

a monopoly to this or any other company. In the circumstances I can have no alternative but to oppose the second reading of the Bill in the interests of those men who are working outback, the farmers of Western Australia.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.34 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 6th December, 1911.*

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

### QUESTION—STATE SAVINGS BANK.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: If any agreement is entered into by the Government with the Commonwealth Bank to transfer the State Savings Bank, will he see that the privileges now enjoyed by the benefit societies dealing with the Savings Bank are retained to the societies before any transfer is agreed to?

The PREMIER replied: Yes.

### QUESTION—STATE BATTERIES AND GOLD PREMIUM.

Mr. MUNSIE (without notice) asked the Colonial Secretary: Will he supply information with regard to the charges made by State batteries in connection with the treatment of tailings (sands and slimes) and state on what basis the Government settle with prospectors in regard to the gold premium?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (for the Minister for Mines) replied: Under regulations tailings are purchased from customers immediately on agreement as to assay after a crushing has been effected. The department pays £4 per ounce for the gold purchased

and after receipt of the premiums from the Gold Producers' Association for the accounting period in which the crushing is effected, pays to the prospector the full amount of the premium received.

### AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from the Auditor General, in pursuance of Section 53 of the Audit Act of 1904, the thirty-first report for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1911, which I now lay on the Table of the House.

### SELECT COMMITTEE—HOSPITALS BILL.

On motion by Mr. Gibson the time for bringing up the report of the Select Committee was extended for two weeks.

### BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

### BILL—CONSTITUTION FURTHER AMENDMENT.

Order of the Day read for the third reading of this Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: As this Bill alters the Constitution Act it is necessary to have an absolute majority of the House on both the second and third readings. I will put the question, "That the Bill be now read a third time," and if there is any dissentient voice I will divide the House. If not, I will take it that the third reading is carried unanimously. I have counted the House, and there is an absolute majority present.

Question put, and two members having declared in the negative the House divided with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	32
Noes	..	..	10

Majority for .. 22

### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Carter	Mr. O'Loghlin
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Collier	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Simons
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Davies	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Heron	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Troy
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Willcock
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Mann	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Marshall	(Teller.)
Mr. McCallum	

## NOMS.

Mr. Angelo  
Mr. Broun  
Mr. Denton  
Mr. Harrison  
Mr. Latham  
Mr. H. K. Maley

Sir James Mitchell  
Mr. Stubbs  
Mr. A. Thomson  
Mr. Piesse  
(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## BILL—COURTS OF SESSION.

## Third Reading.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mrs. COWAN (West Perth) [4.50]: The Premier promised to give the House an explanation of the clause to which the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) objected when we last discussed this measure. I would like to know what proceedings are specially referred to, seeing that the procedure for appeal is already provided for in Statutes and rules, regarding the revision of decisions from the lower court. In view of that position, why is there any necessity for the clause?

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.51]: The clause merely gives power to the court of appeal to amend any defect in connection with the appeal so that it may be dealt with on its merits.

Mrs. Cowan: There is more in it than that.

The PREMIER: I have consulted the Solicitor General and he advised me that that is what the clause does. It merely enables the court of appeal to remedy any formal defect in connection with the appeal, so that it may be dealt with on its merits.

Mrs. COWAN: It will, I think, practically—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. member cannot speak twice at the present stage.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.52]: It is true, as the member for West Perth has stated, that when the Bill was before members in Committee there was no one in the House who could enlighten the Committee as to what was the meaning of Clause 37. Seeing that the clause was only passed on the casting vote of the Chairman, it is right to say that half of the Committee were not clear upon the Clause. It was thought that while the Supreme Court would have power to review certain judgments, they would not have power to quash judgments, but merely amend them. The premier promised to make inquiries and enlighten the House.

The Premier: So I did and I have given the explanation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Is there full right of appeal?

The Premier: Yes, there is.

Question put and passed; Bill read a third time.

## BILL—ARCHITECTS.

Report of Committee adopted.

## BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT.

Reports of Committee adopted.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1921-22.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 1st December; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Department of Railways, Hon. J. Scaddan, Minister. (The Premier in charge of the Estimates.)

Vote—Railways, tramways and electricity supply, £2,596,342.

Mr. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [4.55]: It was stated the other night by the member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson), that the cost of railways had been substantially increased because of the privileges extended to railway employees, in consequence of which a heavy burden had been added to the railway finances. I gathered from the reply the hon. member received to the question he put at the time that, so far as the actual cost to the department is concerned, it is not a question of cash, but of book-keeping entries. The trains have to be run and it is only a question of the men being carried by those trains. Every time the railway workers ask for improved conditions and rates, it is put to them that the service is a non-paying proposition. The agricultural lines are non-paying railways, and in consequence are largely accountable for the losses on the railway working. Each time the men ask for improved conditions, this is what is put up to them to show why they should not be granted any increase in wages.

Mr. Harrison: Do you want to cut the spur lines out?

Mr. McCALLUM: I do not argue that they should not be built, but when they are constructed that position should be recognised and the fact that they are not paying propositions should not be brought forward against the men as an argument against giving them improved conditions nor yet should members representing the country districts complain regarding the cost of privileges because of the non-paying agricultural lines.

Mr. A. Thomson: At the same time, these men are receiving more wages than the men outside the service.

Mr. McCALLUM: In many cases, they are not.

Mr. A. Thomson: In many cases, they are.

Mr. McCALLUM: In many cases, the tradesmen are receiving less than the tradesmen outside the service. The member for Katanning knows that. Tradesmen outside the service, including carpenters and wood workers, are getting more than men employed in those occupations in connection with the railway service. It is well that the representatives of the agricultural districts should know that every time a railway is built into those parts of the country which they represent, it is not going to be a paying proposition.

Mr. Latham: Which agricultural line is not paying?

Mr. McCALLUM: I do not think there is one agricultural spur line which is paying. There are no figures obtainable to prove that point, however.

Mr. Harrison: They have to use the main lines after they leave the spur lines.

Mr. McCALLUM: Of course, they do, but the mileage through the agricultural areas has to be added to the mileage on the main lines. It is not fair to take one particular instance and say that because the railways are not paying, improved conditions to the employees should not be allowed.

Mr. A. Thomson: I was only quoting the Minister for Railways.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Minister for Railways is not always correct.

Mr. A. Thomson: He should be correct in this matter.

Mr. McCALLUM: It is not fair, at any rate, for him to argue that the men employed in the railway service must carry the responsibility for such losses and because of the losses, should not receive the consideration to which they are entitled.

Mr. A. Thomson: That was not suggested.

Mr. McCALLUM: It was suggested. The member for Katanning argued against the privileges on that score.

Mr. Latham: That is your interpretation.

Mr. McCALLUM: What other interpretation could be placed upon it? Are we to say that because the railway lines are not paying, we should not allow these privileges? Is the granting of such privileges peculiar to these workers alone? Does not the farmer provide a farm worker with a horse to go to and from the railway station? He will give him means to get about his work, and do everything usual in the industry that applies to railway men. What difference is there between the employees in the agricultural industry and the employees in the Railway or any other big department? The argument has been advanced in the court by the Commissioner's representative that the railways cannot afford to pay what is asked, because they are a losing proposition, and that one reason why they are a losing proposition is because of the extensive mileage which has been built and that a heavy tax has been put upon the system by reason of its having been overbuilt. It is on this account that it is claimed that the wages which are being asked cannot be paid. The railway men should not

be asked to carry the burden arising from the policy of the Government to construct non-paying lines. Another argument used as an excuse for the Commissioner not being able to show a better condition of affairs, is that he has not full control, that he has not that control over the men in the service in the matter of fixing their wages. There is no employer in the State who has a wider control over his employees than has the Commissioner of Railways. Boan Bros., Foy & Gibson's, and all such firms have to submit to Arbitration Court decisions.

Mr. A. Thomson: And they can tell a man when his services are no longer wanted.

Mr. McCALLUM: So can the Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. A. Thomson: No, he cannot.

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes; no fewer than 600 men have been dismissed from the railway service on account of retrenchment, and no appeal lies for those men. There is no more possibility of appealing on behalf of these men than there is on behalf of any other body of men who may be dismissed by private firms.

Mr. Teesdale: These people always have a member of Parliament to fall back upon.

Mr. McCALLUM: Long before I was a member of Parliament I had to intervene on behalf of private employees as much as on behalf of Government employees. I do not know that Government employees fall back on representative men any more than do private employees. A railway employee can be dismissed and the reason given for that dismissal that there is no more work for him to do, and on that score he has no right of appeal. It is only when his character is challenged that he has the right to defend himself. That is the only time he can appeal. If retrenchment is going on nothing can be said or done. I am not all satisfied with the position in the railway service. Those in the country who have been complaining have no more ground for complaint than the people who reside in the metropolitan area.

Mr. A. Thomson: I wish you had to comply with some of the conditions we have to comply with.

Mr. McCALLUM: If one wants to travel from Fremantle to Perth and happens to miss a train, he might as well go home again, so poor is the service. It means that if a train is missed, the best part of a day is lost. The service between Fremantle and Perth is a disgrace, and in no other part of the Commonwealth would such a state of affairs be tolerated. It has been further stated that the Commissioner was not responsible for the strike that took place in the early portion of this year. I am not going to say that the Commissioner was wholly responsible, but I do say he was largely responsible, and that if other representative men, acting on behalf of employers had adopted an attitude similar to that taken up by the Commissioner, we would have had far more strikes during the last few years than it has been

our lot to suffer. The Commissioner of Railways from the time we first confronted him, stood with his back to the wall and refused to budge. What he said was, "Take the Arbitration Court or nothing." He declined to negotiate or to discuss points.

Mr. A. Thomson: He said, "We will negotiate, but we must have certain things."

Mr. McCALLUM: I am not going to argue that at the beginning there were not faults on both sides, but I do say that when the matter was handed over to the disputes committee the Commissioner had no right to allow the prejudice that had been built up in his mind during the early negotiations, to act against us. When he saw we were anxious to get through without a strike, he should have acted with a more open mind, and tried to get over the difficulty without involving the country in a disastrous strike. But he sat back and declined to argue and said, "There is the Arbitration Court." Every appeal we made fell on deaf ears, and up to the time the men came out he declined to budge from the position he had adopted from the first. I have been very disappointed with the stand taken by the Commissioner of Railways since the settlement of that strike, and I do hope that the standard he has set up does not receive the endorsement of the Government. If that attitude is to be adopted, it must mean the end of negotiations in industrial disputes. The working man is a very trustful person until such time as his faith in an individual is shaken. Once he loses that faith he is at all times suspicious and distrustful and it is then very difficult to get him to deal with men whom he has found to have deceived him. The action of the Commissioner of Railways in repudiating the agreement arrived at at the time of the settlement is nothing short of a disgraceful proceeding on the part of a public servant. That agreement provided for the recognition of the principles for which the men struck, and then the Commissioner goes into the Arbitration Court and says there was no recognition, and he repudiates the agreement arrived at. If there was no "recognition," there was no necessity for the strike. During the previous ten days we had been arguing as to whether the Commissioner should put his signature to the word "recognition," and even up to the last day the conference met. It was put to us after the Minister for Railways had left the conference, having agreed to the suggestions, that he went back to Cabinet which considered the matter. Then he again met us and the word "recognition" was struck out of two clauses, and in place of that word there was inserted "has not denied" the principle of extra pay for night shifts, and also suggested the insertion of "does not question" in the clause relating to the eight hours' principle. If it was not a matter of recognition why was the strike held up for ten days in order to prevent the word "recognition" being put into the agreement. Even on the last day the Commissioner was trying to alter the word

"recognition" to insert "has not denied" in one instance, and "does not question" in the other. If the Commissioner thought by consenting to the word "recognition," it did not bind him to recognise, if he thought there was another way of quibbling out of it afterwards, well, a man who adopts that attitude with a body of men who are acting for thousands of others, and who will keep ideas in the back of his head with the intention of deceiving his employees—a man who will do that, can never again expect to be trusted.

The Minister for Works: Is it not possible that he was honest in his views?

Mr. McCALLUM: He should then have told us at the table. He should have said, "I am signing here for the recognition, but this does not bind me to it. The whole discussion that week was as to whether the department was to be bound. I was deliberately deceived, and I venture to say that every member of the intermediary deputation, including the Archbishop of Perth, understood that there was to be a recognition of those principles. Nothing whatever can be gained by deceit, especially in connection with industrial matters. I have always appealed to every union on whose behalf I have acted, when setting out in a document the conditions of wages and terms that were to be agreed upon between themselves and the employers, to be perfectly explicit so that there should be no misunderstanding. "Do not try to show the other fellow points" is what I have always urged. It was the pride of my term of office that when I finished my labours there after so many years that I was able to declare there was not an employer who could say "McCallum, you put your signature to a document and you deceived us; you signed something which you afterwards repudiated." And I was associated with the preparation of hundreds of agreements. What is the position in regard to the Commissioner of Railways? How can you possibly ask a body of men to sit at a round table conference and draw up an agreement with a man who has acted as the Commissioner has done? I regret extremely what has taken place, and I say that if he had anything at the back of his mind which led him to suppose that he was not bound to what he had signed, that there was some way out of it for him, he should have been man enough to tell us there, and not deceive us. We should then not have found ourselves in the position of not being able to trust him further. I notice in the Commissioner's report it is stated that the cost of the strike to the department was £101,000. During that period all wages and salaries were stopped. There was also the saving of all fuel and stores. Yet we find that with the two weeks during which the strike took place, taken out of the month, the working expenses totalled £167,922. In the month of March, which is only one day shorter than the month of January, and without a strike, the working expenses were £197,838. I do not know how the Commis-

sioner arrives at his estimate that £101,000 was lost. Did he do it by rule of thumb, and divide a month's working expenses by two?

Mr. Johnston: A lot of the traffic was carried subsequently.

Mr. McCALLUM: I do not see how he can argue that the loss was £101,000, and that his costs for March were practically equal to those for January. From my experience of the railway men, I can say that the staff are very discontented. There is a great deal of dissatisfaction throughout the service. Of course it was to be expected, while a process of retrenchment was going on, that there would be a deal of friction and dissatisfaction in places, but the dissatisfaction seems to be universal. Not only is there dissatisfaction regarding the attitude of the Commissioner in connection with the settlement of the strike, but with regard to the attitude he is adopting in connection with promotions. I want to quote one instance of what is really happening by way of illustrating the cause for dissatisfaction existing amongst a number of the employees. This information has been given in answer to questions in another place and is, therefore, reliable. The position of loco. draftsman was advertised in England at a salary of £400 a year. The rate fixed in the advertisement in this State was £382 a year. Yet the appointment was made at £450. In other words, a man in England was offered the job at a higher rate than any of our own people and, after receiving the appointment, was paid an extra £50. The man from England who was appointed has been told that his line of promotion is to be from loco. draftsman to chief draftsman, then to works manager and then to chief mechanical engineer. Just imagine the effect of that on men who have been for many years in the department and who thought that their line of promotion would be to those positions! Here is a man brought from England and put over the heads of men who have been in the service for many years, and he is distinctly told that this will be his line of promotion. In effect, the other men have been told that they have no chance of aspiring to these jobs. This is not the way to keep a contented service, or to get men to do their best, and it does not tend to the harmonious working of the service. There has been sufficient in the Press recently regarding other appointments and I need not refer to them, but I hope the Government will make inquiries. The member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) complained that the Commissioner has not a free hand. In my judgment, he has too free a hand. This should be a matter of public policy and the Commissioner should not be permitted to play fast and loose as he appears to be doing. During my remarks on the Address-in-reply, I mentioned that a number of new appointments had been made of district officers, which meant new expenditure. This was denied by the Minister for Railways by way of interjection, but I noticed that when he spoke, he made no reference to the creation

of these positions. It has since been argued that the appointment of district engineers meant a saving. No man has been able to give a specific instance to show that it has meant a saving.

