

That was not carried out, although the Federal authorities were prepared to do so if necessary, but the final upshot was that provision has now been made whereby the State obtains money with which to pay its sinking fund at two per cent. less than would have been the case if the Treasurer had gone on the open market and borrowed the money as he would have had to do; had the negotiations not been carried out. The sinking fund is to be paid just as before and the money with which to pay it will cost the State two per cent. less than would have been the case had these negotiations not been entered into.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The London and Westminster Bank have paid it to save the reputation of the State.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Nothing of the sort. I do not know what we should do if we had many hon. members like Mr. Holmes, who takes every opportunity of twisting everything and trying to damage the reputation of the State in the eyes of the outside world. Mr. Ewing referred to the capital spent on the trading concerns, and from that hon. member we had the extraordinary statement that this information had never been supplied by the Government.

Hon. J. Ewing: I have never seen it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member has been a member of this House for over two years. Does he not remember that early in 1917 the then Government presented to Parliament a Bill for an Act called the State Trading Concerns Act? Does not the hon. member recollect seeing at the end of that Act a schedule setting out in detail the amount of the fixed capital and the working capital in connection with every one of the State trading concerns? Is the hon. member not aware that each of these concerns under this very Act has to submit to Parliament each year its balance sheet, and that in those balance sheets full details are given of the fixed capital and the working capital and everything else that the hon. member may desire?

Hon. J. Ewing: I do not think that is known.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not see what more the Government can do. We have put it up in our Acts of Parliament in detail. We have put it before members in "Hansard." What more can we do?

Hon. J. Nicholson: And it is on the Table of the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: As the result of the motion moved by Mr. Sanderson further information will be laid on the Table of the House, and if hon. members want it presented every six months they can have it. The fact remains that the fixed capital and the working capital in connection with all the trading concerns, will be found in the schedule of the State Trading Concerns Act passed last year. I do not think it is necessary for me to deal with the remarks of other hon. members because the hour is late. One advantage about the criticism indulged in in the Legislative Council is that it is to a large extent mutually destructive. Mr. Dodd effectually answered many critics. Mr. Millington answered others, and thereby saved my time to a large extent. I regret that the Estimates

are not before the House, but I want to remind hon. members that although this session followed the briefest recess in the history of Parliament in Western Australia, or at any rate the briefest recess that I know of, the Estimates were presented at a very much earlier date than in any other session for many years past. Ministers had less time to prepare for this session than Ministers ever had before in connection with the meeting of Parliament, and in spite of that the Estimates were submitted very early. The debate, as Mr. Nicholson has said, has been a very interesting one. Personally, I am inclined to regard this as a preliminary gallop in preparation for the Appropriation Cup, and unless some hon. members have left their form on the track that event should be full of interest to the House. I am sure it will be helpful and informative to the Government, and I trust it will be of great benefit to the country.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

BILL—PRISONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

House adjourned at 9.34 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 30th October, 1918.

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

For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."] "

NOTICE OF MOTION—PARLIAMENTARY ALLOWANCES, TO REDUCE.

Notice of motion standing in the name of Mr. Thomson—"That in the opinion of this House the allowances paid to members of both Houses of Parliament should be reduced by ten per cent. per annum, until such time as the finances of the State warrant a reversion to the present payment," called.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.40]: It is rather unfortunate that the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) is away from the House, and is unable to move the motion standing in his name—

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow this to be debated. It must lapse.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am sure the hon. member will be greatly distressed at not being present. Could I not move this motion for him?

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow any further discussion.

NOTICE OF MOTION—POTATO GROWING, ASSISTANCE.

Notice of motion, standing in the name of Mr. H. Robinson, in regard to rendering assistance to potato growers, called.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—'anning') [4:41]: The member for Albany (Mr. H. Robinson) is unwell and unable to be present to-day to move the motion standing in his name. I have the information the hon. member was seeking, and would like to give it to the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Cannot the Minister lay it on the Table?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I cannot do that, but I am acquiescing in this motion of which notice has been given. Cannot I give the information with the consent of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House can do as it chooses, but for my part, I cannot allow any discussion on this. It would be an unwise principle to adopt. The hon. member can give notice of this motion again.

PAPERS—REGISTRATION OF WORKERS UNION.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [4:43]: I move—

That all papers relating to the application for registration under the Arbitration Act by the Goldfields Mining and General Workers' Industrial Union of Workers be laid upon the Table of the House.

The principal reason I have for moving for these papers is that there has been an extraordinary procedure adopted with regard to the attempted registration of this Union. First of all, they practically bluffed the public on the Goldfields that they were a registered organisation under the Arbitration Act, by flouting the registration certificate at all public meetings and stating that they were a registered body, just as the miners' or any other union was. On inquiry being made we discovered that the registration was simply a registration under the Trades Union Act, which could be obtained by any seven employers or employees who might desire to become registered under that Act. This was not a registered body, as has been stated on many occasions, under the Arbitration Act. The first meeting of this organisation was called for on March 31st, 1917, for the purpose of conforming to the rules of their organisation and carrying the necessary resolution to become registered under the Arbitration Act. Hon. members will notice that March 31st was a Sunday, notwithstanding that the rules of the organisation distinctly set out that Sunday meetings are prohibited. A meeting was called for Sunday, and a resolution was carried that applications should be made for registration. Notices were sent out to the other organisations in the ordinary way, and the objections were sent in. Eventually the Registrar came to Kalgoorlie. Representatives of both organisations, the original miners' union registered in the district and this so-called miners' union, argued the point for and against. A technical point was raised by the secretary of the

registered union with regard to the application being confirmed on a Sunday. That settled the application for registration. No further action was taken with regard to the application, but they let the matter rest there. They went on again and put in a second application for registration. The ordinary notices were sent out again to the other union, and objections were lodged to the second attempt at registration. The secretary of the organisation making the application came to Perth, for what reason I do not know, but I do know that he conferred with the Registrar in Perth, and again for what reason I do not know. The application for registration on the second occasion was dropped. Then another notice was put in the paper and a third meeting convened for the purpose of carrying the necessary resolution once more. The third resolution was carried, and notices were sent out to the organisations on the third occasion. Objections were lodged again, and once more the Registrar went to Kalgoorlie and met the representatives of both organisations. They conferred again and the application was yet again upset on some technicality. Up to that time I had no objection to the applications which had been made. I believe they had tried every available means that they knew of to be within their own constitution, and within the limits of the Arbitration Act. But they were defeated. Then after that happened they for the fourth time made application for registration, and this is why I want the papers laid on the Table of the House. If my information is correct there are some very interesting documents on that file, and if the Attorney General is prepared to reply he may be able to disabuse my mind and the minds of the trades unionists on the goldfields with regard to the statements I am about to make. I honestly believe, however, that the information in my possession is correct.

The Attorney General: It is not in my department.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister may have soon the file. The position is this: I am given to understand that when the fourth application was before the registrar he agreed not to register. The secretary again left Kalgoorlie and came to Perth. He had interviews with officers in the Crown Law Department—I saw him there myself—and also with the registrar.

Hon. P. Collier: Was he getting cheap advice?

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not know. But this is the advice that I am led to believe was sent to the registrar. It was to the effect that in the opinion of the Crown Law Department it was advisable that the union should be registered provided they could prove that the members of the registered organisation were members of a trades union and were of a different political belief from that held by the members of the trades union applying for registration. If it could be proved to the satisfaction of the registrar that such was the case the registrar was advised to register the organisation. I want to know if it is the duty of the Crown Law authorities of this State to issue instructions or advice to a registrar to register an organisation, because the secretary of that organisation says that the members of it are of a different political opinion from that held by the members of the registered organisation.

The Attorney General: I should not think that any such thing would happen.

Mr. MUNSIE: On top of that the registrar wrote back to the Crown Law Department pointing out that he was not prepared on his own

initiative to register the union, and if the department desired him to do so they should first put the request in writing. Now I want to see whether it is in writing. If such is the case, in the interests of good feeling in this country between the trades unionists of Western Australia, it is necessary that the public should know whether such a thing has taken place. This organisation tried on three occasions to come within the scope of the Arbitration Act, and failed, and whilst the Act remains on the statute-book there is not the slightest possible chance legally of that union becoming registered. What is more, there is no necessity for the union to become registered. If the case went before the president of the Arbitration Court they would not have the slightest grounds for registration. There is a surface workers' union registered, and there is also a miner's union registered under the Arbitration Act, in the district and the majority of the members of the bogus organisation—because I cannot call it anything else—are men who are disgruntled and have become dissatisfied with the present union purely over political matters, and they withdraw. Now they want to register a second miners' union in the same locality. The Act is definite against permitting anything of that kind, and on top of that we are informed that the Crown Law authorities have said that if the organisation can prove that the members of the original body are of a different political belief from that held by the other union they can become registered under the Arbitration Act.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Who said that?

Mr. MUNSIE: I am told that this has been said by the Crown Law authorities to the registrar of this State, and if that is a fact, the country should know it. If it is not a fact, there is no objection to laying the papers on the Table of the House. I am also informed that the registrar in whom I have every confidence, and who is a man who is quite capable of carrying out the registration of any organisation in this State, has refused to register the union unless the Crown Law authorities request him to do so in writing. It would therefore be interesting to get the correspondence from the Crown Law Department and from the registrar of the Crown Law Department. I need not say anything further. I trust, in the interests of unionism—because so far as the workers of Australia are concerned their only hope lies in unionism—such a thing as this will never be permitted. If it has not happened there can be no objection to the papers being placed on the Table of the House. If it has there is every justification for the papers being presented, so that the country may know what is being done. We have heard about the labour party on every occasion causing party strife. What, I ask, will cause more bitter party strife than an action of the description I have given? I submit the motion to the House.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister) [4-45]: I had not noticed the motion on the Notice Paper, and I do not know whether the Colonial Secretary had his attention drawn to it. So far as the papers are concerned I would have felt inclined to lay them on the Table of the House without delay if the hon. member had just asked for them without making any remarks. But after his speech, I think I would be justified in asking for an adjournment of the debate. The charges he has made are a serious reflection, either on the Government—

Mr. Munzie: Not on the Government.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Or on some officer of the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: If they are true they are serious.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Absolutely, and it is only fair to give the Minister in charge of the department time to look at the papers. Hon. members will admit that this matter has never been dealt with in the ordinary course of Ministerial duties. It is not a case that would come under Ministerial notice, and it is one of those cases that would go on for ever almost without the Minister knowing anything about it. In view of the remarks of the hon. member I think we should have an adjournment. I will look at the papers and consult with the Colonial Secretary, and perhaps lay the papers on the Table of the House afterwards. At any rate it may be necessary to reply to the hon. member's statements, and we may require time to do it.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4-57]: It is rather unfortunate that the Honorary Minister has asked for an adjournment of the debate, because, having regard to the state of the Notice Paper and the advanced stage of the session, it is more than likely that the motion will not come up again before the end of the session.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I will undertake that it does.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is fair. I agree with the Honorary Minister that the statements made by the member for Hannans require a reply, but after all the file itself will be a reply. That the Minister will have an opportunity of looking through the file will not alter the fact—if fact it be—that there are documents of the kind described by the member for Hannans on the file. The position cannot be altered by reason of an adjournment, and if there are no such communications from the Crown Law Department then of course a statement is unnecessary. What I cannot understand is where the Crown Law Department comes into the matter at all. Of course it is quite possible that the registrar of Friendly Societies or the officer in charge would go to the Crown Law Department for advice. That is a common practice on the part of officers, but in this case, whilst he may have been within his province in asking for advice from the Crown Solicitor, if any officer of that department has replied in the terms outlined by the member for Hannans, then that officer of the Crown Law Department has entirely overstepped his proper duty. If the registrar refuses to register a union there is an appeal to the Arbitration Court, and that is the tribunal which should eventually decide as to whether the organisation should be registered or not, and the matter should not be forced on by the advice of the Crown Law authorities.

Mr. Munzie: They know they have no possible hope of registration.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And for the reasons given I can hardly imagine the Crown Solicitor advising that they should be registered if the members hold political views different from those of the registered organisation. It will be interesting to know whether or not there are any papers which bear that out.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Well, we are entitled to have a look.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I agree. If the Minister will undertake that there shall be an opportunity for the motion coming forward again, I shall have no objection to the adjournment of the debate.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [5-1]: As head of the Crown Law Department, I may say that this is the first time my attention has been drawn to the motion on the Notice Paper. I have not advised anything in regard to the matter.

On motion by Mr. Mullany, debate adjourned.

MOTION—WATER METER RENTS, EASTERN GOLDFIELDS.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [5-2]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the rents charged for water meters on the household water supply services of the Eastern Goldfields are vexatious and unjust, and should be abolished.

I have moved this motion before in this Chamber. I moved it at the beginning of the year. At that time, towards the close of my remarks, as a reference to "Hansard" will show, the Minister for Works agreed to bring the motion on again during that session. I recognise that we had a lot of business to do and that what to him, perhaps, appeared unimportant may have been let go by the board. For his information I direct attention to page 406 of "Hansard" of last session, where it is shown that he gave that promise. I have scarcely anything to add to the arguments I used on the previous occasion. Since 1903, the date of the inauguration of the goldfields water supply service, this annual charge of 10s. per meter on the goldfields has been vexatious. In many instances meters are placed on small blocks where obviously there is no need for them, because there is no garden. Yet the people up there, who have high water rates to pay on blocks where there are no gardens and the premises are small, are charged 10s. per annum meter rent. This charge is not borne out by any parallel case in the metropolitan area. I do not wish to bring up the cry of country versus town; but the people in the outback centres are prone to think that they do not get a fair deal as compared with whom they regard as the more favoured people of the metropolitan area. Unfortunately a charge of this kind lends colour to that suspicion, because in no part of the metropolitan area is there a rental on the water meters.

