

Clause 6—Assessments:

Hon. G. W. MILES: Is not this clause in conflict with Sub-section 9 of Section 6 of the Dividend Duties Act? In view of the provisions of that sub-section, I should like an explanation from the Chief Secretary.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will get the information for you.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.40 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 13th November, 1934.

	PAGE
Assent to Bill	1274
Bills: Cremation Act Amendment, 1R.	1274
Gold Mining Profits Tax, 3R.	1274
Dried Fruits Act Continuance, 3R.	1274
Land Tax and Income Tax, 2R., Com. report	1274
Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment, 2R.	1274
Land Act Amendment, 2R.	1276
City of Perth Superannuation, returned	1312
Annual Estimates: Votes and Items discussed	1279
Railways, Tramways, Ferries, and Electricity Supply	1270
State Batteries, Cave House	1274
Agriculture	1274

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

BILL—CREMATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. Hawke and read a first time.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Western Australian Aged Sailors and Soldiers' Relief Fund Act Amendment Bill.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Gold Mining Profits Tax.
 - 2, Dried Fruits Act Continuance.
- Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 8th November.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [4.33]: This is the usual Bill, following general custom, but I notice the wording has been altered and I understand it is simply to bring the Bill under the operations of the Consolidated Land Act. I have read the Bill through very carefully and I see there is no alteration at all in the tax rate, for which I suppose we should be truly thankful. The Government have not increased the tax, but with the money they have in addition to what they had last year, I do not suppose there is any need for increase. Still, it seems to me we are going on and building up the deficit, without anything to assist us in providing for the future except our primary industries.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: The original Act was passed in 1931 and the first season in which the farmers' affairs were administered under the Act was that of 1931-32. In that and succeeding years arrangements were made to carry on the 1919 farmers. Of the stay orders applied for, 170 lapsed, while 310 farmers applied for stay orders but had unsuccessful meetings. Of those whose stay orders lapsed, 33 farmers were able to make their own arrangements, 35 did not desire to carry on, and the balance were unable to obtain finance. Total crops under the Act

proper have been, wheat 831,127 acres, other crops 51,176 acres. Under Section 13D of the Act, whereby farmers were able to carry on under bills of sale, the area cropped was 198,840 acres. In all, 376 farmers carried on under that section. The total advances in cash or kind under the Act amounted to £825,569, and the total advances under Section B were £198,353. Repayments of advances and credit, exclusive of this current season, total £580,733. The total distribution to interest, hire purchase machinery, rent, rates, etc.—also exclusive of the current season—amounted to £112,456. Considering the position the industry has been in during the last four years, the response of creditors to the spirit of the Act, I think, may be regarded as satisfactory. The previous amendments to the Act, which was re-enacted from year to year, did not effect any drastic changes. They were chiefly machinery clauses considered advisable for the smoother working of the Act. But the amendments in the Bill before the House go farther into the matter of adjustment of debts, as distinct from proposals merely for the purpose of putting in and taking off a crop, thus justifying to greater extent the Title of the Act. The Bill is to implement certain recommendations by the recent Royal Commission and is a logical sequence to those sections of the Agricultural Bank Bill, now before Parliament, which authorise the adjustment of debts due to the Bank; in that this Bill provides for the consideration of proposals to write down, suspend or otherwise adjust the debts of farmers to creditors other than the Agricultural Bank, with the consent of 80 per cent. of the creditors in value, so long as the first mortgagee is one of the consenting creditors. Last year I promised that the whole question of farmers' debts would be reviewed in the light of the Royal Commission's recommendations. The House is well aware that during the last four years prices have been low; but happily the seasons have been fairly normal, except this year. This year not only are the values still low, but the season indicates a reduced harvest owing to the reduced acreage under crop and to the effects of rust and weeds and the absence of late rains. Some portions of the State are not so seriously affected as are others; in fact in some parts the yield will be more satisfactory than it was last year, as for instance, along the Great Southern and in the Lake Grace and

Gnowangerup districts. The recent rains have done more good than harm in places like Esperance, where, although we have had reports of damage by hail, the rain has really done good and the wheat will fill out the better for it. However, if the position was serious in 1931, it may be said that it will be still more serious in 1935. Therefore it is advisable that creditors should take stock of the position, with a view to giving temporary or permanent relief according to the capacity of the farmer to pay. The Bill proposes that definite full information should be placed before creditors for examination and decision. Of course it will be apparent to all that a breakdown in the industry must be avoided. It does not force them to a decision, but invites them to make one. Once a decision is arrived at, it becomes an accomplished fact. This practical recognition of the farmers' difficulties is necessary to give them some encouragement to continue production, upon which so much of the welfare of the country depends. Claimants for the wheat bounty last year numbered 11,473, of whom 5,670 were Agricultural Bank clients, and 5,803 were clients of Associated Banks and other institutions. I should say that the Associated Banks have about as many farmer clients as has the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. Patrick: And they are carrying about the same amount of mortgages, too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Now that we are dealing with the Agricultural Bank clients, it is fitting that we should take up the matter of the clients of the Associated Banks. The Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the Agricultural Bank estimated the farmers' debts at £34,000,000. The amount may be a little more or a little less. The estimate of the Royal Commission which sat in 1931 was approximately £32,000,000, exclusive of stock accounts, private mortgages, and traders other than country storekeepers, etc. The accumulation of interest since 1931 must have been very heavy. Only in comparatively few instances have Agricultural Bank clients been able to pay any interest, and in all probability the same thing applies to the clients of the Associated Banks. Briefly, the purpose of the Bill is as follows. It provides that farmers, whether they come under the Act or not, may apply for a stay order, and may submit for con-

sideration by their creditors a scheme of writing down or suspension of their debts. If the proposal is in any way impracticable, the director may modify it, with the consent of the farmer, in any way calculated to render the scheme more acceptable to the parties concerned. The commissioners of the Agricultural Bank may request the director to submit to other creditors concerned a scheme of adjustment after the commissioners have arrived at a decision, conditional or otherwise, in respect of the debts due to the Agricultural Bank. There is no obligation on the part of the commissioners to call in the director. If his services are required and are available, they can be made use of. If the scheme that is submitted to the creditors is approved by a majority of at least four-fifths of the creditors in value, including the first mortgagee, the scheme shall be made effective. No resolution affecting the security of any present mortgage shall have any effect without the consent of the first mortgagee first being obtained. The first mortgagee has done his business on sound principles and presumably he has proper security for his money. The man who came in later knew that he was taking a risk. That was the position with the second and third mortgagees.

Mr. Stubbs: In New Zealand there are seven or eight mortgages, I believe.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was assured by the Minister for Lands in New Zealand that some farms carry as many as 16 mortgages. Probably nowhere else in the southern hemisphere are land values such a curse as they are in New Zealand, because properties have been sold too often and bought too often. Although the rights of the first mortgagee cannot be affected by any scheme that is arrived at, without his consent first being obtained, the creditors may, by resolution, debar him from having any recourse against any of the unsecured assets for the payment of the mortgage debt. At the meeting at which the resolution to which I have just referred is carried, the first mortgagee would be represented. When the resolution is carried, the other creditors may insist that the mortgagee shall depend solely upon his security for what he may get out of the estate, and the unsecured assets will be removed altogether from association with the first mortgage. The director will have power under the Bill to adjourn any meeting if he con-

siders that it is not fully representative of the creditors. It is provided that any resolution passed in accordance with the Act shall be binding upon both the farmer and his creditors. Any aggrieved party will have the right to appeal to a judge of the Supreme Court on the ground that the resolution is manifestly unjust. If such appeal is upheld, the judge may order that another meeting of the farmer's creditors shall be held to be convened by the director. The director is to be given power to make use of the services of the staff of the Agricultural Bank, if that is necessary for the preparation of information that he may require, or for the preparation of proposed schemes of arrangement under the Act. If a mortgage debt which is also secured by guarantee be written down or suspended, the liability of the guarantor shall be written down or suspended proportionately. The period of suspension of any liability shall not be taken into account for the purpose of any statute of limitation. The Act in its amended form will continue until 31st March, 1938, 3½ years hence. This will give the director and the people who come under the Act the fullest opportunity to arrange their affairs. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [4.53] in moving the second reading said: Last year the Land Act was consolidated. I regret it is now necessary to bring down an amendment to that consolidation. I do not like amending any legislation that has once been consolidated, because amendments sometimes confuse people who have occasion to rely upon the consolidated Act. Experience has shown that a few amendments are necessary to make good certain omissions from the Act. One of these is to afford a measure of relief to farmers whose conditional purchase leases have expired, or will shortly expire, but who, through present-day difficulties, are unable to pay off arrears of land rent to obtain their Crown grants, and are thus prevented from arranging any further financial

assistance, which involves the registration of documents at the Titles Office. Mortgages are held up, and people cannot get finance because they cannot obtain a mortgage. It has become necessary to rectify other weaknesses and omissions that were revealed when the principal Act came into operation. These arose in some cases from the repeal of the old Act with its many and involved amendments. Provision has for instance been made for certain co-ordinating channels between the Titles Office and Lands Department in respect to adjustments of Crown leases registered under the Transfer of Land Act, pursuant to action taken under the Land Act. The matters chiefly concerned are—The amplification of the powers of the Minister for Lands as a body corporate to hold real and personal estate; the delegation of certain powers to officers to sign documents; the limitation of the area of leases; and the provision of statutory powers to notify or direct the Registrar of Titles to adjust Crown leases. By the Bill we take power to reduce the price of land, and to refer the payment of rent and extend the terms of existing C.P. leases. Power is given to resurrect expired leases, and give an extension of term to pay off the balance of the purchase money, and also to allow of the registration of further dealings in such leases. Until such power is given expired leases can only be regarded as dead leases. It is intended to alter the term of occupation certificates of homestead farms from ten years up to 25-30 years, to coincide with the terms of C.P. leases forming part of the surveyed location, and we also provide for the removal of protection against seizure or bankruptcy proceedings in respect of homesteads after the first seven years. At present proceedings in bankruptcy cannot be taken against the homestead location. It happens that people have taken up such locations or holdings, and abandoned them and their other leases as well. A homestead farm is not given to a person to assist him in defeating his creditors. It is a concession given to a man who takes up land. When a man gets into trouble financially he may, as things are to-day, hold up his homestead farm against his creditors, which was something that was never intended by Parliament. The Bill will confer the right on aboriginal natives to enter upon any enclosed, or unenclosed but not other-

wise improved, parts of a pastoral lease, to seek sustenance in their accustomed manner.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That will not apply to the agricultural areas.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, only to pastoral areas.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They are not prevented from doing that to-day.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They have been stopped.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I have never heard of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The matter would not have been brought up but for some good reason. The Lands Department were informed by the Aborigines Department that natives had been stopped, and asked for legislation to provide against it.

The Minister for Justice: They may want to shoot birds on some pastoral leases.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They have no right to possess guns.

The Minister for Justice: Some of them do.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill contains also provision for the registration at the Titles Office of transfers of portions of pastoral leases, after approval thereof by the Minister for Lands. There is power to reduce the price of land in existing leases on repurchased estates. The present power applies only to unselected land. We propose to take power to reduce the rents on repurchased estates if necessary. Our experience of these estates has not been altogether a happy one. Some of the estates purchased during the war were found to be very unproductive. They were probably good estates for the sellers, but they turned out to be very bad for the buyers.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They would have been all right if bought by people who had money, but when they were bought by people who had to borrow money to buy them the position was unsatisfactory.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The settlers on some of these estates have had a hard struggle. There is no reason for maintaining high values when there is no basis for them.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The chairman of that Commission offered the Government land at a price far in excess of its value, and the offer was refused.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are not dealing with the Commission now.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No; but I want you to know that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The price paid for the homestead block on some of the repurchased estates is impossible. We know that. The homestead block contained the improvements for the whole area. The cost of the buildings, in particular, made the purchase price impossible. Still, some fine estates have been purchased. On the other hand, some of the estates acquired for repatriation purposes were sold by people who were getting out. Those people sold some very poor country indeed to the Government. I am not complaining about estates like Yandanooka and Inering. But even the settlers on good estates are practically not paying anything, because the times have been against them.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The trouble is that if the Government capitalise the interest, the annual payments become too heavy.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill gives power to deal with these estates. Again, there is the Herdsman's Lake area, which has cost the State over £200,000 to date.

Hon. C. G. Latham: As bad as the manganese railway.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is much worse. The State got rails and sleepers from the manganese railway, but has got nothing from the Herdsman's Lake area.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think only one block of that area is unused now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have had an examination made, and the examination shows that the area is not by any means what we believed it to be. There will have to be reclassification and revaluation at Herdsman's Lake; otherwise we shall get nowhere.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It grows good feed. You should have a look at it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, it grows good feed; but the land has cost the State about £400 or £500 an acre.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It was sold at £70.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Herdsman's Lake land was removed from the Lands Purchase Act, which provides that the whole cost must be charged against the land. The Government are not getting any results worth speaking about from Herdsman's Lake. That land was purchased and drained for garden areas. In the spring it grows some produce. However, it was

never intended for a grazing area. In the case of many other estates it is amazing how small is the amount paid by the settlers. The accumulations of interest are now almost equal to the purchase price. One estate cost £26,425. The amount still owing is £17,456, and the amount of principal repaid is only £866. There also relief will have to be given. Salt has taken possession of a fairly large acreage on some parts of the estate. I was there in March, and found one settler in a serious position owing to salt. About one half his block has gone salty. It has, of course, been claimed that he should not have cleared the land if it was salty. The salt on his block is creeping up, and his position is most unsafe. I do not see how it is possible for such men to carry heavy burdens on reduced acreages as the result of alkali accumulation.

Mr. Stubbs: The object of this Bill is to give them relief?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. The Pallinup Estate is a fine estate, and the settlers there are doing well. The cost of the estate is £44,774, and the amount that should have been collected from the settlers is £11,322. The amount actually collected is only £6,149.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is principal?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. In interest £29,289 has been collected, leaving £6,444 of arrears. Some of the settlers on the Pallinup Estate are doing well. The people who occupy good estates must not expect, under this legislation, that there neglect to seize the opportunity to make good is going to be of advantage to them.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are going to treat some of the settlers harshly, because the man who has worked hard and reduced his liability will not get any benefit.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the inequality of life.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In all this legislation someone has to bear the burden. The man who has done his job and paid his way has to carry the burden. In many communities the storekeeper is nearly bankrupt because he has not been paid, and he is endeavouring to make those who do pay, pay for those who do not pay. On the Guraru Estate the settlers have done very well, and have tried to meet their payments. Its purchase cost was £33,000. The Government have written off £16,434 from

the Noombling Estate and in addition to that, interest amounting to £6,503, which was recouped from the Commonwealth, representing in all £22,937. If what I hear about the estate from bank officials is correct, these settlers have not had much of a chance to succeed. I will give members additional information when the Bill is considered in Committee. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1934-35.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 8th November; Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

Public Utilities:

Vote—Railways, Tramways, Ferries, and Electricity Supply, £2,760,000:

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS

(Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [5.16]: I do not intend to have much to say in introducing these Estimates, but I shall give the Committee some particulars of what was done during the last financial year and some indication of what is proposed for the present financial year. The cash receipts and disbursements for the year ending 30th June, 1935, are expected to be—

	£
Revenue	3,000,000
Expenditure	2,350,000
Net revenue	650,000
Interest payments	1,030,000
Anticipated deficit	380,000

Included in the expenditure is £100,000, which will be provided out of revenue to pay for the rehabilitation scheme in connection with belated repairs. If members analyse the position regarding belated repairs, they will find that £120,000 was spent under that heading during the last financial year, and it is expected that a similar amount will be spent during the next 3½ years. From now onwards, we will have returned about £100,000 out of revenue, so that actually the railways will be expending between £20,000 and £25,000 only from Loan Funds. It is expected that that money will be recouped by the department to the Treasury the year after the belated

repairs programme is finished. That means to say, it should be recouped in 4½ years' time. The actual revenue received for the last financial year was £2,884,531, so it will be necessary to collect an additional £115,496 during the current year to reach the estimated revenue of £3,000,000. Up to the end of September, which concluded the first quarter of the current financial year, the cash receipts amounted to £147,000 more than for the corresponding quarter of 1933-34. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that the estimated revenue of £3,000,000 will be realised. Since the original estimate was framed, the position regarding the wheat harvest has not quite come up to expectations. During a month or two we experienced a light rainfall in the wheat areas, and in the northern district the crops were considerably affected by rust. Naturally that will have an influence on harvest statistics, and the probability is that this year we will not receive much more freight from wheat than we did last year.

