fund on the amount. The statement has been made repeatedly that the trading concerns were not costing the State anything. The Premier has said that here, and Mr. Colebatch made a similar statement in the Legislative Council.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is going a little outside the Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. The Bill is to give the Government the right to sell the trading concerns. These arguments have been put up as to why they should be sold.

Mr. SPEAKER: But not in this debate.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The debate is only just starting.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member might confine himself to the question whether Parliament should give authority to the Government to sell. The principle itself is not under discussion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I surely have the right to show by arguments such as those I have been advancing that the right to sell should not be given to the Government. I am endeavouring to prove that the Government should not have the right to dispose of the trading concerns without first consulting Parliament, and in support of this contention I shall show that the various enterprises have not been a charge on the taxpayers of the State. At the present time the Government cannot sell any of the concerns without the approval of Parliament, and my arguments are in the direction of showing that the existing position of affairs should continue. The whole of the money invested in the trading concerns was not spent at the same time; it was spent over a period of years. Over the last three years we find that the money paid into Consolidated Revenue from the State trading concerns has been sufficient to provide five per cent. interest on the total capital during the whole of the seven years of their existence. No less a sum than £1,054,176 has

been paid into Consolidated Revenue to meet interest, departmental charges, and for other purposes. The total paid for recoups, interest, and departmental charges has been £641,465. This represents interest on capital invested, interest on working capital, and recoups to the department for work done for the trading concerns, and the period is 1916 to 1923. There has been transferred the Consolidated Revenue, in addition to the amount I have given, no less a sum than £412,710 during the same period, making the total I previously gave, of £1,054,176. Take five per cent. from the amount invested of £2,450,000, and we get £857,500; so that there is still left an amount of £196,676 to meet interest on working capital and departmental charges, or £28,096 annually. There are very few members in this Chamber who have gone into these figures to determine for themselves whether the trading concerns have or have not shown a loss. My desire is to make the position plain, so that members may know precisely what they are voting for when the time to vote arrives. I am endeavouring to prove that the trading concerns have not been a loss to the State; that therefore the Government should not be asked to dispose of them. I also wish to point out that over £300,000 has been paid towards depreciation and sinking fund. This money has come out of profits. In addition to the amount taken into Consolidated Revenue, members will be surprised to learn that the State Sawmills alone cost £369,602. That concern is valued in the books of the department to-day at £198,321, and they have in addition a sinking fund of £29,535, thus leaving £168,786. So that the State Sawmills to-day are worth £369,000. They are as valuable to-day as they were when first installed. That applies also to a number of the other trading concerns.

The Premier: The sawmills will cut out.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But they have a very big area to work upon. Take State shipping: I know the feeling of members of the Ministry in regard to this enterprise, and I will not give to them the right to sell any of the boats trading on the coast. Parliament should retain the right to declare whether or not the vessels should be sold.

The Premier: But we have a perfect right to our own opinions.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It cannot be denied that the people on the coast are just as much entitled to have vessels trading along the coast as the people on the land are entitled to have railways to serve them. The losses on the coast have been a mere bagatelle compared to the losses sustained on the State railways. The member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) no doubt has another reason for desiring to give the Government the right to sell the trading concerns. It is not long since one of the firms, on whose behalf the hon. member voiced opinions very strongly in this Chamber, endeavoured to secure possession of the implement works. And that firm wanted those works for nothing. They desired that the stocks should be retained in the works and that they should be permitted to carry on the manufacture of

implements, and that payment should be made over a number of years. If the Government had the right to sell the trading concerns without consulting Parliament, the implement works might have been handed over on these conditions. Take the State Quarries. No doubt the Government would sell the quarries if Parliament gave them permission to do so, but I guarantee that there are few members of Parliament who would agree to sell the quarries if they gave five minutes' consideration to the matter, and knew what the concern was used for. The State Quarries were brought into existence, in the first place, to provide metal for a dock at Fremantle. When it was found that a dock could not be built, the Government agreed to supply at cost price the various local authorities in the metropolitan area with stone for road making. The quarries have been used for that purpose ever since. How, therefore, can we expect this concern to show a profit? The taxpayers have received the benefit from this enterprise every day of their lives. The implement works, to which I have already referred, are a necessary requirement in the State, and are paying thousands of pounds towards depreciation and sinking fund. The State Hotels are in a similar position. I have heard no argument advanced in favour of giving the Government power to sell the trading concerns. The hon. member who introduced the Bill did not advance any reasons why we should pass the measure. I can understand the hon. member imagining that the intelligence of the other hon. members in this Chamber is no better than his own, and expecting, therefore, to get the Bill through. But if he held the views that I do, he would not for a moment dream of giving the Government the power it is sought to give by the Bill. Is it not strange that the hon. member should be submitting the Bill to the House in this our last week of sitting?

Mr. A. Thomson: The Bill has been before the House for months.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I agree it was one of the first Bills introduced this session, but the hon. member never seemed anxious to go on with it. Time after time its consideration had to be postponed because the hon. member was not present to move the second reading. It is not the fault of Parliament nor of the Government that the Bill was not considered earlier. What his reason for the delay was, I cannot say. There seems to have been a reason for keeping back the consideration until the dying hours of the session. It is the duty of Parliament to scrutinise all the actions of the Government. It may be said that if the Government sell any of these trading concerns and their action has not the approval of Parliament, they can be turned out of office. But that is an impossibility. We had an example only a little while ago in connection with the Lake Clifton railway.

The Premier: Two years ago.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It does not seem so long ago. My friends opposite knew the Government had done wrong, and said so. They said it was a disgraceful action on their part, and yet when the time came they stood like

sheep behind the Government, and supported them.

The Premier: It was not this Government that did that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It may not be this Government that will have the right to sell any of these State trading concerns.

The Premier: It will be, for a time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier is more optimistic on that point than I am.

The Premier: That suggestion will not help you. You can have all the hope you like, but you will be disappointed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The argument is used that if the Government make a bad sale they can be turned out.

The Premier: You made a bad purchase when you bought some of these things.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I should like to know what they are.

The Premier: I will tell you.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier has not shown us yet what they are. We did not make anything like as bad a purchase as the Government did in connection with the Fremantle and Carnarvon freezing works, and the Northam butter and bacon factory.

The Premier: You do not like the Northam butter and bacon factory?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have not condemned the Government, because we realise they have been doing the best they could, and have been influenced by certain members on the cross-benches, and by the continual smoothing over of the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo). The Government can sell the meat works at Carnarvon.

The Premier: You can buy them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They do not come under the State Trading Concerns Act.

The Premier: But we cannot sell them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They do not require leave to do that.

Hon. P. Collier: They are too bad to sell.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are State funds invested in them. If it had not been for the decision of Parliament, the time might not have been far distant when the Government would have had an opportunity of selling the meat works at Fremantle. One vote stopped them the other day.

The Premier: They voted with you. Two of them did so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Neither of these concerns is a State trading concern, and the Government can dispose of their interests when they desire to do so. It may be said the Government should be given the right to sell these State trading concerns, because they stop other people from starting out in secondary industries in Western Australia. It is said that people are afraid to establish an industry here because the Government may start in opposition to them. That cannot be done under the Act to-day, for the approval of Parliament would first have to be given. Take the State Implement Works. Members will find from the returns for the four months ended 31st October that no less than £127,990 worth of agricultural implements were im-

ported into Western Australia. That argument goes by the board. The State Implement Works cannot be detrimental to the establishment of similar industries here, because we have the market in this State.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is discussing the whole principle of State trading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member's argument is not as to whether the Government should be entrusted to sell these concerns or whether Parliament should have power to sell.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Those few people who are anxious that the Government should have the right to sell are afraid of Parliament. They think it is easy to get over the Government, but know the difficulty of getting over Parliament. The State Sawmills afford an example of that.

The Premier: The people could not put up their cash.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: So long as they can get these concerns into the hands of the Government they know it will be possible to get hold of some of them. They would like to get one or two of them at a reduced cost, and at a price that will not be beneficial to the State. That price would leave the State to carry the interest and sinking fund for many years. Because we are going through a slack time on account of the late war, that is not to say this position will continue, and these business men see that. They think they will be able to get hold of the State hotels, the Wyndham Meat Works, and one or two other concerns at a reduced price, on account of the state of trade, and that if these concerns are in the hands of the Government they will be able to bring pressure to bear upon them. No member who votes away any right he possesses as a representative of his constituents, and hands it over to four or five members of Cabinet, is fit to represent his electorate.

Mr. A. Thomson: And yet you cheerfully give the Government power to spend millions of money in other directions.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He will be taking the entire power out of the hands of his electors. When I go before my electors next year and they ask me what my action would be concerning State trading concerns, if this Bill is passed I shall have to say I have no power, for it is in the hands of the Government. Would they not be justified in asking me why I had voted away their rights? They sent me here to protect and preserve their interests, not to give them away. I pledged myself to preserve them, and every other member did the same. There are only a few trading concerns that will be affected by this Bill, and they will be affected detrimentally to the State. We have only the shipping, the implement works, the Wyndham Meat Works, and the brickworks. Once our State ships are got rid of up will go the cost to shippers.

Mr. Teesdale: They will not get rid of the "Bambra."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Passenger fares and freights on goods will immediately go up. The same thing applies to bricks if the State brickworks are disposed of. If the implement works are sold, up will go the cost of implements.

The Premier: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It has occurred before.

The Premier: Machinery could not be dearer.

Mr. Latham: The implement works do not keep down the cost of machinery.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: And it will happen again. These works have been policing the State.

The Premier: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: One firm will sell a chaff cutter cheaply, another a harvester, and so on, in an endeavour to cut out the State Implement Works.

Mr. Latham: I will get the names of the firms who do that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The farmers are reaping the advantage of the position. The State Implement Works are acting as policemen, and guarding the interests of those who require implements. I hope the Bill will be defeated.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.27]: The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has made out a good case. He stands for State trading, and I do not and never have done so.

Mr. Hughes: Why do you carry them on?

Mr. Lambert: They are a State necessity.

The PREMIER: There is no need for some of them. I will tell members what is invested in them, how the money is invested, and what has been the result of the trading.

Mr. SPEAKER: Unfortunately the question is not whether State trading concerns should exist, or what they cost. The question is whether the Government should have power to sell them, or whether Parliament should retain that power.

The PREMIER: I cannot see how members can consider State trading concerns unless they know what they are going to sell.

Mr. Lambert: They are in the schedule.

Mr. SPEAKER: The importance of the question may justify me in relaxing the general rules of debate in this instance, but if I allow one member latitude I shall have to allow the same to others. There is no reason why the Premier should go into the question whether the State trading concerns pay or do not pay.

The PREMIER: I should be sorry to vote on any question if I knew nothing about it, and would be equally sorry to ask anyone to vote unless he knew what he was doing. If we were asking for power to sell the State Sawmills, for instance, we should have to give every item in connection with them, and set out what the offer was and tell members all about it.

Mr. SPEAKER: And the question before the Chair would permit of that being done.

I will, however, allow the Premier to proceed and give him every scope I can.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has made out a good case. He has dangled before us a bunch of carrots in the usual manner. State trading concerns have not helped anyone in the State.

Mr. McCallum: Nonsense!

Mr. Hughes: They have helped your revenue.

The PREMIER: Let me have my say in my own way. They have not been the deadly loss to the State that some people have made out. I want to make the position plain and I wish to be quite clear. I will not say I am in favour of State trading, because I am not.