The Minister for Works: Then you should impeach the Commissioner.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is the duty of the Government. I claim to have a right to criticise and to point out what I think ought to be done.

The Minister for Works: Quite so, but if the Commissioner is as bad as all that, we should impeach him.

Mr. McCALLUM: These new appointments as district engineers are considered by railway men who are in a position to judge to be an absolute waste of money, and they cannot point to one instance where savings have been effected. In the case of Northam and Bunbury, so far from there being transfers of engineers from one position to another, we have two new and distinct positions created, and the salaries involved in each case total £1,600. These positions require more than the engineer; there is a staff as well, and the amount of salaries per year is £1,600. There can be no saving, and no saving has been effected by these appointments. There is ample room for improvement in the administration of the railways. Though we have not an inside knowledge of the department, we know there is great dissatisfaction among the employees. Travel where one will around the State, there are complaints from the general public about the administration. I hope the Government do not stand to endorse the policy of repudiating the principles of an agreement arrived at in the settlement of an industrial dispute, but since it has occurred in this instance, I hope it will not occur in any other Government department in future.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [5.20]: I regret that the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) should have criticised the policy of spur railways in the agricultural districts of Western Australia.

Mr. McCallum: I did not; I made that perfectly clear.

Mr. Willcock: He merely said they were run at a loss.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not know that they involve any greater loss than any other part of the railway system. In the portion of Western Australia served by the spur lines, a large number of people have been settled. They are improving their land and are doing excellent work for the State, sending in huge quantities of wheat and hay to augment the traffic on the main lines. All this progress and settlement and development is going on in the new districts, and particularly in those which have been opened up by the spur lines. The spur lines in the timber districts, too, are doing excellent work in supplying the main lines with freight. I cannot sit quietly by and hear any reflection cast upon the policy of building spur lines through these fine new agricultural districts.

It is a pity that we cannot get a return showing the receipts from the different spur lines, as well as from the main railways. We would then know exactly where the loss is taking place. At any rate, I think successive Governments, including the Scaddan Government, should be congratulated on the policy which led to the building of these spur railways. They have been built through many of the best portions of Western Australia, and it would have been a sorry thing for the State if they had not been built when material was so much cheaper than it is to-day. This policy has always had my hearty support. I was glad to hear the hon. member's intimation that he had no desire to reflect on that policy, but I understood that his remarks tended that way. But for his remarks, I might not have directed attention to the fact that we are conducting some very expensive services in the metropolitan and suburban areas. A great many trains have to be run in the suburban areas during the night and they are patronised almost entirely by people who have season tickets which they purchase in order to travel to and from their work.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The season ticket is different from the workman's ticket.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am not referring to the workman's ticket. I know that the workman's ticket only permits a person to travel on the one journey a day and back home. But the season ticket, which is issued for quite a reasonable rate, enables a person to travel to and from his work in the day and also to use the ticket at night. During all hours of the night, the Commissioner has to run trains in order that suburban season ticket holders might be able to patronise the metropolitan

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have to pay extra for season tickets.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am referring to season tickets, and I emphasise that the fortunate possessor of a season ticket can travel to and fro as often as he likes for the one payment. Consequently, the Commissioner is put to a good deal of expense in order to carry people to and from the metropolitan area after working hours that they might visit picture shows, for which service the Commissioner receives no extra payment from the season ticket holders.

Mr. Teesdale: The season ticket represents a big rise on the worker's ticket.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The season tickets are used as workers' tickets as well.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The policy of spur lines, which has been criticised, is one which has always appealed to me. If members want to attack something, they might attack the cheap suburban season tickets, and the fact that the Commissioner is put to great expense by holders of these tickets in order that they might travel to picture shows and other city amusements at night.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are you sure of that? That is only assumption on your part.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I know for a fact that it is so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is only assumption.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The hon. member can see it for himself every night. I have before me a copy of the supplement to the "Government Gazette" issued on the 25th November, headed "Western Australian Government Railways, Goods rates. Classification and general regulations for the conveyance of merchandise and livestock and jetty regulations, wharfage charges, etc." Another portion of it is headed "Western Australian Government Railways, coaching rates and general regulations for the conveyance of passengers, parcels and livestock, local and intersystem." This is a document of 397 pages of closely printed matter. I have compared it with the rate book issued in 1919 and, after spending an hour or two on it, I have found it very difficult to ascertain what differences the new classification makes in passenger, freight and other rates as compared with those in force previously.

Mr. A. Thomson: The 1919 rate for miscellaneous was 15s. 11d. and to-day it is 22s. 8d.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I hope the Government will tell us the effect of this new rate list. I do not ask for complete details; I do not want to know the difference in each of the items. But the Government should tell us whether these new rates mean a general or only a special increase in railway freights. The Government should tell us how much more money they expect to receive under the new rates which came into operation on the 1st December. Some items have been altered, and the effect in those cases has been to increase rates. But if any alteration of a general nature has been made, we are entitled to a frank statement regarding its effect. If no great alteration has been made, I must express regret that the expense of preparing this new list of 397 pages should have been incurred by the department for nothing.

The Minister for Works: The old rate book was full of alterations.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The new book is not too clear as to the extent of freight increases. I have been comparing some of the railway statistics for last year with those for the present year and I would like to put on record some of the differences which appear to require explanation. In comparing the results of last year's operations with this year's, I find that the number of miles of railway opened was 3,539 in both years. The railway mileage operated on was the same in both cases. I find that for the year ended on the 30th June 1920, there were 3,071,936 tons of goods and stock carried over our railways, as compared with 3,015,704 tons of goods and stock carried in the year ended on the 30th June, 1921. So that there were 56,232 tons less of goods and stock carried in this last year than in the previous year. Then I find that the earnings from the carriage of goods and stock for the

year ended on the 30th June, 1920, were £1,394,908, whilst in the latter year, with a smaller quantity of freight in the form of goods and stock the earnings rose to £1,637,979. This figure shows an increase of £243,071 paid by consignors for the carriage of 56,232 tons less. Then I find that in the year ended on the 30th June, 1920, there were 18,411,231 passengers' journeys, whilst on the 30th June, 1921, there were 17,732,571 passenger journeys, or 678,660 fewer passenger journeys than in the previous year. Notwithstanding that fact, I find that coaching or passenger earnings increased very much in the latter year as compared with the previous year, increased by no less than £146,135, notwithstanding the fact that the number of passenger journeys was reduced by 678,660.

The Premier: The fares had to be increased in order to meet the increased wages and costs.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Despite these increases, we appear to have lost more money on the railway service at the end of the year. Next as regards miscellaneous receipts, from wharfage, rents, etc., these receipts for the year ended June, 1920, were £132,096, which compares with £171,046 for the year ended June, 1921, the latter year showing an increase of £38,950 in respect of miscellaneous services. As regards the number of railway employees, I find that the total on the 30th June, 1920, was 7,609, which compares with a total of 8,083 on the 30th June, 1921. In the latter year the number of employees thus increased by 414, although I know, and I regret—one always regrets dismissals—that since the end of the financial year the Government have felt compelled to put off a number of railway employees. After allowing for interest, the loss on the working of the Railway Department for the year ended on the 30th June, 1921, was £418,317, as against £399,215 for the previous financial year. Hon. members will see that the same mileage of railways carried 56,232 tons less freight last year than in the preceding year, and collected £243,071 more revenue for transporting the lesser tonnage. These figures show the incidence of the high freights on the development of this State's industries. The figures also show that passenger journeys for the year 1920-21 decreased by 678,660 as compared with the journeys in 1919-20, and that for the lesser service the Railway Department collected £146,135 more revenue than that collected from passenger journeys in 1919-20; and this notwithstanding the fact that first class passenger journeys decreased by 168,402 as against 1919-20. In other words, a large number of people, owing to the increased fares, travelled second class instead of first class. Again, notwithstanding the decreases in tonnage and passengers, it will be seen on page 12 of the Commissioner's report that the department used 6,293 tons more coal in this last year than in 1919-20. That is a matter calling for explanation.

The Premier: It is due to the non-use of Newcastle coal.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That has been the case during previous years also.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The 6,293 additional tons of coal would cost roughly £6,000, plus charges for haulage and distribution. Furthermore, there was an increase of 66,667 miles in the train mileage, to carry less freight and fewer passengers. The figures appear to me to show a lack of general policy in the administration of the Railway Department. I commend the Government for showing an appreciation of the position, and for recognising the need of a searching investigation into the working of the railways. In the Railway Department this country is making the losses which constitute the principal portion of the deficit, and this despite repeated increases of freights. I trust that if the proposed standing committee on public works should be authorised, one of the first functions, if not the very first function, assigned to the committee will be an investigation of the Railway Department, to ascertain how it comes about that while the taxpayers are being charged considerably more money for appreciably lessened services the working of the railways shows an even larger loss than before. Now just to finalise this review of the 1919-20 and the 1920-21 working of the railways: the loss for 1920-21 was £418,370; the increased collection from freight on goods and stock was £243,071; the increased collection from passenger fares was £146,135; the increases from wharfages and rents amounted to £38,950—the total of increased collections, as compared with 1919-20, being £428,126, and this for the same services. And yet we lost on the railways for 1920-21 a sum of £418,370, as compared with £399,215 for 1919-20. To sum up in one sentence: As compared with 1919-20, in 1920-21 the Railway Department was run at a loss of £846,526 and employed 414 additional men to render the lesser services. The department received £428,156 from increased charges, and still lost £418,370. I am not blaming anyone at this stage. But the figures I have given demonstrate the necessity for a searching investigation into the administration of the Railway Department. The Government have shown their appreciation of that need in connection with the Public Works Committee Bill. Should that measure fail to pass another place, then I would urge the Premier to appoint a Royal Commission to carry out the investigation. What the personnel of the Commission should be, I leave to the Government. In any case, such an investigation should be carried out in order to secure the best possible advice on how to stop the disastrous drift in the finances of the Railway Department. Then Parliament, meeting next July, will have available a report dealing with this vital question of railway finance, and recommendations as to the best means of making our railways more useful to the development of Western Australia, while at the same time, if it can possibly be done consistently with assisting in our developmental policy, causing them to

be run on lines which will yield better financial results than those which have characterised their working during recent years.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [5.42]: I should not have spoken but for the remarks which have fallen from the last speaker. Indeed, I had not intended to speak on the Estimates at all. It must be patent to the hon. member that the railways of this State are not run on commercial lines. They are not run on commercial lines for the simple reason that the party to which the hon. member belongs dominates the Government of the State to the extent of even preventing the running of the railway department as a sound commercial proposition. I do not speak in any spirit of disparagement. It seems to me, however, that the members of the Country Party do not realise their responsibilities to this State. After all is said and done, every political element in this Parliament has for a long time felt, indeed, has for many years felt, the need for assistance to the farmer. To-day I think is a day when we may have to review the position to the extent of asking whether the farmer should not pay reasonably for the service which he is receiving from one of the big public utilities.

Mr. A. Thomson: Does he not pay now?

Mr. LAMBERT: My hon. friend knows the farmer does not.

Mr. A. Thomson: You have never analysed the Commissioner's report.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have analysed it through and through, and I am satisfied that the farmer is not paying a remunerative rate for the service which he receives from the Railway Department.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is contradicted by the Commissioner's report.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Commissioner himself is to-day helpless. If it is the intention of Parliament to bind that official hand and foot regarding rates for any specific purpose—

Mr. A. Thomson: I wish I could reply to you.

Mr. LAMBERT: I would not mind. However, I think it well that the Leader of the Country Party should reply on behalf of the farmers with respect to matters having an important bearing on the agricultural industry. We should review the position of every service rendered to various sections of the community, and so allow Parliament to assess the respective value of that service to the State, to the Consolidated Revenue, and to the railway finances. I do not believe in the granting of indirect concessions by the Railway Department. The railway system should be run first on commercial lines. Having said that, let me say there are many contributory factors to the development of the State. They reflect to a big extent the indirect benefits accruing from our railway system. Those benefits, I think, should be assessed and paid from Consolidated Revenue. That would be a far more business-like way of running the Railway Department. How-

ever brilliant the Commissioner of Railways may be, he cannot make ends meet if we use the railways as part of our developmental scheme. Every concession given by the railways should be known to the House and should be assessed by competent assessors.

Mr. A. Thomson: Do you believe the House capable of assessing it?

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, I think we have sufficient collective knowledge in the House for that.

Mr. Teesdale: Somewhat high ideals!

Mr. LAMBERT: No, it is very easy to assess the amount which should be allocated to, say, mining by the agency of the Railway Department, easy to assess the amount to be given from Consolidated Revenue through the Railway Department to the assistance of farming. It would be equally easy in regard to pastoral and all other industries which affect the economic and social life of the State.

Mr. Teesdale: How would you run the railways commercially, if you studied those industries?

Mr. LAMBERT: We could decide the amount to be set aside for the encouragement of any industry through the agency of the Railway Department. That would then be made a vote on the Estimates for the year, and the Railway Department would be credited with the amount from Consolidated Revenue. Then we should arrive at a point where, if ends were not made to meet by the managerial ability of the Commissioner of Railways, we could intimate to him that we would hold him responsible. I only hope that members will think along those lines. Country Party members must realise that our finances are in a serious condition, that we cannot go on exacting concessions from the Government which will ultimately end in the bankruptcy of the State. I ask them to realise that while they are responsible for the being of the Government, it is politically immoral for them to go on expecting this big trading concern to continue piling up deficits month after month. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) apparently thought he had discovered something wrong in the management of the railways. The fault is not with the management. The Commissioner is doing as well as any other level-headed business man with technical knowledge could do. The trouble is with Parliament. It is hypocritical to say the Commissioner of Railways is at fault: it is Parliament which is at fault. It is Parliament that must solve the problem of whether the railways are to be run as a developmental agency for the opening up of the State, or whether they are to be run on commercial lines.

Mr. Willcock: It is not Parliament, but the Government, for the Government fix the rates.

Mr. LAMBERT: After all, Parliament is paramount over the Government. It is true the Government fix the railway rates: but let me remind the hon. member that before

we have the temerity to ask the Commissioner to run the system on commercial lines, we have to decide whether or not the railways are to be used as part of our developmental scheme. If we are to properly apportion the services rendered by the railways in the development of the country, there is only one way to do it, namely, first to get the very best advice, either by a public works committee or by a Royal Commission, as to the services rendered, and then to allocate an equivalent sum from Consolidated Revenue to the railways so as to restore them to the focus of a commercial proposition. Since we are an over-railwayed young State grid-ironed with developmental railways, it is impossible to run the system on commercial lines unless we accept a different conception of railway management, unless we agree that it is not so much what we can expect of the railways as what the Railway Department can expect of Parliament. It is the height of hypocrisy to expect the Commissioner to balance his ledger when every element in the House is working day and night in the undermining of the railways as a commercial concern.

Mr. TROY: That is rather an extravagant statement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: One I do not agree with.