Mr. Doney: Not as much?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:

Yes. Last year there was a considerable quantity of carry-over.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But farmers are still carting the wheat.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I think that they have just about finished doing so.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There is a fair quantity yet to be carted.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I noticed along the Wongan Hills line that there was a considerable quantity of wheat on hand.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That was wheat from last year's harvest. They are getting it away now.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. I made inquiries two or three weeks ago and I was informed that there was not much more to transport.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Comparatively speaking, I suppose that is the position.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is so. Spread over the current financial year, there will probably be at least as much wheat carted as there was last year, because the carry-over has been considerable. At Geraldton two or three boats were loaded during October. At nearly every siding there is a balance of wheat over from last season.

Mr. Hawke: Will that mean no carry-over for next year?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We do not know what will happen. It all depends on the market. If satisfactory prices are available, the position will be improved, but then there is the question whether the wheat can be sold at all.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, that is the main question.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In framing Estimates, many matters have to be taken into consideration, but the principal question is whether the wheat can be sold at all. If it can be sold, the grain will be railed to port and shipped to various parts of the world. If comparatively small sales are made, necessarily much of the wheat will remain in the country. It is certain that the harvest will not be as satisfactory as it was last year. If marketing arrangements can be entered into for this year's crop, the railways will be able, in view of the reduced quantity of wheat available, to cope with the traffic and, taking into consideration the carry-over from the previous season, we shall probably transport more wheat than we did last year. For 1933-34, the balance, after providing interest, amounted to £280,586. The forecast for the current financial year is £100,000 more than for the previous twelve months, which is mainly accounted for by belated repairs. The interest for the ensuing 12 months amounts to £1,030,000, an increase of £22,000 compared with the actual debit under that heading for the last financial year. Members are interested in the trade of the country, which is reflected in the earnings of the railways. I have had figures prepared to illustrate the earnings derived by the railways from various commodities last year and disclosing the estimated receipts from them during the current financial year. For instance, wheat returned to the department, £507,283 last year and it is anticipated that the returns from wheat this year will amount to £620,000. Of course, that figure will have to be modified because the estimate was made two or three months ago and harvest anticipations have not been realised. Consequently there will be less wheat to be hauled and that estimate of revenue from wheat will have to be considerably modified. With regard to local timber, the revenue last year was £207,423, and the estimate for the current financial

year is £200,000. Fortunately for the State generally, the timber industry continues to expand, which means that a considerable volume of additional work is provided for timber hewers, and remunerative traffic is provided for the railways and the ports affected. That has a considerable effect upon conditions generally throughout the State. Some 12 or 18 months ago a large number of the timber workers were employed for two days a week only, but, owing to the increased operations in the timber industry, the position has greatly improved. The Government have contributed towards the increased prosperity of the industry by means of reductions in railway freight. The Forests Department contributed by allowing a reduction in royalty charges and the Government, in other directions, furnished general assistance to the industry. Certainly it is in a much more prosperous condition today and the outlook is much brighter than it was two years ago. It is fortunate for the State that it is so. It is fortunate, too, for the timber industry, for it means so much increased employment. Mainly because of the two industries I have already mentioned—mining and timber—the position of the State has been much easier than it would otherwise have been. That has made a great difference with regard to employment. On top of that, there is the extra loan money that the Government have had at their disposal and, as the Minister for Employment can tell members, the increased number of individuals employed in our secondary industries has also made the position much better than it was two years ago. The principal sources of earnings last year and the probable returns from them during the current year—I have already referred to wheat and timber—are as follows:—

	Actual earnings, 1933-34.	Estimated receipts, 1934-35.
	£	£
Wheat	507,283	620,000
Local timber ..	207,423	200,000
Local coal ..	114,249	115,000
Wool	60,541	60,000
Passenger and parcels traffic	688,480	680,000
Livestock ..	122,031	120,000
All other goods ..	1,048,286	1,040,000
Miscellaneous and rents	171,022	165,000
	<u>£2,919,315</u>	<u>£3,000,000</u>

Hon. C. G. Latham: Did the figures regarding Collie coal show an increase on those of the previous year?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have not the figures for 1932-33, but I think the figures show a slight increase. Even so, the position, as I will demonstrate later on, will still further improve because a number of the motor trucks employed in conveying wool were licensed for a short time.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That will not affect your returns this year.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The licenses will not expire until the end of the year.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Some of the licenses were granted exclusive of the transport of wool. A considerable quantity of wool has been brought down, and the results from the operations of the Transport Board will make the railway position much easier, particularly if the clip remains about the same as last year or even shows a slight improvement.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: There will be a greater quantity of wool this year.

Mr. Seward: There has been quite a considerable increase in the weight of wool.

Mr. Mann: Yes, about 1 lb. per sheep.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Nevertheless, we do not anticipate much difference because of that fact. We know there has been an increase in the productive value per sheep throughout the whole State, but the wool from about half the sheep only is transported over the railway system. The other half of the sheep are located in the North, or elsewhere, and the wool is transported by boat.

Mr. Seward: About half the sheep in the State are in the agricultural areas.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, and the wool from those sheep is transported over the railways, but that system is not affected by the wool from the remainder of the sheep.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Even so, the increase represents about 5,000,000 lbs.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: And there is less cartage by road than previously.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That would make a difference of about 500 tons. The increase that members referred to does not mean so many extra tons. From

the table I have quoted, members will realise where the bulk of the railway freight is derived. The bulk of it comes from the haulage of wheat, timber, coal, and wool. The returns from passenger and parcels traffic represent about one-fifth of the earnings and livestock, other goods, miscellaneous and rents account for the balance. The estimated expenditure for the railways is approximately £200,000 more than the actual expenditure for 1933-34. Of this £100,000 is a recoup to the Treasury for the amount advanced for overtaking arrears of maintenance. Extra expenditure is forecast in the traffic branch to earn additional revenue. In the mechanical branch provision has been made for a larger expenditure on repairs to engine power and rolling stock to meet pressing requirements, while increased boiler expenditure is also anticipated. The current year will see a full year's operation of the easements in wages and salaries under the Financial Emergency Act, 1934. The Financial Emergency Act Amendment Bill, which is expected to come into force at the beginning of next year, will entail extra payments over six months of the current financial year, and there will be a considerable amount to find on that account. Instead of having to finance the financial emergency rebates, which operated from the beginning of this year for six months, we shall have to provide those amounts for the whole year and, in addition, find the money for the additional benefits to operate as from the 1st January next. During the year the section of railway from Pemberton to Westcliffe, 22 miles 16 chains, was taken over from the construction branch and operated under ordinary conditions. Traffic on the new line is very light, and a loss on working for some time to come is inevitable. I do not wish to dilate on that, except to say it is a pity the line was ever built. The same remark might apply to the extension from Denmark to Nornalup. Such railways are expensive to build; heavy rails are necessary and the traffic offering is extremely disappointing as compared with the very optimistic forecast made when the Bills to authorise the construction of those lines were before the House eight or nine years ago. The earnings of those lines will be very small and it is no matter for congratulation to the Railway Department that this railway has been taken over during the year. New rol-

ling stock built last year comprised 39 sheep trucks and three brake vans. No new rolling stock is at present under construction from loan, but certain replacements of obsolete stock are being undertaken under belated repairs account. These will eventually be paid for out of revenue. Extensive repairs to existing rolling stock are being carried out to cope with the traffic during the forthcoming harvest. Most members will agree that the passing of the State Transport Co-ordination Act has been the most important event for many years from the standpoint of the Railway Department. For several years the railways have been slowly but surely drifting towards insolvency. But for the Act conserving to the railways a good proportion of the freight offering, no policy could have been adopted other than to increase the freight charges, unless we were to have a deficit of over half a million a year, which would have been impossible. We would have been compelled, with much misgiving, to contemplate the increasing of freights on primary products. Fortunately, owing to the administration of the Act by the Transport Board, we can see daylight. The railways will get reasonable consideration where facilities are provided, and we can now look forward to the future with some confidence that it will not be necessary to increase the freights on primary products.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Railway Department will have to give the service, and I am afraid they do not attempt to give it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I know the hon. member has very oblique views as to what the railways should do.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No, they are very straight views.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The railways are performing a wonderful service, though I do not say it could not be improved. When the business was gradually declining, all incentive to effect improvements was removed. When the men saw ever-increasing quantities of goods conveyed by other means, they lost much of the incentive to work, and when bad times came, the staff was retrenched considerably and that upset the whole service. There was no money available with which to effect improvements, and though usually the cost of improvements is repaid, money is necessary in the first place to inaugurate them. There

was no incentive to do anything that would involve fresh outlay. However, there is now quite a different atmosphere in the service. Business is being conserved to the railways, and I am sure the railways will do their part. There is a prospect of the traffic increasing considerably, and that will mean benefit to everyone in the service, such as opportunities to secure higher positions and perhaps better pay. It means also that money will be available to cater for increased business. The aspect of co-ordination of transport will meet with a very ready response from the department. In some respects co-operation and co-ordination have already been achieved. The railway authorities are not unmindful of their responsibilities co-incidental with the elimination of unfair competition, if I may so term it. In expectation of increased business, they have reduced freights, especially on small parcels, which members know have been a cause of complaint by people in the country. If only the same amount of business continues to be done, this will mean a rebate of about £50,000 a year, but the full effect of the altered conditions cannot yet be gauged as all the road transport licenses will not expire until the end of next month. Thereafter the conditions from a railway point of view should be improved. If the increased business brings increased earning capacity and the overhead charges remain stationary, the Government are not anxious to wipe out the debit balance immediately. The policy of the Government is to give some benefits to the people using the railways and, as I have mentioned, this year we have given benefits representing £50,000. It is not our aim to wipe out the deficit of £250,000 in one year, but we hope to improve the position of the railways progressively, and at the same time give benefits to the people who provide the trade. One-half of the State deficit for the year will be caused by the excess of railway expenditure over receipts, so members will realise the important effect of railway administration on the general finances of the State. With increased business, I think we can look forward in a comparatively few years to the railway deficit being less of a bugbear to the Treasurer than it has been. Everyone will agree that the Transport Board have done an unpleasant and particularly difficult task in a manner that has been fair and reasonable to all interests.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Since they have become more moderate, they have won the respect of the people.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Sometimes, in order to get a naughty child into a proper frame of mind, it is necessary to administer a fairly hard smack, and sometimes it is considered that the smack has been much harder than it ought to have been. The Transport Board had a very difficult task to perform in very difficult circumstances. It was not a task that anyone desired to have, because it involved serious inconvenience and loss to individuals engaged in road transport work. The board were desirous of conserving the interests of those individuals as far as possible, but Parliament had laid down the policy to be adopted by the board, and the board have administered it in a manner that has given general satisfaction, although some people were deprived of rights and facilities in the process. We do not now hear so much about the disabilities suffered by country people because of motor transport being denied them.

Mr. Wansbrough: In January next all the complaints will be revived.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think so. Members will recollect that a considerable proportion of the meat supplied for the Eastern Goldfields was transported over the Trans. line from South Australia. The Minister for Agriculture is anxious to preserve that trade for the producers of this State. The Railway Department have sent a special officer to co-operate with the stock agents, and I believe that, as a result of running fast trains and easing the position from a freight standpoint, the trade hitherto done from the Eastern States will largely revert to the people of Western Australia.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Will the freight from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie be as cheap as that from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It will be cheaper.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That is the point.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: By running fast trains, the stock will be delivered expeditiously, with a consequent improvement in the condition of the stock. If we can transport the stock there in 24 hours, it will arrive in much better condition than if the journey occupied three days.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Especially if the stock has been landed from Derby or Broome just before.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: But there are opportunities to spell and feed stock after being landed from the boats. Provided regular and sufficient supplies of stock are available at the weekly sales, the running of the special train should remove objections which the goldfields people have had to buying in the metropolitan market, and mean increased business to both the railways and the pastoral industry. Efforts have been made to co-ordinate the road and rail services by means of which a door-to-door service will be provided for goods, whilst at the same time retaining to the railways traffic which really belongs to them. The goods will be taken to a distributing centre at the cheapest possible rate, and at that centre there will be another transport service which will distribute them from door to door.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Railways have agreed to that at last.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Railways have always been anxious to agree to a proposal of this description, but not on the terms desired by the road boards who wanted five-sixths of the whole of the charges for carrying over a short distance, and to leave only one-sixth of the earnings for the railways, who would have the greater distance to carry. Now that there is to be an adequate proportion of the money for the railways, the Commissioner has shown a disposition to co-ordinate with anyone desirous of supporting the service. It has been difficult to obtain money for the building of rolling stock, but we must seriously face the position and provide adequate small units to take passengers and light traffic to various destinations in quick time.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If you do not do that, you will lose all your passenger traffic.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. It could not be done with mixed trains. If we can concentrate on petrol or steam coaches, whichever is the better, to provide the unit that can be worked by one man, so much the better will it be for the people and the department. Such a service on branch lines of perhaps 60 or 70 miles in length will enable people to get to their destinations in a couple of hours, instead of four or five, as is the case at present. This will

give great satisfaction, and should increase the traffic for the railways. This policy is being carried out in the other States. It is only because of lack of money that we have not been able to inaugurate it before. The system will considerably improve the position where passengers, mails, and perhaps small parcels are concerned, since it will be possible to have rapid transit at a reasonable charge.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And probably it will be the means of retaining here a lot of money that goes out of the State at the present time for the purchase of petrol.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have discussed the matter with the Commissioner several times. During a visit I paid to the Eastern States recently, I saw the different coaches in use in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, catering for passenger and light traffic. The Commissioner is very keen on giving the system a trial here, and if we can get some loan money for the purpose, we shall secure two or three coaches, and in that way learn which is the best type for our traffic. Personally I think the internal combustion engine is easier to manage than the steam engine. Proposals are under consideration dealing with the reduction of working costs by means of re-grading and deviations at key stations, and also by the provision of new locomotive stock to replace obsolete plant. The latter necessitates some strengthening of bridges. With regard to co-ordination of transport, we recently made arrangements with the cement works under which a considerable quantity of cement required for the construction of the Canning dam will be carried in bulk by the railways, then put into lorries and conveyed to the dam site.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am glad to hear you say this. It shows you are being converted to our way of thinking with regard to bulk handling.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is just an indication of the trend of railway thought, brought about by the morale of the railwaymen, who did not know whether they would be kept on or dismissed. Fortunately, now, there is a better spirit because of the improvement in traffic. Wherever it is possible to do so by the expenditure of a comparatively small amount of money we shall co-ordinate with the

other form of transport and in that way increase the business of the department. The cement will be conveyed to Armadale in special containers to be constructed at the Midland Junction workshops. These will be transferred by road motors to the dam site. The rate of delivery of the cement will be from 200 to 300 tons per week. It is estimated there will be about 70,000 tons of cement required for that job. The delivery will be at the rate of 10,000 tons a year, so it should take six or seven years to complete the conveyance of the cement to the site. Attention is being given by the Railway Department to many small matters, such as refreshment room charges, comfortable travel in both sitting and sleeping carriages, and all will tend to give better service to railway patrons. As far as the tramways are concerned the estimated results are as follows:—