The Minister for Works: The conditions are not the same.

Mr. GREEN: If there be any variation in the conditions it is to the detriment of the people whose case I am now championing. In the metropolitan area the water rate is so small in comparison with what is charged on the goldfields that I venture to say not one householder in 50 in the metropolitan area knows what the charge is per thousand gallons on the water he consumes for household services, whereas every man or woman who has a water service on the Eastern Goldfields is well aware of the charges made. In the metropolitan area there is no meter charge, and in support of the charge on the goldfields it has been frequently urged that the cost of attention to the meters, such as oiling and upkeep, has to be provided by the department, and therefore, a reimbursement requires to be made. But precisely the same attention has to be given to the meters in the metropolitan area. Apart from the three Guildfords and Midland Junction, the metropolitan area draws its supply from the Canning reservoir and from bores. To that extent I agree with the Minister that the conditions are different. But we have a singular comparison when we take the

metropolitan suburbs of West Guildford, Guildford, East Guildford, and Midland Junction. Those districts are supplied entirely from Mundaring reservoir, a reservoir constructed to supply the goldfields. When we consider the figures we find that the quantity drawn from Mundaring for the goldfields services in comparison with what is drawn for the three Guildfords and Midland Junction leads to the conclusion that this water scheme is just as much a metropolitan scheme as a goldfields scheme. For instance, we find that the average quantity during the last few years for Kalgoorlie and Boulder is 261 million gallons, whereas the three Guildfords and Midland Junction have consumed 202 million gallons, which is within reasonable distance of the requirements of Kalgoorlie and Boulder. But when we come to payment for the respective services we find that the goldfields are charged £48,000 whereas in the case of the three Guildfords and Midland Junction they are called upon to pay only £2,500 for what might almost be regarded as an equal supply of water. There is no meter rent in the three Guildfords and Midland Junction, yet there is a meter rent on the Eastern Goldfields. This is truly a national scheme. Of course, I shall be met with the objection that the scheme does not pay. The same objection can be lodged against the railways. But if the people who depend on the agricultural industry in some portion of the State served by a spur line, which, standing alone, does not pay, if they were charged an extra railway rate, one can imagine the outcry that would be raised in this Chamber by the Country party. The revenue received from water meters is comparatively small. The Minister may meet that argument by saying that therefore there is very little to complain about. But where the complaint lies is in the vexatious character of the charge, in the fact that those people are charged something which practically no other district in the State is charged with.

The Minister for Works: Would they pay more for the water if we did away with the meter rent?

Mr. GREEN: If the Minister were prepared to recommend that the people of the goldfields should get an additional supply of water equivalent to the meter rent, the people would be prepared to pay, so that the revenue should not be decreased. But they are charged for a separate service which no other district pays.

The Minister for Works: Do I understand that if they get water to the value of the meter rent they would be content?

Mr. GREEN: Yes, that would be all right, and the revenue would not be decreased, while the people would have more water for the money paid. People on the Eastern Goldfields could use ten times the quantity of water they do use on their gardens; and I would remind the Minister that in the comparative desert surroundings of the goldfields those gardens take on an enhanced value. If it were possible to add the cost of pumping, if need be, and allow the people additional water to make up for the charge for meter services, the people would be quite satisfied. At present the amount received by way of meter rent from Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Broad Arrow, and Kanowna is £2,850, which might easily be made up in the direction I have indicated. I trust, therefore, that the Minister will see his way clear to taking the middle course which he has suggested, and propose it to the people of the goldfields. The charge has frequently been made

not pay. I know of no public work in this State, or any other, which has an impost of three per cent. sinking fund upon it, as in the case of the Goldfields Water Scheme. And even on that basis I believe that the whole of the sinking fund will be complete in 1927, which, in view of the history of the scheme, is not very remote. And at that date, owing to the amount having been over-estimated, there will be some £500,000 more than is required as sinking fund, an amount which, of course, the Government then in power will no doubt put into Consolidated Revenue.

The Minister for Works: I am glad you are so optimistic.

Mr. GREEN: It is not optimism. Let me in closing, point out this anomaly: While a great number of motors on the goldfields are Kennedy meters, more recently the Kent meter, which costs only £5, has been used. I do not know whether the cheaper American meter, costing only £3, has been put into use up there. However, we can readily see that if the cheaper meters were used people who from the inception have been paying 10s. per annum meter rent have long since overpaid the actual cost of the meter.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [5-15]: I have much pleasure in supporting the member for Kalgoorlie. The whole trouble in connection with this scheme—and the same thing will exist until such time as the matter is remedied in the way suggested by the member for Kalgoorlie, namely by the dawning hope of a new party—has been the outrageous capital cost of the scheme. Undoubtedly the business side of the scheme was never considered until such time as money had been squandered.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss the water scheme generally on this motion. He must confine himself to the terms of the motion.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am merely, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, pointing out one of the subterfuges which it was necessary for the Government to resort to.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not discuss the general cost of the water scheme under this motion. The hon. member can illustrate, but he must not go into the general cost.

Mr. LAMBERT: With due deference to you, Sir, if we are met with the argument that it is necessary to get a certain income in order to meet interest and sinking fund—and no doubt that will be the Minister's argument in replying—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot anticipate that by way of defending himself in now discussing that aspect.

Mr. LAMBERT: So far as I am aware, there is no sound argument and no sound reply to be advanced; and I am anticipating the only unsound reply which may be given. If you, Mr. Speaker, will not permit me to refer to the outrageous capital cost of the scheme, I still would like to say that the principle of segregating the different functions, as is done in this connection, is altogether unsound and in practice absolutely rotten. Undoubtedly the goldfields residents have had since the inception of the scheme much just cause for complaint. I think the Minister for Water Supply will agree that any exactions of this description are certainly vexatious. They do not produce any considerable revenue, and it is unnecessary for me to refer to the unfairness, comparatively, of the position, which matter has already been outlined by the member for Kalgoorlie. I do not, however, agree with that hon.

member, that the residents of the Goldfields will be satisfied with water in lieu of the meter rent.

The Minister for Works: He should know; he is their member.

Mr. Green: Give them a trial of it.

Mr. LAMBERT: That member speaks only for the unimportant centre of Kalgoorlie, unimportant as compared with Coolgardie, the residents of which latter centre have had just cause for complaint regarding the segregation of this item. As the Minister knows full well, irrespective of what he may say, the department have no more right to make a charge for the rent of a meter, which is purely a machine to carry out certain check functions for the Government, than they have a right to charge the consumers with the oil used on the pumps, or with the cost of some of the useless motor cars used by the inspectors in useless inspection trips.

The Minister for Works: That is absolutely unfair and unjust.

Mr. LAMBERT: If it is unjust, I am wrong in my information and shall be only too pleased to withdraw. The whole trouble underlying the scheme is, in the first place, the extravagant capital cost, and, in the second place—although retrenchment has been exercised—the service, which is to my mind altogether out of proportion to the requirements of the goldfields themselves. I hope the Minister for Water Supply will give serious consideration to the abolition of this single charge altogether. I know that for some time he has been devoting his attention to the matter, and to a complete review of the position of this big national work. The goldfields people, in common with the mining industry, have been groaning under the unfair exactions of the scheme. While I do not wish to discredit the building of the scheme, or the men responsible therefor, I do say that there has been and that there is to-day a great hardship inflicted on the larger proportion of the goldfields people.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not discussing the Goldfields Water Scheme. He is discussing the necessity for abolishing the meter rents. The hon. member cannot discuss the whole question.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not wish to stress the point, but I think the Minister for Water Supply, whom I have heard speak on this scheme once or twice, will, in reply, outline the capital cost involved; because, after all, that capital cost represents the main reason for the imposition of these unfair exactions and unfair charges. I hope the Minister will concede that point. Seeing that the point is conceded, merely a passing reference is needed to the fact that the goldfields have had to bear this burden ever since the completion of the scheme. If I am not permitted in a general way to discuss the matter, I hope that, should the Minister for Water Supply fail to give us some indication on this motion of the policy of the Government regarding the scheme, an early opportunity will be taken either on this or the other side of the House to obtain from the Government some general idea of their attitude towards this great national work. The Minister for Water Supply, together with the Minister for Railways, visited Kalgoorlie some little time ago, and this matter, with other more important factors bearing on the administration of the water scheme, was, I understood, gone into fully. The Minister for Water Supply, after having devoted a good deal of time to this matter and after having gained information on the spot at first hand from all

quarters, should be able to indicate to the House on some general lines whether the Government intend to-day, or to-morrow, or in five years' time, to relieve the goldfields people of the unfair rates, unfair taxes, and unfair charges and exactions under which they have suffered ever since the scheme was introduced.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [5-25]: I would like the motion amended so that it would refer to meter rents throughout the agricultural districts served by the water scheme as well as to meter rents on the goldfields. In that case I would be in sympathy with the motion. As it reads, it seems to be confined to the Eastern Goldfields. There are townships supplied by the scheme other than those on the Eastern Goldfields. If the mover is willing to amend the motion as I suggest, I will certainly support it.

Mr. Lambert: By all means move an amendment.

Mr. HARRISON: The charges for meter rents are imposed on the consumer of the water. But the meter serves the administration of the scheme.

Mr. Lambert: The department might as well charge the consumer for the departmental cash book.

Mr. HARRISON: Is it a fair charge? Why should one section using the scheme be penalised in this respect and not another section? Residents of our agricultural areas receiving water from the same source are charged not only the meter rental of 10s. per annum but also a domestic fee of £5 per annum, which is more severe still.

The Minister for Works: Did you not agree to those conditions before you took the water?

Mr. HARRISON: No. If I remember rightly that charge was put on afterwards.

The Minister for Works: You agree to do a certain thing and then you do not even pay your accounts. There are more arrears on the agricultural areas than on any other part supplied by the water scheme. Of course I do not refer to the hon. member personally.

Mr. HARRISON: I do not think the agriculturists are the only people who have been anxious to obtain certain supplies and have failed to fully realise what the conditions of the supplies mean until after years of service the consumers recognise that the conditions needed amendment. Not only would I support the abolition of the meter rent charge of 10s. per annum, but I would vote for this motion by way of protesting against the lack of finality in regard to recommendations in other directions. Quite a while ago we were to have had a revision of the whole system.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss the water scheme generally under this motion. The hon. member must confine himself strictly to the motion.

Mr. HARRISON: If the mover will amend his motion to read that no consumer of scheme water shall be charged meter rent, I am with him.

The Minister for Works: So long as the consumers pay their rates.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5-29]: I move an amendment—

That the words "household water supply services of the Eastern Goldfields" be struck out and "Goldfields Water Scheme" inserted in lieu.

The mere fact of my moving an amendment on the motion is indicative of the fact that my sympathy lies with the goldfields people on this matter. I am in accord with the arguments of the member for Coolgardie that the meter, after all, is an instrument serving the department. It is a necessary portion of the departmental equipment, necessary for checking the volume of water which is consumed. The department charge a rate for the water, and it is only fair that they should provide some means for registering that rate.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What difference does it all make?

Mr. Lambert: It means that the consumer should not be debited with the cost of the department's equipment.

Mr. PICKERING: In dealing with this motion, I am not referring to the Scheme in general, but I am opposed to the excessive charges imposed on the agriculturists. It is with a view of affording some small measure of relief to the users of this scheme in the agricultural areas, that I am supporting the motion. A measure of relief to the farmers who have been suffering under oppressive rates, should be impressed on members of this Chamber. I move the amendment.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [5-34]: I hope we shall be able to convince the Minister that there is some justification for this small reduction in the water rate. I certainly support the motion as it stands. I would have supported the motion as it was first moved because there are certain centres enjoying the exemption. Therefore, I do not see why this exemption should not be applied to the water scheme all round. As far as the farmers are concerned, the water rating measure certainly needs review and amendment. The Minister for Works asked the member for Avon by way of interjection whether he agreed to the homestead fee. What the hon. member was really referring to was the holding fee of £5. In some instances there was no acknowledgment or agreement of that fixed rate. What the Minister is referring to is an agreement for the extension of the scheme in certain quarters not in every instance throughout the length of the pipe line. In some cases owners were not consulted but the rate was imposed on them as it stands to-day regardless of whether there was an agreement or not.

The Minister for Works: I understand that is not correct.

Mr. PIESSE: It is not incorrect. I know that of my own knowledge, for I have paid the rate. In this House on two or three occasions previously I have said that this holding fee is iniquitous for the reason that it is intended that farmers should use a certain amount of water for homestead use, but it is impossible to convey the water from the pipe to the homestead because the homesteads in many cases are outside the taxable radius. It would be a relief if the farmers were free from the meter rate, small as it is.

The Minister for Works: Why not abolish any charge? That would be better still.

Mr. PIESSE: I wish to impress on the Minister that this meter rate is certainly unfair when we consider the other tax imposed on ratepayers in conjunction with it. It was my intention to bring this matter before the House by a special motion because the whole question should be reviewed, and I think at a later date that I shall do so. However, I hope the Minister will consider the meter rate question and see if some relief cannot be given to the farmers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle): [5-39]: I support the motion. It is customary when a person supplies goods and weighs them, he should supply the scales with which to weigh those goods, and if a person has to measure goods the measure should be supplied also. We should

not forget that if there is not a direct charge there must be an indirect charge through the price of the goods supplied. The Government not long ago were kind enough to knock off the meter rents at Fremantle, but it would have been better if they had been left alone.

Mr. Green: What are you paying there?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: One shilling in the pound.