Mr. LAMBERT: If my hon. friend does not agree, it certainly must be extravagant. Irrespective of my friend's disagreement with my belief, I hold that if we are to expect financial results from the railways, they must be placed on an altogether different basis. They must be handed over to the Commissioner and removed from Ministerial control. That would be a necessary corollary to their being run on commercial lines.

Mr. Willecock: But we do not advocate that.

Mr. LAMBERT: No, but it is a necessary corollary to running the railways on commercial lines. We cannot have Parliament dictating a certain line of action for developmental purposes, and still expect the Commissioner to make his railways commercially successful. Let the Government formulate some policy under which the railways can be definitely commercialised. Every day we have discussions in the newspapers and by Chambers of Commerce and other foreign-interest-representing concerns in Perth.

The Premier: Not foreign-interest-representing.

Mr. LAMBERT: But the Chambers of Commerce do represent foreign interests. They never stand for any sentiment towards local interests. I say that with all the detestation and hate I can conjure up. They represent foreign interests, foreign to every sentiment and love that we have for this country. We should have a review of the position of our railways in relation to the finances of the State. The member for Williams-Narrogin blamed the Government.

Mr. Johnston: I did not blame the Government.

Mr. LAMBERT: Well, I do not know whom you were blaming. At all events, the Government should formulate a definite policy in respect of the railways. The people have a right to know the services which the railways render to the people, a right to know to what extent as an agency the railways are used for developmental purposes, a right to know the amounts chargeable, whether to revenue, loan or any other account, which the railways should pay and be reimbursed.

Mr. TESSDALE: Would you allow them to formulate a policy of wages and salaries; for that would be necessary if the railways were run on commercial lines?

Mr. Willecock: It is against the law of the land.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is a matter which affects the policy of the State. Some day the hon. member may realise that the people of the State and not the Government, lay down the policy in these matters. A member's ideas may be prejudiced, and vile and repugnant to the ideas of those who hold more advanced ideals as to the policy of the State being dictated by the people and not by the Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member confine himself to the question before the Chair?

Mr. LAMBERT: I have finished.

Mr. ANGELO (Gaseoyne) [6.0]: During the debate several members have criticised the action of the Minister for Railways in being away from Western Australia and from his seat in Parliament during the debate on these Estimates. Up to the present I have not heard a single member, whether a member of the Government, or the cross benches, say anything in defence of the Minister. I should like the House to be made aware of the fact that there is one member who is only too pleased to know that the Minister for Railways, who is also Minister for Industries, has taken charge of the delegation to the Dutch East Indies and Singapore.

Mr. Johnston: You have no railways in your electorate, have you?

Mr. ANGELO: I do not know what that has to do with it. I visited Java and Singapore some years ago, and was struck by the great possibilities of trade between those countries and this State, and the great market that is available there for us. That is why I think the Minister for Railways is better occupied in opening up these markets for Western Australia than in sitting here replying to criticisms on the railway Estimates. It was necessary for someone to represent this State, though it is somewhat unfortunate that the Minister was obliged to be away during the sitting of Parliament. It would have been useless for the delegation to have gone without being accompanied by a representative of the Government. We cannot sell our meat because the markets are glutted. At our very door we have a market in the near East, which only requires to be opened up to be made full use of. Flour has

fallen 60 per cent. in value in the Home markets during the past 12 months. Here we have a market at our very doors, which will consume a considerable amount of our flour. Is it not the duty of the Government, then, to open up this trade?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are selling flour to them at 6s., and at 9s. to the people of this State.

Mr. ANGELO: When I was in Java I met representatives from the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales. That was before the war began, and before there was the same necessity for opening up these markets. Their representatives were doing their utmost to secure the trade for Victoria and New South Wales. Without a Government representative we could not expect to oust their already established connections. It is only by means of Government representation that we can hope to do so. Goods are being dumped into Java from Australia that are not up to sample. We therefore require a Minister, speaking on behalf of Western Australia, to guarantee to the Governments of those countries with which we wish to trade that the goods we shall send them will be true to sample.

Mr. Willeock: Is the hon. member in order in speaking along these lines?

Mr. ANGELO: I am discussing the absence of the Minister for Railways. Without the presence of a Government representative to guarantee to these other Governments that our goods would be true to sample, we cannot expect to trade with them. Members seem to forget that there are railways in Java and Singapore. The Minister for Railways will, therefore, have an opportunity of looking at these and comparing our system with theirs. That is another reason for his going. My own opinion is that the Minister for Railways is doing an invaluable service to the State by opening up these markets at a time when we so badly need them. I regret the criticisms which have been levelled against him, and wish it to be known that I for one do not endorse them.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [6.5]: With my leader, I wish to voice my protest against the attitude adopted by the Railway Department in leasing a portion of our railway system. I have worked out the figures pretty accurately, and I see from the speech of the Leader of the Opposition that he has stated them pretty accurately, as to what the revenue would have been for the State had the Government hauled the firewood over the Coolgardie section of the railways. If negotiations had gone on between the Railway Department and the firewood company, for the purpose of permitting the company to supply wood to the mines at Kalgoorlie and Boulder at a reasonable rate, in all probability the Government would have granted some concession to the company and probably not have charged the 2s. 8d. per ton for the difference in the mileage. I admit that if the Govern-

ment had charged the extra 2s. 8d. per ton, that amount would have been passed on as a burden upon the mining industry.

The Premier: That is right.

Mr. MUNSIE: At the present price of firewood, the mines would probably not have been able to bear the additional burden.

The Premier: The company only has the running rights and not the sole right.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Government have gone further than that. They have given to the company the sole right over an immense area of timber country for the purpose of getting firewood. They have granted to this company the right to cut out what has always been a reserve held for mining purposes. When the company gets to the farthest point of the concession that has now been granted to them, even if they have to haul firewood over the 15 miles of Government line, they will not be as far away as they are now obliged to haul firewood. At least £10,000 a year is being presented to the company. They could well afford to pay, inasmuch as they will have at least 20 miles less haulage than they had before. The Kurrawang wood company is to-day hauling firewood 86 miles before it reaches Kurrawang. The farthest point of their concession granted by the Government will not take them 86 miles away from Kurrawang. The Kurrawang line is laid side by side with the line which will be used by the Government. The wood trains according to their agreements are not scheduled to run at any particular time, but are run at their own convenience. The Government have had to meet claims on some occasions for produce that has been destroyed by fire. What is going to happen if a goods train chances to be running between Coolgardie and Kurrawang on the one line, and a wood train laden with wood happens to be going to the same destination on the other line, the one using Collie coal which is supposed to be bad from the sparking point of view, and the other using firewood without any spark arresters at all?

The Minister for Works: What could happen?

Mr. MUNSIE: Half the train could be burnt out.

The Minister for Works: Nonsense!

Mr. MUNSIE: It is not nonsense. When the woodline companies are taking produce from the Kalgoorlie end to its destination, they keep a man walking backwards and forwards over the trucks putting out the fires. The man could not be walking backwards and forwards on the Government trains.

The Minister for Works: You said the Government trains were carrying Collie coal.

Mr. MUNSIE: I said they were using Collie coal, which is claimed to be bad from the sparking point of view. There is no comparison between wood fuel without a spark arrester, and Collie coal. There are no spark arresters on the Kurrawang engines. They use their own locomotives, and their own trucks side by side with those on the Government track. I am positive the Commissioner

did not grant this concession except with the concurrence of the Government.

The Minister for Works: You want to be sure.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Premier by interjection admitted that the Commissioner had consulted the Minister before taking this step. When he consulted the Minister I am positive that he also had the concurrence of the Government. No Government department would enter into such a contract without consulting the Minister. It was only natural the Commissioner should do so when handling a big deal like this. The Premier admitted that it was so by interjection to the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It must be an order of the Executive Council.

Mr. MUNSIE: It has been stated that it was a good deal for the Government, because they are getting £2,000 a year for nothing. The Leader of the Opposition has pointed out that the Government are compelled to maintain this 15 miles of railways, which will cost more than the rent received to keep in repair. According to the Commissioner's report, taking the average cost of maintaining the railways of the State, providing for interest, sinking fund, etc., this 15 miles section will cost more than £2,000 a year. The Government will, therefore, lose from that standpoint.

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

Mr. MUNSIE: There is not very much more that I wish to say in connection with the Railway estimates. I desire to emphasise one point, however. Probably eighteen months ago, there was some trouble on the goldfields in connection with the firewood companies. A settlement of that trouble was effected by a concession which was granted to the companies. Many people are under the impression that the concession which we have been discussing is the one that was granted to the companies on that occasion. I wish to disabuse members' minds on that point. The one to which attention has been drawn by the Leader of the Opposition is the second concession in connection with the railways that has been granted to the company. There are other concessions as well, but they do not concern us in the discussion of the Vote before the Committee. So far as I can ascertain no provision is made in the agreement for extra inspection by the Government regarding the loading of the wood trucks. The Kurrawang Firewood Company load their trucks in the bush, and bring them in to the mine. Even before the concession now under discussion was granted, the company had seven miles of Government railways over which to haul their wood. With the new concession, however, they have the right to haul from Coolgardie, a distance of 15 miles alongside the Government railways. They are not using the concession at the present time but when they do commence to

utilise their right under that concession, the position will be as I have described. If there is not a closer inspection regarding the loading of the wood trucks, accidents will occur, and they will not affect the wood trains, but the Government lines. I hope that the Premier, while he is representing the Minister for Railways, will go closely into this aspect, and see that the loading of firewood into trucks is closely scrutinised before the company are allowed to run their trains alongside the Government railways. I enter my emphatic protest against the Government leasing any portion of the railway system without consulting Parliament. I am firmly convinced, in common with the Leader of the Opposition, that the reply given by the Minister for Education in another place definitely lays it down that the lease was granted under the wrong section of the Act. It was granted under the section dealing with sidings, and it is rather stretching the imagination to regard a railway length of 15 miles as a siding. If the concession went through the ordinary course, such as has to be adopted in connection with the leasing of any portion of the Government railways, the papers in connection with the deal and the regulations would have to be laid on the table of the House, and we would then have had an opportunity of discussing the matter before the lease was completed. As it is, the contract is signed, and the Government will be liable to comply with its terms for a period of three years. The Government should receive the censure of the House, owing to this particular deal. They are constantly crying out regarding the public utilities, which, they say, constitute the chief cause of the deficit. Here we have a Government squealing about the finances and the want of traffic for the railways, and when they get an opportunity of having 145,000 tons of wood carted over their line in a year they part with this concession for a sum of £2,000 per annum and, in addition, agree to maintain the line. If that sort of thing is regarded as a means for getting the railways out of their present difficulty, it strikes me as being rather peculiar. I want to voice my strong protest also against the method that is being introduced in connection with our railway system in the direction of "pimping."

The Minister for Works: What is that!

Mr. O'Loughlen: It was there in your time.

Mr. MUNSIE: I refer to a regulation issued by the present Commissioner offering a reward or bonus, whichever way members like to regard it, to employees of the Railway Department who pimp on the passengers. I also object to the methods adopted by some of the heads of the department to ascertain whether the railway employees are carrying out their duties or not. I do not know that I would be justified in giving instances, but I cannot let this opportunity go without making a statement regarding that position. Regulations were issued prohibiting smoking in non-smoking cars, and prohibiting passengers

from putting their feet on the seats. With both those regulations I agree. There are smoking compartments set apart for those who desire to smoke, and these should be used. Seats are not provided for people to put their feet on but for them to sit upon, and I think they should be used for that purpose. I do object, however, to the methods employed by some heads of the Railway Department to ascertain whether employees are doing their duty, in acting as pimps and reporting people who break these regulations. After the two regulations to which I have referred were issued, one of the heads entered a non-smoking compartment, filled his pipe, put both feet on the seat, and started smoking. When asked if he did not know he was breaking the regulations, he said:—"Yes, but I want to find out if the men are doing their duty or not." That is not right. I do not think that is doing a fair thing by the railway public.

Mr. O'Loughlin interjected.

Mr. MUNSIE: I agree with the member for Forrest that if some of the railway employees had seen this particular head of the department breaking the regulations, they might have been rather afraid to correct him.

Mr. Marshall: Many of the employees would be afraid to report the matter.

Mr. MUNSIE: No man should be allowed to set traps for the employees in the Railway Department. For all I know, some of them may have been brought to book because some of the railway employees evidently saw the head of the department to whom I have referred. There are innumerable other regulations which have been issued recently in connection with the railways, and, in my opinion, these are having the effect of reducing the system to the status of a "Darktown railway." I do not know what the object of some of these regulations may be. There is the case of the men who are travelling on the trains along the main passenger line; I refer not to the conductors, but to the inspectors. When a passenger gets a ticket at the railway station, the station-master has to make a note of the sale of the ticket, and also of the destination of the passenger. Under the new regulation, the department, not content with duplicates, require the inspector to take four copies of all particulars from Kellerberrin to Kalgoorlie. Wherever the passenger goes to, it must be noted and records have to be kept of everyone who gets on or gets off at stations between the two points I have mentioned. These four sheets then have to be sent to head office. The effect of this will be an increased clerical staff at the head office. In any case it is only getting information which is already supplied on every ticket. Why then the necessity for duplicating all this information? There are a dozen and one regulations issued in connection with the department, which are open to criticism. We talk about the system not paying, but if we continue on the road we have been travelling recently, there

is very little hope of the department making ends meet.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [7.42]: There is a great change evidenced on the part of members sitting on the Ministerial side of the House compared to what was exhibited a few years ago regarding secret contracts. Members who were present in this Chamber only a few years ago, know that the question of secret contracts was like a red rag to a bull in those days. Members, who are now Ministers, could hardly sit still in their seats. They all wanted to get up at once and condemn secret contracts. The position, unfortunately, has changed, and to-day we have another secret contract for Parliament to consider. No doubt the Premier will try to give an explanation of the position.

The Premier: I want to see the contract.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is no difference between the letting of 15 miles or letting the whole of the railways on lease, for the principle is the same. I am of the opinion that the people will strongly resent the leasing of the railways to private concerns—

Mr. Willcock: Or any portion of them.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: What about some of them being sold?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have always been of the opinion that the railways in Australia have not reached the stage of business propositions. The railways in Western Australia are more of the developmental type than for the purpose of making the revenue meet the expenditure, or making the returns meet the charges for interest and sinking funds. I remember a few months ago when I was in England, the ex-Premier of South Australia, Mr. Crawford Vaughan, pointed out to the people of England the difficulties the people of Australia were in because they were running their railways at a loss. He wrote a very strong article in the papers advising the people to avoid the nationalisation of their railways. That article appeared in a Cardiff paper and I took the opportunity while there of pointing out through the columns of the same paper that Australian and English railways were entirely different propositions, that we had to develop big areas of country in Australia, and it was necessary therefore that the railways should be used as an undertaking for developmental purposes rather than for making profit. We have made it a hard and fast rule, so far as the railways are concerned, that they must be utilised for the development of the interior of the State. That being so, every section of the community served by the railways should be treated alike. We have many primary industries in Australia, but unfortunately some of my friends can only see and only know of one primary industry, and so long as that industry gets every advantage they are not concerned about how the others are treated. We were told the other night, when discussing this question, that the rates, so far as the agricultural in-

dustry was concerned, had been increased equally with the rates affecting other industries which had business relations with the railways. Let us see how the position applies. We find that the timber earnings per ton per mile last year amounted to .60 per cent. more than in the previous year. In regard to coal, which is an industry which should be assisted, because it helps in the development of other industries in the State, the increase per ton per mile was .42 over the increase of the previous year. Then we come to minerals. The mining industry, as we know, has gone through trying times, far more trying than has the agricultural industry, especially during the past few years. The increase in this department amounted to .31. Next we come to fruit and garden produce. This industry should run hand in hand with that of agriculture. We know that fruit growers in Western Australia suffered considerably during the war period, more so than any other kindred industry. The market for fruit for some years past has been entirely cut out, and fruit growers have been compelled to consign their products to pigs, because it did not pay to send anything to the market. The increase so far as this industry was concerned amounted to .28. In regard to fertilisers we find that the increase was only .12, while wheat, which brought an excellent price, and the highest ever known in the history of Australia, was increased only .06. These figures which I have quoted show that the private industries in Western Australia have not been treated alike as the Commissioner would have us believe. The only reason I can assign is that some primary industries have greater representation in this House, and while the Commissioner objects to political influence being exercised in the carrying on of the business of the railways, he realises that that influence is so strong as affecting one particular industry, that he protects that industry without pressure being brought to bear.