			£
Revenue	..	..	284,000
Expenditure	..	..	200,000
Balance	..	..	84,000
Interest	..	..	54,000
Profit	..	..	30,000

The actual cash results last year disclosed a profit balance of £23,852, so that an improvement of £6,000 is expected. Earnings from other lines are estimated to approximate those of last year, with slight variations. Two new extensions, namely, Mintstreet to Patricia-street on the Victoria Park line, and from Nanson-street to Alexander-street on the Wembley section, were added to the system last year, while 71 chains of track on the Kensington-street route were dispensed with because of the introduction of the trolley buses, which are operating satisfactorily. The trolley buses are not making any profit, though not because of any mechanical defect or any other disadvantage; it is simply because they are working on a route where there is much competition, actually four different lines of traffic. First there is the Hay-street tram; next the railway; then the trolley buses, and another bus service.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I notice you have written down a large sum for depreciation; heavier, I think, than is justified.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is as well to be careful when introducing a new system. In many parts of the world

now tram rails are being raised. Wherever the electric system is available, trolley buses are becoming the method of transport. The trams are obsolete and very noisy. Standing in front of the Treasury buildings in Barrack-street when a tram is passing, it is almost impossible to carry on a conversation. The noise of the trams reverberates against the buildings, and one cannot hear oneself speak.

Mr. North: Are the trolley buses faster than the trams?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; and moreover they do not lead to a congestion of the traffic, as do the trams. For instance, if one wants to travel from the Supreme Court to the railway station, it takes a considerable time because of being held up by the trams in Barrack-street.

Mr. North: Yes, you could do it faster on a push-bike.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: A trolley bus can go close to the footpath, or around a vehicle, and gets along without difficulty. Regarding ferries, the revenue is expected to total £9,000, while working expenses and interest are estimated at £8,600, leaving a surplus of £400. Last year the balance, after allowing for working expenses and interest, was £180, so that an improvement of £220 is forecast for the current year.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Are you putting on a new boat?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We have promised to go into that matter. Regarding the electricity supply, the estimated results for the current year are as follow:—

	£
Revenue	300,000
Expenditure	202,000
Balance	98,000
Interest	63,000
Profit	35,000

We are endeavouring to finalise the position as far as the new plant is concerned, and hope to be able to arrive at a decision in two or three weeks' time. The position is really becoming alarming. As the Leader of the Opposition will know, there have for years past been insistent demands for extensions. While I was Minister for Railways five or six years ago, these extensions were required then. But perhaps the delay

has been for the best, because I think we shall be able to get a much more modern plant to-day than if we had accepted tenders five or six years ago. Because of the incidence of the recent coal award, small coal, which is used by the Electricity Department, will cost 10d. a ton more. This will increase the fuel cost $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., a rather serious advance.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is that $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. over last year's price?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: On the rates fixed by what is known as the Shann award. This new award increased the price of small coal by 10d. a ton, and the coal used by the railways by about 4d. a ton. Fortunately the Electricity Supply Department is able to make a profit and so it may be able to stand the increase in the price of coal, whereas the increase to the Railway Department, which is losing money, is not so great.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Have you completed the tenders for the power plant?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, not yet. We are seeking information which will put the Government in a position to make a decision within the next two or three weeks. I hope the whole arrangements for the tenders will be concluded and work on the foundations will soon be started.

MR. WELSH (Pilbara) [6.1]: I should like to ask the Minister whether he has made provision for a motor coach on the Marble Bar-Port Hedland Railway. The present means of transport consist of a trolley without either hood or windscreen. To ask people to do 114 miles on that trolley in a temperature anything up to 120 in the shade is asking too much, especially of a sick woman or a child. Making the journey on that vehicle under so hot a sun, and always with the chance of a thunderstorm, is a very arduous proceeding. If the Minister could provide a motor coach for the line it would be of very great advantage to the passengers. Apart from that, the railway service there is practically confined to the wool season. In the off season a full train is drawn by a 70-ton engine, with only one or two passengers aboard and a few hundredweight of freight. Instead of having that heavy train going up, there should be a motor coach and a truck which could easily carry four or five

tous. That would be of great advantage to the people up there, and would probably save wear and tear on the permanent way.

The Minister for Railways: That is a district where a light passenger coach would be useful.

Mr. WELSH: It would be, indeed. The present vehicle has neither windscreen nor cover, which is pretty hard on any passengers who have to travel. During the summer season the people there go down to spend a holiday at the seaside, and if provision could be made for a motor coach and for some other truck to carry a bit of a load, it would be a distinct advantage. It is not an unreasonable request, because the conditions up there are pretty hard at any time.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [6.5]: I have just been looking through the report of the Electricity Supply, and I am impelled to ask why there should be an extra charge made to the Perth Tramways as against the Fremantle Tramways. In 1930 the charge to the Perth Tramway system was 1.25d. per unit, and it has since been reduced to 1d. Yet the Fremantle Tramway system is being charged only .85d. per unit. I wonder whether the General Manager of the Perth Tramways is anxious to show a greater profit on the Electricity Supply, and perhaps a greater loss on the Tramways, in which apparently he is not so keenly interested?

The Minister for Railways: The price of current has been reduced by 1d. within the last four or five years.

Mr. CROSS: I am pleased the Minister and the Government are making exhaustive inquiries before finalising that contract to purchase a new unit for the power house.

Mr. Raphael: Then you ought to be ashamed.

Mr. CROSS: The General Manager has just returned from a trip to Great Britain, and has made certain recommendations. In the light of the knowledge I have of some of the results of Mr. Taylor's previous purchases, I should be very careful before I accepted any of his recommendations at all.

The CHAIRMAN: I think you will find that under the Loan Estimates.

Mr. CROSS: Am I not in order in speaking to it generally on these Estimates?

The CHAIRMAN: In a general way, yes.

Mr. CROSS: In the past the General Manager has been responsible for quite a lot

of purchases, and in my opinion has wasted a fairly large amount of money in that way.

Mr. Raphael: How can you say wasted it?

Mr. CROSS: I realise the uselessness of some of Mr. Taylor's purchases, and I would appreciate it if the Minister would place on the Table the papers relating to those purchases, so that we could get some idea of the loss entailed by them. Some years ago Mr. Taylor, after a trip to Europe, purchased overhead recording electric clocks, which cost a large amount of money but were never used, not even from the first day. Shortly after that he introduced some automatic point-shifters, but because of the accidents they caused they were discarded. I should like to know what they cost. Mr. Taylor next purchased in Great Britain a new type of controller, the Metropolitan Vickers controller. I understand this type had been previously condemned by the Melbourne Tramway Department, notwithstanding which Mr. Taylor obtained a number from England. But as soon as they arrived here it was discovered that they had to be reconstructed in the Perth sheds. They have been a fruitful source of annoyance and it has cost a fairly large sum of money to keep them in repair. One can get on almost any tramcar fitted with this device, and he will soon find that it does not really give satisfactory service. I have been on two cars to-day, each fitted with this controller, and both cars were missing on one of the controls.

Mr. Raphael: Did you buy a ticket?

Mr. CROSS: I should be sorry for those who did, and were hung up as the result of the Metropolitan Vickers controllers. It would be interesting to know what those controllers cost, and the cost of the repairs that have had to be effected.

Mr. Hawke: Where was the other type of controllers made?

Mr. CROSS: In Philadelphia. Mr. Taylor was also responsible for the introduction of the multiple type of tram in Perth. These also have been unsatisfactory. By experience it has been found that when the cars are coupled together the motor in the one car works against the motor in the other, and so causes certain damage and faults which have been the source of a good deal of annoyance and have cost a lot of money. Then Mr. Taylor introduced what he termed the power-saving meters. They

were installed on most of the cars, but were not connected nor ever used, and after a time they were all removed. I want to know what they cost and why Mr. Taylor recommended them, and who paid for the loss. They are stuck away in the car barn with a lot more rubbish that he bought when in England.

Mr. Raphael: Don't be too hard on him.

Mr. CROSS: Only recently a new controller was taken out of No. 1 car because it was found to be useless. A similar condition obtains in No. 2 car. If there is anything at all in the Perth Tramway system which ought to be inquired into, it is the history of the purchases of material made by the General Manager when away on foreign trips. I am glad the Government are making exhaustive inquiries before entering into the expenditure of nearly half a million of money.

Mr. Raphael: It is that £25,000 we are thinking of.

Mr. CROSS: For years past the single lines of tramway have used the Nachod signals. They proved reasonably satisfactory. But whenever there have been head-on collisions Mr. Taylor has always blamed the man, although he knows as well as I do that when two trams simultaneously enter a section at opposite ends the Nachod signal does not work. He is now introducing a new kind of signal, the Forest signal. I have watched it to see how it works and I find that if any car passes that signal at other than a walking pace, the signal does not work at all. The motormen say the Forest signals will be responsible for a pretty big accident, and they are not nearly as satisfactory as the old Nachod signals.

[Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.]

Mr. CROSS: During the last few months the Tramway Department have used thousands of electric globes, many more than ordinarily. It appears that these are obtained from the Stores Branch at Midland Junction. For some reason the globes have not been of the shock-proof variety. The result is many more have been used during the period under review than would normally be used. I want to know who is responsible for putting into the trams so many more globes in the last six months than should have been necessary. I do not

know whether the manager has anything to do with that.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is not that a matter for the Tender Board?

Mr. CROSS: If I were the manager I would want to know something about it. Other features of the tramway management may be said to be unsatisfactory. The department issues a time table for which they charge the public a penny. Amongst other things this shows the tram service for Victoria Park. It gives the times for the first and last trams, and informs the public that the service will be run at given intervals. If one goes to Victoria Park on any day one need not be surprised at having to wait 20 minutes or half an hour for a tram. That is not an uncommon occurrence. I do not know whether the management are responsible for the arrangement whereby two or three trams come along together, after which there is a gap of 20 minutes or half an hour. That is also a frequent occurrence in Victoria Park. Generally speaking, all over the metropolitan area complaints have been made about the unsatisfactory service. It is not as if the men were satisfied. I do not know whether the general manager ever gave any real consideration to the compilation of a decent roster. Under present conditions a large percentage of the day shifts last for 12 hours. Many day shifts are finished as late as 8 p.m. Very drastic and extensive changes could be made and the roster greatly improved, with the result that nearly all the 12-hour shifts could be eliminated with very little extra expense. If that were done the tramway men would give better service. When a body of people are dissatisfied with their working conditions they seldom give of their best. In my electorate there is great dissatisfaction concerning the South Perth portion of the tramway service. We suffer a disadvantage through having a single line there. No single line of any length, with loops in it, can be worked satisfactorily. The time has arrived when this line should either be duplicated throughout the greater portion of its length, or replaced by a trolley bus service. The Minister for Railways said that the trolley buses had not been run at a profit. I believe that in the coming year the profits from this source will be greater than they are for this year. When Mr. Taylor introduced the trolley buses he had no experts at his disposal. The de-

partment should have arranged for the services of experts, or else have had the trolley buses set up properly before they left Great Britain. That would have saved a great deal of expense. The Minister may not be aware that the armatures of the trolley buses have been taken out more than a dozen times. It is a fairly lengthy as well as an expensive job.

Mr. Hegney: Did not one of the buses come out in its completed form?

Mr. CROSS: It was supposed to be made up. After about the fourteenth attempt to take the armature out of one of the buses the source of the trouble was discovered. Had an expert been here quite a lot of expense would have been saved. The trolley bus line along the Wellington Street route is working at a greater disadvantage than is seen elsewhere. The corners along that route make it a difficult one. The route runs through an area which carries only a small residential population as far as the metropolitan markets, and after that the route is also served by other means of transport. If the Government took a bold step and installed trolley buses between South Perth and Como they would not only provide a better and more frequent service, but show a better profit. Several extensions from the Electricity Supply Department are required in the metropolitan area. I have made several attempts to secure more electric light services in the Canning Bridge area. Several requests have been made to the department, and at least three different replies giving as many different reasons why the requests could not be granted have been received. When the new power house unit is installed I hope these extensions will be given. In my remarks before the tea adjournment I had no desire to reflect upon the integrity of the General Manager. The Government are to be commended for their action in seeking the advice of reputable engineering firms in Great Britain so that this State may get the best results of the contract which is to involve so large a sum of money. We know that mistakes have been made in the past with regard to previous purchases made overseas. Mr. Tayler is probably the best electrical engineer in Australia. What I wished to convey was that he had not the requisite knowledge of transport work to run the tramway system.

I have long held the opinion that the position of manager of the tramway service should be held by a man who is well versed in modern methods of transport and knows all about its intricate workings.

MR. WARNER (Mount Marshall) [7.40]: I wish to make a few suggestions regarding the train traffic in my electorate. We have three looplines there. We know that every effort is being made to push the commercial goods vehicle off the road in favour of railway transport. In place of that means of transport it is only right that we should have one fast train a week over those loop lines. If that is impracticable we should be given a steam coach or a coach of similar proportions to provide the necessary fast service for passengers and perishables. If these lines were served by one fast train a week I believe that the motor traffic now coming from the outside portion of my electorate would undoubtedly be driven off the road, and the goods would be sent by train. The Government would then gain in railway traffic and revenue, and local coal instead of foreign fuel would be consumed in the process. The transport legislation has now pushed most of the motor trucks off the roads. We are looking for something from the Railway Department to compensate for the fast motor trucks which used to move the perishables to the outlying towns. I also wish to refer to the extra freight on bulk wheat. I have heard that matter discussed and the excuses offered for the increase. That extra freight should be abolished. I cannot believe that the reasons given for it are correct. I trust the Minister will have that extra freight removed in time for the next harvest. These shillings mean a great deal to the farming community, in fact they mean more to the farmer to-day than pounds did a few years ago. I am rather concerned lest the Government should, seeing that the farmers are to receive a little in the way of dole money, endeavour to get some of it back by means of still further railway increases. I trust the Minister will take notice of the two points I have raised, with regard to the fast train service on the loop lines, and the cancellation of the increased freight on bulk wheat. If he would instal the fast service to which I have referred, and advertise it well, I am sure the department would reap good results.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [7.45]: Last year when the Railways Estimates were before us, I referred to the Government's policy in retiring men from the railway service at the age of 65. On that occasion the Minister said it was the policy of the Government. Evidently that policy has continued. I know that representations have been made to the Minister from other quarters pointing out the unwisdom of retiring men at the age of 65. The objection that is held against the policy is its arbitrary nature. Whilst there may be some men who at 65 cannot give efficient service, without the slightest shadow of doubt many of the men in the Railway Department can give, and are giving, efficient service at that age. Probably the Minister, in replying to-night, will repeat his reply of 12 months ago, that the policy is not confined to the Railway Department but obtains in other branches of the Government service. I am not acquainted with other departments, not having had personal experience in them; but I have had experience in the railway service, and I venture to say that many of the men retired at the age of 65 were rendering capable and efficient service to the department at that time.