Mr. Green: They are getting off lightly.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not in comparison with the water supply. The price is high, and during two-thirds of the time the water is very discoloured. The rates went up from 6d. to 1s. The meters had to be paid for if not by way of rent then they had to be paid for by rate. The money must be found to pay for the meters. Is it better to pay meter rent or an increased rate? At Fremantle, the rate has been increased so that now the Government are getting double what they previously got. There is nothing being gained by the people who use the water, in knocking off rents. It is the duty of the Government to supply meters to check the water used, but they should not charge rent.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington): [5-41] I hardly know how to reply to the motion without referring to the Scheme itself.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot do that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then I cannot reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: Not to the general question.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot reply unless I refer to the scheme as a whole. If the motion had been divided into three parts, I could have dealt with them separately but I cannot deal with the matter as it is now presented. It is tangled up. There is the big Goldfields scheme, the agricultural area scheme, and the metropolitan scheme.

Mr. SPEAKER: Under the motion I can only allow the debate to hinge around the motion as it stands. I cannot allow a general discussion on matters which are not mentioned in the motion. If I did we should never get through the business of the House. I try to confine members to the matters before the House. If members desire a discussion on other matters, they should move the motion in accordance with their desires.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not desire to dissent from your ruling, but I only wish the House to understand that if I am to deal with the whole question I must refer to the whole scheme.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will allow the hon. member to answer members who have already spoken, but I have checked members in every instance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As far as this matter is concerned, the principal thing that I can gather from the member for Kalgoorlie's remarks is that his constituents object to pay meter rents, and the hon. member made a statement which is quite true, that meter rents are not paid in the metropolitan area. I have a good answer as far as that is concerned, but I cannot refer to it because the Speaker will rule me out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: By comparison the hon. member can refer to those other matters. The hon. member may proceed with his argument and I will stop him if he is out of order.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the metropolitan area the water scheme pays its way. The Goldfields Water Scheme does not pay its way, even if we do charge for meter rents. Every thousand gallons costs the State 9s. 1½d. and

we got for that an average of 6s. The loss this year will probably be in the neighbourhood of £120,000. The sinking fund referred to as three per cent. amounted on June 30th last to £1,411,385 of which £126,000 has been paid by the Goldfields and the rest has come out of the revenue of the State. These are solid facts. The reference made to the agricultural areas—water supply from the goldfields mains, I am informed by the officers, and I know of no reason why they should try to mislead me, that not a single extension has been made except what has been asked for by the settlers in the districts concerned. The necessary votes have been given and the water is supplied on condition that the people pay for it, as they agreed before the mains were laid and a supply given.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They sat on the doorstep until it was done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Exactly. There is one scheme which is connected up with the main going to Dowerin. I have this year to spend something like £10,000 upon that main, to supply the people who are on it so that they can get water, because the pipes are so defective that they do not convey to its destination one-half of the water which is put into them. I think there is a loss of over 100 million gallons a year along that main. There goes into the goldfields water supply main, which is connected up by means of reticulation with the meters, and has water pumped into it at the Mundaring weir, nearly 500 million gallons of water per annum, of which not quite two-thirds reaches its destination. The rest is lost in leakages from the pipes, many of which are nearly worn out, some through evaporation at the dams, and the rest through usage along the roads. That accounts for the position. We get for our water 6s. per thousand gallons, and it costs 9s. 1½d. to deliver it. Yet we have hon. members asking us to reduce our price.

The Minister for Mines: That includes sinking fund.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no question about that. The great bulk of the sinking fund is not paid by the people who get the water, and no attempt is made by them to pay it. It has been paid out of the general revenue of the State, and is to a large extent responsible for the deficit we have had for the last few years. The member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) made some reference to this. In my opinion the biggest defaulters in proportion in paying for the water are the biggest grumblers at the rates they have to pay, that is, the farmers who get the water in the extensions to which the hon. member has referred. I have had before me to-day the case of one farmer who has not paid a single penny for the water which has been supplied to him for the last four years. He is supported by influential gentlemen who desire that we should either wipe off the debt altogether, or give him time in the sweet by and bye to pay it, which means never. The member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) who was Minister for Water Supply some years ago, and the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) can hear out every word that I say. They know what the position is. The fact of the matter is that on the one part there are people who have grievances and who agreed to carry out their part if the Government carried out theirs, but are now endeavouring to have their just liabilities reduced. I do not say this may not be a legitimate thing to do, and I daresay some of them are poorly off, but I do say that if people are going to whittle

away the sources of revenue in the way suggested it is no use growling about the deficit. Further, it will be no use pressing for economy and saying that the civil service is too inflated, and no use saying that we must keep taxation down. It is simply rioting along the path of bankruptcy to attack the sources of revenue which the State possesses. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) I regret to say has gone a little off the track. He talked about the unfair exactions and taxations which the goldfields have had to face in connection with water supply. He knows better than anyone else that this scheme was got up in response to demands which were made from the gold mines of Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and round about those districts.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no gold mining in Coolgardie to-day.

Mr. Lambert: The mines have not petered out like some at Boulder have done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I believe there is a great deal in what hon. members have just said. This scheme, whatever its faults may have been in its installation, and whatever extravagance or loss there may have been upon it, has kept that goldfield together, and in keeping it together has meant the employment of tens of thousands of persons in the State, and through that employment has helped the State. The Chamber of Mines and other people have been in communication with me to see if I could reduce the price of water, but with the loss that is facing us, it is a difficult problem to see how that could be done. Until lately I have been able to get a guarantee of £90,000 a year for this water supply, but to-day the Chamber of Mines and the mines of Kalgoorlie are not prepared to guarantee £80,000. Instead of our realising during this coming year 6s. per thousand gallons, I doubt if we shall realise, even if I do not reduce the price, above 5s. 3d. The position that faces me as Minister for Water Supply, and that faces the Colonial Treasurer, is this: we are entitled to reckon upon a certain revenue, and if that revenue is to be whittled away how are we to keep going? As far as meter rents are concerned, we got, I think, about £3,000 out of Kalgoorlie. The member for Kalgoorlie, who knows what his constituents want, which is more than the member for Coolgardie does, because he is not so well acquainted with that electorate, says that if we gave the people water in exchange for rents he would be satisfied. I will give the hon. member some information, and will confirm it. I have in my hand a memorandum which passed through the hands of the member for Boulder when Minister, in June, 1914.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before the hon. member quotes from that file I wish to draw his attention to the fact that he will have to place it on the Table of the House, if he does quote from it.

Mr. Pickering: What is the file? We might call for it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not so sharp a file as the hon. member. The letter I refer to passed through the hands of the member for Boulder, as I have stated. It will, I am sure, afford the member for Coolgardie a great amount of pleasure, as well as information, to know that at that time, and at present, anyone who has a meter and pays rent for it in Kalgoorlie can have the equivalent of its value in water without any extra payment. If a person pays 10s. for the rent of his meter he can have have 10s. worth of water in exchange.

Mr. Green: That is not generally known.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That has been going on since 1914, and I believe earlier. I am quite prepared to emphasise that by writing a minute to-morrow morning advising those connected with the scheme to allow that quantity of water in exchange for the value of the meter.

Mr. Green: And advertise it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am prepared to do what I say. It is not that we cannot get the water through, but that we cannot sell it. The scheme was built to deliver five million gallons of water at Kalgoorlie, and if it had been able to do that it would have been the best paying scheme imaginable. As a matter of fact we are not delivering more than one million gallons. If we could dispose of two million gallons daily there would be no deficit on the scheme. We cannot sell much more than a million gallons daily as the demand is not there.

Mr. Lambert: The enterprise is over-capitalised.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not at all. The hon. member does not understand the question. The member for North-East Fremantle said that the meters should be provided just as much by the purveyor of water as scales should be provided by grocers for the sale of their stuff. That seems to be a sound argument.

Mr. Green: It is.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What would be the only other way to do it? The expense of a water scheme must begin from the time when the water is first delivered, and therefore must be paid for from that time until the delivery.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I said that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If it is not paid for by the individual by way of meter rent it must be paid for by our raising the price of the water. There is really no difference between the two. It is only the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. What difference does it make whether a man pays for the water by way of meter rents or by way of an increased charge for it? Hon. members seem to look upon this water business in the same way as they regard a business connected with the purveying of food, and think that the State should make a profit out of it. The State is not desirous of making a profit, and has been quite prepared to be content with getting its own back again. From what I can see of other Ministers, I do not think they have felt easy, any more than I have, that the charge, which should be borne by one particular part of the State and that particular part only, should have to be spread over the whole of the taxpayers of the State.

Mr. Lambert: Your reasoning is unsound in face of your previous admission.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not expect the hon. member to understand it. If the metropolitan area was in the position of the goldfields, and the goldfields people were asked to carry the burden of the metropolitan people, there would be a howl from every one of the members representing that part of the State. With regard to the water at the Mundaring Weir, and the metropolitan area, that water is given credit for. The big expense in connection with the water is in the pumping, and in the payment of interest and sinking fund. That is where the trouble comes in. Every penny that we get out of the Mundaring weir is additional revenue to the credit of the scheme, and makes the loss less than it would otherwise be.

Mr. Lambert: You have never varied the rates from the inception of the scheme, and they have never been reduced.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not suppose they have been reduced. I think they ought to have been increased. I do not mind the arguments put forward by the mines, which are the biggest buyers in connection with the scheme, as they were put temperately and in a business-like and reasonable way. The Chamber of Mines acknowledged all the arguments I could put forward in connection with the question of costs.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But they wanted the water at a cheaper rate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They wanted it cheaper from the following point of view. The cost of producing gold and the returns they were getting had reached such a pitch that they had to look for a reduction in their costs in any way that they could and from every source. If we could reduce the price of water it might enable them to go on longer with some mines that otherwise must close down.

Hon. P. Collier: They have argued in the same way for years past.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would not be surprised. The question of the meters is, can the State charge 10s. a yearly rental for an article which costs £3? The hon. member will find that even that 10s. barely meets the expenditure upon repairs and maintenance of meters. I do not know what the reason is, whether it is that the dust gets into the meters, but the replacement of meters upon the goldfields is a very heavy expense. Mention was made of the sinking fund of three per cent. We shall be very lucky indeed if we can convey the water to the goldfields at the present price without a large expenditure for another five or ten years. The maintenance and repair of pipes are growing in extent every year. If we are not to get any revenue out of the scheme for the purpose of dealing with this position, what is the use of talking? I do not know that I can say any more. No man in this House would be happier than myself if I could find it possible to make a recommendation as suggested, not only in favour of the goldfields, but also the agricultural areas. But taking into account what it costs to carry on these services the matter is out of the question. We have tried to cut the expenses down as much as we can but I do not see that we can do what is asked of us now. Of course if the House decides that the rents of these meters shall be abolished, very well. But I do not know what the Treasurer will say. I suppose my estimates then will be whittled down and hon. members must be prepared to accept "no" to their requests for special grants for their districts.

Amendment put and negatived.

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

Ayes	14
Noes	19

Majority against	...	5
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AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munslie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Davies	Mr. Rocke
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Walker
Mr. Jones	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Green

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Maley
Mr. Brown	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Draper	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Duff	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. George	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Lefroy	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

MOTION—GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY, PROPORTIONATE FARES.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [6-8]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the fares from Kalgoorlie to Adelaide on the Great Western Railway should be reduced to a proportionate basis commensurate with the nearer proximity of Kalgoorlie to Adelaide as compared with Perth. That in accordance with this motion it is desirable for the Government to enter into negotiations with the Federal Government with a view to making a substantial reduction on the fares from Kalgoorlie east on this basis.

This is another matter that I brought up on a previous occasion, and I was unfortunate enough to be told by the Minister to whom I addressed myself at the time that he was unable to understand what I was after. I hope that I will be better understood this afternoon and that I shall be able to carry conviction to the Minister and through him to the Cabinet with which he is associated. I admit that both Kalgoorlie and Perth are to-day in a better position so far as travelling facilities to the Eastern States are concerned than they were before the railway was completed, but what I want to point out is that Kalgoorlie, as compared with some of the towns in the Eastern States, is not receiving that treatment to which it is entitled, by reason of the fact that the same reduction is not allowed for the through trip to Kalgoorlie, and remembering that passengers to Perth have a further distance of 375 miles to travel.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you suggest that those travelling to Perth should be made to pay more?

Mr. GREEN: No, but is the hon. member going to oppose all my motions this afternoon?

Point of Order.

Mr. Lambert: On a point of order, I would like your ruling Mr. Speaker as to whether the hon. member is in order in submitting such a motion. With all due deference to the hon. member I think he is trespassing on dangerous ground.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the hon. member's point of order?

Mr. Lambert: That this is purely a Federal matter, and I hope you will allow me to outline my point or order so that you will more clearly understand it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not be offensive.

Mr. Lambert: I in no sense desire to be offensive. My point of order is that the member for Kalgoorlie is practically asking the House to give a direction upon a matter which is purely of a Federal nature, and I am asking you, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that it may be taken as an interference on our part with Federal functions, to say whether you consider the motion is in order.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion if carried will only be an expression of the opinion of the House that something should be done, and it will be for the Government to act upon it or otherwise. The motion is in order because it will not in any way interfere as the hon. member thinks with any Federal function.

Debate resumed.

Mr. GREEN: I am pleased you have given that ruling Mr. Speaker. It is the only one that I would expect under the circumstances, remembering the knowledge you have of Parliamentary procedure. So far as the member for Coolgardie is concerned we do not expect him to be fully acquainted with the procedure of this Chamber as he is a comparatively new member and therefore we must forgive him. As you, Mr. Speaker have stated, this motion if carried will only express the opinion of this House. That is what I desire because the matter affects the State railways equally with those of the Federal Government.

The Minister for Mines and Railways: It could only affect the State railways if the fares were increased from Perth to Kalgoorlie.