Mr. A. Thomson: It is time you got a new story.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have stated nothing but actual facts. The hon. member need only look at the Commissioner's report. It shows that while the Commissioner objects to political influence in certain directions, he knows in which direction it is strong and can be exercised.

Mr. A. Thomson: You prove that to your own satisfaction very successfully.

Mr. Willecock: You cannot contradict it.

Mr. A. Thomson: I can.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I received a letter from the Commissioner in April of this year, which I strongly resent. I understand that other members have received a similar letter.

Mr. Mann: Is it about interference with employees?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. I had occasion to write in regard to the running of engines light from East Perth to Fremantle, and I thought at the time that this was a reply to my communication. On making fur-

ther inquiries, however, I found that it was a circular letter. Whilst the Commissioner may be right to a certain extent in regard to asking that political assistance should not be given to employees, at the same time he overlooks the fact that when an officer comes to a decision on a question, that officer's report is generally accepted without further inquiry. The report is passed from one officer to another and initialled as being in order. It is necessary to see sometimes that justice is done, and there is nothing wrong about an employee requesting a member of Parliament to make inquiry into a matter. On more than one occasion I had to make application to the present Minister for Works when Commissioner of Railways, and during the whole course of my experience with that gentleman I never received any such letter as that which was sent to me by the present Commissioner. The present Minister for Works realised my position as a member representing a number of electors, and he recognised that I was quite right in asking for certain information, and at all times supplied that information as desired by me. But that is not to say that because a member writes to the department in regard to a particular case, that the Commissioner must carry out the wishes of the member. He can, however, and does in many instances, enlighten the member on the exact position, and in that way prevents further worrying by the member for the district or the individual concerned. I would not, and neither would any hon. member say to the Commissioner that he must reinstate an individual. As a matter of fact, if I were in the Commissioner's place and a member said to me, "You do this," I would quickly tell him to go to blazes. But a member must be treated with courtesy and he should not be threatened in the manner that the Commissioner threatened members in the circular letter that he issued. The letter I complain of was most uncalled for, and I hope the Commissioner will cancel it at the earliest moment.

The Minister for Works: Was that letter to you?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes.

Mr. Munzie: Every member got one. It was a most insulting letter.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I may as well read the concluding portion of it. It reads:—

I may say that my policy at all times is to give the utmost possible consideration to the domestic circumstances, etc., of the employees, so far as is consistent with the efficient performance of the business of the railways, and as every facility is given under Rule 16a for appeal either to myself or, in cases of punishment, to a board, which has distinct jurisdiction under an Act of Parliament and on which each section of the employees has its own elected representative, I trust you will agree with me that reference to political aid should not be allowed. Any such breaches of Rule 29 should be regarded as disobedience of

orders on the part of any employee concerned and I propose to deal with them accordingly.

Will members tell me that that letter is not uncalled for? There was no necessity to send such a letter to members. Hon. members have their duty to perform equally with the Commissioner of Railways. That brings me to a point which perhaps is a transgression in this instance, because I tried, I admit, to use a little political influence in regard to a case which I intend to quote for the information of the House, and when I have done so hon. members will, I am sure, agree that I was right in pursuing the matter. I could not see the Minister for Railways, who at the time had left to go to Java, and knowing that the Premier was looking after the Railway Department, I interviewed him. A decision was arrived at by the Commissioner and also by the union that in connection with the retrenchment scheme that was being put into effect, the single men had to go off first. Married men whose wives were not resident in the State were to be regarded as single men, while single men who were the sole support of their mothers were to be regarded as married men. I put this matter up as an injustice which was being done to a young chap as the outcome of the retrenchment scheme. The case is that of a widow with seven children. One lad aged 19 was a cleaner on the railways. Another lad aged 18 was drawing an invalid pension of 15s. a week, which was not sufficient to support him. A girl 17 years of age was in domestic service drawing 12s. 6d. per week. A girl just under 16 was also in domestic service receiving 10s. a week. There were three children under 14 years of age. The Charities Department, realising the position, assisted the mother in the maintenance of two children by giving her £1 a week, which left the boy working in the railways to maintain his mother and another child. Thus the position was that that lad was the sole support of his mother. The department, however, decided that, as the mother was getting assistance from the State, and because there were two girls working, she was not dependent upon her son, and the boy was dismissed from the service. The position now is that the mother lets a portion of her house and she has an income of £1 13s. 6d. on which to keep a family of six in food and clothes, after paying her rent.

Mr. Davies: Was this case brought before the Commissioner?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I brought it before the Premier on two occasions. The Premier put it before the Minister, but up to date no reply has been received. I said in the letter I wrote to the Premier, and I repeat it to-night, that in a case like this it would be a good thing if it were possible to put the individual responsible in the position of the unfortunate employee for

the purpose of trying to soften his heart. According to the letter the Commissioner wrote to me I had no right to see the Premier. I know, however, that the Premier would not agree to an action such as that taken by the Commissioner. The Charities Department realised that a great injury had been done to this widow and they immediately assisted her to the extent of paying her another 7s. a week. This extra 7s. per week is included in the £1 13s. 6d. a week which the mother receives to maintain six children in food and clothing, one of the children being an invalid.

The Minister for Works: That circular did not apply to you.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I approached the Minister, and I think the Minister for Works would have endeavoured to deal justly with such a case.

The Minister for Works: And I think any other Minister would, too.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The only reason given was that the mother was not solely dependent on the boy, that she was getting relief from the State, and that one girl was earning 12s. 6d. and another 10s. a week. I sent a letter to the Premier and that is the only reason which was given. In such a case it is a matter of hardship, and it is necessary for the Minister to take steps as I have indicated. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) is barking up the wrong tree when he says that persons who buy season tickets are getting rides for nothing in order to attend picture shows in the city. They pay an increased rate for the privilege of travelling at any time they desire. Many season ticket holders come to the city in the morning and return home at night, and only occasionally visit the city during the evening. Others use their season tickets frequently, but to say that the Commissioner is running trains at an additional cost for which he gets no revenue because people travel on their season tickets is quite wrong. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) referred to a suggestion which has been before the House ever since I have been here, and was also put up by the late Commissioner of Railways, Mr. Short, that instead of indirect subsidies, particularly in regard to Collie coal, there should be a certain amount to subsidise the department for the losses incurred in granting assistance. No doubt this is a very good idea, but no Government have adopted the suggestion. The suggestion, however, is not new so far as this House is concerned. So long as I am a member, I will never cast my vote in favour of handing over the property of the people to the sole control of any man, no matter who or what he is. The people own the railways. These railways must be controlled by the people's representatives. To hand over the full control to a Commissioner as suggested by the member for Coolgardie would never receive my support. It is a wrong principle to hand over the property

of the people at any time to the control of one man. Some such things have been done and the State has suffered as a result. I trust the time will never come when the people's property will be taken away from the control of their representatives in Parliament. Their representatives are the right ones to control these matters. If I had my way, I would wipe out the office of Commissioner of Railways. I would have the Minister in charge of the department and taking the responsibility for the department.

The Minister for Works: You wiped me out, anyhow.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know that there is a great improvement since the Minister left the position. Had we remained in power, he might have held the office for a little longer. I hope that no one will ever introduce legislation in favour of handing over the control of the people's property. Any move should be in the direction of making the Minister responsible to Parliament rather than permitting him to shelter himself behind the Act which gives the Commissioner of Railways certain powers.

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan) [8.5]: I would like to express my appreciation of the many courtesies I have received from the officers of the department. On all occasions there has been a desire to meet any reasonable wish. I feel, however, that the further increase in railway fares is operating very harshly, and particularly is this the case with regard to the outer suburban and hills districts. By a species of see-saw arrangements, the railways have been working fares upwards for a considerable time past. At first the daily fare was advanced. Later the price of the monthly tickets went up, and at a later stage the schedule for quarterly and half-yearly tickets was increased and the price based on the cost of the monthly tickets less a 5 per cent. deduction. The cost of monthly tickets has again been increased, and the amount to be saved by purchasing a season ticket is so small as to be scarcely worthy of consideration. As an instance, the fare from Darlington to Perth by taking monthly tickets works out at £18 19s. a year. That is just about double the cost of the yearly ticket some six years ago. The season ticket rate in the outer suburban districts has, I believe, advanced more in proportion than those in the area in close proximity to the central station. I claim that people should be encouraged to live in the country. There is a great shortage of dwelling-houses in Perth and the immediate vicinity. The development of our outer areas and the consequent use of the train service should be encouraged. As a result of the heavy increases in fares, there is an absolute inducement for people to live in the city. This is surely a wrong policy. Season tickets operate to the disadvantage of the outer suburban districts. Residents of Claremont, for instance, find it possible to travel twice, and sometimes thrice daily, whereas people in some of the hills districts

find it impossible to use the line more than on the outward and homeward journey each day. Consequently a season ticket does not offer the same attractiveness as is the case from stations closer to the metropolis. Because of the infrequency of the service, it often happens that holders of season tickets have to remain in Perth over night and surely no member is desirous that residents of the hills districts should be put to this added expense. I regret that we have heard nothing recently with regard to the motor train service or the use of the internal combustion engine on the railways. I understand that a motor train service is in use in Tasmania, and I would like the Government to give further consideration to this means of transport. I know that three petrol-driven cars have been ordered, and I am anxiously looking forward to their delivery. I hope the use of these vehicles will be found possible and profitable.

Mr. Davies: On the Upper Darling Range line?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, and elsewhere, and I hope that experience will prove that they are suitable for heavy suburban traffic. It has been suggested, in view of the recent improvement brought about in carburation of spirit both crude and refined, that kerosene may be used. A carburettor recently brought into use, the "Challenge," has produced wonderful results in this respect. However, that is another story. When the three cars arrive, I hope a great improvement will be possible in the service. Time after time we see trains travelling and containing very few people. If it were possible to use these internal combustion engines, it would be possible to run trains within a radius of, say, 30 miles from Perth, at more frequent intervals and at very much less cost. I look forward to the department giving very serious consideration to the development of this method of passenger traffic, which I believe will be to the advantage of the State. The question is whether it is practicable; whether this method will stand up to the requirements, or whether the carriages are suitable for heavy grade work. If these difficulties are found to be non-existent, then, undoubtedly, a new era will have been brought in, and travelling should be much cheaper and a better time table should be possible.

Mr. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.12]: It is not my intention to weary the Committee by speaking at length on the railway estimates. I merely wish to say a few words as to the effect on my portion of the system. I regret exceedingly that figures are not available to show what sections of the system are paying and what sections are being run at a loss. I am perfectly sure that the section between Jarnadup and Bunbury and Boyup Brook and Bunbury must be showing a wonderful profit to the department.

The Minister for Works: And between Pinjarra and Bunbury.

Mr. SMITH: I do not know about that. The timber trade is one of the buoyant industries of the State, and if the Government would only throw open the Crown lands along the existing railways to the timber hewers, there would be no question of these lines paying, and assisting to make up a lot of the leeway on other parts of the system. We have a Commissioner of Railways who is free from political control; at least he is supposed to be, but we know he is not. I regret very much that it has been necessary to retrench 600 men. We have one mile of railway for every 93 of our population. What we require is more population along our existing railways. There is no use complaining about freights and fares. Fertilisers and wheat and fruit represent an essential and two products of our chief primary industries, which create the wealth of the State. I am, however, up against the Minister for Works with regard to the railway from Jarnadup to Pemberton, which railway is under the control of the State Sawmills. The Premier in his wisdom is as Minister for Lands endeavouring to settle people in the country served by that railway. Those people are having a hard struggle under adverse conditions, and they have been seeking for years to find a remedy for the ills resulting from the Jarnadup-Pemberton railway being under the control and domination of the State Sawmills Department. Some of the settlers have certain timber, and they are endeavouring to get that timber away with a view to making a few pounds out of it. They have been offered a high price by outside timber companies for their timber, about £1 per load more than the best offer of the State Sawmills for the same timber. The manager of the State Sawmills says that the settlers, if they want to send this timber away, will have to do so by a special train, which will be run at his convenience and discretion. If outside companies can afford to pay £5 or £6 per load for the timber, the Minister for State trading concerns should offer the same price, and so afford these men a chance of making good. Again, my electors want the Jarnadup-Pemberton railway taken over by the Railway Department. The settlers have no time table to work by. They cart their produce, fruit and other things, in, and probably it may lie there for days. My electors want an instruction given to the State Sawmills to pick up with their train trucks put into the loops. Another great trouble is that there are no fixed rates on the Jarnadup-Pemberton railway. A bag of lime will cost, say, 1s. 6d. or 2s. to rail from Fremantle to Jarnadup, and then cost another 1s. 6d. or 2s. for transport over this railway of the State Sawmills. Some alteration is necessary in that respect. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) said losses were made on the spur lines. Possibly that is so, but it has to be remembered that the spur lines feed the trunk lines. Another matter requiring attention in my electorate is one which no sensible person can understand. The Rail-

way Department have a set of men going over the line between Bridgetown and Bunbury. The unnecessary cost involved is £20 per week. It passes my understanding that the set of men is not divided into two parties of four each, one party of four to run half way from Bridgetown to Bunbury and then return to their starting point, and the other party to run half way to Bridgetown and then return, instead of each set of men running right through. That seems to me a weakness in the administration of the Railway Department. Finally I desire to impress upon the Minister the absolute necessity for either fixing a time-table from Jarnadup to Pemberton, or else handing over that line to the control of the Commissioner of Railways.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [8.21]: I should not have intervened in this debate but for the fact that the last speaker has inadvertently mis-stated the circumstances connected with the Jarnadup-Pemberton railway, which is run by the State Sawmills. The hon. member knows that a deputation waited upon Mr. Colebatch, who brought the matter under my notice. Inquiry is now being made into it; and if any injustice is perpetrated, the wrong shall be righted. To run that railway as if it were part of the general State railway system would interfere most materially with the working of the State Sawmills; and therefore I am not prepared to recommend any such arrangement. On the other hand, the State Sawmills are prepared to pick up on that line any traffic offering. Our trains run even more regularly than the trains commanded by the Commissioner of Railways. The only difference is that we run at night instead of in the day time. If the hon. member's constituents will bring their traffic when our train is coming along, it will be attended to with punctuality and despatch. As regards the charges made on that railway, the State Sawmills are a trading concern and have no bowels of compassion. Neither have their numerous critics.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [8.24]: The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) said that the railways ought to be run as a hard commercial concern, and that any bonus given to any industry by way of a special rate of freight should be made good to the Railway Department. There is a good deal in that contention. Probably the railways ought to charge the full cost of hauling all goods, leaving adjustments to be made. Last year the Railway Department lost £454,000 plus £140,000 sinking fund, or a total of £594,000. It will be seen, therefore, that the Railway Commissioner's losses to that extent were covered from Consolidated Revenue. It is expected that this year the loss will be £259,000 plus £140,000 sinking fund, or a total of about £400,000. Now, one cannot develop a country without railways; and one cannot expect to make development railways

pay altogether, especially in the early stages. In developing Western Australia we have built an extensive railway system. In connection with our goldfields we have built hundreds of miles of railway in districts where the mines have gone down. As we are all aware, Western Australia's gold production has dropped from 8½ millions annually to 2½ millions annually. From this it follows that the lines on the goldfields cannot possibly pay as before. I do not believe there are any losses on the spur lines. Apparent losses are due to the fact that the spur lines are credited with only a portion of the long distance traffic. But for the spur lines especially those in the wheat belt, there would be very little traffic on the railways generally. It is expected that during the next six months we shall make up a good deal of our loss on the railways so far, mainly thanks to the spur lines. I do not propose to answer in detail all that has been said, but I shall ask the Commissioner of Railways to go through "Hansard" carefully and make a note of hon. members' suggestions. I am sure that some of those suggestions will be useful to him. Something was said about the number of men employed. The lines have been restored to proper order, and the rolling-stock has been got into better order, and a great deal of work that had to stand over during the war has now received attention. These things involved the putting on of a good number of men. It is, of course, imperative that our railway track should be kept in good order, and similarly as to our rolling-stock: we cannot afford to take any risks in connection with the running of our railways. Really, there is very little that I need reply to at length. The member for North-East Fremantle has said something about a secret contract. I suppose the Commissioner of Railways has made some arrangement. He cannot be expected to publish every arrangement he makes. As to the contract for leasing the line, I have not seen it.