Mr. Lambert: You will not lie about it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the Premier allow me to remind him that we are not discussing whether he is in favour of State trading or not. That does not affect the question, which is as to whether Parliament shall retain the power to sell the trading concerns or enable the Government to have that power.

The PREMIER: On a question like that, there must be on one side of the House those who are in favour of State trading, and those who are opposed to it will sit on the opposite side of the House.

Mr. Marshall: Why not move to disagree with the Speaker's ruling?

The PREMIER: I will not contest the Speaker's ruling at all. We have investigated the position and find that the amount of capital invested in the State trading concerns is £2,582,273. Last year there was a loss of £103,102. Of that total, the loss on the Wyndham Meat Works was £88,442 and on the State steamers, £78,757. There was a profit on the sawmills of £62,122, on the State hotels of £7,502, and on the State brickworks of £2,232.

Mr. Hughes: The Minister for Works said the sawmills' profit was £115,000.

Mr. Lambert: He would say anything.

The PREMIER: The figures I am giving are for the year ended 30th June, 1923.

Mr. Hughes: The Minister for Works said that the profit on the State Sawmills for that period was £115,000 and you say it was only £62,000.

The PREMIER: That is the profit shown on the balance sheet. The loss on all the concerns, however, was £103,102. It is true, as has been pointed out, we made enormous profits from the State steamers a few years ago, but those days are gone. Those profits were due to the war causing high freights. The deficit has been increased by £80,000 on account of interest payments in respect of the Wyndham Meat Works alone. From the inception to the present time the loss on all the State trading concerns has been £301,726. There have been payments to sinking funds of £55,911.

Mr. Lambert: You have not lost the sinking fund payments by any means, have you?

The PREMIER: The hon. member does not seem to think I wish to be fair. I wish to make a fair statement. Depreciation to the extent of £332,163 has been provided. On the

State Sawmills, the amount allowed has been £170,741. I may explain in regard to depreciation payments that what we are losing on Wyndham we have made up on account of the State Sawmills, so that the State trading concern balances, at the end of the year, practically even up the position. As the balances in respect of trading concerns were not always taken into consideration in revenue account, it was not a fair thing to transfer all the profit from the sawmills to revenue. Thus the position has been more or less balanced, but £170,741 has had to be provided for depreciation on account of the sawmills. That is an unnecessarily large sum.

Mr. Hughes: If you look at page 6 of the departmental report, you will see that the amount given for depreciation is £142,000, not £170,000.

The PREMIER: The amount is unnecessarily large. Of course, a considerable amount has to be allowed for as depreciation in connection with the State Sawmills because they cut out fairly rapidly. In respect of the State Shipping Service, £108,723 has been allowed as depreciation, and that amount is quite reasonable and necessary. On the State Implement Works depreciation to the extent of £30,239 has been allowed, on the brickworks £9,551, and thus, together with other smaller amounts, the total of £332,163 for depreciation is arrived at. Unfortunately the purchase of machinery for the State Implement Works was a bad deal, and £120,155 has had to be written off the cost of the works on that account.

Mr. A. Thomson: Is that included in the sum you have referred to?

The PREMIER: No. The machinery I refer to should never have been brought into Western Australia. I am giving these particulars to hon. members because it is only right that Parliament and the public should know the true position.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The figures published in the returns do not bear out what you are saying.

The PREMIER: I know the figures may not be quite the same.

Mr. Lambert: It is shown that the loss has not been so extensive.

Mr. Latham: They furnish a good argument in favour of disposing of the concerns.

The PREMIER: Taken in all, the loss on the concerns may not have been so very large. Let members of the Opposition accept the position as such. The loss for the future will be considerable.

Mr. Munsie: What has been the loss so far?

The PREMIER: It was £103,102 last year.

Mr. Munsie: What has been the total loss so far?

The PREMIER: The total loss has been £301,726. I have already explained to members that huge profits were made by the State Shipping Service on account of the high freights charged during the war.

Mr. Munsie: The money paid into Consolidated Revenue by the State trading concerns has more than exceeded the loss.

Mr. Hughes: It has repaid the capital involved.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members will have an opportunity of addressing the Chair later on.

The PREMIER: I do not know why hon. members will persist in making that statement! I have shown that the loss has been considerable and that large amounts have had to be set aside for depreciation and sinking fund payments. This has increased the loss from revenue, and that is a point worthy of consideration. Always more and more money has to be found for the State trading concerns. That must be the position if the operations of the trading concerns increase. So far as I can see, the losses for the future will be considerable. As the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has pointed out, the State Shipping Service provides transport facilities for the northern parts of the State just as the railways do in the southern parts. I do not know whether private people would be prepared to provide the steamers necessary to run the service along the northern coast.

Mr. Teesdale: I would not like to take the risk.

The PREMIER: I do not think they would do so in view of the provisions of the Navigation Act. I regard the State Shipping Service as necessary for the existence of the North-West.

Mr. Teesdale: Hear, hear! That is so.

The PREMIER: We have experienced great losses in connection with the Wyndham Meat Works, and unless meat becomes much dearer those losses will continue. There will come a time, of course, when the Wyndham works will be payable. I do not wish to say much more concerning these trading concerns. Reference has been made to the employment furnished to our people by the trading concerns. Certainly they do afford some employment and do some service for the people, but the taxpayer has had to foot the bill. For my part I do not think we have employed one man more, because of the existence of State trading concerns, than would have been employed by private enterprise, without any State trading at all. I do not know that we would have had to pay 1d. more for our articles and our implements than if the State works had not been in existence. No one gets more money or more employment because of the existence of these concerns.

Mr. Munsie: Do you think timber mills would be operating in the karri areas if the State had not undertaken that work?

The PREMIER: I do.

Mr. Munsie: We were for 20 years without one there.

The PREMIER: Certainly, private enterprise would have done the work. I am not a timber expert and I do not know the timber markets of the world. I will not argue that point with the hon. member, but I do contend that if the State can sell karri, other people can sell it too. It is a strange thing that at one time we had private ownership; then we had co-operative effort, and later we had a

State trading concern. Despite all this, timber is dearer than ever to-day.

Mr. Hughes: Because the sawmills are in the combine!

The PREMIER: Timber has not been cheaper in later years than it was when private enterprise controlled the position.

Mr. Munsie: No, because Millars are managing the whole business!

The PREMIER: Notwithstanding the high protection we are enjoying, the cost of implements has not been cheaper to those requiring them and, on the contrary, the cost is heavier than before. I should be delighted if we could sell machinery more cheaply and avoid a loss. As a matter of fact, sales to agriculturists are limited and the loss is considerable. Some of the work done at the State Implement Works, of course, is for the Harbour Trust and that has been the position for some years past.

Mr. Lambert: The State Implement Works helped my little company to the extent of £500.

The PREMIER: Yes, at a loss. Last year the loss was £7,324. The position has not been improved, because of the existence of State trading concerns, although in one respect the taxpayer has benefited, because the trading concerns do not pay taxes. While I would not care to sell the Wyndham Meat Works at the figure they would bring to-day without consulting the House—

Mr. Munsie: Then you don't want the Bill.

The PREMIER: I wish to clearly set out my views on this question.

Mr. Munsie: Why don't you introduce your own Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Let us deal with the question before the Chair.

The PREMIER: I am glad of this opportunity to make my position clear. It is frequently said outside that the loss on the trading concerns has been large, whereas to date it has not been so. The future, however, does not hold out prospects of such results being continued.

Mr. Teesdale: It will be much worse.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You want a State jam factory.

The PREMIER: Reference was made to the butter factory at Northam. The experience of that concern has been unfortunate. So it has been with other butter factories. They have had their bad times, but in the end they will prove successful. The member for North-East Fremantle, who commented on the position, would certainly prefer local products to the imported article. We shall have to incur some loss in undertaking the manufacture of our own products.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You want to start a jam factory now.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [5.45]: I am pleased at the fair manner in which the Premier explained the financial position of the trading concerns as he views it. It is illuminating to learn there is not being in-

curred the loss that interested people, day in and day out, through newspapers and by other means, would lead the public to believe.

The Premier: There was considerable loss last year.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, and if under the book-keeping system an abnormal sinking fund is charged against all of these concerns, such as is charged against the State Sawmills, the Government can make the loss as heavy as they like.

Mr. Teesdale: A lot of private firms lost last year.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes. Parliament in 1917 decided to place State undertakings under statutory authority. Prior to that they had been established and controlled without statutory authority.

Mr. A. Thomson: They were brought into being without statutory authority.

Mr. LAMBERT: Quite so. The then Premier (Mr. Frank Wilson) was responsible for the State Trading Concerns Act, in the schedule to which were included, sawmills, brickworks, implement and engineering works, quarry, shipping service, hotels, meat distribution, ferries, and fish supply. The Labour Party, prior to establishing those concerns, had gone to the country with a policy of which State trading concerns formed part, and had been returned by an overwhelming majority. Therefore, they proceeded to establish the concerns. Their action was commendable. I appreciate the difficulties besetting the control of State enterprises. There is the so-called unfair competition against private enterprise, but these undertakings rank with railways, water supplies, electric supplies, and harbour works. If members are prepared to give the Government authority to dispose of the trading concerns, they must, to be consistent, empower the Government to sell the railways, water supplies, and similar enterprises.

Mr. Money: They are utilities.

Mr. Marshall: That is a distinction without a difference.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know who was responsible for coining that term, but it appears to be another instance of the bare-faced effrontery that characterises many of the inventions emanating from an elastic Nationalist platform. There is no such distinction; all these enterprises are national enterprises. If the member for Bunbury favours a curtailment of the Bunbury harbour works and giving the Government statutory authority to dispose of them, he will vote for the Bill. It is sheer hypocrisy to endeavour to distinguish between the two groups. Shipping on the North-West coast must rank equally with railways. It would be dangerous to give any Government the right to sell the shipping service. It is a national undertaking a national necessity, providing an essential artery to the great North. But for the shipping service the combine would exploit the people of the North and shut them off from effective communication with the main commercial centre of the State. A Minister that may be in to-

day and out to-morrow should not have the power to sell that concern. Members who would give the Government power to sell the Wyndham Meat Works should remember that the Labour Party may be in office next year. The people of the North, to whom the Wyndham Meat Works have been of the greatest service, have been consistently biting the hand that fed them, because they wished to depreciate the value of the works and obtain control of them. If they could depreciate the value of the works to the extent of a quarter of a million, sufficient financial backing would be available to take over the works. Parliament in 1917 took the right to veto the sale of any of these works, and Parliament to-day should preserve that right. However unpromising the Wyndham Meat Works may seem at present, no Government should have the right to dispose of them without first consulting Parliament. Members must be consistent. Let them go the whole hog and give the Government the right to sell everything the State possesses. Let them set up the Government as secondhand dealers to dispose of our railways, harbour works, electric generating stations, tramways and other utilities. No Parliament would grant that power; it would be too dangerous. Members opposite should not be influenced by the harping non-entities commercially interested in the squelching of State trading concerns. The Government should not embark on further undertakings that can be successfully or more efficiently run by private individuals, but after having established transport for the people, implement works to assist the farmers, stone breaking works to assist road making, and brickworks to encourage the building of homes, such national works should be held inviolate from the attacks of meddlesome commercial men that seek to destroy them. Parliament should insist that the Government have no right to barter away any of these national enterprises.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is dealing with the principle of trading concerns.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not wish to open up that question; it is too hot for me. I hope members on the Government side will not be stampeded into giving the Government authority to sell the trading concerns. Parliament should be paramount and should have the right to determine whether the State shall continue to incur a loss on certain undertakings and preserve essential facilities to the people. The figures so fairly presented by the Premier, throw a different light on the question. The loss is not of great moment; it is largely a matter of book-keeping. Certain facilities have been granted by Parliament, and Parliament alone should have the right to take them away.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [6.1]: This Bill does not raise the question whether the State trading concerns are being run at a loss or at a profit. The only matter mentioned in the Bill is whether the proviso to Section 25

of the principal Act shall be carried out. The section provides that the Government may sell or dispose of a trading concern for such an amount, and upon such terms and conditions, as may be approved by the Governor in Council. That means, shortly, that the Government in Executive Council may sell the State trading concerns. But there is a proviso that possession shall not be given of that which is sold, until the approval of Parliament has been obtained. Parliament may not be sitting at the time of the sale. We have known recesses of seven or eight months in Western Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: And that is the time some of these jobs have been worked. That is the time to get to work on a job like this. It was during a recess that the Lake Clifton railway was bought.