Mr. GREEN: I will point out the direction in which the State railways might benefit. The distance from Perth to Kalgoorlie is 375 miles. There has been a difference made in the fares so far as Kalgoorlie is concerned. That difference which is allowed by the Federal authorities is a 10s. reduction on the first class and 6s. 6d. reduction on the second class fares. That difference having been allowed, it then becomes the prerogative of the people of Kalgoorlie, and incidentally also of the representatives of the goldfields and others of the decentralisation party who I see before me on the cross benches, and the Government as well, to see that one portion of the State does not suffer unduly and that it gets the full benefit to which its geographical position entitles it.

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

Mr. GREEN: Before tea I was making a comparison between the fares charged from certain centres in the Eastern States westward with those charged from Perth and Kalgoorlie eastward. We find, for instance, that from Kalgoorlie to Adelaide the first class fare is £7, or 10s. less than from Perth, the difference in distance being 375 miles. We find on a comparison of the fares from Melbourne to Perth and from Adelaide to Perth, a difference of 482 miles, that the reductions on the Adelaide fares, as against Melbourne, are, first-class £2 10s. and second-class £1 13s. On that basis the Kalgoorlie fare should be 39s. less than the present first-class fare from Kalgoorlie eastward, and 26s. less than the second-class fare.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Put it the other way.

Mr. GREEN: I am only reckoning it on the basis of what the Eastern States enjoy coming westward. Kalgoorlie is entitled to the same consideration.

The Minister for Mines and Railways: What preference do they get coming from east to west?

Mr. GREEN: I am showing the advantage enjoyed by an Adelaide resident over a Melbourne resident coming west. The fare is £2 10s. less from Adelaide than from Melbourne.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Would it not be an argument to increase the fares from Kalgoorlie to Perth?

Mr. GREEN: No. On that basis Kalgoorlie pays fully that rate over the State railways to Perth. But, setting aside that argument for the time being, we come to the fact that the State Government themselves, on a ticket from say Perth to Adelaide, receives from the Federal Government 33s. 1d. on the first-class fare, and 22s. on the second-class fare, whereas the Kalgoorlie passenger saves only 10s. and 6s. 6d. for the curtailment of that distance.

The Minister for Mines and Railways: On that basis we ought to get only 10s. and 6s. 6d.

Mr. GREEN: Yes. Really the Kalgoorlie passenger should be charged 23s. 1d. less on the first-class fare and 15s. 6d. less on the second-class fare. That is on the basis which the Federal Government have established for the distance between Perth and Kalgoorlie. That is what they allow the State Government. If the House sees fit to carry the motion, which is only a recommendation. I hope the Minister will make representations to the Federal Government. I am sure the Federal members representing this State would inquire into the matter and endeavour to fix the fares on the basis I have outlined. It is almost unnecessary for me to remark that it is not my intention to suggest that the fares from Perth eastward should be any higher than they are at present.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS (Hon. C. A. Hudson—Yilgarn) [7.36]: This subject was introduced into this Chamber during last year for the first time by the member for Kalgoorlie when he asked a number of questions of me as Minister for Railways regarding these fares. On page 30 of "Hansard" of last session it will be seen that the hon. member asked, among other things—

Do the Government consider that it is an equitable proposal to allow only 10s. first class and 7s. 6d. second class reduction to the Kalgoorlie public, although the journey is 375 miles less than the distance travelled from Perth?

The answer to that was—

The fare to and from Perth and the Eastern States is a specially low competitive one; similar conditions do not apply to the same extent between Kalgoorlie and those States. The Commonwealth line must, for years to come, be worked at a considerable loss, and the fares at present in force between Kalgoorlie and the Eastern States will compare favourably with the old rates from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, plus the steamer fare. It is not customary to allow any reduction on through fares for intermediate passengers, and this concession though small, is an exception.

The question was also asked—

Will the Government enter into negotiations with the Federal Government with a view of making a substantial reduction on a proportional basis in the fares from Kalgoorlie to Adelaide?

The reply was—

Under the conditions mentioned in the previous answer, no.

The hon. member asks the House to declare that the fares from Kalgoorlie to Adelaide on the Great Western Railway should be reduced. To establish his case he has submitted arguments which are contrary to the spirit of the answers given to the questions in November last. I maintain that to induce us to make representations to the Federal Government for a reduction of the fares from Kalgoorlie to Adelaide, it must be shown that those fares are excessive. The hon. member has not established that those fares are excessive.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, as compared with the through fare.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: Perhaps in that light he may have done so. But he has not established that they are in themselves excessive. The reason I mention it in that way is that the fares from Perth as has been pointed out in answer to the question I have referred to, are on a low competitive basis and all the fares throughout the States are, upon that competitive basis, established from capital to capital, the sole exception being in regard to Kalgoorlie, where a slight reduction is made to the Kalgoorlie people. The competitive aspect, so far as Perth is concerned, and which does not apply in regard to the Kalgoorlie to Adelaide ticket, is that we have the competition of the steamers against the rail transit. The hon. member has admitted that the establishment of the Great Western Railway has been of great benefit to the Kalgoorlie people, enabling them to get to the Eastern States much more quickly and at a lower rate than when, under the old conditions, they had to come to Perth and travel by steamer. The point, however, in this is that in regard to the fares from Kalgoorlie to Adelaide, as I say, they are based on a low competitive rate and are not excessive, because the railway is being run at a loss. There is a loss also in the through traffic on the Western Australian line, and there would be a greater loss if the trans-Australian fares were increased as from Perth to Kalgoorlie. I venture to say that a case has not been established which would justify the House in carrying the motion. I submit that until a very strong case is made out the House would not be justified in interfering in the matter. As pointed out by the hon. member, it is a matter really for the Commonwealth Government to determine. But the fares were approved by the Railway Commissioners of the different States, and that in itself may be some justification for the hon. member coming to this House. Until the people of Kalgoorlie have exhausted their rights to make application to the Federal Government through their Federal representatives, it is not for this Chamber to interfere.

Mr. Smith: Would you be prepared to reduce the State railway fares from Kalgoorlie to Perth, so as to compete with the Great Western Railway?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: There is no necessity for that.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie—in reply) [7.43]: The Minister used as one of his arguments that because, as the result of the establish-

ment of the Great Western Railway, the fare is cheaper from Kalgoorlie eastward than it was when we had to take the steamer, we ought to be satisfied. I submit that is no argument at all. It would be just as reasonable to say that because the bullock dray was one of the methods of travelling between Fremantle and Perth before we had a railway, any excessive fare that might now be charged on the railway between the seaport and the metropolis would really be a saving to the people using the railway because the railway was more convenient than the bullock dray. We have to deal with the Great Western line as an established fact. I think I have made out a case that the fares are excessive when we compare them with fares charged over similar distances along the route coming from east to west. As I have said, in comparison with Adelaide, where a reduction is made as against Melbourne of £2 10s. first-class, and £1 13s. 6d. second-class, proportionately we pay 39s. more than we ought to pay first-class and 21s. second-class from Kalgoorlie—I mean more than as between Melbourne and Adelaide.

The Minister for Mines and Railways: There they have to compete with steamer traffic.

Mr. GREEN: That is so; and yet on that basis, which buttresses my argument, in spite of that competition the charge is much less than that from Kalgoorlie. However, the competitive argument is a poor one. To follow it to its logical conclusion, it would mean that because a man is isolated at Cook, say, or in the centre of the Western Australian desert, it would be a fair thing, on the plea that steamers cannot cater for that traffic, to charge that man an exorbitant fare. I maintain the fare from Kalgoorlie is inordinately high compared with the fares charged from other centres. Moreover, our State Government themselves secured from the Federal Government a certain rebate on tickets issued at Perth. That rebate has been agreed between the State Government and the Federal authorities. It is 33s. 1d. for the first-class fare and 22s. 7d. for the second-class fare, Perth to Kalgoorlie. Is it not fair to argue with the Federal Government, "You yourselves have agreed that 33s. 1d. is a fair charge first-class, and 22s. 7d. a fair charge second-class from Perth to Kalgoorlie; then why not extend the same privilege to the Kalgoorlie people?" Whilst there are only a few of us, representatives of distant portions of the State, interested in this question, members on the cross benches, who support decentralisation, may confidently be expected to vote for the motion. I do not court their support, but I have little doubt they will be found voting solidly with this side of the House on the question. I trust, therefore, that on this occasion what is undoubtedly a fair proposition will win out.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	21

Majority against .. 4

AYES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Collier	Mr. Maley
Mr. Duff	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Foley	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Green	Mr. Roche
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Jones	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Lambert	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Broun	Mr. Money
Mr. Brown	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Draper	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Lefroy	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS AMENDMENT, LIMITATION OF SPEECHES.

Debate resumed from the 18th September, on the motion by Mr. Teesdale, "That in order to secure the despatch of business and the good government of the State, the Standing Orders of this House should be immediately amended in the direction of placing a time limit on the speeches delivered by honourable members in the House and in Committee. That the following be adopted as a Standing Order of the House:—No member shall speak for more than thirty minutes at a time in any debate in the House, except in the debate on the Address-in-Reply, or in a debate on a motion of no-confidence, or in moving the second reading of a Bill, or on the debate on the Appropriation Bill, or on the Financial Statement in Committee, when a member shall be at liberty to speak for one hour. In Committee of the House no member shall speak for more than twenty minutes at any one time, or more than twice on any one question before the Committee: Provided that this rule shall not apply in Committee to a member in charge of a Bill, or to a Minister when delivering the Financial Statement, or, in regard to the number of his speeches, to a Minister in charge of a class of the Estimates in Committee of Supply;" and on the amendment by Mr. Foley, "That all the words after 'That' be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu: the matter of the limitation of speeches be referred to the Standing Orders Committee for consideration and report."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [7.56]: It is customary in this Chamber to deal with motions in the order in which they have been introduced. I regret that that custom has not been observed in this instance. Of course once a motion is submitted to the House, it becomes the property of the House, and the Government have power to place it in any position they choose on the Notice Paper. Previously, the motion relative

to the Claremont Hospital for the Insane preceded this motion.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): No.

Mr. Jones: Undoubtedly. My motion was moved before this one.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The motion referring to the Claremont Hospital for the Insane has been shifted down the paper, and this motion has been placed before it. I do not know the reason for this departure from the general practice. As to the amendment which has been moved on the motion we have now to discuss, I see no use whatever in submitting it to the Standing Orders Committee for consideration. The matter is entirely one for the House as a whole. The mover of the motion thought fit to quote from "Hansard" almost in their entirety certain remarks which I made in opposing a motion similar to this. Whether the hon. member thought his quotation of my remarks afforded sufficient support to his motion, I do not know; but he put forward nothing whatever of his own to lead hon. members to vote for his proposal. He commented specially on my remark that there were two ways of doing business in Parliament. I still maintain that opinion. If a matter which is brought before the House has the support of only a minority, the proper course is to talk on the subject as long as possible with a view to securing a majority. If one is in favour of a matter, and that matter has the support of a majority, then the proper course is to say as little as possible and thus assist the Government to get the matter through. However, it is a matter of utter impossibility to give to many of the questions which come before this Chamber that due consideration, dealing with them in all their phases, in the time suggested by the motion of the member for Roebourne. It is a matter of sheer impossibility, though possibly it might be achieved by such members as have had a legal training. But how is it possible for a lay member, when Estimates are submitted in a proper manner, enabling comparisons to be made and items to be dealt with in the best interests of the State, to treat the subject of State finance and administration within the time limit here proposed? Another instance is afforded by the Bills, sometimes submitted, consisting of from 200 to 300 clauses; how is it possible for a lay man to do justice to such measures within this time limit? I hope hon. members will give this motion that due consideration which it merits; and that consideration is to hump it out quick and lively. Last session I quoted from the speeches of a number of members of this House. I do not intend to quote them again to-night. Members who have taken up the time when the Labour Administration were in power. I quoted page after page showing that those who hold Ministerial positions to-day had stonewalled for considerable periods throughout the session.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Never one.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know it is difficult for members to stonewall, but they can take a long time to say very little. I was not referring to the hon. member, because I did not quote him. But I did quote other members who had spoken dozens of times. I will re-

mind hon. members that the political pendulum goes backwards and forwards. Because of a certain sentiment at the last general election—there was scarcely one person in the State who was sane—our minds were affected by what was taking place elsewhere—we had scarcely anything else to think of but the crisis which was taking place in another part of the world—through sentiment a large majority of members were placed on the other side of this Chamber, but the pendulum will swing back, as soon as the people get their sanity again.

Mr. Mullaney: Is the hon. member in order in discussing the state of the public mind.

Mr. SPEAKER. I think the hon. member is only making comparisons.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: As soon as the people of the State become mentally sound, as soon as peace is proclaimed—which we hope will be at an early date—I am of opinion that the pendulum will swing back again, and I warn members opposite not to think that because to-day they are on the Ministerial side they will remain there for ever.

Mr. Teesdale: This motion is not directed only at you.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If we take the hon. member's speech in moving the motion it appears it was directed only against me. The Honorary Minister (Hon. R. H. Underwood) said the motion was warranted, and he complimented me on the excellent speech I put up on the Estimates. The pendulum even swung last evening. I have found it necessary on more than one occasion to carry out what I believe to be in the best interests of the State, to talk for a long period to impress members, and it has taken me several hours, and then I have failed. I have found it necessary on many occasions to do so, and I have been in this position in this Chamber, supporting a Bill with only two or three words because I wanted the Bill to pass as quickly as possible. Let us take the present session. Motions of this kind in almost every Parliament are directed against those in Opposition. They are brought forward for the express purpose of endeavouring to check the Opposition in their honest criticism of the Government.