Mr. Willecock: Such a thing has never been done before.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is strange that a railway line could be leased without the consent of the Governor in Council.

The PREMIER: The Commissioner has leased it under the power conferred on him by Section 64 of the Act. So far as I am aware, no timber concession has been granted to anybody.

Mr. Munsie: Your Minister in another place must be absolutely wrong then. In reply to a question he said that the concession had been granted.

The PREMIER: The leasing of the timber area will have to come before Executive Council for approval, which, so far as I know, has not yet been obtained. I do not even know what area has been applied for. I shall, of course, know before the area is leased. That is the position. I may now just as well finish my reply to the speeches delivered on the leasing of this line from Coolgardie to Kurrawang. The mining in-

dustry must be kept supplied with fairly cheap firewood. We want to get the firewood to the mines just as cheaply as possible. A little more than a year ago the Government made an arrangement for the running of the direct line from Kurrawang to Lakeside because we felt that we ought to cheapen the cost of firewood by every possible means. So when application was made to the Commissioner for, not a lease of, but running rights over, 15 miles of line, he made arrangements which he believes, and I believe, will prove quite satisfactory. If the Commissioner is to run the firewood over this line of 15 miles, it will mean that he will pick up the trucks brought in by the Kurrawang Company's engine to Coolgardie, run them 15 miles to Kurrawang, take his engine back to Coolgardie, and let the Kurrawang Company's engine haul the trucks from Kurrawang to the mines. For that service the Commissioner would be paid 2s. 3d. per ton, because the wood will be run over the Government line in the Kurrawang Company's trucks in respect of which trucks the company receive an allowance of 5d. per ton. The Railway Department would make precious little out of it, seeing that the department burn coal and that the coal has to be brought over a distance of 400 miles. And, whilst the Railway Department would not benefit much, the mines would certainly be called upon to pay more for their firewood.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Nothing of the kind. How does Hedges haul wood 86 miles in from the main camp at Kurrawang?

The PREMIER: He does that work more cheaply than the Government can do it. If the Railway Department charged the 2s. 3d., it would be a fair proportion of the total cost. I believe the wood is sold for 15s. per ton delivered in Kalgoorlie. That 15s. covers the cost of cutting, of laying the line and of running the wood right into the mines. The duty of the Government is to get all the profit they can from this traffic over the railways. But there is another duty, namely, to get the wood into the mines as cheaply as possible. The working costs of the mines are all important just now, and if any means they can be reduced it ought to be done.

Mr. Munsie: If the Kurrawang Company were to go out altogether, the Lakeside Company could supply wood as cheaply as it is now supplied.

The PREMIER: I do not pit my knowledge of that part of the State against that of the hon. member, but I venture to say there is not so very much wood to be hauled by the Lakeside Company.

Mr. Munsie: The Lakeside Company say they could supply all requirements for the next 20 years.

The PREMIER: It is not right to take from Mt. Monger to Kalgoorlie, wood which may be needed by the mines at Mt. Monger. The Commissioner has agreed to running rights upon this 15 miles of line for £2,000

per annum, which will give him a return equal to .32 pence per ton per mile by way of toll. That is a fair return. He will get that without performing any service at all.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would not the same argument apply if you were to lease all the railways?

The PREMIER: It is not proposed to lease any part of the railways for any other service. In the ordinary course of events this line would be removed, because it is not required for the traffic.

Mr. Munsie: The manager of the Kurraline of his own.

The PREMIER: I think he could do that far more cheaply than he can run our line. The Leader of the Opposition said the interest and sinking fund on this 15 miles of line represented £5,400 per annum.

Mr. Munsie: That was with maintenance.

The PREMIER: If it includes maintenance, well and good. But the line has served its purpose and is no longer required. Therefore its value to the State is its value when removed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is a poor argument.

The PREMIER: It is a perfectly sound argument.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, there is the traffic to go over it.

The PREMIER: The hon. member does not seem to realise that it is a duplicate line.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, I do.

The PREMIER: We intended to remove this line. I repeat that the value of the line to the State is the value of the rails, and no more. If we had been getting £2,000 per annum for this line for the last 10 years we would have been well paid. When we consider the value of the line as it is to be leased, all we can consider is the value of the rails. I am not sufficiently up in railway matters to say it is a fair price for the leasing of the line, but the Commissioner assures me that the price secured is a fair thing.

Mr. Munsie: The manager of the Kurrawang Company is very well satisfied.

The PREMIER: Let us face the position as it is. Those rails are worth so much and no more, and they are what the Commissioner is leasing.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That would be all right if you had no traffic.

The PREMIER: But we have a line to carry the traffic, besides this one; it is a double line.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then why will Hedges have to put down a new line?

The PREMIER: We say that if he got a permit he could put down a new line for himself.

Mr. Munsie: He has a permit now.

The PREMIER: I am not going to hold up wood required for the mines.

Mr. Munsie: No, I do not want you to, but I want you to get a fair thing for the State.

The PREMIER: The Commissioner assures me we are getting a fair thing, and I believe him. Something was said about the

other arrangement, made over 12 months ago. Before that arrangement which the hon. member talks about was made, the permit to build a line from Kurrawang to Lakeside, the Commissioner was being paid £9,618 per annum. The service was costing £9,100, and so we were getting a profit of £500. Without a penny paid out in costs, we got £3,743 last year from royalty and other charges imposed on the Kurrawang Company; so we were more than £3,200 better off under this system than when we ran the traffic ourselves.

Mr. Willecock: But the overhead charges were still there.

The PREMIER: In regard to the Lakeside line, the strange thing is that the company have asked the Commissioner to run the traffic over the Government railways, over which they had running rights.

Mr. Munsie: As a matter of fact, the Commissioner has been doing it for the last two years.

The PREMIER: No, for the last 12 months. They had the right, but they gave it up.

Mr. Munsie: Why?

The PREMIER: I suppose it did not pay them to run it.

Mr. Munsie: Their engines were not strong enough to pull the load up the inclines.

The PREMIER: If it be our duty to get wood for the mines as cheaply as possible, I think the Commissioner has done the right thing.

Mr. Munsie: Do you call that line a siding?

The PREMIER: Well, it is beside the other line.

Mr. Munsie: It is stretching the regulations to call it a siding.

The PREMIER: I think the hon. member is wrong. Section 64 is for the making of agreements for running power, and is the section used by the Commissioner to grant to this company running powers over the line.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The section says "on any such siding," not "railway line."

The PREMIER: They have not the exclusive use of the line.

Mr. MUNSIE: Read the whole of Section 57.

The PREMIER: What is the use? Hon. members are familiar with all these sections. Section 64 is the one under which the Commissioner has granted running rights.

Mr. MUNSIE: Which he had no right to do.

The PREMIER: He discussed the matter with his Minister. I believe the House will realise that the total value of the line is the value of the rails, that we have been making nothing out of the line for years past but will now be making £2,000 per annum, or one-third of a penny per ton per mile for every ton run over the railway.

Mr. Munsie: It would be all very well if the line would not cost much to keep in repair.

The PREMIER: It will not cost much, because the trains are by no means heavy

and, moreover, they are slow-running trains. I hope the hon. member will realise that the Commissioner should help the mines as far as he can.

Mr. Willcock: The firewood company will get more than the mines out of it.

The PREMIER: That is very easy to say, but I cannot accept it as reliable. At any rate, there was something unused and unwanted, and by the leasing of that length of line the mines will get cheaper wood.

Mr. Munsie: Why did the Government prevent those contractors along the Norseman line from supplying wood to the mines?

The PREMIER: I do not know that it was done.

Mr. Munsie: But it was. The Government stopped the supply.

The PREMIER: I doubt that. Of course the Conservator of Forests may have prevented the cutting of wood in that locality. The House gives power to one Commissioner to do one thing, and to another to do some other thing. How, then, can the House complain if the Conservator of Forests says that no timber shall be cut in a certain locality?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This House did not give the Commissioner of Railways power to lease a railway.

The PREMIER: Yes it did. However, we are now getting something where, previously, we were getting nothing.

Mr. Lutey: It was a secret bargain.

The PREMIER: No, it was not. The hon. member would have the House believe that the Government one day saw somebody, made a contract, kept it to themselves, did not let the House know, and gave away something worth more than they are being paid for it.

Mr. Munsie: That is precisely what the Government did.

The PREMIER: I say the Government had nothing to do with the thing, and I say the Commissioner of Railways cannot be expected to make public every negotiation.

Mr. Lutey: That is a new principle altogether.

The PREMIER: Well, when next the hon. member comes to me with a request that I do what I can to supply cheap wood to the mines, I shall publish it in every newspaper in the State, announcing that in a fortnight's time I shall decide what is to be done; when he comes to me again and urges me to take steps to prevent the mines closing down, I shall tell him I can do nothing until I first advertise what I propose doing.

Mr. Munsie: You do not know the position.

The PREMIER: That is the position in regard to this arrangement. It was said that we were losing by the other arrangement, whereas we made money by it.

Mr. Lutey: You have still the overhead charges.

The PREMIER: The hon. member cannot argue against actual figures.

Mr. Willcock: Figures can speak any language.

The PREMIER: They can in the hands of some people, but not in the hands of a simple person like myself.

Mr. Munsie: What is the multiplication table you use to make a siding out of 15 miles of railway?

The PREMIER: In a great place like Kalgoorlie, with its enormous activities and its long stretch of line, I should think that 15 miles would be a very moderate length for a siding. My friends had something to say about the price charged on farm produce. Under the railway system, and it is the only possible system, we charge a lower rate on the lower priced stuff than we do on the high priced stuff.

Mr. Willcock: Wheat is a pretty high price.

The PREMIER: It has been at a high price but it is now down to 5s. 2d.

Mr. Willcock: Not yet.

The PREMIER: The freight on wheat must be a good paying freight.

Mr. Willcock: Oh, no.

The PREMIER: I know the hon. member merely takes the average mileage cost of running the trains.

Mr. Willcock: Wheat is about 3d. under the average cost.

The PREMIER: The Commissioner has shown time and again that all freights that are under the average cost per ton per mile are losing freights. Nothing of the sort! He runs full trains for wheat, for instance, as against light trains for other stuff. He runs many miles of empty trucks from Kamballie to Perth, for instance, and all that is taken into consideration. It does not follow, because the freight is less than the average cost of running a train mile, that it is not a paying freight. I say it is a paying freight, no matter what the Commissioner may say. I admit that fertiliser is a policy freight, and it is a low freight because we wish to encourage its use. It has been increased lately by 2s. per ton, but the greatest increase on any goods sent to the goldfields imposed during the last couple of years is 6s. per ton and it has been as low as 1s. 3d. Long distance rates are naturally lower than short distance rates in proportion to the mileage run.

Mr. Willcock: The superphosphate rates are scandalous.

The PREMIER: They produce large freights in return. A ton of super will produce a great deal of freight and that is why it is at a low rate. It was said that we were losing £100,000 on the carriage of super to the farmers, but I have shown that the loss is only £42,000. The total amount that we should collect under the class M rate would be 12s. 5d. per ton on the average, and that would mean £42,000 more than we actually collected. I admit that loss, but not the £100,000 we have heard so much about.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Your own statement last year was £80,000.

The PREMIER: The freight has gone up since then.

Mr. McCallum: Your working costs have gone up.

The PREMIER: They have gone up by hundreds of thousands of pounds, far more than any increase in freights.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Why not get back the £42,000?

The PREMIER: Why not get the actual sum we are losing, namely, £580,000 for last year?

Mr. McCallum: What is your increase; it is only about one-tenth of 1d.?

The PREMIER: It is 2s. per ton.

Mr. O'Loghlen: They are better able to afford it than other sections of the community.

The PREMIER: We ought to carry these fertilisers at a cheap rate. We also carry some mining stuff at a cheap rate.

Mr. A. Thomson: Do not mention that.

The PREMIER: We have carried coal for years at a non-paying rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton per mile.

Mr. Munsie: What mining stuff do you carry at a cheap rate?

The PREMIER: I know there is some.

Mr. Munsie: You carry pyritic ore for the purpose of manufacturing super. If it was not for that purpose you would not carry it at a cheap rate.

The PREMIER: Coal was carried at half rates, but to-day it is much dearer. Bunkering coal is dearer than ever before, and the cost to the railways for coal is greater than it was. We have to burn Collie coal and haul it to our own railways. The freight has gone up and very rightly too. Coal can better stand to-day's freights than it could stand the freights of long ago.

Mr. O'Loghlen: The farmers can stand the freight on super.

The PREMIER: Something was said about railway fares charged in this State as against the Eastern States charges. Over 25 miles ours are the lowest in Australia.

Mr. Teesdale: What do you think of that?

Mr. O'Loghlen: Rasputin has come to life.

The PREMIER: It is 4s. 2d. in New South Wales it is 5s. 7d., in Victoria 5s., and in South Australia 4s. 11d. The 200-mile rate is 33s. 4d. here, New South Wales 43s. 11d., in Victoria 37s. 9d., and in South Australia 39s. 3d. It will be found that many of our charges are lower than their charges.

Mr. Munsie: Is that on wheat and super?

The PREMIER: It is on fares.

Mr. O'Loghlen: What are the super rates in the Eastern States?

The PREMIER: The passenger rates are cheaper in this State than in the other States in almost every case.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Around the metropolitan area?