Mr. MONEY: I assume that the electors of Western Australia may be roused up sufficiently to elect fit and proper persons to represent them in Parliament.

Hon. P. Collier: The Lake Clifton railway purchase was a job, anyhow; and it was done in recess.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MONEY: That for the moment is beside the question.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not beside the question.

Mr. MONEY: The whole point is, can Section 25 be reasonably carried out with that proviso? What person in his senses would hang up his purchase money for six months, leaving it a question whether he shall obtain possession of that which he has bought? If we cannot trust the Government, it would be better to repeal the whole section and simply let Parliament sell. It has been previously decided that the Government may sell.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Subject to certain conditions.

Mr. MONEY: Subject to a clog in the form of that proviso. The proviso undoubtedly makes Section 25 practically inoperative. The clog causes delay, and is entirely unworkable.

Hon. P. Collier: It has never been tried.

Mr. MONEY: I take it the intention of Parliament, when passing Section 25, was to make it workable. It has proved unworkable.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [6.5]: The last speaker has stated that Section 25 has proved unworkable. That is a mis-statement of fact. The section has not proved unworkable, and no member who has spoken in support of the Bill has been able to adduce an instance in which the section has prevented the sale of a State trading concern.

Mr. Money: Has the section been used?

Hon. P. COLLIER: In order to prove the section unworkable, the hon. member should have given the House some instance where it has operated to prevent the sale of a State trading concern. That he has not been able to do and has not attempted to do. On the other hand, when the House was in session,

and not in recess, an offer was made for the purchase of the State Sawmills. This section would not have prevented the sale of the sawmills. They were not sold simply because the Government were not game to submit the offer to Parliament, or I may say because the Government did not desire to dispose of the sawmills, the reason being, as stated by the Minister for Works on the floor of the House at the time, that the Government believed a majority of members were against such a proposal.

Mr. A. Thomson: The Premier stated otherwise.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It does not matter what the Premier stated; it is not correct. There is nobody more willing to disbelieve the Premier or to refuse to accept a statement of the Premier than the hon. member, when it suits him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. P. COLLIER: The statement made by the Premier is not correct. The reason why a motion for the sale of the sawmills was not submitted to Parliament was, as the Minister for Works has stated more than once, that the Government knew such a proposal would not be supported by a majority of this House. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) says that the Executive Council should have power to sell.

Mr. Money: The section gives them that power.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But not to sell definitely and finally.

Mr. Money: Possession is not to be given pending the approval of Parliament.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is a miserable quibble. The fact is that the Government of the day are unable definitely to close a sale and part with one of the State trading concerns until the approval of Parliament has been obtained. The member for Bunbury suggested that the Government might be trusted to do this kind of thing. The hon. member should be consistent, and go further and say that the Government of the day should be trusted to do the right thing with regard to establishing or purchasing new State trading concerns.

Mr. Money: That is not the subject of the Bill. I confined myself to the Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that. For my part I am not going to consider at all whether the State trading concerns have been profitable or otherwise; and I hope no member of the House will cast his vote from that aspect only, or from the aspect whether he approves or disapproves of State trading. The principle of the Bill goes much further than those points. It goes down to the very foundation of representative government. If we are going to declare that any Government shall have a free hand to dispose of public property which has cost more than two and a half millions sterling, then we might go further and say that Parliament shall be closed altogether, and that the Government shall be allowed to carry on all affairs of State without any reference to the elected representatives

of the people. Observe the inconsistency! Members opposite say, "The Government shall have the right to dispose of two and a half million pounds' worth of State property, but they shall not be allowed to change the purpose of a tuppenny-a-penny reserve without the sanction of both Houses of Parliament." The other night it was found that before the Minister for Works could construct a two mile siding at Geraldton, in connection with the carrying out of harbour works there, he must bring down a Bill to get the consent of this House and another place for the building of the siding. I do not wish to reflect upon anybody, but it is possible that a Minister who has decided to go out of office, a Minister in the position of the Minister for Railways to-day, having decided to retire from public life altogether, might in the last few weeks of his political and Parliamentary life dispose of a State trading concern.

Mr. Money: It would be done by Cabinet.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We know that Ministers influence Cabinet, especially as regards the departments which they control. If this Bill is carried, it would be possible for the Minister within a few weeks of his retirement from public life to dispose of half-a-million pounds' worth of public property. Such a principle is wrong. Were I a Minister, I should refuse to exercise that power without the consent of Parliament. If this amending Bill were carried a hundred times, and I were in a position to sell sawmills or freezing works or State ships, I should absolutely decline to exercise that power without the consent of Parliament. I would decline for the protection of myself and my own reputation. We know how easily insinuations and reflections are made when Ministers take action, particularly during recess. I refer again to the matter of the Lake Clifton railway, because it is very pertinent. Things have a habit of happening in recess, things which do not meet with the approval of Parliament. Such things do not occur when the House is sitting. The Lake Clifton railway job is the most discreditable job in the political history of this State.

Mr. Teesdale: Don't you think the word "job" implies that somebody got something out of it?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. I do not put it in that way. But it was a job done behind the back of Parliament, and those responsible for it knew it was a job, because they hushed it up for nearly two years. If this amending Bill were carried, we might have similar things done. In January—these things always spring up in January—negotiations are opened up, and the whole business is completed before Parliament knows anything about it. Parliament may not hear of it for 12 months, or two years. We see what is the result of the Lake Clifton railway job. The works at Lake Clifton are abandoned, and the railway is useless. The State is saddled with a railway which cost £66,000, and on that sum Western Australia will have to pay interest for all time. The purchase was completed behind the back of Parliament. That is the point. The

Parliament of the day would never have agreed to the purchase of the Lake Clifton railway. However, the whole thing was done before Parliament knew anything about it. It had been completed for nearly two years before Parliament had any knowledge of it. Similar cases may arise if this amending Bill is carried. Some of these State trading concerns, worth hundreds of thousands of pounds, may be sold without Parliament knowing anything about the matter. There is no remedy when the contract has been signed, sealed, and delivered. The only thing the Government have to fear in such a case is the displeasure of those who support them. We know that in the existing condition of party politics that displeasure never makes itself felt effectively.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

On motion by Mr. J. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's modification of Council's amendment No. 5.

BILL—YARRAMONY-NEWCARNIE RAILWAY.

In Committee.

Resumed from 6th December.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Authority to construct (partly considered):

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Collier has moved to strike out "Newcarnie" with a view to inserting another word.

The PREMIER: When we adjourned the other night we were on the question of the length of the line. I pointed out that to Merredin the distance was 98 miles, whereas to Newcarnie it was 96½ miles. The distances I then gave were not correct. I have since discussed the matter with the Commissioner of Railways, who does not object to Newcarnie; and with the Engineer-in-Chief, who told me the distance between Yarramony and Merredin is 85 miles in a straight line, or 3½ miles longer than the line to Newcarnie. He does not know what the surveyed mileage would be.

Hon. P. Collier: Then the mileage given in the Bill is not correct?

The PREMIER: No, for it shows a difference of only 1½ miles. However, the Engineer-in-Chief would like to further examine the country between Yarramony and Merredin, first to check the distance, and secondly to see if he can get a suitable grade. Therefore I propose to ask the Committee to agree to

the railway up to the 86-mile post. Then, next session, the House will be given an opportunity to consider the question of terminus. The line will not have reached the elbow before that time. It is a question of costs. We shall have to alter the title of the Bill to read "Yarramony Eastward." I want to strike out "to Newcarnie" from this clause, but not with a view to inserting another word.

The CHAIRMAN: The clause will not then read.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have no objection to withdrawing my amendment so as to allow the Premier to move his. When I submitted my amendment the other night I incurred the displeasure of the Minister for Works. I then felt that it was felt in some quarters that the Opposition had no right to question the wisdom of the Government in submitting the Bill. Now the statement of the Premier shows that my action was not only justified but, probably, saved the House from agreeing that the railway should junction at a point that ultimately may be found to be not the best. Of course eventually the Engineer-in-Chief may determine that Newcarnie is the best point. Still, the Premier has informed us that the Engineer-in-Chief is not sure whether the difference in distance would not be greater than three miles, and is not sure whether he can get a direct run to Merredin and that, in consequence, the Engineer-in-Chief desires to look over the country again. All this goes to justify my remarks last week and would seem to indicate that the responsible officers perform their work in a very slipshod way.

The Premier: I do not think that is right.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am speaking of facts. Last year the Engineer-in-Chief believed the line should junction at Merredin. But apparently he arrived at that conclusion on insufficient information, for he now desires to further examine the country to see if he can get a straight run to Merredin. Surely his investigations should have been more thoroughly made! Although last year he recommended a junction at Merredin, and this year he recommends a junction at Newcarnie, he is not yet satisfied as to where the line should junction. It makes one wonder whether, in the past, we have not committed ourselves to railways and other public works on recommendations by responsible officers that were made on insufficient examinations. Certainly the line cannot be started before the next Parliament has an opportunity to decide the point of junction. In order to afford the responsible officers a third opportunity to determine the best route, I will withdraw my amendment and allow the Premier to move his.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 "to Newcarnie" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN: The clause does not now make sense.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That in line 2, after "Yarramony," the word "eastward" be inserted.

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

(Clause 3—Deviation:

Hon. P. COLLIER: The usual deviation granted in such Bills is three miles. When we are asked to grant authority to deviate five miles, it is prima facie evidence that the route has not been thoroughly examined, more particularly when it is in comparatively level country such as will be traversed by this line. If a careful and permanent survey has been made, those responsible should be in a position to say more definitely than is indicated that they desire to vary the route to the extent of five miles. The only thing, I suppose, that would justify a variation would be the matter of grade.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 8—agreed to.

Schedule:

On motion by the Premier, the title of the schedule altered from "Yarramony-Newcarnie" to "Yarramony Eastward."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I suggest that these words be struck out: "thence in a general easterly direction for about 8 miles; thence in a general north-easterly direction for about 11 miles and terminating at a point in or near Newcarnie station yard on the Dowerin-Merredin railway." This would leave 77½ miles, and as the line would be only 19 miles from the other, no hardship would follow. If you have only 19 miles between two railways, there will not be a big distance to cart. It will leave eight miles on one side and 11 on the other. There will be a little longer distance to work on if the line goes into Merredin. At present there is a distance of only 11 miles on which to work.