Mr. Teesdale: That did not cross my mind.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I did not say it did. The hon. member has not had the experience to know if such is the case or not. These motions are brought forward, I say, to check the Opposition; it is for no other purpose. I want to say if we take this Parliament, I am almost in accord with the member for Northam when he says the members in Opposition should be on the other side supporting the Government, because if there has been any delay in the conduct of the business since the last general election that delay has come from the Government side of the House and not from the Opposition. Members on this side have been endeavouring to carry out as far as possible the pledges which they gave to the electors. They are not only out to criticise the Government but to assist them if possible, and keep them on the right path. We have endeavoured as far as possible to do that, but captious criticism has delayed the business of

the House. Time has been taken up—I do not say wrongly—but I believe the time of members has been taken up mostly by members on the Ministerial side. I believe they thought it was in the best interests of the State and of their constituents. In reply to the Honorary Minister, I hope the time is long distant when we shall make comparisons between this House and the Federal House. I have been in the Federal House, and it is more like a bedlam there. There is no comparison with this Parliament. The members in this House come here to do work, and we endeavour to do it. But the member for Roebourne says, "You shall not work; we will block you. You shall only work a certain time and if it is necessary to deal with certain matters in Committee your time shall be limited." The hon. member should join the I.W.W. movement in moving a motion like this—I won't work.

The Minister for Works: It suits you, does it not?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, it does not suit any member on this side. I suppose when the Treasurer introduced his Estimates on the last occasion he made the shortest speech ever delivered in this House on the finances. But could the Treasurer introduce his Estimates in an hour? Was it possible to do justice to the question in an hour? The Minister for Works has a Roads District Bill on the business paper. To do that justice it will take him two or three hours to explain the various provisions. It is impossible for him to do it in less time. There are other matters I could refer to. Let us take that splendid speech by the Attorney General in introducing the Forests Bill. How long did he take?

Hon. P. Collier: Three and a half hours.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yet the member for Roebourne says that he ought to have only taken an hour, and that members on this side following him should be allowed half an hour.

Mr. Duff: Is that not an exception?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, it is not. Then in Committee the hon. member says members should only speak twice. The whole thing is a fiasco. It should not be allowed in a Chamber of this description. I am confident the people of the State are not in agreement with it. They would not be if they understood the position.

Mr. Teesdale: They want it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They do not. They want members to come here and give consideration to measures brought before us. They want members to come here and show the weaknesses of the Government. There will be no opportunity of doing that if the hon. member's motion is carried. This is not party politics. As sure as the sun will rise tomorrow, the time is not far distant when members on the Opposition side will be transferred to the Government side of the House. I want members to look at it in that light. I have been on both sides of the House more than once, and I know that time after time—dozens of times—the Minister for Works has taken up hours of time, three hours at a time, more than once. Did anyone take steps to stop that hon. member? Members should not be gagged on any ques-

tion introduced in this Chamber. That being so I should like to see the hon. member assume a reasonable attitude and in the interests of the State withdraw the motion.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [8.14]: I am rather shocked to hear the suggestion that the Minister for Works is so loquacious. Since I have been here I have not seen any exhibition of the unnecessary use of words, although at times his conduct is somewhat violent. I am sufficiently charitable and generous to believe that it is probably due to the worship of brevity, which the hon. member seems to possess, that in moving this motion he did not make one single point in favour of such a dangerous and far reaching innovation. As the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has stated, while the Opposition have a function which they have a right to jealously regard, and while hon. members may think that unnecessary talk will not serve a purpose, there are times when, whether we are in opposition or not, criticism of the Government is certainly healthy. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) apparently loses sight of the fact that all members who come here have not the disciplined and trained mind of the lawyer, and that their everyday occupations and callings do not afford an opportunity of conciseness and briefness of expression which are sometimes essential, and which if not practised get upon the nerves of the hon. member. Although he can possibly be commended for his desire that the business of the State should be transacted on different lines, I certainly think he is making a suggestion to the House which he has not supported by one single argument. The only point he does make is, "I do think hon. members of ordinary intelligence can say all they have to say in half an hour." There are many here possessing extraordinary intelligence, who could say all they have to say in five minutes. The member for Roebourne in his desire apparently either to facilitate the business of the Government or the business of the State, as the case may be, is striking at the very root of the rights of hon. members. I hope he will see that it is not the desire of this House to have the privileges of members curtailed in the manner suggested, and that irrespective of the fact that long speeches are sometimes delivered by the member for North-East Fremantle, and may make him slightly nervy, he will be able to see there is a certain useful function even in that, and will realise that it serves a purpose which is sometimes not being served in any other way. I trust the suggestion of the member for North-East Fremantle, that the hon. member will not persevere in his motion, will be adopted. When speeches are delivered in the House I believe them to be delivered in good faith. They are not always delivered, as the hon. member may think, in order to waste time or to embarrass the Government, or put the country to any unnecessary expense. There are some members to whom it is a pleasure to listen. There are many questions which cannot be discussed in the time suggested by the hon. member. If to-morrow we had to discuss the relationship between the States and the Commonwealth, who for a moment would dare to say that all the rami-

fications of this question could be gone into and discussed upon their merits in half an hour? If the hon. member is not informed by what members say in their speeches he can go out of the Chamber. He is not compelled to sit here. There is other accommodation in other portions of the House outside the seat he occupies. If he is not being informed upon any question that hon. members are discussing, and does not desire to listen to the speeches, he has his alternative. There are many matters that require considerably more than half an hour's speech to be properly discussed, and which would take any ordinary member, not an extraordinary member, more than that time to cover in a general way. If we had to discuss, for instance, the redistribution of seats, or an alteration to the Constitution, or other big subjects which it may be advisable to go into, although possibly many unnecessary words would be used by hon. members, still it is necessary and absolutely essential that every member should have the right to express in his own language, in his own way, and in his own time, his thoughts upon the subject. I hope the hon. member will realise that, and that to have one month's session and 11 months spell is not what Parliament is meant for. The people of this country do not pay members of the Legislative Assembly for that. They pay them to attend to the business of the country. Apart from any desire to have a recess of some 11 months in the year, I hope the hon. member will see that it is necessary for us, who are paid to perform our duties to the country, to carry them out in a proper manner, and that it is necessary, not only for members to be prepared to listen to the speeches of others, but for everyone to take an interest in the affairs of State, and to be prepared to speak irrespective of what time may be occupied in doing so.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [8.21]: It is unnecessary for a member to apologise for speaking on such an important subject as this, especially when speaking against the motion tabled by the member for Roebourne. I am opposing the amendment moved by the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley), as well as the motion itself.

Mr. Teesdale: You oppose everything.

Mr. PICKERING: If this opposition is successful I shall have done a service to myself and the country. I am convinced that when anyone comes to consider the subjects for debate in this House, many of which are of a highly technical nature, it is absurd to think that the only members who should have a right to speak upon them are the Ministers who introduce the measures connected with them. It is possible that we may have some highly technical legal point to be discussed upon its introduction by the Attorney General. Although the Attorney General may be a great authority on these legal subjects there are other legal members of the Chamber who are at least of equal eminence. They might think it necessary to speak at great length on the subject introduced by the Attorney General.

Hon. P. Collier: If a Minister does require more than half an hour to move the

second reading of a Bill why should not other members require the same amount of time?

Mr. Teesdale: You have 25 hours between you, at the rate of half an hour.

Mr. PICKERING: I agree. At the end of last session, when several important Bills would have been rushed through the Chamber at the dying hours, fortunately for the country, members of the Opposition prevented that being done. It is possible that there may be a change in the position of parties, and it may be in the interests of the State that we should see eye to eye on a particular point with that party, and talk out all legislation which comes along at the last hours of the session. One of the points upon which the motion might commend itself to hon. members is on the score of economy, but I understand that the experience of the Federal Parliament has demonstrated that no saving has been effected so far as the Federal "Hansard" is concerned. We have had before the House recently several topics of great importance to the country, amongst which is the question of repatriation. The Bill as introduced in this House did not meet with the entire approval of members, and it will be necessary to speak at some length on the measure. Would it be considered a waste of time if, after full discussion on this particular subject, a measure was evolved which was superior to any other of its kind in Australia? There may be measures of a technical nature dealing with architecture, to which profession I belong. There are very few members representing that profession in this House. It might be necessary that I should speak perhaps at much greater length in opposing, possibly, some iniquitous proposition of the Government. Other members of the Chamber might have the same desire to speak. If this motion is carried it means that all the expert knowledge which we may have on different questions that come before the House will be silenced. Take the district represented by the member for Colgardie. That hon. member has specialised in a certain industry, and it may happen that it will be necessary that some measure should be introduced dealing with that industry, which he is endeavouring to establish, and which we hope will meet with the success it deserves. It is possible that the hon. member will desire to speak at great length on the subject. I understand that if this motion is carried it may prevent his doing justice to the industry. I think there is a great deal of personal feeling in the motion moved by the member for Roebourne. That hon. member has not spoken at any length on any subject in this House, and I think he feels a natural resentment against any other hon. member who takes up the time of the House at greater length than he himself has done. I think the motion was directed more particularly against members on the other side of the House.

Hon. P. Collier: We have not been such bad offenders this session.

Mr. PICKERING: No, with the exception perhaps of the member for Kanowna (Hon.

T. Walker). That member is an exceptional speaker and one of the few orators we have in the House. I have listened on many occasions with pleasure to the speeches which have fallen from his lips. I am sure, however, that the member for Roebourne resents anything over a quarter of an hour of that hon. gentleman's orations in this House. If the member for Kanowna is debarred from giving us the benefit of his knowledge on, say, the Criminal Code, or other measures of the kind, we are likely to cast legislation which will be of detriment to the people of Western Australia. I hope hon. members will defeat the motion, and that it will not be tolerated. I shall strongly oppose it myself.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [8.27]: There is one matter which does not seem to have been mentioned during the discussion, and that is that at any time the House has a perfect right to suspend the Standing Orders, if the majority of members so desire, and so extend the length of time during which a member may speak—

Mr. Pickering: That makes it a privilege.

Mr. MONEY: I have heard of no hardship in consequence of the Standing Orders. This is no new thing for this House, and it is not an experiment. I am satisfied that on all occasions it is quite possible for anyone who gives any time to a subject to say quite sufficient in this House within the limits of half-an-hour. I do not think the amendment of the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) is necessary. The House should be in a position to know what it desires and what is necessary for the debates. I am not in favour of the amendment, and shall support the motion.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [8.30]: I do not want to make a lengthy speech to show that it is not necessary to carry this proposal, but I do want to make the same comment with regard to the hon. member who moved the motion that I applied to the hon. member who moved a motion to curtail the number of members of Parliament, and thereby diminish the power of the representatives of the people. The proposal of the hon. member for Roebourne is one that will shear the House of its liberties and its rights and it will be doing so more or less under a false pretence. I do not say on the part of the hon. member. It is true that in the Federal Parliament there are time limits on speeches and if "Hansard" is to be trusted no member there must speak for more than one hour and five minutes on any debate in the House except in the debate on the Address-in-Reply, in a debate on a motion of no-confidence, in moving the second reading of a Bill, or on the debate on the Appropriation Bill, or on the financial statement in Committee, when a member shall be at liberty to speak for 1 hour 35 minutes. In Committee no member shall speak for more than 30 minutes. Those time limits do not at all correspond with the proposal of the member for Roebourne. He does not want any member to speak for more than 30 minutes at any time. Why does the hon. member presume to adjudicate upon the wisdom of members of the House of Representatives in this respect? In the House of Representatives the whole of

the business of Australia is supposed to be transacted and it may be necessary to have short speeches at times. Even there, however, there is a particularly big latitude allowed. There is a vast amount of difference between the hon. member's proposal of 30 minutes and the 1 hour 35 minutes of the House of Representatives. The hon. member for Rochbourne would limit us to 30 minute speeches. I could understand that kind of limitation if we were simply a debating society, and we had to get through a debate no matter how momentous it was, in one evening, so that everyone might have a chance of speaking. I could understand it also in connection with a roads board conference, or any other conference, where people were brought from a vast distance and who had only a few days in which to transact all their business, and where all would have the right to contribute something to the proceedings if they wished to do so. But to bring those methods into Parliament shows very little idea of the purpose of Parliament. The very word itself—Parliament—means a place of speech. It is the place where the people come to speak, where speaking is the work. The whole performance, that of persuasion, that of guidance, that of informing, that of control, that of directing, that of suggesting, all that has to be done in Parliament. What other kind of work is there that the hon. member would have us do? Let us get on with some work. He may utter that expression. What is the kind of work we come here to transact in this Chamber? There is no other work we can do.

Hon. P. Collier: If we cease talking we cease to work.

Hon. T. WALKER: Undoubtedly. The very moment we stop talking we shut the doors, and when the doors are opened members are brought together and the Speaker is put in the Chair for the purpose of speaking. The significant thing, however, is that the most distinguished officer in this House of speaking is Mr. Speaker.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The most silent man.

Hon. T. WALKER: Not necessarily the most silent man. There was a time in the history of Parliament when he had very important speaking to do, when his utterances were the utterances for the whole of the Assembly, but I want to know what notion the hon. member has of the work of Parliamentarians when he wants to stop all talking. He wants to cut us down to 20 minutes, then 10, then five, then four, then three, then two, and then one, and then complete silence. If it is good to limit so much, what is the virtue of half an hour?

Mr. Harrison: You prune the tree right away.

Hon. T. WALKER: That is a matter for the Minister for Agriculture, complete rooting up. A completely silent Parliament would be the ideal Parliament for the member for Rochbourne, and the best equipped candidates for such a Parliament would be the deaf and dumb. Undoubtedly the hon. member would be best suited for a Chamber of that kind. What good purpose does he intend to serve? What occasion has he had since he has been

in this House to complain of long speeches? When have his ears or his understanding been offended by the lengthy loquacity of any hon. member in this Chamber? He has never had his nerves broken up, or his constitution wrecked, by any prolonged utterances from any of the benches.

Mr. Teesdale: You have given it a shake occasionally.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, when it was needed, but never offensively and never tediously. The hon. member has been pleased to listen evidently, but what is he aiming at?