Mr. Raphael: How about retiring politicians at the age of 65?

MR. NEEDHAM: The hon. member interjecting has raised a question. Whilst the Government insist on retiring railway men aged 65, they do not hesitate to appoint to other positions men who have reached that age. I suggest to the Government to-night, as I suggested last year, that they might examine each case on its merits and not arbitrarily retire men aged 65. One could understand this policy of arbitrary retirement if there was in existence a superannuation fund on which the men could draw. However, we know that there is not, and we also know that the rates of wages received by these men during their years of service were not such as permitted them to set aside a fund which would provide for them in their old age. After they have reared their families out of the weekly wage, little of it is left. The only thing that awaits such men is the old age pension, now 17s. 6d. per week. I suggest to the Minister that Cabinet should again go into the question of arbitrary retirement at the age of 65, and see whether it is not possible to revert to the system which was

in operation when practically the same Government were in power previously. I may be wrong, but I believe that during the period from 1924 to 1930 men in the railway service were not arbitrarily retired at the age of 65. I think the present policy has come into operation since the advent of the present Government.

The Minister for Railways: No.

MR. NEEDHAM: Be that as it may, the present policy is worthy of review. I hope that the Minister, in replying to the debate, will indicate such an intention. There is another phase of the matter. Not only are men retired at the age of 65, but they must take out their long-service leave and any holidays due to them, prior to reaching that age. To my way of thinking, that represents a breach of contract. The Government have agreed to give the men in the railway service certain periods of long leave and annual holiday. Why should those periods be shortened when a man reaches the age of 65? I do not know. If the Government are determined to pursue the policy of retirement at 65, then I suggest that at least the long-service leave due, together with any holidays due, at that period should be taken out after retirement and not before it. I believe the Government last year issued an instruction that on and after the 1st January, 1935, all long leave and all holidays must be taken out prior to the statutory age for retirement being reached. These questions are indissolubly linked. The Minister might well review the position. Undoubtedly many of the men who have been retired could still render efficient service to the department, and many about to be retired shortly are still active men who could render better service than new men coming on. I submit these matters to the Minister, and hope that in replying he will say that they will receive careful consideration.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [7.54]: My desire is not only to be critical in connection with these Railway Estimates, but also to give praise where praise is due. One has to take into consideration the enormous indebtedness to the State represented by the capital cost of the railways. That capital indebtedness amounts to over £25,000,000. For the first time in the history of the Railway Department, this year's interest bill exceeds the million mark: and one must

realise what a tough proposition the railway administration have in making a success of that huge system which, as the Minister pointed out to-night, is not merely a commercial venture but also a developmental factor. How long can the system carry on developmental work with such an interest burden? I have been wondering whether it is not possible for the Government to find their way out of the present impossible position by relieving the department of a considerable proportion of the interest burden and placing it on the general taxpayer, so that from the report of the Commissioner of Railways we shall be able to ascertain what the real earnings and profits of the system are. For this year the department's earnings were £2,919,000 odd, and the working expenses some £2,186,000, leaving a net revenue of £732,644. That is the net revenue over and above working expenses. What a wonderful system our railways would be were it not for the interest bill!

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Who do you suggest should pay the interest?

Mr. WITHERS: It has been suggested many times in past years that the increase in the value of land adjacent to the railway lines should be made responsible for the interest on the capital outlay involved in the system. During the time I have been a member of this Chamber, I have not heard how much money has been collected on that account, although there is an Act by which the collection can be enforced. Neither have I ever learnt how much money has been applied to that purpose. The railways are an investment belonging to the people, who are told, "This is your property, and you should support it." Though the Commissioner of Railways can show a surplus of revenue over working expenses, the interest bill year after year prevents the system from being a payable proposition. Again, there is the question of new railways authorised by Parliament. These are simply handed over to the Commissioner as a further capital liability to him and to the State, without his ever having had a say as to whether the railways should be constructed or not. I have read the last railway report, and have examined it to see where the new Commissioner has broken new ground, but have failed to find any evidence of it. In this, his first report, the Commissioner states that the Government have passed a Transport Act

which will be beneficial to the railway system. On looking through the first report of the Transport Board, a new body, one learns from it more concerning the working of the railways than one learns from the Commissioner's report. The Transport Board's report refers to the Denmark-Nornalup and the Pemberton-Northcliffe lines, mentions the cost per mile, and states that the construction of the lines was unwarranted. That aspect should have been inquired into by some responsible authority prior to those railways ever being constructed and becoming a further burden on the people of Western Australia. The Transport Board were appointed for the purpose of controlling a good deal of the traffic taken from the Railway Department by road vehicles. The board have made a discovery. They suggest that the lines mentioned, and also the Ravensthorpe-Hopetoun railway, should be done away with, and that other transport facilities should be furnished in their stead. The Transport Board consists of new men, who might say that so far they had very little knowledge of transport questions. On the other hand, our Commissioners of Railways have been paid, or are being paid, high salaries, and they should have seen the position many years ago. If the Government Railways Act does not empower them to do anything on the lines suggested, application should have been made to Parliament for amendment of that measure in the required direction.

Mr. Wansbrough: Those railways were built for developmental purposes.

Mr. WITHERS: I wish to give the Railway Department every credit for the difficulties under which they are working. On the other hand, the Transport Board have at least endeavoured to achieve co-ordination. I also ascertained from their report that the Commissioner of Railways had a discussion with the board with regard to a revision of the rate book, and he had told the board he was about to make representations to the Government. As a result, the third-class rate has been eliminated and commodities formerly carried under that rate transferred to the second-class rate, and there has also been a reduction in the smalls minimum scale. I have looked through the report of the Commissioner of Railways and cannot see anything in it regarding these matters.

The Minister for Railways: That did not start until this year.

Mr. WITHERS: I heard the Minister make some reference to it, and I was rather surprised. However, I ascertained this information from the report of the Transport Board.

The Minister for Railways: It started on the 1st July.

Mr. WITHERS: At any rate, I commend the department for the alterations. I had intended to refer to several other matters, but the Minister has saved me the trouble, because he indicated what I intended to deal with had already been attended to. I would particularly stress the position regarding the competition of the Eastern States over the trans-line. That matter is long overdue for effective treatment. We should have entered into competition with the Eastern States in the early stages and not have allowed so much of the requirements of Kalgoorlie to be drawn from the East. Now we have to make a belated attempt to counter that competition. The State should see to it that the trade is done within her own borders.

Mr. Wansbrough: The matter was in our own hands at the time.

Mr. WITHERS: That is so. One of the difficulties has been that successive Commissioners have not given satisfactory answers when requests have been made to rectify matters. For instance, agricultural societies have forwarded, from time to time, resolutions with regard to the unsatisfactory arrangements for the transport of stock to the Kalgoorlie market. They could never get any satisfaction from the Commissioner, and therefore could not enter into competition against the growers in the Eastern States who railed their cattle over the trans line. When bodies of that description from various centres have to ventilate such grievances, it shows that there is something radically wrong with the system. The Minister referred to branch-line services. It does not require a man highly trained in transport matters to visualise what has been required on country spur lines for many years past. Certainly the service rendered the people in the outback has been most acceptable, but the day of mixed trains is past, when we consider road transport competition. If we are prepared to provide people with quick transit facilities over the railways, they will

respond. In my opinion, the day of joy riding per motor car is waning. There was a time when country people liked to jump into their new car and set off on a joy ride to the city. Now they are rather tired of that, and are showing an inclination to travel by train, provided quick transit is provided.

Mr. Raphael: Yes, 24 hours to get to Geraldton!

Mr. WITHERS: I know that even the so-called express trains take a long time on these big journeys, but we would not be justified in asking the Government to run a small fast train over such a section as the one to which the hon. member referred. When it comes to lines such as the Margaret River-Flinders Bay-Busselton, the Pemberton-Bridgetown and the Boyup Brook-Donnybrook, it must be realised that they could all converge at one point, such as Boyanup, and there link up with a fast train from Bunbury at Picton Junction, and so on to Perth. Naturally, when people are asked to travel by mixed trains, which take a long time to do a journey, they become dissatisfied. Nevertheless, the Government cannot be asked to provide fast trains over such lines, in view of the small number who travel. If the Government will only provide quicker facilities, they will get the patronage to which they are entitled. The department are pressed from time to time to institute reforms because of motor transport competition, but very often they are not prepared to do what is required. For instance, I know of one individual who travelled regularly on the suburban railways. He had his season ticket. He happened to be on leave and the day he returned, his season ticket expired. He was living at Cottesloe, and before he took his baggage off the train, he went to the booking office to renew his season ticket for the next day. He was told at the booking office that he could not renew his season ticket, but that he would have to take out a new one and forfeit his deposit. I understand the deposit is 1s. Fancy splitting straws over such a matter! The clerk in the booking office cannot be blamed, because he has to act under instructions. In this instance the man very naturally said, "I will not renew my ticket. I will forfeit my deposit and in future I will travel by motor bus." Thus the

State lost a permanent railway traveller, and that has been the position for the past four or five years. Pin-pricks of that description should be done away with. There was another instance in the South-West. A lady went to board a train at Serpentine, which is a booking station, and the fare to Mardella is 3d. When she reached the station, the train was just about to leave, and the stationmaster told her to get aboard and get a ticket from the collector. Accordingly she jumped into the train, and when she got out at Mardella she tendered the 3d. for her ticket. The collector held up the train for about a quarter of an hour over a 3d. fare, and to collect 6d. booking fee. He went to put his hands on the woman, who protested; she defied him and told him what she would do if he dared to touch her. There was all that inconvenience over a 3d. fare. It was not altogether the fault of the ticket collector because he had distinct instructions as to what he should do.

The Minister for Railways: The stationmaster was wrong in the first instance.

Mr. WITHERS: That is so, but this is another instance of the application of red tape, and shows why people are being driven from the railways.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If the lady had got out at the station, she would have been charged a fare from the last place where there was a stationmaster.

Mr. WITHERS: These pin-pricks do the department a lot of harm. The member for Perth dealt with the question of retirement of officers when they reach 65 years of age. I agree that men should be retired at that age, or at 60 years, if necessary, provided that provision is made for them on their retirement. I was in the railway service myself, but I did not make any provision along those lines. Had I remained in the service, I would probably be one of those who complain because of the lack of such provision. It was our own fault that we did not take any steps to secure a super-annuation fund in those early days. I quite agree that when a man reaches a certain age, particularly if engaged in certain classes of railway work, his nerves go to such an extent that he ought to retire. The member for Perth claimed that some men were quite competent at 65 years of age.

Mr. Wansbrough: They would not be on the running staff.

Mr. WITHERS: Some of them even claim they are active enough for that. The position that worries me is that if we put off all these men as they reach 65 years, it means that the experienced men are leaving the service, and these are the men who, to a great extent, are carrying it on to-day.

Mr. Hegney: There are plenty of young men coming on.

Mr. WITHERS: If the member for Middle Swan can suggest that, it goes to show that he does not know what the position actually is. The time is coming when many of these experienced railway men will be leaving the department, and we are not keeping up with the requirements, so as to replace them with experienced men. The departmental report shows that 600-odd extra men were employed during the past 12 months.

Mr. Hawke: On the permanent staff!

Mr. WITHERS: Yes.

Mr. Cross: That would be as a result of the operations of the Transport Board.

Mr. WITHERS: It cannot be attributed to that. That increase was due to sheer necessity. I have been investigating the matter and have secured information from various parts of the State with reference to the shortage of men in the running branch of the locomotive section. I will not give the names of the districts concerned, but at one centre on the 22nd October, two trains had to be cancelled and also two specials on the 23rd and 24th October. The information supplied to me showed that the trains were cancelled because there were no men available, although there was any quantity of loading ready. The foreman stated that the rosters had to be cancelled because he required at least 12 cleaners. The engines were said to be in a filthy condition, and some that had come in from the bush had not been cleaned for weeks, and had been returned in the same condition. I have it on good authority that in the loco. sheds in Perth last week there were no cleaners, and a man had to be sent from Fremantle to light the fires and keep them going one night. Of another depot it was reported that the engines were in a filthy condition. Little or no cleaning was being done. The shed foreman wired for more cleaners with tickets (certificates), and the reply was "none available." The engine-men were working long hours owing to the shortage of staff. Another depot reported that the total clean-

ing time for the week was 20 hours, and the overtime for the week was 105 hours. For another week the total cleaning time was 30 hours, and the overtime 59 hours. Three other depots reported overtime and no cleaning; room for 100 cleaners. If details of all the overtime for the past 13 weeks and the number of trains cancelled could be laid on the table, it would be a revelation. I wish the member for Middle Swan and other members to understand that we do not want a Darktown railway system.

Mr. Raphael: You have got it.

Mr. WITHERS: We have experienced men in the railways, and we ought to aim at building up an efficient staff to take the place of the men who retire. It is impossible to train a fireman in the space of a few days. He must have a knowledge of raising steam and attending to boilers, and must understand signalling, and he has to pass an examination before he can undertake that work. At present we are really pulling men off the street in order to man the railways. That ought not to be done. Less interest charges, we are showing a profit of £732,000 for the 12 months, and some of the money should be devoted to staffing the railways in such a manner as to bring them to an efficient state. The railways, too, are following the example of outside employers by employing girls instead of youths. This is a serious matter that has been agitating my mind for a long time. It is almost impossible to get boys into employment, but not so girls. I had an experience in my own home. I have a boy aged 22 who cannot get work. I suppose it is because I am a member of Parliament.

Mr. Hegney: There are hundreds like you who cannot get jobs for their boys, but that is due to the economic system.

Mr. WITHERS: I have a girl who had never been from home since she left school and recently a trader asked whether she would take a position. She did so. Why was she sent for in preference to the boy? Equality is claimed for the sexes, but not equality of pay. The sooner we get equal pay for the sexes, the sooner shall we be able to get our boys into employment, and enable them to marry.

Mr. Raphael: We shall have to Hitlerise the State.