The PREMIER: It is not necessary to do as the hon. member suggests. What I propose to do will cover the position. I move an amendment—

That the following words be struck out: "thence in a general north-easterly direction for about 11 miles and terminating at a point in or near Newcarnie station yard on the Dowerin-Merredin railway" and "and there terminated" be added.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There must be some reference in the schedule to the plans.

The PREMIER: Not necessarily. I move an amendment—

That in the last line of the schedule "96½" be struck out and "85½" be inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed, the schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Title—consequently amended.

Bill reported with amendments and an amendment to the Title.

BILL.—BROOKTON-DALE RIVER RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the previous sitting.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Deviation:

Mr. HICKMOTT: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 the word "five" be struck out with a view to inserting another word.

This deviation is altogether too big.

Mr. Latham: If the line has not been surveyed, the Premier might give an undertaking that he will adhere as nearly as possible to the route marked on the plan.

The PREMIER: A deviation is made only with the object of improving the grade.

Mr. Latham: Sometimes! The 10-mile deviations cause a lot of trouble.

The PREMIER: The country offers many difficulties, but the route of the line will be adhered to as nearly as possible.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 8—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL.—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th December.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. K. Maley—Greenough—in reply) [8.5]: Since the debate was adjourned members on both sides of the House representing pastoral constituencies, outside the South-West division, met the Premier and me in an endeavour to so amend the Bill as to remedy certain conditions, appertaining to the fencing of water courses, and water supplies, and other matters.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Under the Act, water courses are not fenced.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have often pointed that out. It has been thought desirable now to take a shorter cut by arranging a basis of rating that will enable the money to be collected easily and cheaply. This system will maintain the rate imposed under the 1918 Act, which will still be applied for certain purposes to the rest of the State outside the South-West, with the exception of the provision that I shall move in Committee. Under

this proviso, through the instrumentality of the Lands Department, a rate can be levied on the ratio of pound for pound, both in regard to the cost of administration, and the claims for dingoes destroyed. This will achieve more directly and by less cumbersome methods the objects desired in vermin destruction. A principle of local Government is involved. Many of the vermin boards in the north are far removed from departmental supervision and control. By imposing a maximum rate of one penny in the pound on the unimproved value of pastoral lease holdings, as assessed under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907, we shall obtain a revenue of approximately £12,000. The total amount paid by way of bonuses in the pastoral areas last year was £2,500. Although we anticipate getting in a greater amount of money so that bigger efforts may be made for the destruction of vermin, prompted by the payment of better bonuses, it will apparently not be necessary to rate at anything like the maximum value, particularly as regards the destruction of dingoes. It is not proposed to interfere with the Amendment Act of 1915 as applied to the Gascoyne Vermin Board. The Government will still hold power to rate, in addition to this rate, for the payment of interest and sinking fund for the production of loans for fences already erected, or for fences which in the wisdom of the Government it may be deemed necessary to erect in the future. The provisions of the 1918 Act as applied to the rest of the State, will also protect us. After several conferences with the members to whom I have referred on the subject of making a sustained effort to destroy dingoes, the amendment I shall move in Committee is put forward to meet the situation. I think it will be acceptable to those who waited on the Premier and me.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Munsie in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 6—agreed to.

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That the following new clause be added:

—Clause 7.—The Minister to supersede Boards except in the South-West division of the State. (1.) This section shall come into force on a date to be fixed by proclamation. (2.) In all parts of the State, except the south-west division, the Minister for Agriculture shall be deemed to constitute and be the board of each district; and for that purpose shall, in respect of each district, be a corporation sole, with perpetual succession and a common seal, under the name of the board of such district, and by such name may hold real and personal property and sue and be sued; and in such parts of the State all the powers, authorities, immuni-

ties, rights, privileges, obligations, and duties vested in boards under the principal Act or the Vermin Board Act, 1909, and in the Minister for Lands and Agriculture as set out by the Vermin Boards Act Amendment Act, 1915, shall, for the purposes of this section, be vested in and imposed on the Minister for Agriculture in such corporate capacity. (3.) The members of the boards existing in all parts of the State, except the South-West division, shall, on this section coming into operation, go out of office, and all property real and personal of such boards, and of the Minister for Lands and Agriculture under the Vermin Boards Act Amendment Act, 1915, including rates due and payable, shall vest in the Minister for Agriculture in such corporate capacity. (4.) In all parts of the State, except the South-West division, a rate not exceeding one penny in the pound on the unimproved value of all pastoral leases as assessed under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907, shall be payable in every year to the Minister for Agriculture, in his corporate capacity as aforesaid, by the owner of every pastoral lease within each district. The amount of the rate for each year shall, in respect of each district, be fixed by the Minister by notice in the "Gazette," and shall thereupon become due and payable; and the provisions of the principal Act relating to the application of the funds of a board shall apply to such annual rate: Provided that such annual rate shall (without prejudice to other remedies) be payable by every pastoral lessee to the Department of Lands and Surveys, together with the rent payable by him under his pastoral lease, and by half-yearly instalments as provided by the Land Act, 1898; and in default of payment of such rates in the manner aforesaid, the same consequences shall ensue as in the case of failure of a lessee in payment of rent reserved by his lease, which shall be liable to forfeiture accordingly as if such rate were rent reserved by the lease. (5) Nothing herein contained shall affect the exercise by the Minister for Agriculture, in his corporate capacity as aforesaid, of the powers relating to rating and the recovery of rates conferred on boards by Part V. of the principal Act, the rating provisions of this section being in addition thereto; but no rate shall be levied under section fifty-nine of the principal Act otherwise than for the purpose of defraying the cost of the erection, maintenance, and renewal of fences, and the payment of the interest and sinking fund of loans already or hereafter to be raised. (6.) The provisions of the principal Act relating to the fencing of water supplies on holdings shall cease to be in force in those parts of the State to which this section applies. (7.) In this section "the south-west division" means the South-West Division of the State under the Land Act, 1898.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am prepared to vote for the proposed new clause, provided an addition is made. The clause will impose a tax, but we should state in the Bill what is to be done with the money so raised. I understood that the Government were to grant a subsidy and pay a fixed amount for dingo scalps. The mere imposition of the tax will not carry us much further. It does not say how the Government will expend the money, or what the subsidy will be.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: When I introduced the Bill I gave a definite assurance that the subsidy of 10s. would be provided by way of a Government reward, and by way of regulations the vermin boards would be compelled to pay a further 10s., making up the total to what we propose now. The hon. member will realise that the point he raises is covered by way of regulations, and is not included in the Act. The hon. member should accept my assurance that the cost of administration and the necessary reward for scalps will be taken into consideration and the proportions fixed, so that we shall know what the contributions of the taxpayers will be. The Government will be prepared to make provision on a pound for pound basis, or on a 10s. for 10s. basis, as may be desired.

Point of Order.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: On a point of order. The proposed new clause is outside the Order of Leave which was for a Bill to amend the Vermin Act. The clause contains a provision to amend the Land Act, and reads as follows:—

Provided that such annual rate shall (without prejudice to other remedies) be payable by every pastoral lessee to the Department of Lands and Surveys, together with the rent payable by him under his pastoral lease, and by half-yearly instalments as provided by the Land Act, 1898; and in default of payment of such rates in the manner aforesaid, the same consequences shall ensue as in the case of failure of a lessee in payment of rent reserved by his lease, which shall be liable to forfeiture accordingly as if such rate were rent reserved by the lease.

Provision is thus made for an amendment to the Land Act, enabling forfeiture of a lease to be made should the rates not be paid.

Mr. Teesdale: It is a pity if we cannot make them pay. You know what has happened already.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is another point altogether. This is a new departure.

The Minister for Agriculture: Already a similar provision has been made in the Municipal Corporations Act, and in the Road Districts Act, in both of which there are certain clauses regarding the payment of rates, which must run with the land. The circumstances concerning the proposed clause in the Bill and the Acts I have mentioned are analogous. Rents must run with the land. It is not in contravention of the Order of Leave that the amendment is made.

Mr. Corboy: Such provisions in the Acts mentioned do not make this right.

The Minister for Agriculture: We have already established the precedent, and the point should not be raised now. The ordinary rating powers appear in the Vermin Act of 1918, and also in the Land Act, and they set out that the rates shall run with the land. That is all that is done in the proposed new clause. If no special provision is made for giving security for the payment of the rates, the position will be intolerable, for people will not pay up unless there is some penalty clause, and the proviso furnishes that penalty.

Hon. T. Walker: The Minister's contention is scarcely accurate. The amendment is not all fours with the provisions in the Road Districts Act, or the Municipal Corporations Act.

The Minister for Agriculture: All rates run with the land.

Hon. T. Walker: In this instance there is a distinct amendment. In the ordinary way the Government could proceed against defaulters by way of distress. The clause gives the power of forfeiture which is vested in the Lands Department, which is not the department controlling vermin boards. The proposed amendment is a drastic departure and the Committee has no power to amend the Land Act in the way proposed. In thus giving power to the Minister for Lands to amend the Land Act, the clause proceeds beyond the scope of the Order of Leave. The wisdom of having means of covering rates from defaulters is not the question.

Mr. Money: At the present time lessees have their contracts with the Government, and provision is made in the Act regarding forfeiture. Many documentary titles may be mortgaged, and if the amendment be agreed to, it will interfere with the rights of a third party without notice.

Hon. T. Walker: That constitutes the gravity of the amendment.

Mr. Money: The Minister would be quite safe, however, if he deleted all the words after "1918" in line 6 of the proviso. That would leave the Minister with his ordinary rights to recover unpaid rates by way of distress.

Hon. T. Walker: That would not get over the difficulty. The administration of the Vermin Act is vested in the Minister for Agriculture, and the clause shifts the responsibility for the collection of rates to the Minister for Lands.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Minister for Lands would merely be the rent collector for the Minister for Agriculture.

Hon. T. Walker: The fact remains that the clause is out of order, and beyond the scope of the Order of Leave.

The Premier: I do not know that there will be the slightest objection raised by lessees, for this will be a convenience to the lessees, who will be able to pay to the Lands Department.

Hon. T. Walker: It is not a matter of convenience, but a question of the clause not being within the Order of Leave.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We contend you cannot amend the Land Act under the Bill to amend the Vermin Act.

The Premier: The clause merely says that the Lands Department can issue the notices for the collection of rates, and so forth. As a matter of fact, the accounts for both the Agricultural Department and the Lands Department are dealt with in the one office now. It will be a convenience to have the rent collected in this way. I do not know that any special power is required to enable us to collect it in this way.

Hon. T. Walker: You have no right to amend one Act by another without the order of leave giving permission.

The Premier: The Minister will be the board, and will have to sue. The suggestion of the member for Bunbury should meet all requirements.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am not discussing the method of collection or the matter of convenience. I contend that this subclause amends the Land Act, and that that is outside the Order of Leave which is to amend the Vermin Act.

The Minister for Agriculture: In order to save time I ask the hon. member to accept the new clause. I shall have the matter inquired into and then, if necessary, an amendment can be made in another place.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Chairman must rule on the point I have raised.

The Chairman: Subsection 7 of Section 46 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1921, is fatal to Subclause 4 of the proposed new clause. The subclause is providing for taxation, and Subsection 7 reads—

Bills imposing taxation shall deal only with the imposition of taxation, and any provision therein dealing with any other matter shall be of no effect.

If the hon. member desires a ruling I shall give it, but I would advise the Minister to report progress and have the matter inquired into.