Mr. Teesdale: Getting through a little bit more legislation and having less talk. Look at the Notice Paper last session.

Hon. T. WALKER: What of it?

Mr. Teesdale: Half full.

Hon. T. WALKER: Looking at the hon. member's sage-like contour of countenance. I should say he knows that the greatest evil that can befall a young country is an excess of legislation. To grind laws out in the same way as you grind pork sausages is to make them quite bad as quickly as pork sausages. There is no durability or the least nutrition in them. It was Henry Thomas Buckle, the great historian of English civilisation, who said that the best laws of England passed in the last 400 years were those which repealed the older laws. We could do an enormous amount of good in this Parliament if we repealed a lot of the old laws that fetter us, that govern us from the dead past. But the hon. member's ideal is to turn out laws whilst you wait. A penny in the slot and a law at the other end. That is the idea the hon. member has. He does not know that very often a long debate in this Chamber, though it may be wasted time so far as the listeners in the Chamber are concerned, and though much of it may appear like wilful, deliberate and obnoxious opposition—

Mr. Teesdale: That is what it appears to me to be.

Hon. T. WALKER: Then I am not mistaking the hon. member's capacity at all. Do not mistake me there. But it gives time to the people to know what is being done. It gives time for consideration outside this Chamber as well as in it before a final decision is arrived at. Rushing the debates through with a few short speeches there can be no knowledge on the part of the outside public as to what has transpired within these walls. The laws would then come upon them as the sun. They would go to bed without a law and next morning they would find a new one that they had never heard of before, a law which had never been debated and never been considered. I will admit that so far as the debate in this Chamber is concerned, it is of little value to the members within it. Unfortunately, we too are governed by party restrictions which enable the leaders of party practically to sway the whole body of the side they belong to. Consequently, whatever is said from this side, be it ever so logical, or well founded in fact, be it ever so true to principle, cannot change one vote upon the other side. The best speech ever delivered or heard has not the music in it that the crack of the whip from

the Treasury benches has. Be one ever so gifted in the use of words and phrases, let all the phrases be of the soundest logic, when the Whip says "We want you in your place when the bell rings" all the force of speech has disappeared. I have seen members on that side, and I may say sometimes on this side, coming from the corridors and from the ante rooms rush into this Chamber not knowing one fact that has been advanced, not one single argument adduced, not even be aware of the exact question under discussion, yet vote upon it because it is a party question and the Whip has told them to vote. They look for the Whip and go to the side of the House he is on. In that respect it is useless having debates in this Chamber. That is not the value of debating in this Chamber. But in a sound, healthy body politic, in a community full of public spirit and taking an interest in the welfare of the State, what is said here, being adequately reported, and the reports being obtainable, spreads through to the community, and the public at large weigh up the arguments and judge of the merits of the question. Therefore our debates are, not for the purpose of convincing the hon. member, but for the purpose of letting the public know the light or the darkness that scintillates or obscures in this Chamber. That is the purpose of debate and that is the purpose of the right we have of debate. To curtail that right is not to curtail our right, not to silence the opposition, but to curtail the rights of the public, the interest they have in their representation in this Chamber. I have known men to be deliberately put out of their seats simply because they were what are called silent members; never able to lift up a voice on behalf of their constituents or the country at large. Because of their incapacity to do that they have been ignominiously rejected from this House.

Mr. Teesdale: I suppose they would still be respected even if rejected from here? They would not lose their character simply because they could not speak?

Hon. T. WALKER: No. I know some very good silent members. In fact I have considerable respect for the hon. member himself, although I have not heard him make a long speech.

Mr. Teesdale: You are not going to, either.

Hon. T. WALKER: Perhaps for very good reasons. But what has been the glory of this Parliament of ours? Has it been the silent members?

Mr. Teesdale: Read your papers; they will tell you where the glory comes in.

Hon. T. WALKER: What papers? The "Daily News," the "Producers' Gazette"?

Mr. Teesdale: The "West Australian" and the "Worker."

Hon. T. WALKER: What about it? Does the hon. member take his measure of his own merits and services from the criticisms of the journals he mentions? Will he be content to take a verdict given to him either in an editorial or a paragraph in the "West Australian"? Not he. He will have his own opinion of his own qualities despite what they might say of him. But surely the hon. member is

not going to take up the cudgels on behalf of the journals and defend them in preference to the institution which he adorns! Is it not a fact that those journals, those daily papers, are becoming rival governing agencies with Parliament itself? Are they not trying to usurp the functions of Parliament? Are they not trying to lead and even to obscure the intelligence of the community? Are they not in this putting themselves higher than Parliament? Are they not considering themselves immensely the superior of the hon. member, and is he content to sit down servilely under their floggings in that respect? Does he wish to think he deserves all the contumely, the filth and the vile abuse that some journals pour out on members of Parliament? Has he earned the reputation they would immortalise him with? Is that the spirit of reform—content to cringe under the shadow of calumny that the envious, those who write paragraphs at a penny a line, cast upon him?

Mr. Johnston: They did not cut much ice in the Swan election.

Hon. T. WALKER: No. The people were much wiser than either the Press or Parliament. The proletariat is getting abroad, the sense of manhood is going amongst the multitude, and therefore they are not led or driven as they used to be, either by members of Parliament or by the Press. But I want to ask the hon. member for Roebourne if he is content to put the journals up as superior to Parliament? When he took me off the track I was asking what were the glories of the British institution of which we are a shadow or a child. Is it the short, stumpy speeches of incompetent stammerers? No. The glories of a Fox, a Sheridan, a Burke, a Pitt—

Mr. Johnston: And a Walker.

Hon. T. WALKER: No, I am speaking of the glories of the past. At the same time I agree that the name of Walker, as far as language is concerned, is famous in history—

Mr. Green: And in whisky, too.

The Premier: It is still going strong.

Hon. T. WALKER: For we have in Walker's dictionary—

The Minister for Works: And in his whisky.

Hon. T. WALKER: We on this side are content with his dictionary and we leave his whisky to the fuddlers on the Treasury benches. But to come back to the fact with which we are intimately concerned. Can the hon. member conscientiously say that every great subject can be dealt with in 30 minutes? Are there no subjects, great to his mind, which require a larger treatment?

Mr. Teesdale: When 25 of you have ploughed through it for half an hour each there ought to be enough said.

Hon. T. WALKER: But 25 do not give each a portion of a speech. They do not take speeches in relays.

Mr. Teesdale: They take them on like a 10-inch gramophone.

Hon. T. WALKER: I can see that my hon. friend has still the notion of the sausages in strings. One starts with the first sausage, and the next member takes the next sausage, and so on. But seriously, whoever introduces

a subject of importance in this Chamber is responsible for the development of that subject, for the elucidation of its details, and for the presentment of it in such a way that it can be understood by those who before knew the least about it. It is a member's duty to treat his subject well. If it is a subject of importance to the community, he cannot slum it, he cannot treat it as an indifferent thing. A matter which might lift burdens from the multitude or put fetters upon them cannot be flippantly treated as if it were a debating-class exercise. He must make himself familiar with his subject, and to do that he must get up the matter which gives weight, substance, body and quality to the speech; he must give the House the benefit of his investigations. Our intellects are swayed by the material adduced, and there are some matters of that importance, of that far-extending nature, that they cannot be adequately treated without an abundance of fact and almost an excess of material, although of course there cannot be any such excess. There are some speeches absolutely too long when they are of three minutes duration, while there are other speeches too short, something has been left unsaid, when they are of three hours duration. It is not the length that makes the merit, it is not the brevity that is the excellence; it is the importance of the matter adduced, its relevancy, which constitutes the excellence of a speech, which gives it its weight. It is always a danger to limit speeches. Speech will limit itself. Ignorance cannot continue in utterance, because it has nothing to say. And an ignorant speaker in this Chamber, that is to say, one who is talking and saying nothing, is soon reminded of the fact by hon. members and soon induced to change his theme or resume his seat. Besides which the House has wisely placed in your hands, Sir, the power to correct mere repetition, mere iteration, mere utterance that has no guidance or quality in it; and therefore there is nothing to fear in that respect. There are times when a Government, for their own interests or for the interests of party, may bring forward measures which will bind the country, bind citizens for many years to come. There may be a Government that will bring in measures iniquitous, absolutely unjust, for purely party purposes. Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Speaker, that it is illegitimate, that it is unjust, that, even by what is called stonewalling—which is to say, using every power of speech one has—such a measure shall be delayed until its enormity has been made fully manifest to every citizen of the country? There are times when there is not a man worth his salt but will do his utmost, by speaking for hours, not minutes, to awaken the lethargic public to the fact that a tragedy of a political character is being perpetrated in Parliament, to direct their attention to what is being done here, so that they may themselves take a part in these proceedings, and that the dire fact may be recorded in their memories for future action, when the time arrives. The hon. member would crush that. What is it that distinguishes man from the brute? His power of speech. The ape can chatter for a minute. The monkey can talk for a few seconds, but he cannot speak for half an hour. It is the

crowning distinction of the highest animal in the order of Creation that he can speak. The old philosophers of Greece gave almost a veneration to speech, to discourse. Discourse was a deity. The power of utterance, the power of expressing thought, was accounted as divine. And in that portion of our Christian literature that deals more particularly with the old Greek philosophy, the opening chapter says, "In the beginning was the logos—in the beginning was the word." The most sacred word! And so humanity has ever held it. It is not a mere theological veneration; it is not a mere philosophical abstraction. It is not alone in the region of sentiment that speech is valued. Let me tell you that the power of expression, and the right to express, are the highest characteristics of civilisation. Without speech, without the conveyance of thought from one to another by oracular methods, it is impossible to improve. Give me a nation without speakers, and I will give you a nation of savages. Give me a nation who limit speeches, and I will show you one drifting back to savagery. Curtail our power of expression, stop our utterances of thought, and we shall drift backwards into the mediæval darkness of superstition and ignorance once more. Thought is the quickener of every human effort beneficial to mankind. And what is thought that is not put into words? It is only by words, by the expression of words, that we see the value and the grandeur and the glory of thought. To put a limit on that is like putting a limit on life. For speech is the very life of a community. I am connected with the hon. member opposite, bound with him, we can become as it were as one, a oneness is created between us, the very moment that we can converse, that he can talk to me and I can talk to him. Without thought spoken, we are isolated animal atoms; no more. The aggregation, the binding up, of the social organism, of the human family, is created solely by the power of the communication of thought by language. Stop that, stop even one sentence that has an uplifting fire within it, and you do positive harm to the whole community. There is one part of the works of that great philosopher, Herbert Spencer that is ever dear to me. I never tire of quoting it when opportunity offers. It is more or less a guide to me in my life, and I sincerely trust that it may become a guide to others—

Not as adventitious will the wise man regard the thoughts that are in him, but as children born to him, which he may not carelessly let die. The highest truth he sees he will fearlessly utter, knowing that, let what may come of it, he is thus acting his right part in the world. If he can effect the end he aims at, well; if not, well also, thought not so well.

If we take those words as our guide, we are not going to let thought and knowledge die in our breasts, even in this dead Chamber. We are going to speak here, and no one man is going to curb our thoughts if we can prevent it. Bind my body, if you like, but you shall not check my thought. My thought shall be as free as the air, as free as the freedom given to thought by the hosts of masters who have

died to obtain that liberty. The right to speak is that which fired the best and noblest sons of the human family. In every dungeon, at every stake, in every abode of the instruments of torture, brave sons of the human race have endured even death itself that we might have the right to speak. For that right they have thus suffered, and the pathway to every stand in civilisation is strewn with the bones of martyrs, with the graves of the brave dead who have suffered that we might have this liberty. And now out of the wild backblocks of this now and isolated continent of the south there comes a strange nomad, reminding us of the Neanderthal man.

Mr. Teesdale: Oh, out of the hollow log.

Hon. T. WALKER: He comes into this Chamber of speech, into this House that calls itself a talking House, to say to us, "Come back to the woods to the cave dwellings, once more. Let us live in the darkness and gloom of the cavern, and think there is too much argument even if we ask each other what there is for supper." Such are our leaders, the new uplifters of man, the dignifiers of our race, who themselves have no thought to communicate and therefore ask that we too be silent, who have no great purposes in life to serve beyond that of merely sitting in this Chamber amongst their superiors; who think they are reforming us when they are absolutely inviting us back to the chattering ape and the gibbering denizens of the forest.

Amendment (Mr. Foley's) to strike out the words after "that," put and passed.

Amendment (to insert certain words, so that matter be referred to Standing Orders Committee) put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	22
Noes	15

Majority for . . . 7

AYES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Brown	Mr. Maley
Mr. Draper	Mr. Money
Mr. Duff	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Foley	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. George	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Hudson	(Teller.)
Mr. Johnston	

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Collier	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Green	Mr. Roche
Mr. Jones	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lutey	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

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

Ayes	22
Noes	15

Majority for . . 7

AYES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Brown	Mr. Maley
Mr. Draper	Mr. Money
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Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Hudson	(Teller.)
Mr. Johnston	

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Collier	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Green	Mr. Roche
Mr. Jones	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lutey	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller.)

Question as amended thus passed.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

MOTION—SMELTING WORKS AT GERALDTON.

Debate resumed from the 25th September on the motion by Mr. Willcock:—"That in the opinion of this House, in order to encourage the production of base metals in the northern portions of the State, a State smelting works should be erected at Geraldton."