Mr. WITHERS: I do not agree with that. This is a difficult question to approach

because of the risk of offending the women-folk, but it is a question which must be faced. If the womenfolk claim equal rights with the men, we should pass legislation to provide equal pay for the sexes, and then if employers chose to employ girls instead of boys, they could do so. So long as the existing state of affairs continues the unemployment problem will not be solved. The Railway Department employ girls where youths should be employed. We should be looking to youths to become the railway men of the future. What part could a girl play in the railways outside the office? Railway cadets are trained for every branch of railway work from telegraphists to station-masters. Youths trained in the administrative offices, not in the workshops, give years of service from the time of leaving school until they reach the age of 21, and when they become entitled to receive the adult wage, they are thrown out on the street.

The Minister for Railways: That is not right.

Mr. WITHERS: It is right.

The Minister for Railways: That practice has been stopped.

Mr. WITHERS: If we are going to retire experienced men when they reach the age limit, we should be training young men to take their places. I intended to talk about the electrification of railways, but the replies given to questions do not encourage one to deal with that subject. After the statement of the member for Canning, it would scarcely be worth while touching on the subject of the electrification of railways. Regarding the reduction of freights, I should like the department to take one matter into consideration. I understand that the department intend to revise the rate book. In the good old days when the rate book was first started, practically the whole of the goods traffic radiated from the city to various parts of the State, and trucks returned from Kalgoorlie, for instance, empty. A certain amount of encouragement was given to back-loading, and this was done by means of offering a cheaper rate for up-traffic as compared with down-traffic. That system might have met requirements in those days, but we have reached a stage when there is as much traffic entering as leaving the city, but the rate book is still framed as it was in the early days. A man in my electorate has a factory, and to rail logs from 40 miles north of Bunbury to that town costs more

than to rail them 70 miles to the metropolitan area. Why should not the freight be based on mileage regardless of the direction in which the goods are hauled? If that factory owner obtained his logs from south of Bunbury he would come under the up-rate, and could get them cheaper than by bringing them from the north of Bunbury. That matter should receive consideration of the Commissioner with a view to retaining the traffic for the railways. Many people have established motor services because of such pin-pricks. In the Estimates railways, tramways, electricity supply and ferries are grouped under the heading of railways, and I wish to point out the need for co-ordination. If a passenger misses a train at Mt. Lawley, it is a common experience to find that the tram has left at the same time and the passenger has to wait a quarter of an hour. The same thing happens at the Bridge-street end. There should be some co-ordination between the two services so that the passenger who had missed a train would know that he could catch a tram in two or three minutes' time. The member for Canning spoke of trams running to the city from South Perth one after the other. On the Beaufort-street line it is a common experience to have to wait a considerable time for a tram, and then one finds a tram from Inglewood, another one from Walcott-street, and later another from Bulwer-street running into the city together. The system has surely been in operation long enough to enable the authorities to study the convenience of the travelling public better than that. I hope the Minister will realise that I have offered this criticism, not with any desire to condemn, but with a view to pointing out where improvements could be effected.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [8.26]: I would not have spoken but for the remarks of the member for Canning. He referred to various purchases made by the manager of the Tramway Department during his sojourns at Home, spoke of his having recommended the acceptance of a higher tender and of the Government having held in abeyance the tender for the new unit at the power house. His remarks would lead one to believe that there must be something underlying his statement. I hope the Government will not let the occasion pass without making definite investigation into the

aspersions cast by the hon. member on the manager of the tramways.

Mr. Wilson: He did not cast aspersions on him.

Mr. RAPHAEL: He has already uttered those aspersions, and if he tries to retract them, I would point out that it is much harder to overtake a lie than to tell it. I hope the Government will make an investigation to ascertain whether the information given to the House was correct.

Mr. Warner: Why not move for a Royal Commission?

Mr. RAPHAEL: I should like to remove you to Claremont.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I am sorry that I am so easily led astray. I have been endeavouring to get a reply from the Minister for Railways for some time regarding an overlapping section on the Victoria Park tram route. Various organisations and representatives of old-age and invalid pensioners have waited on him by deputation requesting to be allowed to travel at the old rate of 1d. from the old terminus to the local post office to collect their pensions. The reply received on each occasion has been that Cabinet had the matter under consideration. This matter may not seem important to the Government but it means much to the pensioners to have to pay an extra 2d. to travel that distance. I hope the Minister, when replying to the debate, will give a favourable answer. I hope that Cabinet, after full consideration of this urgent matter, will grant the request.

Mr. Wilson: How long has it been under consideration?

Mr. RAPHAEL: Only seven months, which is not bad for a Government. The Minister might consider the question at his earliest convenience. The bus service running to South Belmont, through the increase of a penny, has been increased by another bus and the service is run more speedily than previously. The increase is short-sighted policy, and it will mean that the Government will put more revenue in the way of the buses. Another point I wish to refer to is the method adopted by the Tramway Department in the selection of their employees. I do not know why the Government do not take action in respect of the selection of the people engaged by the tramway

authorities. A short time ago I attempted to find work on the tramway system for genuine unemployed, but I was unsuccessful.

Mr. Thorn: Are you trying to work in some of your cobbbers?

Mr. RAPHAEL: The hon. member is so wilfully deaf and he makes such inane interjections that they are responsible for a laughter only.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. RAPHAEL: After the hon. member's inane interjection—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member please address the Chair and confine his remarks to the subject matter before the Committee?

Mr. RAPHAEL: As I was saying, I endeavoured to find work for some genuine unemployed married men. I was told on one occasion that there were to be no additions to the staff, but later I found that a man had been put on a permanent job which he holds to-day. On another occasion I found that a single man from the country, a recruit of the West Perth football club, had secured employment on a tramway job, and later still I found that three more who had come from Wembley, where Mr. Shillington lives, had also been given employment.

Mr. Warner: Mr. Shillington was more successful than you.

Mr. RAPHAEL: It looks as if one has to be a member of the West Perth football club or a friend of Shillington's before he can get a job on the trams to-day.

Mr. Cross: That is not true.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I hope the Minister will conduct some investigations into the statements I have made and also the accusations made by the member for Canning against the integrity of the management.

Mr. Cross: I never made any accusations.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [8.36]: I am glad the Minister has agreed to the request of the residents of Dalkeith respecting the bus service to that suburb. The Perth to Claremont route is now recognised as an important one and for that reason I think a more modern system of transport should be installed. There is no reason why trolley buses should not take the place of the trams. It is a long run to Claremont and it is generally understood that the existing system is a white elephant, even though the route is one of the best around the metro-

politan area. Being so, it should be served with the best vehicles, and especially as the distance is long. With regard to the railways, I have had a request from several passengers who use the service, and I pass it on to the Minister; it is that the seats should be sloped as are the seats of motor cars. I think it is a good suggestion though I do not know how it will appeal to the Minister. The ordinary railway traveller is very uncomfortable on long journeys because the seats are flat. They would be much more attractive if they could have a slight tilt as in motor cars or trolley buses. When the coaches are taken to the workshops for overhaul the matter could receive attention. The seats would certainly be made much more comfortable if they were altered in the direction suggested. We have heard that the Transport Board propose to order the substitution of larger vehicles for the existing taxis, to carry six or seven passengers. The House should have some authority to argue on the right of the board to alter the shape or size of vehicles. The North Cottesloe service, for instance, runs every quarter of an hour, and there is just about enough traffic to support the service with vehicles capable of carrying five or six passengers. If the Transport Board insist on vehicles being substituted capable of carrying 14 or 15 passengers, the effect will be to entirely destroy the service. I trust the Minister will see to it that the people of North Cottesloe are not penalised by the Transport Board's suggested innovation, the only effect of which will be the destruction of the usefulness of the service. Another matter about which I desire to complain is the question of overhead bridges at railway stations. I know that they cannot be taken away cheaply and that subways are costly, but I again urge the suggestion that I brought forward once before of considering the idea of permitting passengers to cross the rails. In many parts of the world platforms are practically level with the railways and there are no overhead footbridges. Therefore people walk across the rails and exercise caution to avoid coming to grief. If they can escape mishap where the traffic is much greater than it is in our State, surely no harm would follow from the removal of the overhead bridges here. Some years ago plans of subways for railway stations were pre-

pared. These provided for ticket offices and other conveniences as well. By their construction it would be possible to abolish the signalman at these places and in that way save, as at Cottesloe, for instance, £600 a year which the signalling service at that station costs. Again, with regard to locomotives, I should like to know whether the department has kept in touch with modern developments. We read of the wonderfully fast and powerful locomotives doing all sorts of new jobs, some using Diesel engines and some even using coal and oil, heavy oil on one side of the piston and coal on the other. The effect of this, I understand, is to reduce the cost of running to a few pence per mile, as against the very high cost of the present locomotive. I suggest that the Chief Locomotive Engineer should inquire into this matter with a view of perhaps this year or next year making an attempt to manufacture a similar locomotive in our own workshop.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [8.43]: When this department came up for review last year the new Commissioner had just been appointed; consequently it was felt that criticism might be withheld until such time as he had got into his stride. To-day it certainly cannot be said that the Commissioner has introduced any innovations that are likely to improve the service. Of course in saying that I must qualify the statement by the fact that he had a big job to undertake, because the railways, I think, through years of lack of infusion of fresh ideas, had practically lost a great deal of their business, not through the competition of the motor trucks but for want of ability properly to cater for the business that was offering. There was no desire on the part of country people to go away from the railways, but they were forced to go away owing to the antiquated methods adopted by the railways. The Minister to-night quoted figures relative to the revenue received under various headings last year, and he quoted also the estimates for this year. Those estimates are really conjectural, and I am not going to attempt to show that they are wrong, because we all hope the revenue returns will be as good as possible. At the same time, the position of the wheat industry indicates that the railway revenue this year will be less than it was last year. But the first question I wish to

bring forward is the necessity for speeding up country trains. It is frequently said that it cannot be done. The question of making representations to the Commissioner before the summer time table was drawn up was mentioned recently.

Mr. Stubbs: The representation was refused.

Mr. SEWARD: Take the running of the Albany express: That train is still running to a time table that came into operation when the line was built. Surely a little speeding up of that train could be arranged. I am sure it can be done, because only five weeks ago, when I came down by that train, it was held up at Spencer's Brook for 55 minutes and, after all, we arrived at the Perth station only five minutes behind time; on the run down from Spencer's Brook that train picked up 50 minutes. On another occasion we were over an hour late in leaving Brookton, and we arrived in Perth on time. What I specially noted on the way down was, not so much the speeding up of the train, as the elimination of delays at the stations. That is where so much time is lost. I remember that years ago, in Victoria, the Railway Commissioner started to cut out unnecessary delays at stations and sidings with the result that at most of the stations the trains stopped only about a minute, and sometimes passengers were over-carried. But they soon became accustomed to the new order and got their bags and things ready before the train reached the station. I am certain if that were done here, a saving of two hours could be made in the running of the Albany express. It is the time it takes country people to come to Perth and get back again that precludes their using of the railways. Only the other day a friend told me that it takes him 12 hours to come to Perth by train, whereas it means only four or five hours by car. The member for Claremont suggested the tilting of seats in railway carriages, as is done in motor cars. Perhaps we need not go quite as far as that, but last year I arranged for an inspection of those infernal carriages known as the A.C.Ws. In consequence, I am not asking for the tilting of the seats, but I do ask that some springs should be put in the seats of those carriages, for at present they are just as hard as the floor. And those carriages are used on long country runs. I am convinced that while they are kept on long runs the Commissioner must expect to lose

his passenger traffic. Then there is the lighting in country carriages. Two or three weeks ago I was making a night journey. At dusk the lamps were lit. There were two electric lights in the carriage, and they were so bright that I took out a book and began to read. But presently both lights dimmed down until they were only points in the darkness, and for four hours those of us in the carriage had to sit and stare idly out of the windows. Those are some of the details that can make or mar the effectiveness of the railway service. Then there are the timetables. The winter timetables on country lines, spur lines particularly, are the same as the summer timetables. Surely that could be obviated. In summer time the mixed trains have a lot of shunting to do, but in winter, after the wheat is all gone, a much faster service could be introduced, as is done in the Eastern States. The member for Bunbury touched on the necessity for the proper representation of the Commissioner on any body empowered to determine what new lines shall be built. It brought to my mind the Lake Grace-Hyden railway.

Mr. Patrick: He is represented now.

Mr. SEWARD: But not adequately. He was not in favour of that line. It is an abominable line. I went to the department to get provision made for a stock train to serve the Lake Grace-Hyden line. The reply was that it would be necessary to run a train from Wagin to Lake Grace on Saturday; book off at Lake Grace; run from Lake Grace to Hyden on Monday; book off; return to Hyden, depart 6 a.m. Tuesday, and connect with No. 76 at Lake Grace on Tuesday. The engine crew would again book off at Lake Grace on Tuesday and return to Wagin on Wednesday, resulting in a mileage of 226 being run. Of course one could not go to the Commissioner with such a proposition. So I suggested to him the running of road transport to Kondinin to serve the Hyden and Kalgarin people, but he said that could be done by private enterprise. We have endeavoured to get the Commissioner to contract with local carriers to bring all the wool within reach of sidings in to the railway, to be carried by the railway down to Perth. If that were done and provision made for road transport between Hyden and Kondinin that traffic would come to the rail-

way at that point and would save about 90 miles of freight and a whole day in travelling. But the Commissioner will not agree to that. It is only fair to ask that some provision be made in order to get that stuff in to the railways. Another thing is the provision of some method of cold storage trucks for the conveyance of cream to butter factories. On the Kondinin line at present a very large quantity of cream is being sent in, and that traffic is assuming large proportions. But when we put it to the railways, they said they would have to charge the consignees the cost of the ice in the truck. But the electric lighting, I think, is generated from the wheels of the train, and it has occurred to me that it might be possible to have some refrigerating system that could be developed by the running of the train, and so provide cold storage trucks to bring down the cream a distance of 100 miles to Narrogin, a journey which under present conditions in summer time is sufficient to convert cream from first-class to a second-class product. The improvement would mean a better price to the producer, which is very important to the industry as a whole. Another matter I would mention is that the Kulin Agricultural Society made a strong endeavour to get the wheat exhibit from the Agricultural Department to their show last September. I saw the Agricultural Department, and courteously they arranged that the exhibit should be made available. But on the day of the show the Railway Department rang up to say that half the exhibit had been left on the Merredin station and that, if the Agricultural Society liked to send up a motor truck, they could get it. It is hardly fair to the Agricultural Department, which sends its exhibits along, that the Railway Department should leave them on a far distant station. Then there is the use of the trucks that were specially built for the carriage of wheat in bulk. When we had a debate in the House on bulk handling, the imposition of an additional freight of 9d. per ton on bulk wheat was stressed, and the reply of the Minister was that special trucks had to be provided for the carriage of wheat in bulk, and they could not be used for any other purpose. But evidence has been sent along to me showing that those bulk trucks have been used recently for the transport of sheep, and that when the sheep arrived at

their destination the trucks were loaded with wool for Fremantle. I have no objection to those trucks being used for the transport of anything the railway has to transport, but I strongly object to the wheatgrowers being asked to pay for the trucks on the statement that they cannot be used to carry anything but bulk wheat. It has always been a matter of amazement to me to see lying at Spencer's Brook a long rake of those trucks, idle for six months in the year. If any private person owned them, that would not be allowed. In view of the fact that those trucks are being used generally, I appeal to the Minister to see that that unfair charge of 9d. per ton on wheat in bulk shall be removed. I wish to refer to the State Transport Board, whose activities have started on the small fellow, the man whom the board knew they could hit. Had they started by asking the railways to provide proper facilities for country people, and had those facilities been provided, allowing people to get their goods down by the railways, it would then have been time to turn attention to the motor trucks. These small lines of profit are now denied to the farmer. It would not pay any settler to lose half a day going to a siding with a box of eggs or a few pounds of butter. If he could leave these things at the gate—generally the children when driving to school would do that—they would be picked up by the motor truck and taken to market. These lines are a source of revenue, and at a time like this they count for a great deal. That is one of the effects of the operations of the Transport Board. I admit that some temporary licenses have been granted to the end of December, and in other instances carriers have been allowed to conduct a restricted service on the old routes. On the eastern side of the Pingelly electorate it is no uncommon sight to see crates standing at the gates ready to be picked up by the motor traffic. All that will be done away with by the end of December.