The Minister for Agriculture: The taxation is already fixed by the Acts of 1908, 1915, and 1918. There is no imposition of taxation under this Bill. This measure alters only the incidence of the taxation. Surely that is not an infringement of the Constitution Act.

The Chairman: I am prepared to give a ruling if the Committee desire it. I uphold the contention of the member for North-East Fremantle.

Progress reported.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's amendment.

Order of the Day read for the consideration of the Council's message No. 25 showing an amendment made by the Council in the Stamp Act Amendment Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: My attention has been drawn to the nature of this message by which the concurrence of this House is requested in an amendment made by the Council in the

Stamp Act Amendment Bill. The Bill in question is undoubtedly one imposing taxation, as it extends the period during which a certain duty is imposed from January, 1924, to January, 1925. The Bill, therefore, under the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1921, may not be amended by the Legislative Council, although this House may be requested to make amendments. I suggest that a motion be made for a suitable message returning Message No. 25 for reconsideration.

The PREMIER: I entirely agree with you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the message is a mistake on the part of the Council. I move—

That the following message be transmitted to the Council: "The Legislative Assembly requests the reconsideration by the Legislative Council of its message No. 25 returned herewith, inasmuch as the Bill for an Act to amend the Stamp Act, 1921, referred to in the said message, being one by which taxation is imposed, may not, under the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1921, be amended by the Legislative Council."

Question put and passed.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of three amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Munsie in the Chair; Mr. A. A. Wilson in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 2.—Insert after the word "age" in line 4 the words "or between that age and fifty."

No. 2. After the word "lift" in line 5 add the following: "unless he (a) has served the Empire in any war, or (b) is physically incapable of undertaking more exacting or more laborious work. Provided that no person so employed shall be paid less than the minimum wage prescribed for adult labourers."

No. 3. Strike out the second proviso.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

Order discharged.

Order of the Day read for the consideration of the Bill in Committee (Progress, Clause 6).

The PREMIER: I move—

That the order be discharged from the Notice Paper.

Mr. Marshall: Good-bye, little girl, good-bye.

Question put and passed.

SELECT COMMITTEE—GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS, MEAT CONTRACTS.

To adopt Report.

Mr. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [8.45]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the recommendations of the select committee should be adopted, and that George Cordin, trading either as the Claremont Meat Company or under any other title, should not be permitted to tender for further Government contracts, and that the employees responsible for receiving frozen meat at Government institutions should be suitably punished.

This matter was discussed on the Estimates, and I am indeed surprised to find that right up to to-day no improvement has been effected in the inspection of meat supplied to Government institutions at Claremont, but that the same conditions still apply.

The Colonial Secretary: There is no frozen meat now.

Mr. McCALLUM: There is no improvement in the inspection. Very little if any notice has been taken of the select committee's recommendations.

The Premier: You are wrong.

Mr. McCALLUM: The select committee recommended a definite system of inspection. There has been no improvement in that regard.

The Premier: Have you been down to Claremont to see?

Mr. McCALLUM: I know that to be the case. The inspections recommended by the select committee can be made without any cost to the Government.

The Colonial Secretary: That is not so.

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes.

The Premier: It will have to be made, anyhow.

Mr. McCALLUM: There is an inspector of the Health Department resident in Claremont, and we are advised that he can inspect the meat each morning without interference with his present duties.

Mr. Mann: Is not the meat inspected at the abattoirs?

Mr. McCALLUM: But no one knows where the meat is going when it leaves the abattoirs.

Mr. Mann: The staff ought to know the quality of meat required by the contract.

Mr. McCALLUM: It was shown conclusively during the select committee's inquiry that some of the staff did not know thawed frozen meat from meat that had been in a cooling chamber. Mr. Rust is a case in point. Here in Perth there is a system of inspecting meat before it goes to the hospitals or to Wooroloo. The meat for the Claremont institutions leaves the contractor's premises for

delivery to the institutions. It should be inspected when it is being loaded by the contractor to go out. At the institutions there could be a second inspection, if necessary. That would be a double check. Such a system would be fairer than the present one to those who are trading. I have been advised that the contractor who has been supplying frozen meat to the Claremont institutions is the lowest tenderer for the next quarter.

Opposition member: He will get the contract.

The Premier: No.

Mr. McCALLUM: I want to make sure he will not get any more contracts. I have been informed that he has not secured the present contract, although he was the lowest tenderer.

The Colonial Secretary: Surely that meets with your approval.

Mr. McCALLUM: But he was only stopped after I intervened.

The Colonial Secretary: No.

Mr. McCALLUM: Why was that man ever permitted to tender again?

The Colonial Secretary: The Tender Board would never have accepted his tender.

Mr. McCALLUM: The man's tender went on to the Treasury with a recommendation from the Tender Board as being the lowest tender.

The Colonial Secretary: The tender was never approved by the Minister concerned.

Mr. McCALLUM: No, because I drew the Treasury's attention to what was happening. Had I not been apprised of what was happening, the possibilities are that this man would have been the successful tenderer for supplies during the coming three months.

The Premier: No.

Mr. McCALLUM: We know how these things go through when they are not challenged. What has the Colonial Secretary done since this matter was discussed on the Estimates? Why has he not apprised the Tender Board that this man must not be permitted to tender again?

The Colonial Secretary: The matter has been fully discussed.

Mr. McCALLUM: And no action has been taken.

The Colonial Secretary: Yes, action has been taken.

Mr. McCALLUM: Only since I got in touch with the Treasury. Fortunately, I found out what was going on, and drew the Treasury's attention to it. Months have elapsed since the select committee reported. We on this side were told that we were precipitate in bringing the matter forward on the Estimates. Since then weeks have gone by, and the Minister has never even advised the Tender Board that this contractor must be struck off the tender list.

The Colonial Secretary: You do not know what you are saying.

Mr. McCALLUM: I know that to be the truth, and I challenge the Minister to deny it.

The Colonial Secretary: The man's tender was the lowest, but that does not mean that it would be accepted.

Mr. McCALLUM: In view of the exposures, as to defrauding the State and robbing the public, why was this man still permitted to tender for Government supplies?

The Colonial Secretary: The tender would never have been accepted.

The Premier: Not even if the hon. member had not made representations.

Mr. McCALLUM: It is easy to say that after the event. But the Colonial Secretary should have acted after the discussion on the Estimates, if he did not act immediately upon the presentation of the select committee's report.

Hon. P. Collier: You overlook the fact that the Minister has been engaged in a strenuous combat with an executive recently.

Mr. McCALLUM: If the whole business of the country is to be hung up while a wrangle goes on between certain Ministers and their executive, it would be well to call in arbitrators to settle the dispute.

Hon. P. Collier: I am prepared to act as arbitrator.

Mr. McCALLUM: I know that the contractor in question is now not trading under his own name, but under that of the Claremont Meat Company. I trust that sufficient vigilance will be exercised to ensure that, neither under his own name nor any other designation, will this man ever again be permitted to secure a Government contract.

Mr. Latham: For how long?

Hon. P. Collier: For life, or at least for 21 years.

Mr. McCALLUM: The department know full well that this is not the man's first offence. The letters produced to the select committee show that in the case of both the State and the Commonwealth he had previously offended. The letters show that he had previously been warned regarding his supplies. And still no action has been taken up to this day. I want a declaration by this House that the man shall not be permitted to tender again.

The Premier: Nor any of his employees who helped him in the swindle.

Mr. McCALLUM: Are they to lose their jobs? I have included in the motion a demand that the Government officers responsible should not escape punishment, although the responsibility to see that the contract was carried out did not lie entirely with them.

Mr. Mann: Was there guilty knowledge?

Mr. McCALLUM: The butcher at the asylum and the cook at the Old Men's Home said they knew the terms of the contract, and they were responsible for receiving the meat. The authorities at the Training College protested right through, but their protests were without effect.

Mr. Mann: Did the other two officials know the difference between fresh meat and frozen?

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes, and they even doubted the knowledge of men possessing

much wider experience than theirs. I have an idea what was going on behind the scenes. All the persons responsible may regard themselves as fortunate that they are getting off with a mere declaration that they will not be permitted to tender for Government supplies in future. They have not given the State a fair crack of the whip. Look what this sort of thing means to other tenderers. What chance has an honest trader of submitting a price against such a person as this contractor. If proper inspection of meat for Government institutions can be made in the city, there is no reason why it should not be made in Claremont also. As I have said, an expert of the Health Department resides in Claremont, and half an hour of his time each morning would suffice to see that supplies to the Claremont institutions are in accordance with terms of contract and up to standard. I am surprised to find that after all these weeks the Minister has to confess he has done nothing.

The Colonial Secretary: I confess nothing of the sort. Sit down, and I will tell you what has been done.

The Premier: This man is on the black list.

Mr. McCALLUM: Nothing was done until the Tender Board recommended this man's tender for the new quarter's supplies.

The Colonial Secretary: No approval has been given to the tender.

Mr. McCALLUM: The approval was withheld only when I intervened. I do not know what would have happened had I not intervened.

The Premier: The tender would not have been accepted.

Mr. McCALLUM: I do not know that, but I do know that the Tender Board recommended the acceptance of the tender.

The Premier: That is so.

Mr. McCALLUM: If the Colonial Secretary had carried out his job, he would have advised the Tender Board not to receive a tender from this man. I shall be glad to learn from the Colonial Secretary if he has done anything. I do not know that he has done a thing since the question was previously discussed here. We should insist upon proper inspection of the meat. If no improvement be made in the inspection, men like that one we were able to expose can secure the contract and the same position may crop up again. I hope the House will agree to the motion, and that the Minister will undertake that it will be given effect to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. S. Sampson—Swan) [9.2]: The hon. member is very anxious to prove that nothing has been done, and that because this man's tender came forward as the lowest tender, *ipso facto* it was to be accepted. It would not have been accepted, because it was definitely decided that, if possible, we should prevent this man from tendering, and should also inflict a fine on him. However, it is not possible to fine him. The Government stand solidly for

the protection of inmates in institutions, and no effort has been spared to suitably punish the guilty. This man's tender will not be accepted for Government supplies.

Hon. P. Collier: Has the question of prosecution been considered?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Evidently there is no case. I regret the evidence before the select committee was not a little more convincing, for that added to the difficulties of my position. However, I need not go any further into that, for I discussed it fully on a previous occasion. This butcher's tender will not be accepted, and he will not be permitted to supply. The officers who received the frozen meat will be punished. That is being considered now. But the position is very intricate, for they are not all under the Public Service Act, and it would be unfair to treat one differently from another. If it be found competent to deal with them as we wish to do, they will be discharged. If it had happened in a private concern, the matter could easily have been cleaned up. However, there has been no neglect; I do not know what the hon. member's object is in continuing the suggestion. It is questionable whether it is competent for us to do more than has been done. If it were possible I should feel justified in going to practically any length in dealing with the offenders. The matter has been dealt with thoroughly and properly.

Mr. HUGHES (East Perth) [9.8]: I thought the Colonial Secretary would have given some reply to the statements made by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum). The contractor in question tendered for this quarter's supplies, and his tender was sent along by the board as the successful tender.

The Premier: No, as the lowest tender.

Mr. HUGHES: And, of course, successful tender in the ordinary course; indeed it was recommended by the board for acceptance. The Colonial Secretary assures us that everything has been done. I do not know that we are entitled to take that assurance, in face of his lack of explanation. The Colonial Secretary has treated this matter too flippantly from the start.