The PREMIER: It is true that over three miles in Victoria the charge is  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d.; in Western Australia, 5d.; in New South Wales 6d., and South Australia 5d. It is also true that in Victoria over six miles it

is  $8\frac{1}{2}$ d. as against ours at 9d., New South Wales 10d., and South Australia 10d. It is also true that over nine miles in Victoria it is 1s. as against 1s. 1d. here, 1s. 2d. in New South Wales, and 1s. 2d. in South Australia. Except for these short distances our fares are lower than the suburban rates in Victoria. I will let hon. members have this return.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Have you the super rates in the Eastern States?

The PREMIER: Members ought to be satisfied that we are not losing quite as much on super as it was thought.

Mr. O'Loghlen: What are the Eastern States rates?

The PREMIER: I daresay super is carried free there.

Mr. O'Loghlen: It is not carried free.

The PREMIER: I have listened with considerable interest and attention to what has been said and will see that every suggestion receives consideration.

Mr. Johnston: What about the new rate list?

The PREMIER: Surely that is enough, even for the hon. member. He does not expect me to discuss every item in the rate book. I have told him that all he has said will be submitted to the Commissioner. His speech will go to the Commissioner, every word of it.

Mr. O'Loghlen: And the Commissioner will light a cigar with it.

The PREMIER: I shall ask the Commissioner to let me have a list of the increases in the new rate book. I think there will be comparatively few of them.

Mr. O'Loghlen: What then?

The PREMIER: I will get the hon. member a copy. We have discussed these Estimates at considerable length, and I hope members are satisfied with the information I have been able to give them. I have not been in close touch with the railways but am merely acting for the Minister.

This concluded the general debate of the Railway Estimates; Votes and items discussed as follows—

Item, Superintendent of Transportation, etc., £6,231:

Mr. WILLCOCK: We are told there have been no increases for the supervision of the railways. Apparently, the Commissioner does not classify men in charge of whole districts as administrative but as district officers. During the last two years the staff of inspectors and the general supervisory staff has been considerably increased. Twenty new inspectors have been put on during the last two years at a considerable cost.

The Premier: You are quite wrong.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The year before last five officers were added to the traffic branch at a cost of £2,375 and last year other officers were put on at a cost of £4,200. This year the amount is £6,231 for officers in purely administrative positions. Different districts have been formed from the transport point

of view and many inspectors appointed. We have too many traffic inspectors and too much general supervision. We should do away with a large number of the positions. I know of several newly created positions. In the Northam district, where the train mileage has gone down considerably as well as the earnings, an extra inspector has been appointed. The same thing applies right throughout the service and too many inspectors have been appointed.

The Premier: You want to wipe out supervision.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, but we have had plenty of supervision in the past.

The Premier: You have the same now.

Mr. A. Thomson: Does that explain the position of the railways?

Mr. WILLCOCK: The hon. member has had experience in handling men as a contractor. He knows that if he stands over men and keeps his eye on them the whole time, instead of telling them what he wants them to do and leaving them to do it, and relying upon them to do it, he will not get the results he desires.

Mr. A. Thomson: I know that.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The same position arises in connection with the railways. They have had so much supervision that the position is created now that men will not do anything unless they are told. We have plenty of men in the wages jobs who know their work thoroughly, and they do not want any inspectors to supervise them. When I was connected with the locomotive branch, we never had inspectors running around every now and then to see what we were doing; we ran the railways to time better than is the case to-day and in our days we made a profit. If we have inspectors dropping off here and dropping off there, it only worries the workers and we do not get the same results as if the men were left to carry out their work in a proper manner.

Mr. Sampson: How do they annoy the workers?

Mr. Heron: How do you annoy the House?

Mr. O'Loughlen: They annoy them by pimping.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I do not regard all this extra supervision as necessary.

The Premier: I agree with you.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Then the Premier must disagree with the policy of the Commissioner! I know positions which have been created which mean that three officials are doing the work which was formerly done by one man.

Mr. A. Thomson: Well, we will get the vote for them struck out.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I do not want exactly to cut out any particular positions. I am opposing the increase in the number of officers. There are too many of these positions being created and I would like to cut them out. I will move for a reduction in the vote if the member for Katanning will support me.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If he supports you, your amendment is doomed.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is time the Committee expressed an opinion to show whether we agree with the present policy or not. When the present Commissioner was appointed, I thought he was a good railway man, but apparently he has not that confidence in himself that characterised previous Commissioners, because the present Commissioner has appointed a large staff to keep going round the system and doing the jobs which he should have done.

Mr. A. Thomson: You know the Commissioner cannot do that.

Mr. WILLCOCK: How is it that previous Commissioners could do it?

Mr. O'Loughlen: There have been no officers retrenched during the past six months.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, but 600 wages men have been put off.

The Premier: The wages have increased for every person on the railways.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The cost of administration has gone up, whereas the wages staff has gone down.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Geraldton intend to move for a reduction?

Mr. WILLCOCK: If the Premier has a good explanation, I will not move for a reduction, but if he does not explain the position, I intend to move in the direction indicated.

The PREMIER: There has been no increase in the number of officers during the past year. All the men who have been referred to outside the range of £400 have been elevated by reason of the increases granted. Everyone in connection with the railways got an increase of £37. Officers receiving up to £400 are under the sole control of the Commissioner. If they receive more than £400, they are then subject to other control, for the Minister comes into the matter as well as the Commissioner. That is how these men, to whom the member for Geraldton has referred, got into this class and this is why the number of men seems to have been increased.

Mr. Willcock: There have been additional inspectors appointed.

The PREMIER: Precisely the same number are there. The member for Geraldton is quite willing to say that there should be no control.

Mr. Willcock: You should not want to increase the number of inspectors at the present time.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows that the business of the railways has to be attended to properly and the people have the right to go to someone in a senior position in such an important place as Geraldton. Geraldton is a very important railway centre, and the member for Geraldton will agree that a senior officer should be appointed there.

Mr. Willcock: We have one senior officer there now; we do not want a dozen.

The PREMIER: In addition, there is the wharf work at Geraldton, which is also important.

Mr. Willcock: I know more about the matter than the Premier.

The PREMIER: Well, we will have a talk about it afterwards, not now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I dealt with this matter during the general discussion. The Estimates show that the number of officials have been increased from nine to thirteen. No one will object to supervision, but we object to officers being called supervisors who do not supervise at all. It is well known that if we have too many officers supervising, the supervision becomes slack. In most Government offices, it is necessary to get away from the old system of building up offices for one officer to report to another officer and so on through the department. That is one part of the railway administration that should receive careful consideration at the hands of the Minister.

The Premier: I agree with you.

Mr. Underwood: And the Minister is in Java! He will worry a lot about this matter!

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is he not going to China to see about it too?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have seen the circular sent out in connection with the railway service and that shows that the number of inspectors has increased during the past year. There is not the slightest doubt about that point.

The Premier: These officials have been taken from other positions.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not care about that. The fact remains that there has been an increase in the number of inspectors, although I admit they may have been employed at other work before. While there has been a reduction in the wages staff, I object to the official staff being increased.

Mr. A. Thomson: In such circumstances one would have thought there would be a reduction.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is quite true. The last two votes we have dealt with show an increase of nine or ten new officers during the year.

The Premier: They were all included in the lump-sum vote last year.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They should be in the lump-sum vote this year. The official circular sets out clearly that there has been a number of new positions created during the year and the service does not demand such a position.

Mr. McCALLUM: We know that men have been taken on, that guards have been made superintendents, and engine-drivers have been made inspectors. We know the individuals, and we know that the jobs were not there before. These are new positions which have been created—an officer in charge of finance £550; an officer in charge of operations, £550; a district traffic superintendent, Perth, £425; a district traffic superintendent, Northam, £450; chief clerk, £282; two traffic inspectors at £319 each; two district en-

gineers at £485 each; an assistant engineer, £318; an inspector of building and works, Bunbury and Northam, £319 to £359.

Mr. Teesdale: Are all these new positions?

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes; all newly created, and they are all occupied by men who are known to most of us.

Mr. WILLCOCK: A statement I have here shows that there has been an increase all round in the staffs. While there were four traffic superintendents in 1920 averaging £475 to £500, the number this year has been increased to six drawing salaries from £387 to £612. Inspectors have been increased from £48 last year to £58 this year, and so on right through.

Mr. A. Thomson: Are you going to move for a reduction of any of the items?

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Premier has denied that these new positions have been created. How can he deny that there are 58 inspectors now when there were only 48 last year? I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £1,000.

The PREMIER: I hope hon. members will not support the amendment.

Mr. Willcock: How else can we register our protest against these increases?

The PREMIER: We have to rely on the Commissioner of Railways. If he is incapable there is a proper way of dealing with him.

Mr. A. Thomson: How can we deal with him?

The PREMIER: I do not know.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	23
Majority against				9

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Corboy	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Heron	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Simons
Mr. Lambert	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lutey	Mr. O'Loughlen

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Money
Mr. Broun	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Carter	Mr. Piess
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Davies	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Denton	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Johnston	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. Mullany
Sir James Mitchell	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Item—Salaries, wages and allowances, etc., £607,636:

Mr. A. THOMSON: Seeing that the railways are going backwards at an alarming rate, I intend to endeavour to reduce this item. I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £7,000.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item—Ways and Works Branch, Salaries, £557,279:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This includes stores and materials and wages necessary for keeping in repair the 15 miles of railway which the Premier says is a siding. There is nothing in the Railways Act to show that any portion of railway property is a siding. Section 64, which no doubt the Commissioner has acted upon, does not apply to the Government railways already existing, but to a siding to be constructed. The reply the Commissioner has put up through the Premier is an insult to Parliament, because he has formed the opinion that we are a lot of asses here and that we do not know anything about the Act; in fact, that we have no common sense, and therefore do not understand the meaning of Acts of Parliament which passed through this Assembly. I admit that sometimes there are clauses in Bills which we do not understand. We had one the other night, but so far as the sections of the Railways Act are concerned, any child at school could understand them. Section 57 of the Railways Act deals with the leasing of railway property and provides that the Commissioner may, with the approval of the Government from time to time, let on lease any portion of a railway. Then further down it sets out that the terms and conditions of a lease shall be laid on the Table of Parliament not less than 30 days before tenders are called for. That is the only section in the Railways Act which deals with the leasing of railway property.

The Premier: Look at Section 64.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I intend to. If the Premier's contention is correct, the Commissioner of Railways could to-morrow enter into an agreement to lease every mile of railway in Western Australia and call it all a siding.

The Minister for Works: He could not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He could do it just as well as he could lease 15 miles.

The Minister for Works: No, he could not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No doubt there would be a great outcry, but he might bind the Government in such a way that they would have to pay heavy damages to get out of the difficulty. Letters will bind equally with a signed agreement. If the Commissioner has power to lease 15 miles of the Government railways, he has power to lease every mile in possession of the State.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: He has not leased 15 miles.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He has.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: He could give running rights over the railways to anyone.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I admit that, with certain conditions. Clause 64 deals with sidings. Clause 63 states that the Commissioner may agree that any person desiring to construct a siding in connection with any Government railway should do so. Clause 64 deals with a siding constructed in connection with a railway. It also sets out that, after the completion of any such siding connected with a Government railway, the Commissioner may agree with the person that any trains or rolling stock, the property of His Majesty, may be run upon the siding, and that any trains or rolling stock, the property of such person, may be run upon any Government railway upon such terms and conditions as are specified in the agreement. That deals entirely with the construction of sidings. This 15 miles of railway is part and parcel of the Government railways. It is true that owing to lack of traffic and there being a double line, the Government felt that they might with advantage shift one line. That was thought desirable because there was no traffic. There was no prospect of getting traffic, but immediately there was a prospect of getting traffic, the necessity for the line returned, and there was no need to take it up. It is ridiculous to say that the line was going to be removed because there was no traffic or likelihood of traffic. Owing to the firewood company having to shift from their previous area because of the timber being cut out, or being too far from the railway, they applied for an area in another district, which no doubt would be granted in due course. It was necessary to get the firewood to the mines, and they had either to use the Government railway or construct a line of their own.

The Premier: They would probably have constructed a line of their own.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The company could not have constructed a line without the permission of the Government, and the Government would not have given their approval. Is it likely that the Government would have adopted the attitude which they adopted in Kalgoorlie many years ago by passing a Bill for the construction of a tramway, thus depriving themselves of the passenger traffic from Kalgoorlie to Boulder? Knowing what they lost in that connection, is it likely that they would have taken similar action for the purpose of depriving their railway of freights? No sane man would have ever thought of doing so. I ask members what would they think of any man who had a siding on the Perth-Fremantle line and asked for a lease of one of the lines to Fremantle? That line would not be so long as the one which has been leased, but members would think a man mad to make such a request.

The Premier: Quite so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The same principle applies here. This line is part and parcel of the railway system. The prospect of traffic was good. It was necessary to use the line to carry the firewood to the mines. There is a little subsection at the end of Section 64 which is the only portion under which the Commissioner could work, but it was never intended by Parliament that persons who availed themselves of the subsection should have rights over 15 miles of Government railway. It was merely intended that if a person was going into a siding, with an engine and trucks, he might be able to use a short portion of the Government railways for shunting purposes and for nothing else. Here is the subsection under which the Premier says the Commissioner acted rightly:—

Nothing in this Act or in any such agreement shall be deemed to authorise any person to enter upon any Government railway for any purpose whatsoever, except with the written authority of the Commissioner first obtained in that behalf.

The Minister for Works: Have they done so?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Of course they have got it. The Minister knows well that that subsection was put in to deal with ordinary sidings and to give a person with a siding an opportunity to run over a few yards of Government railways for shunting purposes in connection with the business of the siding. I am perfectly safe in saying there was no intention on the part of Parliament to give a running right over 15 miles of Government railway. The Minister cannot contradict that. It has never been done in any part of Western Australia until the present time.

The Minister for Works: You have to make a start at some time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Of course.

Mr. Willecock: We should have been consulted first of all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not going to say that some people would not make a start. I want to point out the danger.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Had not a portion of the line been abandoned?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No; this is portion of the double line from Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie. There was no traffic over it, but when the new firewood area was taken up, traffic would have been created. There was no necessity for the Government to take up the line. There is no doubt that the section of the Act under which the Commissioner acted has been stretched considerably for the purpose of granting this lease, and it has been done contrary to the intention of Parliament, and contrary to the law of the land. The Government can endeavour to cover it up as much as they like, but it is clearly laid down that this section deals with sidings, and with sidings only. Have members ever heard of a siding 15 miles long on a Government railway? Have they ever seen a siding over two

miles long? Most of them are shorter than that.

Mr. Willecock: In the time table this is called a line, not a siding.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Of course, and it should have been leased under Section 57 of the Act. The law has been stretched. If the Commissioner has done it—

Mr. Teesdale: You are stretching it by using the word "lease" so often when it is only a matter of running rights.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have not seen the lease or the conditions under which the right has been granted.

Mr. Willecock: No one has seen it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: So far as I can gather these people have been granted the sole right of using this line for three years at £2,000 per annum.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Not the sole right.

Mr. Willecock: Yes, the sole right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is a secret contract; we have not seen it. This is one of those obnoxious things about which so much noise was made five or six years ago, that it nearly lifted the roof. The hon. member was not here or he would have sympathy with me. I could not adopt the attitude which the Minister has taken.

Mr. Teesdale: I would be with you if it were the sole right, but the Premier denies it and I take his word.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier is defending the action of one of his officers. He is loyal to this officer who has done wrong under the Act.