The Minister for Railways: It will not all be cut out.

Mr. SEWARD: One contractor informed me that he would certainly be cut out at the 31st of December.

Mr. Patrick: All those that are in opposition to the railways will be cut out.

Mr. SEWARD: These small things are generally the perquisites of the housewife, and give her a little extra money with which

to carry on the home. The new transport regulations will certainly deny the farmers the profits to be derived from these products of the holding. When the department effect any change in the train service, they should properly advertise it. Last winter the department put on two extra trains in my electorate to take stock to market on Wednesdays. No proper notification of this additional service was sent out. Indeed, the trains had been running for a month before the stock agents knew anything about them. It would be good business for the department to notify the stock agents and other people interested when making a change of this kind, and to do so in a way that would reach everybody interested.

The Minister for Railways: Were not notices put on the sidings?

Mr. SEWARD: When people are trucking things away, they very seldom go across to the platform. If they want to order a truck, they ring up for it. They do not see notices that are posted up. It would be a simple thing to send a small circular to Elder Smith's, Dalgety's and the other stock agents, who would then bring the matter prominently under the notice of their clients. I had considerable correspondence with the department at Narrogin, and Elder Smith's representative on the subject of these trains, and I know it was a month after the service was inaugurated before the firm knew anything about it. I trust that in future these changes will be made known to everyone concerned.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [9.5]: I was pleased to hear the optimistic remarks of the Minister. He indicated that the Railway Department were making some progress, and had been able to give employment to many extra men during the past 12 months. He indicated that the railways were making up for time with regard to belated repairs, and that £140,000 per annum would be spent in that direction during the ensuing three or four years. The Minister was also hopeful that this year, and from now onwards, the revenue of the department would be considerably increased. It will require to improve owing to the heavy interest payments which have to be made on the capital cost. I wish to refer to an agitation that has been going on for some time for the erection of a new station be-

tween Maylands and Bayswater. For the last 12 months the local authority and I have been trying to convince the department of the necessity for such a station. We are judging the necessity for one on a very conservative basis. The Minister says the department are unable to undertake the work at present. This agitation has been going on for ten years. The population in the locality has increased but the same answer is given to the request to-day that was given to the representatives of the district ten years ago. That answer was given to Mr. Davies, who represented Guildford, to the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson), and it has been given to me. The department say they cannot undertake the expense at this juncture. In arriving at an estimate of the number of persons who would patronise the proposed station, the department have taken too narrow a boundary. It would only be about four miles from the city. A great deal of vacant land is there to be built upon. As the metropolitan area expands, it must go in that direction, for that is where cheap blocks are available for the erection of homes. There is indeed a lot of vacant land there adjacent to the city. It is too far from Maylands or Bayswater for people to build upon it yet. It is said that the annual cost of maintaining the new station would be about £800. That may appear high, but the local authority and the Gold Estates company have undertaken to contribute a small sum annually for three years to help the department in bearing the maintenance costs. The district is advancing. A magnificent recreation reserve for the people of the metropolitan area has been established. A turf wicket has been laid down, and within the reserve are 12 tennis and croquet lawns. Apart from the Bayswater people, there would be many others who would use the station because it is alongside the recreation ground. The department forget that there are also numbers of people who at present go across the district to reach the station. The workers who go to Perth for their employment, and they are many, naturally prefer to patronise the train because of the through service. During the past year no less than £60,000 was spent on the building of homes in the Bayswater area. The centre is likely to go ahead, and must go ahead because of its proximity to the metropolis. People will be obliged to

go there to secure land at a reasonable price and build their homes in the district. The department also say that if the station were built, it would take business away from Maylands or Bayswater. The same argument could have been used in connection with many other stations along the metropolitan lines. It is not many years ago that there were no houses at all near the Daglish station. When the land was thrown open and built upon, a fair population assembled there, and soon warranted the construction of a station. Daglish is no nearer Perth than the locality of which I am speaking. I urge that before next year's Estimates are drawn up the department should give serious consideration to the erection of this new station. Although it may not show a profit immediately, I have no doubt it will give a service that is fully warranted, and that in time to come a thriving population will be established in the area.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [9.11]: I would draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that the traffic has fallen away greatly along the Great Southern line. I have been up and down that line for the past quarter of a century. Sometimes during the summer I go to Albany for a blow. I guarantee that for every man I see who gets off the train there on a Saturday or Sunday morning, there were 20 a few years ago. I admit that motor transport has seriously affected the railway traffic. There are, however, many people in my electorate who say they would prefer to stay at home rather than get into a train, and sit there for seven or eight hours in the course of a hundred-mile journey from Newdegate to Wagin.

Mr. Moloney: How long has that been going on?

Mr. STUBBS: People with children will not do it. Two matters require the Commissioner's serious attention. The first of these is the obsolete coaches that are now being run on spur lines. I could only think they were built in the time of Noah. I am sure the member for Albany will endorse what I am saying about these rotten carriages. It is time they were replaced by something better. The other point is the length of time it takes for a train to travel from one station to another. I am one of a number of members who wrote to the Commissioner a few weeks ago, thinking we might secure the

speeding-up of one train a week on the Great Southern between Perth and Albany, and obviate such long stops at the various stations. One thing that struck me was the apparently excessive number of refreshment stations—Chidlow's Well, Spencer's Brook, York and so on. If the trains travelled a little quicker, there would be a saving of an hour or two. Is it necessary to stop a train which travels from Perth to Albany at Chidlow's Well, Spencer's Brook, York, Beverley, Narrogin, Wagin, Kataning and Mt. Barker? I suggest that the Minister mention to the Commissioner that in the country districts there is a feeling that the department has lost traffic which it will not regain under present conditions. After the 31st December next, motors plying between Perth and Albany are to be taken off the road. The fare by excursion train from Perth to Albany used to be 30s. Will that system be re-established? It does not cost more to run a full train than to run it empty, and on Sunday mornings now half the carriages of the train arriving in Albany are empty. In my electorate there is an unpayable line constructed about 30 years ago, the line from Hopetoun to Ravensthorpe. Ever since the War that line has been highly unpayable. Numbers of people engaged in the mining industry at Ravensthorpe drifted away when the price of copper fell below the cost of production; moreover, many of the young men there enlisted. Until quite recently mining has been unpayable in the district, but later developments with the diamond drill have caused quite a stir in the locality. I understand there is now a proposal to close the railway which runs from Ravensthorpe to Hopetoun during the months January to March. The people are perturbed on that account. What are to be the future arrangements for the weekly transport of the commodities likely to be rendered necessary by the developments undertaken by the Anglo-Australian Syndicate of London? I ask the Minister to inquire what the Commissioner of Railways proposes to do in that respect. Again, there are the farmers' wheat and other products to be carried to Ravensthorpe for transport by the "Kybra." Do either the Transport Board or the Railway Department propose to call tenders for the necessary service from Newdegate, the nearest point to Ravensthorpe by road, a distance of 80 miles? I

understand that the Ravensthorpe-Hopetoun railway causes an annual loss of £15,000 or £20,000, and I have no desire that the Government should continue to incur that loss; but I am anxious for adequate means of transport by road.

MR. MOLONEY (Subiaco) [9.21]: I hope that as a result of even belated criticism the Minister in charge of the Railway Department will wake up. To me there appears to be a tinge of irony in the criticism levelled at the department this evening. To my mind it savours of a Rip van Winkle or antediluvian spirit. I was indeed impressed with the remarks of the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs), which show clearly that the railway line from Ravensthorpe to Hopetoun is not paying. The hon. member has just discovered that fact. It is a unique line in the respect that it does not pay. Another remarkable feature about it is that its operation is limited to three months of the year. The people of the district are perturbed at the prospect of its ceasing to function during those three months.

Mr. Stubbs: I wish you lived down there!

Mr. MOLONEY: Again, tilted seats are required. We must progress with the times, the hon. member says. We must have Diesel engines, the latest engines.

Mr. Stubbs: Who said that?

Mr. MOLONEY: The member for Claremont (Mr. North). The innovation may be admirable, but the suggestion, coming from the Opposition, is not only belated but also pathetic, bearing in mind that the condition of the railways when the present Government took office was not only ironical and pathetic but also tragic. On taking office, the present Government were faced with a stupendous task in the way of maintenance and repairs. Over £440,000 had to be spent on those accounts. One sleeper in every three on the railways had to be replaced. A five-year plan of rehabilitation had to be embarked upon. It was hardly possible for the trains to crawl along the lines. And now we are told that we must vitalise, electrify the railways, remove the monstrosities of bridges that have existed for 30 years or more to my knowledge. Whilst Opposition members are agitating for the removal of these so-called monstrosities, I am trying to get a bridge. I require only a humble bridge for the people of Daglish. The member for Middle

Swan (Mr. Hegney) has mentioned that his constituents need a station. I may point out that the population of Daglish, like that of Middle Swan, has increased considerably during the past two years. The people of Daglish bought land on the understanding that they would be provided with a bridge and an exit. I have put up that request to the Government repeatedly.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Which Government promised the bridge?

Mr. MOLONEY: Probably the Government in which the hon. member interjecting held a portfolio. The present Government have just got into the saddle. They are doing their job. The only complaint against them so far is that they spend too much money. Opposition members, while castigating the present Government for failing to put all these innovations into operation right away, have not a word of praise for the things that have been done. Nothing is said about re-ballasting, or about re-conditioned engines.

Mr. Sampson: Why gild refined gold?

Mr. MOLONEY: Nothing is said about the trucks which were stowed away at Robbs Jetty and in other inaccessible places, and on repairs on which extra men have been employed—an indication that the Railway Department are doing all they possibly can. It must be remembered, too, that the Railway Department are not merely a profit-seeking venture, but also a public utility. If Opposition members are not prepared to praise the Government, I am, even though they have done some things with which I am not entirely in accord. In similar circumstances, if a Government of another political complexion were in power, I would be the first to congratulate them had they shown the initiative that has characterised the present Government. No doubt the Minister views the criticisms of the Opposition in a humorous way. The member for Victoria Park has said that the official who places men at work on tramways should be removed. Some members want one man put in and another man put out. No one has touched the most vital phase, namely, that one-third of the total revenue of the railways is absorbed in interest. Not even the member for Claremont has mentioned that a new financial system is required. We have heard that many things are necessary, including some alterations because the light became dim

when the member for Pingelly was reading the latest news from the front. When we view the position in the light of common sense, we must acknowledge that the criticism lacks foundation and savours of a Rip Van Winkle atmosphere reminiscent of antediluvian times.

MR. HAWKE (Northam) [9.31]: It is with much humbleness and a certain amount of trepidation that I rise to make one or two comments regarding railway management. I am very happy to feel that I am speaking after the member for Subiaco, not prior to him.

The Minister for Railways: I wondered why you waited!

Mr. HAWKE: As the member for Subiaco has practically covered the ground of the Minister's reply, it will not be necessary for the latter to speak at length. Therefore I shall be quite in order if I take full advantage of the time available. I support the statement of the member for Bunbury regarding overtime in the railway service. It must be agreed that overtime in a system such as the railways will always occur periodically because the traffic is periodic. There may be a rush at one time, which, of course, will necessitate overtime being worked. During the last few months, almost continuous excessive overtime has been worked and as a result there has been a great deal of dissatisfaction among the employees. It has been felt by them that, with conditions so severe regarding unemployment, overtime should be eliminated wherever possible, and that work available should be spread as much as possible in order that men who are unemployed or on part-time employment should be given an opportunity to be employed in full-time positions.

The Minister for Railways: That matter is being attended to.

Mr. HAWKE: I am glad to have the Minister's assurance in that respect. I knew the matter was receiving the earnest consideration of the Minister and of Cabinet, and I felt that a successful issue would result. Not only was there marked dissatisfaction and discontent among the railway men themselves, but, on account of the personnel of the railway system not being sufficient to cope with the traffic, even with excessive overtime, it became necessary on occasions for freight trains to be cancelled. When that happens it means that goods are

held up. One of the greatest complaints against the railway system is that it is too slow in delivering goods from the city to country towns. When trains are cancelled and goods are consequently held up, it means that such complaints increase in number and magnitude, as a result of which the railways receive a bad advertisement. It is my desire, as will be that of every member of the Committee, to see that the railway system increases in efficiency. I am sure even the member for Subiaco would support that policy, although he seems to think that the system is 99 per cent. perfect and would become 100 per cent. perfect with the construction of a bridge at Daglish. I trust the excessive overtime question will soon be satisfactorily dealt with, that additional men will be employed in the department and that the carriage of goods from the city to the country and from the country to the city will be expedited. If these results should follow, the people will have the greatest respect for the department and will again accord it their patronage wherever possible. In addition, those who during the last few years have patronised private means of transport will return to the railways. There is one other question to which I shall refer, namely, the railway institutes. The Minister will know far better than I that they serve a very valuable and useful purpose. They are mainly, if not entirely, engaged in educational work and the Railway Department gives them every encouragement and financial assistance. The local committees of the various railway institutes throughout the State endeavour to increase their financial resources in order that more valuable educational work may be carried out. Of course, the best means of raising revenue takes the form of social functions. But the committees find that those functions are being run mainly for the benefit of the Taxation Department. That department, under the heading of the entertainments tax, gathers in a considerable amount from the functions so promoted. I believe, and those associated with the railway institutes are of the same opinion, that the institutions are purely educational in their objective. They feel, as I do, that it is wrong in principle to impose indirect taxation upon social functions run for the purpose of benefiting the institutes and making them greater factors for education in this State. It seems ridiculous that the

Railway Department should grant financial assistance to the institutes on the one hand and the Taxation Department, which is another department of government, should come along and take away money from the committees controlling the institutes. This matter has been before the Minister and I believe the Premier was considering it before he was unfortunately compelled to relinquish duty temporarily. No doubt it is being considered by the Acting Premier and his officers. It is right that those who give their time and services voluntarily in running the institutes should be placed in a more favourable position, and, with that object in view, I trust favourable consideration will be given to the removal of the taxation imposed upon social functions so that the committees may have additional money with which to carry out their activities.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [9.40]: I do not propose to delay the Committee, nor do I desire to be very critical of the administration of the railways at this juncture. I will draw the Minister's attention to the fact that without any increase in the cost of administration, encouragement could be given those living in isolated places by increasing the facilities available. I have listened attentively to the criticism and eulogy lavished on the department. The thing that strikes me most is that members who have had experience of days gone by still seem to support motor transport enthusiastically as against the railway system. They are prone to criticise the railways because of their inadequacy to compete against motor transport. I have the greatest respect for the member for Wagin and I do not desire to be offensive if I deal with his criticism. He suggested that people to-day did not use the trains as they did in the past because the journey from Wagin to Perth was slow! I would remind him and his electors that if the State were to cease running the trains to Wagin, very soon no motor transport would be available there. No form of motor transport possible could haul wheat and super at the prices charged by the railways. It is the generosity of the railways that has kept the wheat centres in existence. Without the railways, there would be no farmers and no country towns.