The Colonial Secretary: Oh, nonsense! Where is the flippancy? Don't you understand language.

Mr. HUGHES: Well, disregard of his responsibilities, if he likes it that way. The Colonial Secretary does not appear to have a proper regard for his responsibilities. The serious charge was put up by two members on the floor of the House that frozen meat was being supplied to the institutions.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot go all over the question again.

Mr. HUGHES: No, but I am replying to the Colonial Secretary's statement that everything has been done. I do not think anything has been done. After the events that led to the appointment of the select committee, one would have thought the moment the report

was available the Minister would have gone into it and notified the tender board that this contractor was on the black list. If the Minister showed the regard he professes for the inmates of institutions—

The Colonial Secretary: I do not profess any regard for you.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not want the Minister's regard.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that a certain person should not be allowed to tender for Government contracts.

Mr. HUGHES: I am replying to the Minister, who said everything had been done. We find that nothing has been done. The Tender Board should have been notified that this man was not allowed to tender.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Tender Board has nothing to do with the question.

Mr. HUGHES: I think it has. The Minister has failed to answer the member for South Fremantle.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for South Fremantle has moved a motion dealing, not with the past, but with the future.

Mr. HUGHES: I regret that it should have been necessary for the hon. member to move such a motion. I would have expected the Colonial Secretary to take action without any direction from the House.

The Colonial Secretary: But you do not understand.

Mr. HUGHES: In consequence of the Colonial Secretary's lack of desire to take the necessary action, the member for South Fremantle has to police the tenders.

The Colonial Secretary: You should be policed.

Mr. HUGHES: I might be policed, but the Colonial Secretary will be lucky if he is not pole-axed before the executive has done with him. The member for South Fremantle has to police the Minister's own department, to see that what happened in the past shall not happen in the future. And we get from the Colonial Secretary the statement that everything has been done! Perhaps everything he is capable of doing has been done, but if he is not capable of doing more than—

The Premier: Are you supporting the motion?

Mr. HUGHES: If the Colonial Secretary is not capable of doing more than he has done—

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister is not under discussion. The hon. member will discuss the motion.

Mr. HUGHES: It is necessary that the motion shall be carried and the House thus issue a direction to the Colonial Secretary as to what shall be done, in order that we may feel sure that it will be done. I hope the House will agree to the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [9.13]: It is usual that transgressors of the sort under discussion be put on the black list. That is done by order of Executive Council. It is true the Tender

Board sent forward this contractor's tender as being the lowest. However, the man has now been put on the black list, and steps are being taken to punish the officials who received the frozen meat. All this cannot be done in five minutes. Advice has to be sought of the Crown Law Department. We want to do justice by the delinquents, to see that they shall not be wrongfully punished. In other words, we want to make the punishment fit the crime. I can assure the hon. member that that is being done. Whether or not the motion be carried, this contractor who did transgress will not be allowed to tender again. That is the usual practice, as the Leader of the Opposition knows. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) was somewhat hard in his criticism of the Colonial Secretary. I can assure him that the necessary steps have been taken.

Mr. McCallum: Only since I intervened.

The PREMIER: I am obliged to the hon. member for calling attention to the matter and doing what he did. He took the right course. I have nothing to say against that.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [9.17]: One is surprised at the hardihood of this individual in again submitting tenders in the light of what was revealed by the inquiry. Certainly the man who has the impudence to tender for the supply of meat to the same institution will require to be closely watched by the officers of the department in the future to see that he does not sneak in again by some door or other the kind of stuff that he supplied before. The man who, immediately after the disclosures that were revealed by the select committee, can again calmly submit a tender to the same institution, is capable of going to any length in order to secure a footing with the department once more. I am only sorry that it was not found possible to prosecute him. I realise in a matter of this kind that there would be some difficulty in obtaining a conviction. I take it that the Minister asked the Crown Law Department to advise him on that matter, and I am only sorry that a person who would supply offal—bullocks' heart and liver and that kind of stuff—to an institution such as the Hospital for the Insane for the purpose of making beef-tea or gravy for the invalids, could not be punished. An aspect raised by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) was not touched on by the Minister in the course of his reply. Possibly he overlooked it. I refer to the question of the future inspection of supplies for the institution. It is quite possible that the person who supplied meat in the past may not be the only dishonest trader.

The Colonial Secretary: It was an oversight on my part. I should have said that a close inspection will be made.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is necessary, of course, that a strict inspection should be made. I do not know why the officers of the department should not act as inspectors,

although many of them would not know frozen meat from fresh meat.

The Premier: They could soon be taught.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Very soon, I think. The officials handling it should know. But there again the personal equation comes into it, and we might be let down by some officer receiving meat that should not be accepted. I trust that the Minister will see that the inspection of the meat is properly carried out in the future, and that the institutions will be protected.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—LONG SERVICE LEAVE.

Debate resumed from 17th October on motion moved by Mr. Willcock, as follows:—

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

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [9.23]: This is a very old friend indeed. It has come up several times before. In 1912 it was considered by the Cabinet of the day, and because of the great cost that would have been involved it was not entertained. In those days the cost would have been less than to-day, because wages were so much lower. In that year the request was refused. In 1913 it was again considered, and a similar reply sent to the unions concerned. The position is the same to-day. I would like to see everybody having holidays. Of course there are certain annual holidays, but the motion refers to long service leave. The cost has always been the trouble, and always will be. If the motion were agreed to, the expenditure involved would be over £400,000.

Hon. P. Collier: That would be spread over a number of years, because it would not be possible for all to take their holidays at the one time.

The PREMIER: I agree, but the annual cost would be £50,000 at least. I am afraid, therefore, that we cannot face the expense. In the civil service we have in addition to annual leave, long service leave, but a great many civil servants do not enjoy that because they cannot afford to take a holiday. It would be fairer if the civil service were paid the extra amount represented by the leave, and then if they wanted the leave they should be allowed to take it without pay. However, I do not suppose any members of the service would be inclined to take that view of the position. It is all a matter of cost. If we have £50,000 to spend it would be better to spend it in employing labour rather than in the direction of paying men for taking holidays. I think the motion should be withdrawn. When motions of this description are placed on the Notice Paper, naturally hon. members have no means of ascertaining what amount of expenditure would be involved.

Hon. T. Walker: Do you oppose it on the ground that there is no money with which to do it?

The PREMIER: I oppose it on the ground that the hon. member opposed it in 1912. I will give the same answer that the hon. member gave, if he likes. I will read the letter that appears on the file if he likes.

Hon. T. Walker: I only wanted you to answer my question.

The PREMIER: The objections were similar in 1912, and I oppose the motion to-day on the same ground.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.28]: The Premier opposes the motion on the same ground on which it was opposed in 1912, namely that of cost. Things have decidedly changed since 1912; conditions of employment, in connection with the salaried staff, have altered considerably since that time. In 1912 salaries were fixed by Parliament; to-day they are fixed by an Appeal Board, or we might call it another Arbitration Court. Salaries have been considerably increased by that Appeal Board. In 1912 wages men had their wages fixed by the Arbitration Court. Now the salaried staff and the wages staff are on a more equal footing than was the case in 1912. There is no reason why a man who joins the salaried staff should have greater privileges than a man who joins the wages staff. To-day members of the salaried staff have the same conditions as to cost of living applied to them as is the case with wages men, consequently they are reaping greater advantages than they did in 1912. It used to be said that the salaried men were earning less in comparison with those who were outside the service, and therefore were entitled to privileges which the others did not get, because of the difference in their pay. They are not in that position to-day. They now have an appeal board to go to in the same way that the wages men have an Arbitration Court to go to. If a man has given long service in one department and can get leave in consequence, another is entitled to the same privilege if he works in another department. If a man in the Public Works Department can get long service leave, another man in the Railway Department should also get it. That is only equitable.

The Premier: You could not do it in 1913, and we cannot do it now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I admit that finance is a bar to some extent, but that difficulty could be overcome by arrangement.

The Premier: It could not be overcome in 1913, when the pay was smaller.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The conditions are different. The wages staff of the railways has not obtained increases in the same proportion as has the salaried staff.

The Premier: That is not so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier has frequently referred to the large increases in salary consequent upon the appeals to the Appeal Board.

The Premier: I am glad there have been increases.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not complaining of the increases, but desire to show they are more equitable. There are men in the service who started on small salaries in the hope that when they reached old age they would receive some consideration. If a man retires from an office in the service he is entitled to a pension if he joined it before 1905, but, if he retires from the railway service, he gets nothing.

The Premier: That is the Act of 1904.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is the Act of 1871 under which pensions were paid, but it does not apply to wages men. Men have been working in the Railway Department for 40 years in responsible positions, but are not entitled to the privileges accorded to those employed on the office staff. The Government should see whether some arrangement cannot be made for a certain proportion of the wages staff to be granted leave each year. There is no occasion to make up back leave in one year. Those wages men who have had long services are entitled to the same consideration as the salaried men.

Mr. HUGHES (East Perth) [9.35]: The Premier says that it would cost £400,000 to grant accumulated leave to wages men in the railways. It would be impossible to let all the men go at once, for the service could not be carried on under such conditions. All the wages men would not come within the scope of this motion, for some of them have not been there longer than 10 or 15 years.

The Premier: The 20 years' men are not in it.

Mr. HUGHES: If the men were worked off during the next 10 years it would cost £40,000 a year, if we accept the Premier's figures as correct. That is not an unreasonable request to make to the Government. To one section of the community the Government are giving concessions worth £217,000 a year in cheap railway freights.

The Premier: We give the railway men on holidays free fares.

Mr. HUGHES: I am not referring to that. I want extended to another section of the community the same privileges that are extended to the other. Why should one section of the community have certain privileges that are denied to another?

The Premier: It is impossible to give equal privileges all round.

Mr. HUGHES: It could be done.

The Premier: The railway men earn their free passes.

Mr. McCallum: Men in breweries get free beer.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! We are not discussing that question.

Mr. HUGHES: The Premier says this is not a practicable request. It does not follow that because a man takes a three months' holiday another man will have to be put on in his place. It can be so arranged that the work is carried on without the employment of additional labour.

Hon. T. Walker: That is often done in the service.

Mr. HUGHES: I have had a conference with representatives of the loco. drivers and the Traffic Branch of the railways. The loco. men assured me that if this provision were brought into operation, additional hands would not have to be put on while men were on leave. At a certain time of the year the existing staff would cover all the work, while the men were away on holidays. In other branches of the service similar arrangements are made, and the unimportant work is allowed to stand over until the officer responsible for it returns.

The Premier: The officers are all fully occupied, and I protest against that suggestion.

Mr. HUGHES: I was not suggesting that the men did not work.

The Premier: It sounded like that.

Mr. HUGHES: It is too near the elections for the Premier to make a suggestion of that sort. When I was in the Public Service we used to think that if our Minister worked as hard as we did things would be better in the service.

The Premier: He must have been an easy-going Minister.

Mr. HUGHES: The Premier has put before the House the maximum cost. I take it the Premier implies that for every man who is given leave another would have to be put on in his place.

The Premier: I think so. The men do work all the time.

Mr. HUGHES: It is the practice in the service to allow officers to go on leave without employing additional help. The same thing could be applied to the railways. The Premier has given a concession to agriculturists, wealthy and poor alike, worth over £200,000 a year.

The Premier: In what way?