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. C. A. Hudson—Yilgarn) [9.21]: I desire at the outset to congratulate the member who introduced the motion and also the member for Greenough who has given considerable support to it, and the member for Kalgoorlie, who has also interested himself to a great extent in relation to these lead-mining propositions in the Northampton district. The object of the motion is to secure a resolution of the House declaring necessary in the interests of mining in that district that there should be smelting works erected at Geraldton in order to encourage the production of base metals in the northern portion of the State. A number of members in this Chamber have taken an interest in that district, and the development of it is a matter of congratulation. During the early portion of the year I had the pleasure of visiting the district with the State Mining Engineer, and a close examination was then made of all the properties producing lead, and the result of the visit was published in the newspapers. Since then I am given to understand from conversation with the Premier and remarks that have been made by mem-

bers representing that district that there has been considerable further development in at least one of the mines in that locality. I find, however, on close examination of the position that there is not, in the opinion of the officers advising me, and in my own opinion formed from some slight experience of smelting propositions that sufficient guarantee of the success of such an undertaking. I regret exceedingly I am not in a position to recommend the House to pass the motion. In stating that I have had experience of smelting propositions in the State I refer not to lead propositions so much as those connected with the copper industry, and there is a distinction between the two smelters dealing with these two matters inasmuch as in a majority of cases in this State, our copper percentage is very low and it is necessary to have the smelter as near as possible to the mines so as to get early treatment to save the expense of transport of the ore. With regard to the lead in this district, at any rate, the position is somewhat different inasmuch as the lead is transported to the smelter and it should realise something in the nature of a 70 per cent extraction to enable the mine to be successfully worked. The amount of the production of ore in this locality that is in the northern portion of the district—although reference has been made to the smelting of copper from the Peak Hill district—I think might easily be dismissed because it is not proposed to erect a smelter for the treatment of both these metals. But confining our attention to lead, the amount produced in the district that has been mentioned during the last six months as shown in the return which was furnished to the House during the present session, and the total tonnage for the six months ended June last was 4,451 tons. Of that amount of ore which was taken over the railways, ore and concentrates, the total from the Fremantle Trading Company's mines, Nabawa and Baddera, was 3,203 tons, and from other producing mines 1,258 tons. Now we have at Fremantle a smelter capable of treating a much larger quantity of ore than is being produced in the Northampton district altogether. Indeed, they are only employing one furnace, a small one at that, and even then are not able to keep it fully employed; the position being that the Fremantle smelter is owned by the same company which is operating a number of mines in the Northampton district and from those mines the greatest supply is obtained. If the smelter were erected at Geraldton we would have only a very small quantity of ore in present showing to treat. Indeed with regard to the smelting of lead ore—

Hon. P. Collier: It would pay that company to treat there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I propose to show that it does not pay them to shift their property to Geraldton for treatment.

Hon. P. Collier: If the State had a smelter there they would probably use it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am going to show they would not. They have distinctly

stated that they will not give up smelting at Fremantle in order to go to Geraldton to be suppliers to a State smelter there. I make that emphatic statement because I inquired from the company whether they are likely to become patrons of a smelter at Geraldton if erected and they distinctly stated they were not.

Hon. P. Collier: They are not likely to say otherwise when they are doing the trade now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They also said the small quantity of ore they are receiving from the prospecting shows in the neighbourhood at Fremantle for treatment is such that they are not particular whether they have it or not at the present rates of charge. I shall show directly what the charges are. To make my first point. As there is not a sufficient quantity of ore produced in the district, taking it by and large, to justify the construction of a smelter and of the production from the mines and by the Fremantle company there certainly is not. The prospects of increased supplies are improving but they have not improved during the last six months to the extent to warrant the anticipation that they would be greater during the next six months to such a material extent to warrant the expenditure involved in the erection of a smelter at present. The cost of the erection of a smelter would be twice as great to-day as 10 years ago, or as it might be after the war. The estimated cost of a smelter to treat 20 tons a day is in the region of £20,000. That expenditure so far as I can gather, and as I am advised is not warranted. There is the position also to be faced that if a smelter were erected at Geraldton by the State, and there was an increase in the output of ore, it does not follow as a necessary consequence that the whole of that ore would be taken to the smelter at Geraldton for treatment. If companies were formed, they might possibly put upon their mines concentrators, and reduce the ore to a greater percentage of metal so that they would be able to ship it elsewhere for treatment at a lower rate. I do not like to advance that argument, particularly because I think it is of advantage to the State to have smelters to deal with this ore, and to have as many as the production of ore will warrant. There has been considerable argument in connection with the charges made by the Fremantle Smelting Company. It has been urged that a smelter at Geraldton would greatly reduce the cost. As a matter of fact the cost of railage from Geraldton to Fremantle is very small, and the charges that are made at Fremantle for the treatment of the ore that is sent there by the prospectors is less than that which they would have to pay if they sent their ore, or their concentrates, outside the State. It is a pity that the figures were quoted in the way they were because they are somewhat misleading. I do not say there was any intention to mislead. In considering the charges that were made at some other smelters, the position was shown only in a qualified manner. The cost of smelting alone was shown, whereas the real cost of treatment and the returning charges were much higher

than was represented. Taking the treatment of ore in the Eastern States at the company's works at Cockle Creek and Port Pirie, I would point out that these have not altered their charges seriously since they were published in the bulletin issued by the Mines Department in 1917. If hon. members have that pamphlet, they will see on reference to pages 44 and 47 the charges that are made there. There has been no serious increase in these since 1917 and no real change in the charges that are there made. Taking the average Northampton ore of 70 per cent. lead, and the London value of lead at £30 per ton, the smelting charges at Cockle Creek and Port Pirie would work out as follows, according to the tariff explained in the bulletin. At the Associated Smelters, that is Port Pirie, the charges are £8 12s. 8d. per ton of ore, at the Sulphide Corporation Works at Cockle Creek they are £8 2s. 9d., and at the Fremantle smelter the charges are £8 2s. per ton of ore, these charges being the amount to be deducted from the full assay value of the ore at £30 per ton of lead. The argument, therefore, that the smelting was done in the Eastern States at £3 less than the charges at Fremantle does not hold good.

Mr. Munsie: Do not other smelters allow for the other values in the ore as well as for lead?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They pay for the silver, but up to the present at the Fremantle smelter there has not been sufficient silver in the ore which has been delivered to warrant the cost which would be involved in the treatment of the silver.

Mr. Munsie: Not to the smelter but to the prospector.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They also pay for the gold, but the gold which is in the ore that has been discovered in the Northampton district is of a negligible quantity.

Mr. Willecock: What is the average amount of silver to a ton of ore?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is less than an ounce.

Mr. Rooke: It is half an ounce.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It would represent 1s. 11d., or 2s. per ton at the outside. That is not sufficient to warrant the further treatment which would be involved in the extraction. The charges at Fremantle are as reasonable as they are in the Eastern States. The extra cost of going to Fremantle with the ore is only in the railrage charge of about 11s. per ton, that is to say, 354 miles of railrage at $\frac{3}{4}$ d. equals 11s. $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per ton. Even if there was a smelter at Geraldton, and the metal was extracted from the concentrates, and the ore delivered there, the lead would have to be carried to Fremantle either by rail or by water, and there would be a charge upon it which would be nearly equal to the charge made for the ore and concentrates. I am not arguing against a smelter at Geraldton. I am arguing that, under present conditions, the expenditure is not warranted, because with the mine development which has taken place, there is sufficient accommodation already in

the State. I do not argue that this material should go out of the State, but I do say that we have no guarantee from the producers that even if a smelter were erected at Geraldton, the whole of the products would be sent there willy nilly. If there were conditions obtaining in England, or in the Eastern States, to their greater advantage, they would seize that opportunity and send it there irrespective of whether a Government smelter was in existence at Geraldton or not.

Hon. P. Collier: It is reasonable to suppose that the treatment would be done there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is reasonable to suppose that they would go to the nearest market. A lead proposition is quite a different thing to a copper proposition. The small percentage of metal in the ore we have in Western Australia makes it difficult and expensive to transport it, whereas the difference between 70 per cent. metal and 100 per cent. metal in the ore, makes very little difference in the cost of transport. As a matter of fact, ore is carried both by rail and by water at a cheaper rate than metal, because metal is of greater value than ore. I think I have shown that the quantity of ore now available for treatment is not sufficient to justify the establishment of a smelter at Geraldton, and that at present there is accommodation within the State for the producer at a reasonable rate. Assuming that the Government did erect a smelter at Geraldton at a cost of £20,000, would they be in a position to treat the ore at a lower rate, allowing for the cost of carriage and transport from Geraldton to Fremantle, than is the case at Fremantle to-day? I submit that it could not be done at any lower price than is being charged at Fremantle, because Geraldton is not a place where coke is provided. Coke would have to be taken past Fremantle to Geraldton, and the other fluxes would also have to be taken there.

Mr. Willecock: There is plenty of coke at the company's works; they do not know what to do with their product.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Coke would have to be taken to Geraldton for the purpose of smelting, and fluxes would also have to go there. The cost would be as great, if not greater, if the ore was to be treated at a profit, than obtains at Fremantle. Whilst I do not advocate Fremantle as against Geraldton, I am not disposed to say that Fremantle should be closed down for the purpose of establishing a smelter at Geraldton, which would not be a paying proposition under present conditions. I am, therefore, unable to recommend the House to agree to the construction and running of a smelter at Geraldton.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [9.40]: I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willecock), and my only regret is that I did not have the honour to move it myself. The matter, however, concerns his electorate to a similar extent as mine, and I do not grudge him the honour. When I moved for a return for the six months ended the 31st July last, I was proceeding to deal with the question of a smelter at Geraldton but was prevented from doing so. The information given in that return was

to the effect that during that period of six months the total tonnage railed from the Northampton mining district was 4,451 tons of concentrates and picked ore. I want the House to understand that the principal developments in this district have only been going on for the last six months. I am, of course, speaking of new developments, for mining generally has been going on in the district for the last 60 or 70 years. The lead produced from these 4,451 tons of concentrates and picked ore, on a basis of 70 per cent., which is a fair average basis for the concentrates sent from Geraldton, either to the Eastern States or Fremantle, taken at £28 per ton, equals a production for the half year valued at £27,240. That includes also the production of the Fremantle Trading Co. from each of their mines. The return also shows that, exclusive of the Fremantle Trading Company's operations, 1,258 tons of ore were railed by the prospectors during the same period. Of this tonnage 979 tons were railed from Ajana, which is the siding for the Geraldine mine, 57 tons from Nabawah, which is on the Upper Chapman railway line, and altogether distinct from the Northampton line, and 222 tons from Northampton itself, and the mines in the immediate vicinity. The gross value of the production outside the Fremantle Trading Company's properties for the half-year amounted to £24,657. When moving for the return, I requested to be furnished with a comparison for six months of the ore produced and ore treated in respect of this field and of Ravensthorpe. The information shows that the Ravensthorpe smelting works for that period treated 2,622 tons ore for a copper value of £22,156 and a gold value of £6,727, making a total production for the half-year by the Ravensthorpe smelter of a value of £28,883. That is only some £4,000 in excess of the value produced on the Northampton mineral field by the prospectors outside the Fremantle Trading Company. And as the Northampton output is growing I wish to know whether the development of the industry there does not warrant the Government in giving either the railway or the smelter? It seems to me that the people of Ravensthorpe, although the Government did not erect the smelter there—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Government did erect that smelter, and gave it away to a private company.

Mr. MALEY: Apart from the smelter, them, the Government have constructed, for the purpose of helping the Ravensthorpe copper industry, a line of railway, 34 miles long, to Hopetoun. If that assistance can be rendered in the constituency of the Minister for Mines, there is some justification for asking—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Ravensthorpe was not in the Minister's constituency at that time.

Mr. Lambert: But the existence of the works is a very handy thing for him now.

The Minister for Mines: None of that money was expended in my time. The only amount put up since I represented the district is that for the railway.

Mr. MALEY: It is owing to the Minister's energetic representation that all this has

been done. Now I come directly to the charges made by the Fremantle Trading Company's Smelting Works. I cannot congratulate the Minister on the case he has put up in this respect, although I am prepared to admit that, proceeding on the basis of ore which has been sent to the Eastern States smelters at Port Pirie and Cockle Creek, it is not a fair comparison to say that the ore should be estimated practically on a basis of 55 per cent., because there has been a uniformly high grade of ore sent from the Northampton district. A fair average to take would be 70 per cent. The charges at the Fremantle Smelting Works and at Port Pirie and Cockle Creek for the actual smelting alone on that basis, work out in favour of the Fremantle Trading Company's charges by a small margin. But there is this to be contended with—the Port Pirie and Cockle Creek works make provision for the saving of noble minerals, either gold or silver. By a slightly increased payment one can recover the silver or gold contained in the ore.

Hon. P. Collier: But the Port Pirie and Cockle Creek charges too are excessive. Those works have a monopoly.

Mr. MALEY: I want now to show exactly where the shoe pinches as regards the Fremantle works. The Fremantle Trading Company, by virtue of an agreement with the Government, are allowed to make on every ton sent to their works an overhead charge of 10 per cent. This charge is in addition to the charge of £6 per ton and of 1s. for every lead unit below 70 per cent. In my opinion this overhead charge amounts to an absolutely vicious levy on industry. The 10 per cent. is charged by way of making allowance for the obsolete plant operated by the company. I believe it to be a fact that this is charged as an insurance against loss from defective plant. I understand the plant is not very modern type of blast furnace, which, instead of recovering up to 98 per cent. or perhaps, as a modern smelting proposition should do, almost 100 per cent., extracts only 96 per cent., the other 4 per cent. either passing up the chimney or else escaping in the slag.

The Minister for Mines: One does not get 100 per cent. extraction from any smelting works.

Mr. MALEY: With modern methods very high percentages indeed are obtained. Another feature I wish to point out is that of the 4,451 tons of ore produced during the last six months on the Northampton field and railed to Fremantle, only 3,115 and seven-tenths tons were pig lead. Railage has to be added, therefore, on no less than 1,336 tons of rock, which has been sent from my constituency to make road metal for South Fremantle. That rock has been converted into slag, but railage has had to be paid on that useless quantity. Such unnecessary expenditure would be absolutely avoided by the erection of a smelter at Geraldton.