Mr. Stubbs: And no city.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is an argument. Nevertheless there are cities where wheat has never been grown. We would never have had our wheat fields but for Kalgoorlie and Boulder. I realise that motor transport has come to stay, and I believe it will prove of material assistance in the development of the State. At the same time, motor transport must pay in proportion to the privileges granted and should assume reasonable and fair competition. Motor transport has not been responsible for creating communities and should not ask for privileges that public expenditure has made possible. I have always believed that motor transport will in its turn serve us well, but the system adopted by private enterprise has not given a beneficial return to the community, bearing in mind the financial responsibilities of the State. The system has tended to foster Yankee oil companies and to convert the State into a Yankee bowser at the expense of the taxpayer. I know that we cannot abolish it entirely, but if motor transport is as economical as is claimed, let it pay for the roads it requires and uses, let it compete fairly with the railway system and carry wheat, super and all the merchandise necessary to keep rural communities in existence. If it does that the railway authorities, even with the present charges, will find themselves in a happy position. Many years ago the Minister received a letter from me regarding the difficulties growers in the North-West and the Murchison experienced in the transportation of stock by special trains. The department confessed that they could reduce the time occupied provided everything ran to schedule. I suggest that the administrative officers are responsible for trains running to schedule. Experts inform me that a bullock loses 100 to 150 lbs. on the journey from Meekatharra to Midland Junction if the train runs to schedule time, and how much weight must it lose when a train runs six or eight hours behind schedule? That might mean the difference between profit and loss to the grower. I am not asking for further expenditure to be incurred; I am not asking for additional services to be rendered; all I ask is that the department do what they say they can do—give more rapid transportation to stock. It was stated at the time that a special stock train, which cost between £300 and £400, showed a loss. How the cost was made up

I do not know. If a train were run to Meekatharra and back I doubt whether it would cost that much. However, I have to bow to the opinion of experts, though it seemed a large sum of money. Undoubtedly the growers have good reason to criticise the department. I am thankful for the advent of the Wiluna, Ltd., which is a wonderful acquisition to the service. It reduces the long journey by six hours—an awful journey, particularly in the summer months. We hear references to Pinjarra, Lake Grace, and such like places, but they are only suburbs of Perth compared with Wiluna, which is 750 miles distant. Those places have an excellent climate most of the year; the Murchison has only two seasons, one particularly hot and the other particularly cold. A mixed train from Meekatharra to Perth makes 76 or 78 stops, all of which are considered necessary. Yet that train can run to scheduled time, about 33 hours 20 minutes. For a special stock train the necessary stops should not exceed 10, and yet it takes such a train six or eight hours longer to do a journey 12 miles shorter—to Midland Junction—and the railway authorities say they can reduce the time provided everything runs to schedule. I merely ask that the time be reduced for the sake of the growers. Those people have an awful time. Residents of the city have no conception of their trials and tribulations. They have to contend against the difficulties of too much water and not enough water, pests of all kinds, long overland journeys, and then a railway system that imposes exorbitant charges, necessarily so, perhaps, and on top of all that, growers suffer the loss due to wastage of cattle owing to the fact that they are kept longer in the trucks than is necessary according to the railway authorities themselves. The growers of beef, especially in the North, have had a very hard time in recent years. After transporting their stock to the metropolitan markets, they have had almost to give it away because of the impositions levied by the Department of Agriculture—pleuro lines, tick lines, all sorts of lines—making it impossible for them to command anything like a payable price for their commodity. Those people who are fortunate enough to be able to get marketable beef to the rail head should be assured of rapid transport. It is just as important to bring the stock down expeditiously as it is to

transport human beings expeditiously. On one occasion when I travelled down in a mixed train, it was broken at Mullewa. At Northam we met a special stock train, and the stock on our train was there taken off and attached to the special train. I met the grower of the stock later, and he informed me that the special train reached Midland Junction about six hours after we got to Perth. I inquired the cause of the delay. He replied that the special train had got to a siding just beyond the tunnel and was held up for 1½ hours, because an empty goods train was proceeding into the country for wheat. Surely preference should have been given to the stock train! I admit that that happened some years ago.

The Minister for Railways: Since then we have duplicated the line.

Mr. MARSHALL: I want the Minister to duplicate the speed. Only recently a mixed train occupied 40 hours on the journey, which is far too long to have large stock huddled up in trucks and jolted about. The officers of the department are aware of their responsibility to the growers, and I hope they will take steps to ensure that the stock is transported more rapidly. During the hot weather when women and children particularly are travelling, there is a shortage of water bags on the passenger trains. I know that the officials experience considerable trouble in keeping the water bags intact.

The Minister for Railways: My word, they do.

Mr. MARSHALL: When I have been travelling, I have noticed indifference on the part of the officials in keeping the bags filled. That is not right. The Minister should instruct his officers also that trains should be swept out and fumigated at Mullewa or Yalgoo. There are no refreshment rooms at convenient intervals and food must be carried and consumed on the train, and the compartments become in such a state that a good clean out would do them no harm. Some time ago the carriages were cleaned and fumigated at Yalgoo, but the station master there was appointed to West Perth. I give that man credit for the consideration he showed for passengers. Years ago we were promised that long-distance passengers would be given preference of seats, and that compartments would be guaranteed clean at Mullewa. We do not get preference of seats, and the carriages are

not cleaned. If the department will give heed to the matters I have mentioned, they will go a long way towards warding off fair criticism as distinct from some of the criticism I have heard this evening. It is not to be expected that we can get our trains to travel 60 miles an hour. It ought not to be expected. We are becoming Americanised. We are in a dreadful hurry. With the advent of the motor and the aeroplane, we are speeding up rapidly. It will not be long before we are adopting other American customs, such as lynching people and in other ways taking the law into our own hands. I hope that whatever criticism is levelled is fair. All I want the department to do is to carry out those things they have promised to do. I shall then be satisfied for the time being.

Item, Working and Maintenance, General Charges:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I notice under the heading of General Charges several increases over the previous year's Estimate. In the case of contributions to the State Insurance Fund, the amount estimated to be spent this year is £25,000, compared with the expenditure of £17,736 last year. For compassionate allowances £4,000 is set down this year, whereas the expenditure last year was £992. In the case of the item dealing with contributions to the railway accident and fire insurance fund, this year's amount is £17,000 and last year's expenditure was a little over £9,000. For long service leave £40,000 is provided this year against £32,000 spent last year. Will the Minister indicate the reason for these increases?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There were exceptionally busy times at the end of the last financial year and all the long-service leave that was due could not be taken. Provision has been made for the number of men who are expected to take their long-service leave this year. We estimate spending £4,000 less this year than we anticipated spending last year. It may be that the arrears will be brought up this year and that the whole of the amount estimated to be spent will be spent. Regarding the other matters referred to by the Leader of the Opposition I have not any particulars.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There is a big increase for compassionate allowances. Is it

expected there will be more accidents this year? The State Insurance Fund contribution is also greatly increased.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Nothing of that nature is anticipated.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—State Batteries, £95,406; Cave House, etc., £5,650;—agreed to.

Department of the Minister for Agriculture (Hon. H. Millington, Minister).

Vote—Agriculture, £67,446:

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [10.5]: In times past this department was regarded as the poor relation of the Lands Department. To-day I think agriculturists are looking more to the Agricultural Department than they are to the Lands Department. I propose to give a resume of the main activities associated with the department during the past 12 months. Last year wheat was grown on 3,182,658 acres, for a yield of 37,533,177 bushels, an average of 11.79 per acre, compared with 12.33 for the previous year. The total area stripped for wheat and oats on the seven experimental farms controlled by the department was in the case of wheat 1,557 acres and of oats 274 acres, for an average yield of 15 bushels 54 lbs. in the case of wheat, and 15 bushels 31 lbs. in the case of oats. The quantity of graded seed provided from these State resources was in the case of wheat 20,093 bushels and in the case of oats 3,135 bushels. After the seed requirements of the department had been provided, the balance was made available to the farmers. Under the scheme of exchange the wheat farmers received a bushel of graded pedigreed seed wheat in exchange for 1½ bushels of f.a.q. wheat, and in the case of oats a bushel of seed for one bushel of f.a.q. wheat. This system was greatly appreciated by the farmers, many of whom would otherwise have not been supplied with pedigreed seed. The two latest varieties of wheat produced on the State farms are Bencubbin and Totadgin. Although Bencubbin was only made available to the farmers some three years ago, it is anticipated this season that it will be the most widely known variety—

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Not so much next season.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:—and will have exceeded the record which was held for years by Nabawa, an earlier production of the department. On the State farms efforts have been made to produce a wheat of good yield and good milling quality that will also be disease-resisting. In order to provide a wider range of market, it is necessary that we should produce a grain that will compete with the best milling varieties in the various exporting countries. The production of such a variety will take a long time, but if success attends the efforts that are being made, it will be time well spent. In connection with the 50-acre crop competition organised by local agricultural societies, 165 entries were received. The trophy for the highest yield per acre was won by Mr. D. Davis of Gnowangerup, who produced 43 bushels of Bencubbin to the acre. The competition for the M. T. Padbury trophy was advanced a further stage. Messrs. F. N. and J. L. Atkins were the most successful farmers, having grown 3 bushels 39 lbs. per inch of rainfall in the growing period. This was a most creditable performance, and exceeds the previous best record established in 1930 of 3 bushels 23 lbs. grown per inch of rainfall in the growing period. With respect to fat lambs, success has attended the efforts at the Avondale State Farm. Last season very satisfactory prices were obtained. Some very gratifying comments were received from the agents in London concerning the quality of the Swan-down lambs. They said these were equal to anything offering on the English market. We have been told that lambs of that brand can be sold prior to arrival in London. This lamb is a cross between a Southdown ram and the Border Leicester crossed with a Merino ewe. Already 68,000 lambs have been killed for export. I am informed that this season we shall be exporting from Fremantle 130,000. One of the problems we have specially tackled during the year is that of toxic paralysis in stock. Fortunately very little of that was discovered last season, in contrast with the previous term when its incidence in most districts was severe. Much preliminary work has been accomplished. The investigations are being continued, and provision has been made to carry them on at the experimental station during the ensuing season.

Mr. Seward: Where is that station?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: At Merredin. We began the investigation there last year; but, either fortunately or unfortunately, the year was not a good one for that work. The rains came early, and so the dry feed, which, owing to insufficiency of minerals is the main cause of the disease, was obviated. However, previous experiments made there have indicated that if stock are fed a small amount of chaff and oats, half a pound of oats and a small quantity of chaff, they do not get toxic paralysis. The department have been able to decide even thus early that the problem is mainly one of feeding, and that the disease of the previous year was due, in plain language, to starvation, the stock being insufficiently fed. It may be that this year will prove more favourable for experimental work, but in the meantime the information available is being supplied. At the Northam meeting it was agreed that the experiments should be continued, and that any information available should be supplied in pamphlet form to stock raisers. The departmental officers are hopeful that with the feeding of stock the disease can largely be obviated. I will pass over references to the past season. It has been a curious season. It opened well, and there was every prospect of an abundant harvest. It looked like a year when there would be no difficulty in putting in the crop. Unfortunately a dry year intervened, and thus a season that looked particularly favourable for the killing of weeds and the planting of crop turned out to be the opposite. In going through the country I found that in many districts there is a prevalence of weedy crops. It was possible to obviate that the previous season; but last year, unfortunately, the position was as I have stated. Again, the season took up early, and many districts have suffered from that cause. That is one of the disabilities of Western Australia, and makes it necessary that we should have the best possible cultural methods. In addition, this year the Victoria district has suffered under a rather disastrous attack of red rust. When I was at the Chapman State Farm recently, representatives of various organisations waited upon me to ask what was being done. It will be understood that the wheat grown on State farms is produced with the object of obtaining a prolific yielder as well as a disease resistant

variety. Wheat can be tested out on the experimental farms in regard to resistance to smut and other diseases, and also resistance to drought; but in this State there is not the opportunity to test out rust. Therefore when we are unfortunate enough to strike a season like this, it turns out that wheat which we consider reasonably resistant to rust is in fact not so. The variety I mention, Benenbinn, is highly popular. It was bred at the Merredin State Farm. It is a cross between two good disease-resistant wheats, but even then it is a question of planting. Where the wheat was well forward it developed, in spite of rust, almost to f.a.q. standard. In other cases, however, it was a failure. Mr. Sutton delivered a most informative lecture on rust, and he has admitted that we shall find extreme difficulty in providing a rust-resistant wheat. He said it was one of those things with which we must persevere, and he has taken advantage of all the information available in the Eastern States where the disease is prevalent. We shall do our utmost to see what can be done in that direction.

Mr. Stubbs: Have not climatic conditions a good deal to do with it?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. In the meantime the farmers will discover for themselves the varieties most resistant to rust. I myself have seen crops which were sown early, smothered in rust right on to the stalk, and some of them, in spite of the rust yield a fairly good f.a.q. sample. My test, of course, was by eye.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am told the wheat is 12 lbs. overweight.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: When it is tested out by bushel weight, it may prove light. Mr. Sutton, although the breeder of Benenbinn, said he would not recommend it to be sown in the Victoria district. However, I heard the farmers there say they intended to sow it next year. The records I have read out show that Benenbinn is a fine wheat. At Gnowangerup it beat the State, with an average of 43 bushels. It seems to me that with all the care that has been taken, and in spite of all the experience of past years, wheat possessing all the qualities desired cannot be produced. That is the difficulty. Farmers insist on a good yielder, and one has to provide against other diseases. It seems to me impossible to get a wheat that is both prolific and entirely resistant to disease.

Mr. Doney: Conditions vary so much.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. Those who are disposed to blame the department should remember that even in this unfavourable season rust has appeared in only one district. I think it may be said we are pretty fortunate in that respect. The district affected, the Victoria, holds the average for the State; and I must remind the farmers there that theirs is not by any means a district labouring under constant difficulties. Even with this year's disaster, the Victoria district holds the record over a number of years. However, a disaster has overtaken this district, and the Agricultural Department are advising to the best of their ability. It will be possible to provide facilities at Merredin for testing out rust-resistant wheats, but the work will have to be done under artificial conditions. We shall have to arrange for those humid conditions which are specially favourable to the development of rust. With hot-house or laboratory conditions we shall probably be able to decide whether the Benenbinn wheat is rust-resistant, just as now we can test in the field whether it is resistant to other diseases. However, it would mean laboratory accommodation and considerable expense. Even if we produced a rust-proof wheat, I am not too sure that, in view of attacks of rust being intermittent, such a wheat would be generally accepted by farmers.