Mr. HUGHES: By allowing 25 per cent. off the freight on super, and 50 per cent. off the freight on wheat.

Mr. Harrison: That is only a business proposition. You double the returns to the railways with the freight coming back.

Mr. HUGHES: It is a business proposition to give men in the railways three months rest, because they come back to work with renewed vigour.

The Premier: Don't forget that firewood is carried cheaply.

Mr. HUGHES: If we must give concessions to the farming community, let them be applied to the poorer section. Why should a wages man in the railways, earning £4 10s. a week, be asked to work for wealthy farmers in receipt of large incomes? The wages men make possible the transport of those things which bring so much wealth to the farmers. The Premier should review the position, and cut out the concessions to the wealthier section of the farming community. By this means he would save far more than the £40,000 I referred to, and could then give holidays to the men in the railways.

The Premier: In 1913 the super. rates were put up.

Mr. HUGHES: We cannot compare that year with the present, because we have the assurance of the "West Australian" that we have turned the corner. According to the Premier our financial position has improved. It is unfair to ask the railway men to bear the whole of the burden of the development of the State.

The Premier: The whole of the burden?

Mr. HUGHES: They are bearing an undue share of it.

The Premier: No.

Mr. HUGHES: The concessions to the farming community are given at the expense of the wages men in the railways.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss railway freights.

Mr. HUGHES: It is a question whether the railways can find the necessary money.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not the question before the House; it is a question whether long service leave conditions applying to the salaried staff shall be applied also to the wages staff. It has nothing to do with the railways at all.

Mr. HUGHES: You, Mr. Speaker, allowed the Premier to put up as an argument that the railways could not find the money to provide this concession.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Premier did not refer to the railways at all. He said it was a question of cost.

The Premier: I did not refer to the railways. I referred purely to the financial position.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Premier's argument was that the financial position of the State could not allow of this being done.

Mr. HUGHES: I merely wish to show that the statement made by the Premier will not bear analysis. If that is not within the scope of the debate, I have nothing more to say.

Hon. M. F. Troy: On a point of order, I submit that the hon. member is in order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have not ruled him out of order.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I thought you had done so.

Mr. SPEAKER: I drew the attention of the hon. member to the fact that he was wandering from the point.

Mr. HUGHES: I have pointed out one avenue the Premier could avail himself of to secure the money involved in this concession. There is another avenue. The railway men carry on a service through mile after mile of unoccupied land. The provision of those railway facilities materially increases in value the land through which the railways pass. If the owners of that unoccupied and unutilised land were made to pay something towards the railway service, the cost of this concession would be amply covered. If the Government levied a tax of 1s. in the pound on the unimproved value of the land, that impost would produce over a million pounds. The Premier should in-

sist upon those people holding unutilised land paying something towards the railways. I hope the House will not have regard to the bogey raised by the Premier that it is a financial impossibility to grant this concession.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	..	13
A tie					0

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Cbesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Heron	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Corboy
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. H. K. Maley
Mr. Carter	Mr. James Mitchell
Mr. Durack	Mr. Money
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Latham	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. C. C. Maley	(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Willcock	Mr. George
Mr. Davies	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Troy	Mr. Denton

Mr. SPEAKER: I give my casting vote as I am bound, irrespective of my personal opinions, to protect the revenue. In the circumstances, I shall vote with the noes and declare the motion negatived.

Question thus negatived.

ESPERANCE-NORTHWARDS RAILWAY EXTENSION PROJECT.

Council's Messages.

Order of the Day read for the consideration of Messages Nos. 10 and 12 from the Legislative Council regarding the extension of the Esperance-Northwards railway.

Mr. SPEAKER: I draw the attention of the House to the following: The consideration of Messages Nos. 10 and 12 from the Legislative Council was set down in one Order of the Day but no debate can take place without a motion and I cannot see how a motion can possibly be framed. Message No. 12 is more like a polite letter of explanation than a message such as ordinarily passes between the two Houses, and it admits of no action by this House. Message No. 10 presents for concurrence a resolution of which part was passed by this House in the affirmative and part dealt with in the negative. On both grounds, to put a question that the resolution be concurred in, would be a direct violation of Standing Order 176. No motion being possible, the Order of the Day must be allowed to lapse.

Hon. T. WALKER: I do not wish to take the drastic step of disagreeing with your ruling. I would like to make an explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will allow the hon. member to make an explanation but I cannot allow a discussion without a motion.

Hon. T. WALKER: It will be remembered that I moved the resolution now covered in the Council's Message No. 12 and my resolution as I moved it in this House is precisely as carried in the Legislative Council.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is the reason why we cannot deal with it here, because we have already dealt with it this session.

Hon. T. WALKER: There is nothing in our Standing Orders which prevents us accepting or rejecting any amendment made by the Council, unless it be to money Bills.

Mr. SPEAKER: Standing Order 176 prevents it.

Hon. T. WALKER: That deals with another phase. It says—

No question shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any question which, during the same session, has been resolved in the affirmative or negative.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is exactly the same question.

Hon. T. WALKER: There is a broad distinction. No question is involved that has been definitely settled. It has been treated as all messages are treated between the two Chambers. A resolution carried here can be forwarded by message to another place and can be returned to us either as we sent it or as amended by the Council. No finality has been reached in the matter until we have dealt with this message. This is part of the process of our bi-cameral Chamber procedure. The Council can by message send the resolution back to us amended.

The Premier: They did not do so.

Hon. T. WALKER: Practically they have done so. I admit the wording of Message No. 12 is somewhat vague. The message should have been that they had already considered the message and had made an amendment, in which amendment they desired the concurrence of the Assembly. They have practically done that in Message No. 10 because that covers precisely the same resolution that I moved in this Chamber. It was in deference to the promise made by the Premier that this question would receive prompt attention next session that the matter was not gone on with before this.

The Premier: The House would not consider it without the information it was necessary to get, including the surveys and other particulars.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Kanowna would facilitate matters if he suggested what motion he could submit.

Hon. T. WALKER: I could submit a motion that we concur in Message No. 10.

Mr. SPEAKER: I could not accept that motion, because we have already dealt with it.

Hon. T. WALKER: But this is unprecedented. You, Mr. Speaker, have no instance in your records on all fours with this.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the Standing Orders.

Hon. T. WALKER: But they do not affect the position. With all due deference I contend that Standing Order 176 does not affect the position, because it refers only to a debate on something already finalised.

Mr. SPEAKER: Part of the resolution was dealt with in the affirmative and part in the negative.

Hon. T. WALKER: I differ strongly from that view. The resolution was not finalised because we sent a message to another place asking them to concur in our resolution. They have replied by sending back a resolution precisely similar to the motion submitted to this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are making an explanation.

Hon. T. WALKER: Then I move—

That the Legislative Assembly concurs in the Legislative Council's Message No. 10.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot accept your motion. Message No. 10 reads—

The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that on the 8th November it passed the following resolution:—
"That in the opinion of this House, the Government should seek the necessary authority this session to extend the Esperance-Northwards railway, now in course of construction, so that it will junction with the main railway system of the State at Norraman," presents the same to the Legislative Assembly for its concurrence.

That was received on the 15th November. On the same day the following message, No. 12, came from the Legislative Council—

The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly, in reply to its message No. 11, that the Legislative Council has already passed a resolution which is of like substance to that set out in the message. The only difference between the two resolutions is that in the former the words "this session" are substituted for the words "as early as possible." Under these circumstances, but for the difficulty which arises owing to the provisions of its Standing Order No. 120, the Legislative Council is necessarily prepared to concur with the resolution of the Legislative Assembly with this alteration therein above referred to.

That is we must concur in the resolution containing the words "this session," which we have already decided in the negative. The Council never considered our message. They sent us a polite message telling us they would have done so but they were precluded by their Standing Order No. 120, because they had passed the other motion before our message was considered. Now I say we are precluded from dealing with their message under our

Standing Order No. 176, which is exactly the same as the Council's Standing Order No. 127. Notwithstanding that the hon. member has argued to the contrary, I am bound to interpret the Standing Order as I have indicated. It reads—

No question shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any question which during the same session has been resolved in the affirmative or negative.

We have decided in the negative one section of the resolution and in the affirmative the other section. Therefore, we cannot touch it. It is not merely a matter that is the same in substance; it is precisely the same resolution. It is obvious this House cannot accept the motion contained in the Council's message.

Hon. T. WALKER: Even if it were permissible, it would be almost useless at this late stage to pass the resolution. I wish to explain—

Mr. SPEAKER: I know the hon. member is anxious about this matter, and with the permission of the House I shall allow him to explain.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am under the impression that both in the other Chamber and in this, the Standing Order has been misunderstood. Clearly Standing Order No. 176 deals with matters finally disposed of. If it had been a resolution that went no further than this House, that originated here and ended here, your ruling would be strictly to the point, but when the matter is not finalised until it has gone to another place and been returned therefrom and then considered, it does not come under that Standing Order. Otherwise we should not be able to deal with amendments to a Bill, because it could be said we had dealt with the same matter previously. When it is a matter of transmission from one Chamber to the other, the question is not finally completed until all the messages have passed. This resolution is in course of consideration; it is not finally dealt with. Will you permit me to say how I rejoice at the change of events. It was this House that was always in favour of the measure, and carried it again and again, while another House always blocked it. Now another place is the more eager and wants this railway constructed more speedily than we do. I rejoice in the progress of public opinion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order.

Hon. T. WALKER: I recognise that, but it is important to note that another place is leading this Chamber in progressive legislation for the benefit of the country.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member holds that Standing Order No. 176 does not apply because the question was not finally dealt with. There is no doubt this House had finally dealt with the question.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am not prepared to argue it further to-night.

The Premier: You have done your duty by it, if anybody has.

SELECT COMMITTEE—RETIREMENT J. B. CONNOLLY.

To adopt report.

Mr. HUGHES (East Perth) [10.9]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House, John Bide Connolly should be reinstated in the railway service in accordance with the recommendations of the select committee; or, granted a special allowance in compliance with the provisions of Section 6 of the Superannuation Act, 1871.

J. B. Connolly was an officer in the railway service prior to 1905. As he occupied a salaried position, he came within the scope of the Superannuation Act, 1871. Connolly was retired from the service to facilitate improvements which, under the Superannuation Act, carried the right to a special annual allowance. The Commissioner of Railways, when he retired Connolly, thought he was retiring an efficient officer. He gave him a year's salary, and apparently thought he was doing something handsome by Connolly. The Commissioner, however, deprived Connolly of his double rights. Being retired as an excess officer he was entitled to a special annual allowance under the provisions of Section 6 of the Superannuation Act, from which decision there is no appeal. If there is no work for an officer, he cannot be retained. But the purpose of the Act is to give an officer the benefit of his years of service by way of a special annual allowance or pension. If Connolly had been charged with inefficiency, he would have had the right of appeal, and the department would have been bound to substantiate the charge by sworn evidence. By retiring him as an excess officer, the department deprived Connolly of his right of appeal, and he was not given a special annual allowance. Consequently a grave injustice has been done him. Having reviewed all the circumstances, the select committee recommend that he be reinstated in such a way that he shall suffer no loss from his period of temporary retirement. If the department are not prepared to take advantage of that offer, Connolly should be brought within the provisions of the Superannuation Act and granted the special annual allowance. The motion merely asks the House to give effect to the findings of the select committee.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [10.12]: I do not know much about Connolly's ability; personally I know nothing. He was retired from the service and I believe he was perfectly satisfied with the amount of £270 paid him. Then I heard there was a protest, but up to the time the money was accepted, he was content with the arrangement by which he was paid this retiring allowance.