The Minister for Mines: But would you not have to cart the lead?

Mr. MALEY: Yes. The Minister will admit that the grade of ore in the Geraldine mines is very high—in conversation with the State Mining Engineer I gathered that the grade

is phenomenally high. Could smelting works be erected at Geraldton, the effect would be that the ore could be sent to Geraldton, always providing the railway line were constructed as well. There are two strings to this bow of mine—the smelter and the railway. The ore from the Geraldine area contains so high a percentage of lead that the ore body could be trucked practically *holus bolus*. On the average it contains 40 per cent. of lead across the whole face. If there were smelting works at Geraldton that ore could be sent there without any dressing whatever.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If it is a good payable proposition, do not you think private people would take it up?

Mr. MALEY: Private people are only now becoming alive to the fact that the mines are there. If there is any part of the State which suffers from want of publicity or advertisement, it is that part of the country whose claims I am now advocating. There has been no hotel accommodation at the head of the line to Geraldine, which centre one can visit only by imposing on the generosity of residents. I have repeatedly urged the Government to get an hotel established there. The ore of the Baddera mine, owned by the Fremantle Trading Company, contains at present, when broken to be sent to the crushers, only about 14 per cent. per ore ton of lead. Hon. members will gather that if the majority of the mines at Geraldine yield ore containing from 40 to 50 per cent., the proposition is a good one, and will increase the tonnage over the line to Geraldton as well as saving the prospectors any need whatever for putting up those most expensive appliances used for concentrating ore. I think the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) and the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) can bear me out in the statement that the works at the Prothero and Baddera mines are very extensive—I refer to the works for concentrating and dressing ore. If this huge expense to the prospectors can be avoided, the Minister ought to take that circumstance into consideration as another factor operating in favour of the erection of a smelter at Geraldton. To-night I heard the member for Kalgoorlie appeal to the cross benches for support to a motion of his. He appealed for support on the plea of decentralisation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But he did not get it.

Mr. MALEY: I responded to the hon. member's appeal, and I think other members on these cross benches also gave him support. If, when motions of this sort are tabled, hon. members, perpetuating the system which is absolutely wrecking the country to-day of dragging products that should belong to the various outcrops of the State down here, continue the policy of centralisation, Western Australia is going to be a very poor country. If the Government care to give assistance to this industry, here is a chance for them to create a thriving community in Geraldton and also at the mines, which are capable of sustaining a large population of men working in profitable employment. I commend this motion to hon. members as absolutely worthy of their support, and I hope it will receive that support.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [9.59]: I have little to say in giving this motion my general support. I sincerely congratulate the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) and also the member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) on having brought this matter forward. If the discussion serves no other purpose it will have the effect of focussing public attention on a very deserving district. I can quite appreciate the attitude of the Minister for Mines in trying in a general way to outline the proposition from a business point of view. Certainly his position is one that is difficult and from his point of view must be approached with considerable caution. Still I think that in all matters of this description, particularly where evidence has been brought forward which shows that the district possesses the undoubted possibilities which have been stated, the Minister for Mines would be well advised if he, at all events, declared that the matter would be properly investigated. I do not altogether think it is a matter for the House to deal with in the manner in which motions of this description are generally dealt with. The members for Geraldton and Greenough certainly put up a very good case in support of a smelter at Geraldton, and I would like to remind the Minister of the fact that it is certainly cheaper to smelt ore in Geraldton than in Fremantle. The ratio in tonnage between coke carried to Geraldton and ore carried to Fremantle would be about four in one. That is to say, it would take approximately one ton of coke to smelt four tons of ore, and one could easily see the advantages geographically and otherwise of smelting in Geraldton instead of at Fremantle. In saying that I need only to refer to the apparent tonnage available for smelting purposes. I think hon. members put up a very good case in making comparisons between the facilities granted at Ravensthorpe and the required facilities at Geraldton. The Minister for Mines, I believe, is seized with the importance of granting facilities to assist mining, and I certainly believe if the money was available he would have no compunction about granting the facilities sought. With the knowledge the Minister has acquired and is acquiring daily, I am convinced, too, he would grant greater facilities in the future than have been granted in the past. The member for Greenough put his finger upon the main reason why the charges imposed by the Fremantle Trading Company are extortionate. I understand they make no pretence about their plant being obsolete. I am not an authority on smelting, but I understand that this plant is completely out of date. A small plant at Geraldton would smelt ore 30 per cent. cheaper than the prospectors have to pay to the Fremantle company.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The plant at Fremantle has been fitted up in the past five years.

Mr. LAMBERT: I hope the hon. member will not take offence at the statements I am making, nor take a parochial view which would obscure any worthy observations he may make upon this matter. The smelters at Fremantle

were originally designed for an altogether different purpose, and when the company went into liquidation the plant was knocked down, and a ready-made thing of a sort which is right enough in its way, was erected to smelt lead ore. The Minister for Mines could readily ascertain that it would be possible to build a small smelter at Geraldton for much less than the amount he has mentioned, and so long as he is convinced that it would pay interest and sinking fund upon the outlay he would be justified in bringing forward a recommendation to have the smelter erected. As other hon. members have stated, it is a vicious practice which has obtained, and will obtain, of centralising everything. While my respect for the member for North-East Fremantle will carry me far, it will not carry me to the extent of supporting the practice of centralisation, particularly as we know that Geraldton, from a geographical point of view, and also from the point of view of the raw products, fluxes, and shipping facilities, is in a much better position to deal with the output of ore and smelt it into a marketable article than to remove it to Fremantle. I hope the hon. member's vision will not be obscured by the vicious practice of centralisation, and that we shall be able to approach this matter and discuss it from the point of view of the interests of the State, and with the desire to open up our great coastline and give to the different centres the trade which is legitimately theirs. The members for North-East Fremantle and South Fremantle in discussing this matter should keep that in mind. I would suggest to the Minister for Mines that if a report has not already been obtained, that when one of the officers of his department, particularly the State Mining Engineer, is available, he should get the officer to report upon the proposal of establishing a reasonable sized smelter at Geraldton.

The Minister for Mines: The State Mining Engineer has already been there this year.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister was expressing the State Mining Engineer's views.

The Minister for Mines: From my own experience and observation, and the assistance of the officers of the department, whose views I expressed, I cannot recommend it.

Mr. LAMBERT: Has the Minister ever called for a report from the State Mining Engineer?

The Minister for Mines: Yes, and I have expressed the views he holds. He is against the erection of a smelter at Geraldton at the present juncture.

Mr. LAMBERT: I regret that the Minister has not that report before him. I think the State Mining Engineer is a little conservative in approaching matters of this description. So far as my own district is concerned, I will give him due credit for the facilities he has rendered which I hope will in the near future lead to a big development. Coolgardie still has its latent wealth, and it only requires facilities and just treatment at the hands of the Government to reveal the wealth which undoubtedly is there.

Hon. P. Collier: In other words it will come again.

Mr. LAMBERT: I would earnestly ask the Minister for Mines to give serious consideration to this question, and to keep in mind the fact that the prospectors of the lead mines are developing those mines to an increasing extent, and that when normal times return—and it looks as if we were going to have them again in the very near future—the assistance which those people want will be given to them to treat the high grade galena ore in that district. There is a considerable amount of white lead used in this State, and we should be producing all that we require. While I do not desire that the department should be committed to any great expenditure, I hope the Minister will keep this matter in view in the hope of, at an early date, bringing about the erection of a smelter at Geraldton.

Mr. ROCKE (South Fremantle) [10.10]: In endeavouring to arrive at a decision regarding the establishment or continuance of State enterprises it is necessary to ascertain to what degree they will benefit the industry concerned and the community at large. I desire to see the development of every industry in the State because I feel that without the development of industries the State must take a second place.

Mr. Green: What about the breweries?

Mr. ROCKE: I should have said legitimate industries.

Mr. Duff: Is a brewery illegitimate?

Mr. ROCKE: The arguments advanced in favour of the erection of State smelting works at Geraldton are the alleged excessive cost of treatment at Fremantle and the non-recovery of other valuable metals. The member for Geraldton (Mr. Wilcock) in moving the motion in favour of the establishment of smelting works at Geraldton said, amongst other things—

The Fremantle smelting plant was not erected for the purpose of dealing with lead ore at all, but principally for the purpose of dealing with telluride and kindred ores. Even at the present time the whole of the capital cost of that plant, only about 25 per cent. of which is in use, is made a charge on the lead mining industry. Only about a quarter of the plant is being used at the present time. The smelting company have a very large plant at Fremantle and the plant is not being utilised to anything like its full capacity, and those who use it have to pay charges covering interest and sinking fund on the capital value of the plant which, I am quite safe in saying, is not being utilised to anything like 50 per cent. of its capacity. Still if the plant were being used to its full capacity the charges presumably would be reduced considerably. One of the greatest complaints in connection with the Fremantle Trading Company is that their plant is not a smelting works in the proper meaning of the term that is to say, they only pay on returns for one purpose, namely, the extraction of lead. According to the official records, the original Geraldine mines were known to contain as much as 20 ozs. of silver to the ton. However, by reason of the plant at Fremantle being unable to extract any silver, the whole of that product is be-

ing wasted and, as I say, the mines at Geraldine in close proximity to those worked in the olden days possibly produce half the value of which was obtained in olden times. . . . One of the things the people have to complain about is the prices charged for smelting. Before the war the average price charged at the Cockle Creek works in New South Wales was £1 11s. a ton. I have copies of the invoices here. For lead from White Peak the Sulphide Corporation charged for a particular shipment £1 11s. a ton, while to-day it charged £6 4s. 2d. per ton. The Fremantle Trading Company, on the other hand, charged £7 per ton for smelting similar ore, and it did not recover the silver, whereas the Cockle Creek Company did. The difference between the cost of smelting at Port Pirie and at Fremantle was said by one authority to be approximately £3 per ton.

It is quite true that there is a difference of £3 per ton, but the difference is in favour of Fremantle. The Minister for Mines to-night quoted from this report of Mr. Montgomery, but not quite fully. It shows that the Fremantle charges are the cheapest in Australia. At Port Pirie, in the treatment of 69 per cent. lead at a price of £25, the total charges are £8 2s. For 72 per cent. lead worth £30 per ton the total charges are £8 16s. For 65 per cent. lead worth £35 per ton the total charges are £8 4s. 4d., while for 65 per cent. lead at a price of £22 per ton the total charges are £7 16s. 4d. To this must be added freights, wharfage, and other charges, which bring the charges at Port Pirie to £11 8s. 3d. The member for Geraldton inferred that there was a difference of £3 per ton against Fremantle. The difference is £3 8s. 3d. in favour of Fremantle as compared with Port Pirie. The smelter at Fremantle is treating the total output of lead ore concentrates from its own mine as well as the total output from all the Northampton mines. The smelter is under agreement with the Government to take all the ore the other mines care to put forward, although those mines are in no way obliged to send the ore to Fremantle. So if there were a difference favourable to them in sending the ore to Port Pirie, no doubt they would have done so long ago.

Mr. Willcock: But that is impossible.

Mr. ROCKE: The hon. member told the House that the Fremantle smelter's charges were so high that it was detrimental to the interests of the Northampton mines. I do not claim any philanthropic intention on the part of the Fremantle Trading Company, but seeing that the company is treating all the ores from the district, it stands to reason that the private mines are getting the benefit of the treatment of the Fremantle Trading Company's output. So, too, if State smelters were established at Geraldton, the Government there would get none of the Fremantle Company's ores for treatment and, consequently, unless the State smelters were run at a big loss, the price of treatment there would be prohibitive. It has been pointed out that one of the reasons for the alleged high charge at Fremantle is that the smelter is working to only 50 per cent. of its capacity. Let me

say that if more ore were forthcoming, the smelter would be worked at its full capacity and the charges would be reduced. The other question was that of the non-recovery of other metals from the concentrates. There is just a word here by Mr. Montgomery in his notes which must be authentic because issued under the authority of the Hon. R. T. Robinson, the then Minister for Mines. Mr. Montgomery says—

The Whim Creek and Uaroo lead ores usually contain sufficient silver to be classed as argentiferous lead ores, but those from the Northampton mineral field as yet have been found to be too poor in silver to make its extraction a matter of much value to the mine owners.

Mr. Willcock: But we are talking about Geraldton, not Northampton.

Mr. ROCKE: The assay of silver in concentrates from Northampton is about half an ounce per ton, and the value is 1s. 9d. So members representing mining communities will realise that it would be absolutely absurd to attempt to extract that half ounce of silver worth 1s. 9d.

Mr. Willcock: It is worth 2s. 3d. to-day.

Mr. ROCKE: The question of flux has been dealt with. It is a more serious factor than, perhaps, some hon. members imagine, for it is not possible to obtain some of the fluxes required at Geraldton. As an illustration of the relative cost of treatment of those concentrates, there is the example of a parcel sent from Uaroo to Fremantle containing 20 tons. This Uaroo concentrates assayed 20 ozs. of silver to the ton, worth about £4 per ton. The company sacrificed this silver, allowed the Fremantle Trading Company to retain it, rather than send their product to Port Pirie, which again proves that the Fremantle charges compare more than favourably with those of the Eastern States.

The Minister for Mines: They do not use much of that in Western Australia.

Mr. ROCKE: But the hon. member for Geraldton referred to shipping freights on concentrates to Port Pirie. I will oppose the motion, because I wish to save the Government from further increasing the deficit. If private enterprise is such a good thing, as we are often told, I think private enterprise might well be left to establish smelting works at Geraldton. They cannot reduce the charges ruling at Fremantle.

On motion by Mr. Teesdale, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.24 p.m.