Mr. Heron: And admits that he does not know much about it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is a very dangerous practice. What would country members say if one of the branch lines running out from a main line were leased to a gentleman at the far end? If the Commissioner has power to lease 15 miles of the general railways, he has equal powers to lease a branch line connecting up with one of the main lines. It is the principle to which I object. The Act says that Parliament must decide. The conditions must be laid before Parliament. Parliament has the right to say whether this shall be done or not. Under the section under which the lease has been granted we have no say. Not even the Governor-in-Council has had a say as to whether this line should be leased. It has been purely a matter for the Commissioner.

The Minister for Works interjected.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: From what I know of the Minister for Works, he would never have dared to lease this railway unless he had the approval of the Executive Council under Clause 57. I was surprised to hear that the Executive Council had not dealt with it. I do not want to take up the time of the Committee, but this is a serious matter. It is a principle which may become dangerous and members opposite may know of it to their

cost. The time is not too late now for the Government to have a lease fixed up properly, put through Executive Council, and laid on the Table, so that members will have an opportunity to discuss the conditions and, if they approve of it, take their responsibility in accordance with the provisions of the Act. We have no right to allow any public officer, I care not who he is, to transfer any portion of the Government railways unless in accordance with the desires of Parliament.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I suppose I ought to say something in connection with this matter, seeing that the Act of 1904 was this statute which conferred the power on me when I was Minister for Railways. With what the member for North-East Fremantle has said, we must all agree, but although a person may, strictly speaking, have power to do certain things, a broader view must be taken of them rather than the view of an individual exercising certain power. The people for whom this siding has been fixed have been in business for a great number of years, not for the fun of it, I admit, but in order to obtain the best advantages possible. I myself, had I been Commissioner of Railways, would have thought it necessary to be particularly careful in making any arrangement with these men, not on the ground that there might be anything dishonourable on their part, but because I would be dealing with people who knew the game from A to Z. The member for North-East Fremantle referred the Committee to Section 57 of the Government Railways Act, which lays down clearly that—

The Commissioner may, with the approval of the Governor, from time to time let on lease any portion of a railway, with the rolling stock and other appurtenances thereto belonging, to any person willing to take and work the same, subject to the following conditions:—(1) The letting shall be by public tender. (2) The terms and conditions of the lease shall be laid before Parliament not less than 30 days before tenders are called for.

And so on. Evidently, however, the framers of the Act, when they came to Part VI., dealing with sidings, did not regard the position as requiring so many safeguards as this previous part of the Act. Therefore the power in question was given to the Commissioner. Hon. members should know that under this Act the Commissioner has power over the whole of the railway employees up to a certain point, beyond which point the power vests in the Minister for Railways, as representative of the Government. In dealing with sidings, the framers of the Act did not consider it necessary to repeat the various paragraphs of Section 57. Section 63 distinctly lays down that—

The Commissioner may agree with any person desiring to construct a siding in connection with any Government railway for the construction and maintenance of so

much of such siding as may be within the limits of the railway . . . and so forth. Then Section 64 provides—

After the completion of any such siding connected with a Government railway, the Commissioner may agree with the person constructing or owning the siding that any trains or rolling stock, the property of His Majesty, may be run upon the siding, and that any trains or rolling stock, the property of such person, may be run upon any Government railway, upon such terms and conditions as are specified in the agreement.

Taking that section literally, there we have the power to the Commissioner. Of course we can only give opinions as laymen, opinions based on such experience as our lives have afforded us; but in most instances, I think, our experience pretty nearly hits the mark. However, I am given to understand that in this particular instance the Crown Law Department were consulted, and that they specifically advised the Commissioner that he had full power under the Act to enter into that agreement. The Premier told the House that he had not seen the lease. I have not seen it either, and neither has the Colonial Secretary nor the Minister for Agriculture. In making that statement I do not want to appear for a single moment as trying to evade any responsibility that attaches to me in common with the Minister for Railways, who it must be presumed saw the agreement. But the Minister for Railways is not here to-day, and we are not in full possession of all the facts even on this side of the Chamber. I can only presume that the Minister for Railways satisfied himself, in consultation with the Crown Law Department, that he was acting within his powers. Probably he would consider that it was not necessary to bring the matter under the notice of his colleagues. The member for North-East Fremantle suggested that the particular section in question had been stretched like a piece of elastic. I can express some agreement with that view, while in nowise departing from strict loyalty to my colleague, the Minister for Railways. I shall see the lease as early as possible; and if I am satisfied it is all right, I shall be prepared to say so; and if I am not satisfied that it is all right, I shall be prepared to act. But all these matters connected with the management of our railway system must be left largely to the man who holds the responsible office of Commissioner. I do not think that I, when Commissioner, should have entered into an agreement of this sort very easily. I should have felt, with regard to the gentlemen managing the firewood traffic, that it was necessary for me to be, if possible, super-careful. Only within the last six months or so I was approached by one of the firewood companies in the matter of water supply. The Government had an agreement with the company by which the company were to get all their water from the Goldfields Water Supply. There had been a fairly heavy fall of rain, and water had accumu-

lated in some dams, either natural or artificial, which were accessible to the company. They desired to be allowed to use that rain water, saying there was no very great quantity of it. I told them that if they used rain water, they would have to pay 15s. per thousand gallons for any water they required from the Goldfields Water Supply, instead of their agreement rate of 7s. 6d. They tried hard to obtain permission to use that rain water, but I would not yield. I afterwards found that, if I had agreed, the company would have got from the dams fully two-thirds of their requirements, notwithstanding their representation to me that the quantity of water in the dam was comparatively small. I do not know that any more can be said on the subject of this railway lease at present. The Premier said that the matter was not referred to him, and I have said that it was not referred to me, and I have explained why it was not referred.

Mr. Willcock: Our complaint is that the matter was not referred.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Perhaps, in the absence of the Minister for Railways, my words may appear disloyal. However, neither the Premier nor myself nor any other Minister desires to be otherwise than absolutely loyal to the Minister for Railways. We all believe that that Minister's action was taken under the belief that there was no necessity to refer to either Cabinet or Executive Council with regard to it.

Mr. WILLCOCK: With other members of the Opposition, I consider that when there is any distinct departure from ordinary practice, or the introduction of an absolutely novel principle, Parliament should be consulted. Having carefully read the Government Railways Act, and being familiar with the phraseology of railway operation, I know what is a siding, and I know what is not a siding. The Act was never intended to apply to a deal of this description. My knowledge of previous debates in this House enables me to say that, had the Minister for Works been speaking from this side of the Chamber, criticising such a lease granted by a Labour Government, the plaster would have fallen from the ceiling.

The Minister for Works: I can only tell you the truth.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I do not suggest for a moment that the Minister would do anything else. From the standpoint of safe working, it is hardly in the best interests of the Railway Department that private traffic should be allowed to run in such close proximity to the working railway system. Again, the trucks used by the company do not conform to the departmental standard. If there should be a serious derailment through bad trucks or other faultiness, the consequences would be very serious, possibly involving loss of life. This so-called siding does not appear in the list of railways open to traffic set forth in the Commissioner's report; neither does it appear in the list of sidings contained in the working railways time table. Further, the

section between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie is called a double line, and not a single main line with a siding attached thereto. The member for North-East Fremantle made a point that 140,000 tons extra were to be carried on that stretch of line between Kurrang and Kalgoorlie, and that therefore it would be necessary to have a double line instead of a single line. If there is a certain set way of doing things connected with our railways, for instance, and that set way is departed from, the House should have an opportunity of discussing such matters. Possibly, had the lease been granted in a proper manner, there might not have been objection to it: I say, possibly there might not. But there has been an immense deal of suspicion and innuendo in connection with the arrangement. The Government would have done wisely to bring the lease before the House and let the matter be discussed here.

The Premier: It seems to me that you would be satisfied if the line was not used and no license given to cut the timber.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am not satisfied that a fair deal has been given to the railways.

The Premier: We had the line for ten years and it never brought in a penny.

Mr. WILLCOCK: During the last ten years, the existence of the line has been of distinct advantage to the department in the running of the service. The Premier knew that exception would be taken to this lease. Why should not the House have been given an opportunity to discuss it?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I can understand the Premier getting wild. I was wild when I sat on that side of the House at times when there was talk of secret contracts.

The Premier: I simply want to assist an industry.

The Minister for Works: If the Crown Law Department advised the Commissioner that he had the power, would not the Commissioner adopt the advice given him?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I have had experience, and I know you can get different opinions from two or three solicitors.

The Minister for Works: You are reflecting upon the legal fraternity.

The Premier: Are we to waste a night discussing this question because the Commissioner has exercised the right Parliament has given him?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I think he has exceeded his right.

Mr. Munzie: Fancy calling 15 miles 30 chains of railway a siding.

Mr. WILLCOCK: In view of the exception which has been taken to the position—

The Premier: I will bring the lease before members.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is all very well to lay the agreement on the Table. If it has been constitutionally entered into, as the Minister for Works suggests, we cannot do anything with it. The only opportunity we have of expressing disapproval of this action is during the discussion on this Vote.

Surely the House should have had an opportunity to discuss such an important matter!

The Minister for Works: You will have to amend the Act.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I admit the Minister has the opinion of the Crown Law Department behind him.

Mr. Pickering: We must limit the length of a siding.

The Premier: I should think the Commissioner of Railways will never let anything in future—unless Parliament grants him permission.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not think he should, if he does things like this.

The Minister for Works: The Commissioner will never be able to carry on the railways if you make an office boy of him.

The Premier: In any case, he did consult the Minister.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I think the whole thing is unconstitutional.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Whatever view I held of the action taken by the Commissioner in letting a length of Government line on lease and calling it a siding in order to enable him to let it, it seemed to me to be a far more serious matter after I heard the statement by the Minister for Works. Until that Minister spoke, I thought it was an extraordinary thing that a siding should have been leased without the knowledge of the public or of Parliament. When I find from the Minister that it was done behind the back of the Premier and without Cabinet's decision—

The Minister for Works: It was not necessary; I explained that.

The Premier: The Minister was consulted.

Mr. JOHNSTON: We think it necessary that Parliament should have information about it.

The Minister for Works: The Act does not say so.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Believing that, I think it is the more necessary that Cabinet should have known of the position.

The Premier: I heard there was likely to be some offer, but I did not know more than that until the thing was fixed up.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I sympathise with the position the Government find themselves faced with in having 15 miles of the Government railways leased without Cabinet knowing of it.

The Premier: The railway has been idle for ten years and has been absolutely useless.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It was said that the railway was to be pulled up, and there were deputations on the subject. I think the Commissioner kept something back.

The Premier: The freights were put up; that is the trouble.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I know the freights were put up, but surely, while all this discussion was going on regarding the rumours that the railway was to be pulled up, the railway authorities might have given some

indication that the line would probably have been leased.

The Premier: Had we leased this line ten years ago, we would have had £20,000 in revenue.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, you would not have had that, because it would cost something for upkeep.

Mr. JOHNSTON: We have here another secret contract, and I regret to find that the administration of the Railway Department is on such an autocratic basis that the Commissioner can do such a thing without Cabinet knowing about it.

The Premier: It is in accordance with the law.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is not in accordance with the law or of common sense to call 15 miles of railway a siding, for the purpose of getting behind the back of the Government and of Parliament. That is the only reason for calling such a length of railway a siding, in order that the Premier should not know what was going on. This is not the first time we have heard about such happenings in connection with this particular company. Some years ago they secured a dam for a water supply. There was a great row about it. They sold water to the Government and got more for it than they were paying as rental.

The Premier: You are suspicious of every enterprising person. According to you, we should not allow enterprising people into the State.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is not a matter of suspicion. It is a question of letting 15 miles of Government railway to the Kurrawang company. It is wrong.

The Premier: I will let you the right to lease the Marble Bar railway to-morrow morning, and will not say anything about it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am not negotiating about that railway.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The interest alone on the line under discussion is £3,000.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I object to such an attitude as that adopted by the Commissioner in going behind the backs of Ministers. I object to these secret contracts being carried out behind the backs of Parliament, and I sympathise with the Government in the position in which they find themselves.

The Premier: I do not want the sympathy of the hon. member. The Commissioner acted very foolishly, in the opinion of some hon. members, a little time ago because he put up the freights, and that is the trouble at the present time.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is hardly fair! That is not the position in this case.

The Premier: This line has been useless to the country for ten years.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Now that it may become profitable, you part with it!

The Premier: There was never any concern evidenced by the House because of the non-paying position of this railway.

Mr. Munsie: There was not much objection taken when you wanted to pull it up!

The PREMIER: No protest was ever made by any hon. member because of the fact that this line had been a dead waste for all these years. Now that it can be brought into use—

Mr. Munsie: You give it away.

The PREMIER: It never earned a brass farthing for all these years and it has not been wanted. When there is an opportunity of getting £2,000 a year income from the line, hon. members raise objections.

Mr. Munsie: You should have got £5,000.

The PREMIER: We could not have got that amount.

Mr. Munsie: If this company would not have been prepared to give that, they could have put down a line themselves.

Mr. McCallum: They could not do that without the consent of the Government.

The PREMIER: It is not a bad bargain, in the circumstances.

Mr. Munsie: It is a bad principle, this letting of such a lease without the consent of Parliament. You would have got a better deal if Parliament had been consulted.

The PREMIER: I do not know about that.

Mr. Munsie: You would have got a better deal before Parliament would have permitted the lease to go through.

The PREMIER: If it is a question of cheap firewood for the mines at Kalgoorlie, it is a good deal. If it is not important that the mines should get cheap wood, then it is a different matter altogether.

Mr. Munsie: It is important that they should get cheap firewood.

Mr. Heron: They will not get wood any cheaper.

The PREMIER: I do not know, but the member for Hannans admitted that they would get the wood cheaper.

Mr. Munsie: No, 2s. 5d. for 15 miles.

The PREMIER: That is right. It is very strange that when this line, wasted for ten years, is made to produce revenue, all this bother should be raised about it. I cannot understand this protest. The Crown Solicitor was consulted, and said it was right and proper to lease the line under Section 64. The Commissioner had no intention of doing anything not in the interests of the department and of the mining industry. Anything that can be done, especially if free of cost, to cheapen the wood supply to the mines, should be done. Apparently the trouble is that we did not get enough money for the lease.

Mr. Munsie: No, it is the principle of doing it without first consulting Parliament.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: When you were on this side of the House you moved a motion condemning secret contracts.

The PREMIER: I daresay that even today the Commissioner has bought 50 tons of firewood somewhere or other without placarding it. Is that a secret contract? We ordered half a dozen boiler tubes in London

the other day, and I forgot to tell the House about it. Is that a secret contract?

Mr. MUNSIE: I am surprised at the lameness of the excuse put up by the Premier. He questioned whether any application for a reserve had been approved. If the Kurrawang Company have not any rights to cut wood south of Coolgardie, I want to know what they require the line for. They are not going to pay £2,000 per annum for the line if they are not to use it. They must be definitely assured that they have a forest in which to cut wood. The Minister in another place, in reply to a question the other day, said an application had been received for permission to construct a tramway through the western portion of the Coolgardie-Burkbank State forest, with certain cutting rights, but that no decision had been arrived at in regard to the application. The Premier says the Commissioner was justified in leasing the line. If that be so, the Minister in another place must have been sadly misinformed. In reply to a question as to whether any agreement had been arrived at to lease or grant running rights over either of the railway lines between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, the Minister in another place replied, "Yes, under Section 64 of the Government Railways Act." In answer to further questions he said the other party to the agreement was the W.A. Goldfields Firewood Supply, Ltd., and that the lease was over the southern track between Coolgardie and Kurrawang, for three years, at a rental of £2,000 per annum. So it is not a case of running rights, but of a lease of 15 miles 30 chains of the line. Nobody will agree with the Premier that this length of line constitutes a siding. I am not blaming the Commissioner, for I am quite sure he must have consulted the Minister for Railways. In fact the Premier said so the other night.