Mr. Corboy: That is not so.

The PREMIER: Yes; I saw the letter. The point was not raised till afterwards.

Mr. Corboy: The receipt for the money is endorsed "Received under protest."

The PREMIER: I did not say it was not so endorsed. The letter of the 6th October, 1922, reads—

Yours of even date relative to retirement of Mr. J. B. Connolly. I note decision as conveyed to you by the pensions board. As you state you are unable to supply the necessary certificate to the pensions board, we now desire that you will give effect to your previous offer of a year's salary, i.e., £270 and trust this will be made available early as Mr. Connolly has now completed his leave. Thomas Kenafick.

One would have thought that meant finality. The money was sent along. On the 13th October the following letter was forwarded by Mr. Kenafick:—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 7th instant regarding Mr. J. B. Connolly, and desire to advise that the cheque has been collected by him. This is without prejudice to any further action that may be taken by himself or the union to further his claims for the payment of a pension. (Signed) Thos. Kenafick.

That was after the receipt of the £270. The mover, of course, knows that.

Mr. Munsie: That was all explained in the evidence.

Mr. Corboy: That is all dealt with in the report.

The PREMIER: An officer retired should say whether he agrees that the offer which has been made to him is acceptable or not. It is unthinkable that every man who is in the Government service must be kept in the Government service.

Mr. Munsie: The select committee do not say that, and the motion does not say it.

Mr. Corboy: Have you read the select committee's report?

The PREMIER: Every word of it.

Mr. Corboy: Then you have forgotten a lot of it.

The PREMIER: I never forget anything. It is unthinkable that a man, whether suitable or unsuitable, should be retained in the Government service once he enters it. The select committee practically say that.

Mr. Munsie: No, we do not.

The PREMIER: The select committee say the man must be reinstated or given a pension, and that if the £270 is to be returned, repayment must extend over a number of years.

Mr. Corboy: You are counting on getting the whole lot back. I suggest you read the report.

The PREMIER: I know it very well indeed. It is a wonderful production. After I had read it, I said, "There is our accountant at work; no one else has written a word of this."

Mr. Hughes: Oh, no! That is not so.

Mr. Corboy: It is a good thing the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) is not here.

The PREMIER: Clause 2 of the report suggests repayment of the £270 at the rate of £1 per week. The House is quite right in rectifying an injustice, but an injustice was not done in this case. I know nothing of Mr. Connolly's ability, but I do know the Commissioner of Railways, and I know what the letter says. It seems odd to say on the 6th "Give me the cheque," and then on the 11th to say, "I accept the cheque without prejudice."

Mr. Munsie: That does not state the position correctly.

The PREMIER: Then the matter is brought up in Parliament. I think it is a pity Mr. Connolly was not retired in the ordinary way, and given the right of appeal, which would have settled the matter. I hope the Commissioner of Railways will in future retire his officers in a way that will give them the right of appeal. It is wonderful how men can stick in the Government service even though in the opinion of their superiors they should not be retained. Naturally I have talked with the Commissioner of Railways about this matter. I pointed out to him what was the course he should have followed. I suppose it can still be followed. I shall offer no objection to the carrying of the motion, for the reason that I think Mr. Connolly should be retired in another way, which would allow him to bring his case before the Appeal Board. But when an officer is retired and says he is satisfied, that ought to end the matter. His opportunity is at the time, and not a year afterwards.

Mr. Corboy: It is over 12 months since Connolly placed the case in my hands, so he has been working on it a long time.

The PREMIER: His case was completed when he accepted the cheque.

Mr. Corboy: You will withdraw that statement when you have read the evidence.

The PREMIER: No. I do not think the House should be called upon to inquire into such a case as this, particularly in view of the existence of the Appeal Board. I hope that in future the Commissioner of Railways will send cases of this kind to the Appeal Board.

Mr. Corboy: That would have been the proper thing to do.

The PREMIER: I do not think a man has the right to stay in the Public Service any longer than in any other service unless his work is satisfactory.

Mr. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [10.22]: As regards the acceptance of the cheque by Mr. Connolly, the Premier said in effect that it savoured of a confidence trick to accept the cheque and then come back a week afterwards and reopen the case. I would draw the Premier's attention to the following answer given by Mr. Norton, paying cashier in the Railway Department:—

751. Were there any peculiar circumstances about the payment?—I noticed it was a special allowance. Mr. Kenafick, secretary of the union, attended with him

when he collected the cheque. I recollect Connolly suggesting that he should write "without prejudice" on the form. Both Mr. Kenafick and I told him it would not affect the position, as we understood he was still negotiating with the department. That happened at the actual payment of the cheque to Mr. Connolly. So there is no question of the matter having been reopened a week later.

The Premier: But it was reopened after he got the cheque.

Mr. CORBOY: The question was raised before the cheque was handed over. Mr. Norton understood that Mr. Connolly would continue his fight with the department in spite of receiving the cheque. I agree with the Premier to this extent, that when a man is retired he should be retired in a proper way, so that he can go to the Appeal Board and fight his case. Then there would be no occasion for Parliament to inquire into such a matter as this. I hope Mr. Connolly will go back into the service, because it is quite wrong for the Government to pay a pension to a man in middle life, which may mean paying the pension for 30 or 40 years. If this man is not reinstated, he will have to be given a pension.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM.

To inquire by Royal Commission.

Debate resumed from the 5th December on the following motion by Mr. Davies:—

That in the opinion of this House a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire generally into the apprenticeship question,

and on the following amendment moved by Mr. Hughes:—

That the words "and also into the question of articles in the professions" be added to the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam—on amendment) [10.26]: As regards the amendment moved by the member for East Perth, I have to point out that the professions are a very different thing from the trades. In the case of articling one's son to a professional man, you pay your money and you take your choice. For example, I should be quite willing to pay the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) £600 to article my son. The training in the hon. member's office would be worth it. To another lawyer I might be willing to pay only £300, because the training would not be so good. In some cases I would be disposed to pay only £100. Finally, I might say to a lawyer, "You must take the boy without anything at all." One pays one's money and one takes one's choice because the training is different in each legal

office. The opportunities of learning would be different, and thus the money's worth obtainable would be different, in different legal offices. Therefore I think we should leave the matter of articles alone.

Mr. Hughes: What about dentists?

The PREMIER: A lawyer is not absolutely necessary to anybody, but a dentist is. Nevertheless, it comes to the same thing once again. There is the dentist of wide experience and there is the dentist of limited experience. When articling one's son, one selects the man who can give him the best training. Naturally there is competition for places on the staff of the best professional man, and he demands the largest premium. I do not think that system should be interfered with, and I do not think it will be. No doubt most professional men are in every way very desirable, but some are not quite so desirable as others. There is another reason why we need not bother with this question of articles in the professions. We do not want an army of lawyers, nor do we want every second man to be a dentist, a doctor, an architect, or a veterinary surgeon. The scope for them is limited. There are quite enough men in the professions now, and all too few in the trades.

Mr. Hughes: We have not enough chemists or dentists or doctors.

Mr. Chesson: We have too much law, and not enough justice.

The PREMIER: Too many lawyers have too little knowledge of the law. It has been said that everybody is expected to know the law, except the lawyers. Most of the professions are overdone now, and it would be wrong to encourage an unlimited number of young people to go into them when they cannot make a living by them. There are openings for a few in the professions, and those few can easily be trained under existing conditions.

Mr. Corboy: I thought your migration scheme would give openings for a good many more.

The PREMIER: It would if my friend would do his utmost to aid the scheme.

Mr. Corboy: My part of the country is taking a lot of your migrants.

The PREMIER: I hope the hon. member will not insist upon his amendment to the motion, for it is quite unnecessary.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [10.31]: While I agree with the motion, I think the amendment is just as badly required. It is all very well for the Premier to say we do not want an army of professional men.

Hon. P. Collier: Just now we do not want an army of aspiring politicians.

Mr. MUNSIE: Years ago the professions were kept for the sons of people well to do, the reason being that those were the only people who, under the then prevailing conditions, could afford to give their boys and girls the necessary education. Thanks to the more democratic spirit of later years, we succeeded in getting free education from

the kindergarten to the university, but now all kinds of obstacles are to be placed in the way of the poor man's child. I am told on good authority there are, in Perth, institutions taking boys as apprentices to dentistry. Their parents believe those boys are to become practising dentists. The parents are paying premiums for the privilege. Later, when they come to read the articles of apprenticeship, they discover that their boys are apprenticed as mechanics, and will never be able to practise dentistry.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion will cover that.

Mr. MUNSIE: No, it will not apply to the professions, but the amendment will.

Mr. Underwood: Why worry about professions when you cannot get a bricklayer?

Mr. MUNSIE: Because I want the rising generation to have the same chance of becoming professional men as they have of becoming bricklayers.

Mr. Underwood: And you turn them out labourers!

Mr. MUNSIE: If they turn out good labourers it will not be much to their prejudice. In some professions to-day they are being turned out mere labourers. If the inquiry be extended to the professions, it may do some good.

Mr. Teesdale: It cannot force an employer to teach a boy a trade if he does not intend to.

Mr. MUNSIE: If an employer takes an apprentice he should teach him a trade. I do not want an employer to be compelled to teach a boy if, on trial, the boy proves unsuited for the trade. But if an apprentice shows aptitude for a trade, the employer ought to be compelled to teach him that trade. I hope the House will carry the amendment and will then carry the amended motion.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.37]: I compliment the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) upon his amendment. The apprenticeship question in Australia is a big subject; in Western Australia it is a pressing one, and as applied to the professions, it is a really serious one, especially for the parent who has had to shell out £200 or £300 by way of premium. It is nearly time Parliament took a hand in the apprenticeship question, not only as applied to bricklayers or carpenters, but as applied to the professions. Dentists have accepted apprentices, knowing that the Dental Act lays it down that, preparatory to being articled as dentists, boys must have passed the junior University examination.

Mr. Underwood: And be able to gabble a bit.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have known registered dentists accept a premium of £150 from working men who believed they were placing their boys in a way to become registered dentists. Under the Dental Act that is impossible. The same thing obtains in the legal profession and others. Parliament should lay it down

as a principle that the only proof to the articling of a boy to his profession is his capacity to serve in his profession. It is a scandal that Parliament should tolerate the payment of extortionate premiums for allowing a boy to be articled in any profession. In the legal profession the premium is a charge upon a lad after he has passed his final examination. Possibly a boy may serve with a legal practitioner and will find after he has passed his final examination that there is a debt standing against him of perhaps £200 or £300.

Mr. Underwood: That is the great Labour movement that looks after the legal professions!

Mr. Munsie: The Labour movement looks after all classes.

Mr. LAMBERT: I will raise my voice in support of the bricklayer, the carpenter, the mason, the bootmaker and anyone else who may be concerned.

Mr. Underwood: You are putting in a pretty good tale for the professional man now.

Mr. Munsie: The amendment deals with the professional man.

Mr. Underwood: It is a fool of an amendment.

Mr. LAMBERT: I hope the House will accept the amendment and that it will prove to be the first step towards wiping out an iniquitous system that has grown up, and that the professional men will realise their obligations more, and see that those who are articled will not be merely those who can pay high premiums.

On motion by the Minister for Agriculture, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.48 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 12th December, 1923.

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