The Premier: I told you so again to-night.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Premier cannot tell us the date of the agreement, nor does he know whether it has been signed. We ought to see that agreement before we pass the item. When we sat on that side of the House and the Premier and his colleagues were on this side, we were frequently told that this was a party of secret contracts and that we had no right to go behind Parliament to make any contract. I agreed with that, then.

The Minister for Works: You did not vote with us.

Mr. MUNSIE: I did, for I thought no Government had a right to make secret contracts. Section 63 of the Railways Act provides that the Commissioner may agree to the construction and maintenance of a siding under certain conditions. But this is not a siding. It is part of the railway system of the State. Section 64 provides that the Commissioner may make arrangements for running powers.

The Minister for Works: He has done that.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister knows that he has done nothing of the sort! This section applies to running powers over a siding to be constructed by those given permission to con-

struct it. Who constructed this 15 miles of railway? When the company completes the construction of a siding, the Commissioner may make regulations for the working of that siding. If the Minister can apply that section to the working of this 15 miles of Government railways, he is pretty clever. I am positive that the Commissioner and the Minister for Railways have made a mistake. They have leased a portion of the Government railways behind the back of Parliament and contrary to the Railway Act. The only excuse put up by the Premier was that he wanted to see the wood supplied cheaply to the mines at Kalgoorlie. More power to the Premier for his laudable desire to see the mines kept going. He argued that if the Commissioner had not acted at once, if there had been a delay through calling tenders and putting the matter before Parliament, the mines at Kalgoorlie would have had to close. I say that if the Kurrawang company went out of existence to-morrow without a day's notice and did not supply another ton of wood, the Lakeside company, provided the Government made available sufficient trucks, could supply the whole of the firewood required for the mines.

The Minister for Works: It is better to have two companies.

Mr. MUNSIE: As a matter of fact they are both one. There is an agreement that each shall supply so much of the firewood. When there were three companies in existence the Kurrawang line supplied two-thirds. When the two agreed to amalgamate, they agreed to supply the firewood fifty-fifty, and they are observing that condition to-day. The Minister said the object was to supply cheap fuel. Have the mines got cheaper fuel by the leasing of this railway? Has the Premier attempted to show this?

The Minister for Works: Seeing that it has not started working, it cannot operate yet.

Mr. MUNSIE: I want to see the agreement before it comes into operation. We had a right to see it before it was signed.

Mr. Mann: If it prevents a rise in the price of wood, would you think it justified?

Mr. MUNSIE: No, not to lease the line for £2,000 a year. Departmental reports are submitted to us in order that we may gain information from them. If we can be guided by the railway report, the upkeep of the line for interest and sinking fund will cost more than £2,000 a year. This being so, where does the Premier's halfpenny a ton profit come in? It is all moonshine. The company are to pay the Government £6,000 for the three years. I would like to ask members: What could the company lay 15 miles of railway for? Doubtless they could easily get permission to construct the line. I have had some negotiations with these people in connection with industrial disputes, and they have told us that to throw down their spur lines

cost an average of £1,000 a mile. Fifteen miles at £1,000 a mile would mean £15,000.

Mr. McCallum: But they would have to lay a better line for this work.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am content to take it on the estimate for bush construction. They can save £15,000 capital expense by paying the Government £6,000 in three years. Now, where is the forest? It is the Coolgardie-Burbanks forest, for which application has been made but not yet approved. I am satisfied that Mr. Hedges has not signed any contract without having the approval to cut wood. Even if he has not got the cutting rights and has to cut outside the Coolgardie-Burbanks forest, how far distant would he then be? The furthest point of the Coolgardie-Burbanks forest is not 12 miles from the Coolgardie racecourse. Therefore the company would have to haul the firewood 15 miles to Kurrawang and  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Kurrawang to Kamballie, around the Kurrawang loop. This makes 35 miles which the company would have to haul their wood if they did not get a concession to cut in the Coolgardie-Burbanks forest. To-day they are hauling their wood 80 miles to Kurrawang. Does not that represent a saving to the company of more than £2,000 a year?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And it does not affect the mines at all.

Mr. MUNSIE: No, the company will save more than half of their costs of hauling, and yet the Premier says the Commissioner has made a good deal. He has made a good deal for Hedges. I am not condemning Hedges. More power to him if he can get these concessions, but I am not going to allow any Government to flout an Act of Parliament in this way. The Commissioner and the Minister have flouted Parliament and disregarded the Railway Act. They have done something illegal and dishonest.

The Minister for Works: You have no right to say that.

Mr. MUNSIE: To give a lease of the railway behind the back of Parliament and contrary to the Act is dishonest. More power to Hedges if he can bring sufficient influence to bear and if he can get men sufficiently weak-kneed or sympathetic to grant any concession he asks. The Premier says that more revenue is being obtained now than before. I do not believe that statement. I should like to know what the maintenance cost of the line actually is. The House should have been consulted when this concession to put in eight miles of loop line was granted. If the timber companies had had to give the 1916 conditions, it might have meant increasing the price of wood to the mines. To say that the concession we are now discussing means cheap wood to the mines is ridiculous. The Kurrawang company will actually gain more than the £2,000 a year in their haulage charges. Rather than spend the £20,000 it would have cost them to

construct their own line to Coolgardie, they would willingly have paid £5,000 a year for the use of this section.

The Minister for Works: From what you say the company would have been glad to pay £30,000.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not say that. I do not think they could have made £30,000 out of it.

The Minister for Works: How many miles is it from the Kurrawang line to where the wood has to be delivered on the Government line?

Mr. MUNSIE: It is roughly about ten miles.

The Minister for Works: The company will save 40 miles loaded and 40 miles empty. On the basis of 150,000 tons a year it would have paid the company to pay even more than you suggest.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have not worked it out on those lines. When a question is asked in the House about the railways, there is no doubt the railway officials frame the reply. In reply to a question I asked as to the estimated tonnage of wood that would go over the line, I was told that this would depend on the quantity of firewood consumed by the mines. If the Commissioner did not know how many tons were to be hauled, on what did he base his charge of £2,000? Why did not the Commissioner give us an honest and straightforward answer? If he adopts that evasive attitude he must expect criticism. The Premier made capital out of the fact that the Lakeside Firewood Company approached the Commissioner with the object of his taking over the haulage of the firewood from Lakeside to Kamballie, a distance of about three miles. A concession had been granted to the Lakeside company permitting them to run their engines into the Kamballie yards, and a small charge was imposed for wear and tear. This concession only lasted about five weeks. The Kamballie company discovered that their engines were not strong enough to haul the wood over that grade, and they asked the Commissioner to alter the arrangements. Instead of taking over the control of the line and charging the ordinary haulage rates, the Commissioner agreed to lend them an engine, a driver, a fireman and two guards, to be utilised two or three times a day for the haulage of the wood from Lakeside to Kamballie, at a charge of £1 a day. And yet the Government are screaming about their lack of revenue.

Mr. McCallum: You could not hire a horse and cart for that.

Mr. MUNSIE: That would cost about 30s. a day. What is the consideration in connection with the present deal? There is not the slightest doubt that some better explanation will have to be put up than has been offered up to the present. No man can fairly construe into those two sections of the Government Railways Act the power to lease that line as the Commissioner has done. The Government themselves said, in reply to a question, that they had leased the line at the pal-

try rental of £2,000 a year. The Government would have shown more honesty of purpose had the acting Minister for Railways admitted that he knew nothing about the matter, and said that he would look it up and inform the Chamber. The lease should be here even now, at this late stage, for us to discuss.

Mr. MONEY: I am not in a position to express an opinion on the goodness or badness of the bargain made by the Government. However, under the two sections of the Act the legal position is as follows: Section 63 assumes that there is a siding connecting a private railway with a Government railway, and that that siding is partly on Government railway property and partly on privately-owned land. When it comes to the construction of that siding, there is evidently a desire on the part of the owner of the private railway to have his line joined up with the Government system. Then it is in the power of the Commissioner to connect up that portion of the siding which is on his property, he doing his own work. I assume in this case that has been done years ago under the regulations.

Mr. Munsie: Never in this case. It was never a private line. It has always been a Government line.

Mr. MONEY: The line into the timber?

Mr. Munsie: That line has not been constructed yet.

Mr. MONEY: Section 63 would certainly have to be complied with before Section 64 could come into operation. After the siding has been completed, the Commissioner may then agree with the owner of the private railway to run his rolling stock over it. On the other hand, the Commissioner may also arrange, by agreement, to permit the owner of the private railway to run his rolling stock over the Government railways. Certainly, to comply with that section, the terms and conditions of the agreement or lease—it may not be a lease of the line itself, but a lease of running rights over the line—

Mr. Munsie: The Minister calls it a lease of the line.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would not the same thing apply to the railway between Perth and Fremantle?

Mr. MONEY: Exactly; because Section 64 says "any railway." Section 63 clearly lays down that the Commissioner may agree with such person to run any trains or rolling-stock belonging to such person over any railway belonging to the Government. Any agreement within Section 64 is legal, and capable for the Commissioner to have made.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not at all surprised that the Premier got angry over this discussion. Here we have a case of chickens coming home to roost. The Premier is fully aware of the attitude he took up previously in such matters as this, and appreciates the attitude forced on him to-night by the action taken, unknown to him, by the department. The member for Bunbury has given a purely legal interpretation of Section 64. I maintain

that Section 64 was never intended to authorise the Commissioner to give general running rights over Government lines, but merely to grant shunting rights in connection with sidings. The section is intended to enable, say, a timber company or a coal mining company requiring a private siding to connect up with the Government railway system, and to enable them to shunt their own trucks with their own engines over the Government railways. If such were not the case, there would be no occasion for Section 57, which deals with leasing of Government railways.

Mr. Money: That refers to the lease of a railway in its entirety.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Here was a Government railway which the Government intended to pull up, as they had no further use for it where it was. There was no traffic warranting the Government in maintaining a double line there. Suddenly it struck some person that he would be able to carry his firewood cheaper if he could get the Government to lease him this piece of line. He approaches the Government, and the Government lease him this piece of Government railway.

Mr. Money: Without seeing the terms of the document, we cannot discuss the subject.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No such thing ever happened before in connection with the Government railways of Western Australia. The principle is entirely novel. It is a principle which could be applied to every Government railway.

Mr. Money: As things are, yes.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If this sort of thing goes on, the Collic coal mines could have their own trains hauling coal through to Brunswick.

Mr. Money: And that is done in many parts of the world where the mines own their own rolling stock.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member is wrong. In the Old Country, companies very often provide their own rolling stock, but they do not provide the engines to do the hauling. Thus there is a check upon the company's operations. In the present instance, the company provide the engines and do their own hauling. Parliament has been flouted, and this is a principle which we should not adopt.

Mr. Teesdale: We will not have it again.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If we do not protest now, this instance will be quoted as a precedent.

The Premier: Very well, I will see that nothing is done that will help the State to go ahead in connection with its industries; it is apparently no good!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is ridiculous to say that there should be no secret contracts whatever. Parliament once decided there should be no more secret contracts, and what was the result? We had a price, which we got quietly, for the supply of oil for use on the "Kangaroo" at Wyndham. Then Parliament decided there should be no secret conditions as in the past. The succeeding

Government called tenders and they had to pay £30,000 more for the oil than if we had accepted the proposition we had under consideration. It will thus be seen that it is not always advisable to direct attention to the requirements of the Government. In the present instance, however, it is a question of departing from the recognised principle underlying State owned railways. Parliament should decide whether we are to depart from that principle, and in order to give Parliament an opportunity to protest against the leasing of a portion of the State railways, I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £279.

The PREMIER: I hope the Committee will not agree to the reduction of the vote. The lease under discussion has nothing whatever to do with any of the men affected by the sum proposed to be reduced. Not one of them had anything to do with the lease, and now the member for North-East Fremantle wishes to make some of these men suffer for the sins of another. Does that hon. member think that is fair? I do not think so. I hope the Committee will not agree to the suggestion put forward by the member for North-East Fremantle.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am sorry that the Premier reflected upon the Chair. The portion of the Railway Estimates I seek to reduce is the only one under which reference may be made to this matter, seeing that it is under this portion of the Vote that the working railways are kept in repair.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	17
Noes	..	..	..	..	20

Majority against .. 3

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Simons
Mr. Corboy	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Heron	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Troy
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Marshall	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. McCallum	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Broun	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Carter	Mr. Pickering
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Denton	Mr. Sampson
Mr. George	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. Underwood
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Mullany
Mr. H. K. Maley	(Teller.)
Mr. Mann	

Amendment thus negatived.

Vote put and passed.

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

Resolutions passed in Committee of Supply granting supplies not exceeding £5,075,786 were formally reported.

## BILL—AUCTIONEERS.

### Council's Amendments.

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Bill subject to certain amendments.

*House adjourned at 11.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 7th December, 1921.*

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

## QUESTION—MINE MANAGEMENT, FINGAL.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is he aware that there are, approximately, 100,000 tons of ore broken in the Fingal mine at Day Dawn, estimated to be worth an ounce to the ton? 2, If not, what is the estimated quantity and its average value? 3, Is it not a fact that the whole of this ore could have been recovered and the mine be still working but for the mismanagement of Bewick, Moreing & Co.?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, It is generally understood that a good deal of ore remains in the Great Fingal mine, but the department have no knowledge of the amount or value. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, The question of mismanagement does not come within the province of the Govern-  
ment.

## QUESTION—MINES INSPECTORS' QUALIFICATIONS.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is it a fact that it is necessary for a man to have a University education before being appointed to a position of inspector of mines, or is the technical man given preference over the practical man? 2, If so, where does the man come in who has worked all his life in mines and is thoroughly practical, but has not had the opportunity of getting a University education?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, A University education is not essential. Positions are advertised and applicants appointed according to their qualifications, combining both technical and practical knowledge. 2, Answered by No. 1.

## ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Local Courts Act Amendment.
- 2, Mining Act Amendment.
- 3, Permanent Reserve (Point Walter).

## BILL—GRAIN.

### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous sitting.

Hon. J. A. GREIG (South-East) [4.36]: I shall not to-day enter into a long discussion on the merits or demerits of bulk handling. For this debate it is sufficient to know that the farmers of Western Australia want the Bill; and they want the Bill because they want bulk handling established. For several years the wheat-growers of this State have been discussing the question of bulk handling, and the majority of them have come to the conclusion that for a State which will eventually become a large wheat growing State, bulk handling is the proper system. Western Australian wheatgrowers have now backed their opinion by applying for 250,000 shares in the grain elevator company. Let me say here that 60,000 of those shares were applied for conditionally, the condition being that the applicants would be in a position to take the shares when the time came. These applicants were on the Industries Assistance Board. Hon. members realise that any farmer who is on the Industries Assistance Board has not the handling of his own money. In the case of such a farmer the Government have the first claim on the proceeds of the crop, and the merchants, or outside creditors as they are usually called, the men who stood by the farmers until the Industries Assistance Board was created, have the second claim. These particular applicants were hopeful that the Government would instruct the