Mr. Patrick: They dropped very good wheats before on account of the rust trouble.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. In my opinion, farmers in that district will be able to judge for themselves, and I think they will be able to decide what wheats to sow. It may be that some will take a risk and plant a little earlier. Those who took a risk and planted early this year have got through fairly well, but the late crops are in a bad condition. Leaving wheat and changing over to apples, members will be interested to know that the apple crop has been somewhat lighter than last year. The number of cases exported in 1933 totalled 504,002 bushels, and in 1934, 618,274 bushels. The table grape crop was practically the same as in 1933, the quantities being exported being in 1933, 44,685 cases; in 1934, 46,603 cases. With regard to apples, as a result of negotiations with the Commonwealth Department of Trade and Commerce, the bounty provided by the Commonwealth Government could not be determined. We

were not given a free hand as to how it should be distributed. It was insisted that it should be paid only in necessitous cases. We decided that the fairest means of distributing the bonus was on the basis of losses incurred by those who had exported. Recently that difficulty was overcome, and the Government are now in a position to pay the bounty. We have a free hand for 1933-34, and we are distributing the money in accordance with the wishes of the apple growers themselves.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Have you decided the question of the standard case?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have a standard case here.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Efforts are being made to have it altered.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We shall resent that, and also the suggestion that white wood cases shall be used.

Members: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I can see no reason for the last-mentioned change. The redwood cases lined with cardboard have proved quite satisfactory, and the apples have been landed in splendid condition. In those circumstances the red wood boxes should be an advertisement for Western Australia, and the use of them should be of advantage rather than the contrary. One commodity—butter—has caused the department no end of trouble, and we have done our utmost to protect the interests of Western Australia. To emphasise the importance and increase in the production of this particular commodity, I may as well inform the Committee that the average price of butter fat during the last 12 months has been 9.9d. It was as low as 8d. for three months, the lowest price ever obtained by the producers during a period of 20 years. Notwithstanding that, the production of butter increased by 534,598 lbs. In 1932-33, the production totalled 11,261,102 lbs., and in 1933-34, 11,795,700 lbs. During 1932-33, we exported 2,280,488 lbs., and last year, 2,087,288 lbs. The prospects for production during the 1934 season were bright, particularly the growth of pastures, which showed an increase of 22 per cent. during the first three autumn months. In respect to the price of butter, a more optimistic feeling exists throughout the dairying districts owing to

the Australian price being fixed at 140s. per cwt.

Mr. Stubbs: Butter is 1s. 6d. a lb. in the shops.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Agricultural Department has been concerned regarding the price obtained by the producer.

Mr. Stubbs: Who gets the difference?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have gone to the trouble of getting out a table, the accuracy of which has not been questioned by the manufacturers, showing that the butter costs 1s. 3d. a pound wholesale, and the producer gets 13½d.

Mr. Wise: You need a price-fixing commissioner.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Needless to say, the producer does not receive that price. Just recently he received 11½d., with 1½d. decrease on account of the levy for equalisation of the product. The return will be still lower. Despite the advice tendered by the department and the agreement made that butter, instead of being exported, should be stored in boxes and used during the lean period when supplies are scarce, the butter has been exported. Recently the manufacturers wanted me to accept the responsibility of saying they were entitled to an additional levy. The department hold it is not their responsibility, and I have replied to that effect. The manufacturers themselves, through their organisation, fixed the price for butter fat, and unless they agree to store butter we have no means of compelling them to do so. When it is noted that the London parity for export butter was 7d. per lb., and the local price is 1s. 3d. a lb. wholesale, it will be recognised that the producer who exported his commodity will have to be bonused to the extent of 8d. per lb. The only source from which that bonus can be secured is the producers themselves. They will have to pay a very heavy levy if that system is to continue. Had the manufacturers agreed to the departmental proposal, and stored during the peak period, there would be no need for such a large equalisation levy. In our peak period we manufacture about 33,000 cases and during the lean period, which is after the summer, we manufacture 6,000 cases. Our local consumption is 16,000 cases, so that we produce at the present time just about twice

as much butter as the State requires. The obvious remedy is to store the butter now against the time when we produce about one-third only of what is required. Because of the position that has arisen despite departmental advice, the manufacturers have sought our approval of their claim for an excessive levy on account of the exported butter. It is now agreed that two firms can manufacture butter of sufficiently choice quality to enable it to be stored. That is the proper thing to do. A suggestion made was that the producer and the manufacturer should receive something extra. One suggestion was that the manufacturer should receive 1d. a lb. extra for turning out the choice butter. If some arrangement can be arrived at, we can obviate the exportation difficulty and secure equalisation in State supplies. We can achieve that end by the exercise of commonsense, but it has not been done in the past. The question of providing legislation for the assistance of the producers is being considered by the Government, and a decision will be arrived at in a day or two. What is needed is a measure that will prevent the importation of butter from the Eastern States, and direct that butter produced in the peak period shall be stored, thus obviating the necessity for exporting. Then it will be possible to give producers the benefit of the Australian price, which is 1s. 3d. per lb. wholesale.

Mr. Stubbs: Under the Federal Constitution you could not prevent butter from coming in from the Eastern States.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We must not raise too many objections to that, for it can be done just as legally as it can be done with dried fruits, and I think by the same method. It is the only way by which the dried fruit trade can be regulated. There are 10,305,000 sheep in the State, not including this year's lambs. During the past season 160,234 bales of wool were offered for sale and 159,852 were sold. The total weight was 50,441,000 lbs., and the value £3,333,529. The average price per lb. was 15.86d. I have here a record of the amounts paid by the Vermin Board. Regarding dingoes, 12,775 scalps were paid for, as against 10,407 in the previous year.

Mr. Marshall: What do they pay for dingoes now?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Only £1. We were paying £2, but the fund

became bankrupt, and we had to reduce it to £1 and call upon the Treasury to assist us. There are no means of determining whether all the scalps submitted are from dogs killed in Western Australia. Bonuses have been paid on 24,120 foxes, as against 17,376 in the previous year. Evidently the board's policy of control of foxes has not been entirely successful. We used to pay £2 per scalp, and the foxes were not a great menace, but now we are paying a bonus on 24,120, and the place is simply over-run with them. Regarding the dingoes, we cannot afford to let up. The board is not prepared to recommend that we revert to the original penny and half-penny on pastoral and agricultural land, and therefore we are endeavouring to find revenue from which to pay the higher bonus. The Central Vermin Board's expenditure was £31,693, and the collection was only £20,190. We started the year with about £12,000 to our credit, but as I say, the fund has been depleted, and so we have had to cut down the bonus.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Could not you extend the basis of collection to all land in the State?

Mr. Marshall: Why did not you do that when you were in office?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It could be done with the approval of the House, but it would be a very debatable question.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I do not think there would be any trouble at all about it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, there was an opportunity in times past, but it was not attempted.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: There was not the same necessity then.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: As to pleuro, in view of the successful results of spraying in the Eastern States by the use of the Complement Fixation test, arrangements were made to apply the test at Anna Plains, and 2,260 head of cattle were treated. As a result it was possible to overland those cattle. They were sold at Meekatharra, but the prices were not deemed satisfactory. One lot brought £5 per head, some were sold at £3 10s., and others for as low as £3. They cost £1 per head to overland, and still the growers were better off than those who brought their stock by boat to Fremantle. Further applications for the test are still coming in, and

we have made inquiries in the Eastern States as to the reliability of this test. Without exception every veterinary authority in the Eastern States declares it to be entirely satisfactory and reliable. Our tests were not as satisfactory as could be desired, but I think our pathologist, Dr. Bennett, attributes that to some defect in the laboratory, and is not prepared to say the test is not satisfactory or reliable. In view of this, if our department were unable to test and treat those stock for which application has been made, we would be failing in our duty. Of course every precaution must be taken, and in addition to exercising all necessary caution, there is certainly an obligation to the stock owners of the North that they should have their cattle tested. Since this test has now been declared reliable I have given instructions that this be done, and our veterinary staff has made arrangements for it. The position of the stock owners is bad enough. It is unsatisfactory and unprofitable to ship stock to Fremantle, for only the best are payable, and it would be cheaper to overland them.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Have you tested cattle from those stations on which pleuro has been found?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They have been tested at Anna Plains.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: But pleuro has never been found there.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Some of the heasts re-acted, although pleuro was not definitely discovered. But in the Eastern States, and even in Tasmania where pleuro does not exist, every possible test is applied and every precaution taken.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It would not be safe to bring down cattle from a station on which pleuro had been found, because they might easily be reinfected after testing.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But they can be segregated. The pleuro has not the disastrous effects it would have had prior to the discovery of the Complement Fixation test. It will be remembered that some years ago pleuro was discovered not far from Perth and whole herds were slaughtered. If pleuro were to be discovered now there would be no need for wholesale destruction. Beasts definitely infected would be slaughtered, but the remainder, after testing, instead of being slaughtered would be quite safe.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: But it would have to be guaranteed that they did not mix with other cattle after being tested.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am certainly not prepared to submit to a cross-examination as to how it is to be done, but I am prepared to take the advice of such authorities as exist in Australia. If the hon. member contends that the Turner test is unreliable, he will have to say that he is not prepared to take the advice of practically the whole of the veterinary officers in Australia.

Mr. Seward: Will your veterinary officers certify to its being reliable?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They are not prepared to certify that it is not.

Mr. Seward: Are they prepared to certify that it is?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I asked the opinion of the chief veterinary officer and he was satisfied that the cattle might be shifted from the Anna Plains station.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: A case of pleuro has never been discovered on that station.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Is the hon. member sure?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The test would determine whether a beast was infected, and if it was it would be segregated.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: But you cannot guarantee the segregation. That is the trouble.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That would have to be arranged. The real danger lies not in the beast that apparently has the pleuro but in carriers. After a severe overland trip of several hundred miles a carrier would show the effects.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: But it might infect another dozen cattle before it showed the effects.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The carrier would show the effects and be discovered. I would expect the veterinary officers to set up an organisation—that is their business—and the cattle would have to be shifted under conditions satisfactory to them. There is stock on stations not known to be affected that cannot be shifted north owing to the tick and that are not permitted to come

south owing to the pleuro, and so they are in a pocket. If the department cannot deal with cases of that kind, I shall consider that they have fallen down on their job. Where station owners make the request, the test will be applied. We will deal with the points raised by the hon. member when the time comes.

Mr. Wise: Any chance of testing store cattle at Fremantle?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, I think it will have to be arranged, but there is no time to go into all those questions to-night. I remember Dr. Rivett delivering a most interesting lecture in the dining room on various problems confronting the stock owners of Australia. He specialised on the blowfly, which he considered was the most disastrous pest in Australia. I think he told us the loss due to that pest.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Yes, £4,000,000 a year.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: One of my objects in going to the North was to visit the Mia Mia station, where the manager has set up a fairly complete organisation for the treatment of the blowfly pest. He treats it the same as the fire brigade would treat a fire. Some of the older hands were rather sceptical, but they afterwards admitted that his methods were effective. There is no guarantee that the blowfly will not appear at certain seasons, but at a station considerably further north 5,000 sheep were lost last year when wool was bringing 15d. per lb. That represented a fairly serious loss. It is claimed that this is one of the problems that should be dealt with systematically. I shall not enlarge on that except to say that the department have taken the matter up and are advising stock owners to adopt preventive measures. I think that will be the slogan of the department—adopt preventive measures. All our production is increasing, but the difficulty is to find profitable markets for it. During the year 55,000 dozen cases of eggs of 30 dozen each were exported, the value being £95,000. It is anticipated that during the current year the export will be greater. The tropical fruit industry on the Gascoyne developed considerably during the year, when some 40 additional blocks were taken up. Approximately 40,000 banana and 20,000 pineapple suckers were planted, as well as several

strains of passion fruit and papaya. There are now 103 acres under bananas, nine acres under pineapples, and approximately 15 acres under vegetables and small crops in that area. During the year 3,613 cases of bananas, 120 cases of pineapples, 24 cases of papaya, 750 cases of beans and 30 cases of other vegetables were sent away by sea from that area. On one occasion at an agricultural conference in the East we requested the Federal Government to forego the duty on bananas so that the people in the North could get them at a reasonable price. The Commonwealth Government would not agree and now the people of the North have found means to supply their own needs. Thus the North is independent in the matter of tropical fruits. The area under potatoes last year was 4,470 acres and the yield 21,204 tons, an average of 4.74 tons per acre, valued at £137,826. The number of stock sold at the metropolitan abattoirs during the year ended June last was—Cattle 26,432; sheep and lambs, 439,875; pigs, 21,364. In addition 15,831 pigs were slaughtered under permit at premises other than the abattoirs. The number of stock yarded at the metropolitan saleyards was—Cattle, 40,187; sheep and lambs, 569,308; and pigs, 73,152. Those figures convey an idea of the requirements of the metropolitan market. There are only one or two other matters to which I wish briefly to refer. One is insect pests. I suppose one of the most malignant pests in the South-West is the red-legged earth mite, and another is the lucerne flea. A parasite has been discovered for the lucerne flea and 30,000 have been distributed. By those means there is some hope of controlling the lucerne flea. Up to date I do not know that any great headway has been made with respect to the red-legged earth mite. The matter has been taken up by the Council of Scientific Research. It is considered a major problem. It has been most disastrous in this State, but we are hopeful that ways and means will be found for combating the disease. Considerable effort has been achieved in connection with the Denmark wasting disease, and the investigations that have been made concerning it. Treatments which both cure and prevent the disease are now available. This is possible as the result of feeding a lick composed of limonite. The lick has been adopted by the Agricultural Bank, and

the treatment is now to be applied to all affected holdings. The curative agent in the limonite has not been discovered, but investigations in this connection are being continued by Dr. Underwood, the animal nutrition officer. This disease has caused the department an enormous amount of worry, and has had a most prejudicial effect upon the Denmark district. It is extraordinary that in a locality so prolific as the Denmark area it is not possible to rear young stock. The disease is a mysterious one. The officers of the department are working in with the officers of the Waite Institute in South Australia and they are, it is believed, on the road to discovering both the causes of the disease and the right treatment for it.

Mr. Wansbrough: Is it a preventive?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It turns out that the disease is due mostly to food deficiencies in the animal. Limonite is said to supply that deficiency. The whole thing is so complicated that our officers are unable to say what chemical it is in the limonite that does effect the cure. The disease can be cured, but neither our officers nor those in the Eastern States can tell us how it is done.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: What is limonite?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is an ore containing iron. Limonite is a cure for the disease.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Is it a local product?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think it comes from Queensland. The hon. member would have to write to the Animal Nutrition Officer, Dr. Underwood, for all the technical information on the subject. As a result of a grant made by the Commonwealth Government, two officers have been appointed to work in the tobacco area. The function of one of them is to undertake demonstrations and carry out advisory work, and of the other it is to conduct experiments in connection with problems of interest to the settlers. For seed purposes a quantity of disease-free seed of several varieties has been distributed to tobacco growers in the State. The real difficulty is not to grow tobacco, but the particular variety that manufacturers will buy and smokers will smoke. In times past people used to talk about their ton of tobacco to

the acre, but to-day it is a question of growing the right variety.

Progress reported.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH SUPERANNUATION FUND.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 14th November, 1934.

	PAGE
Question: Miners' Phthisis Act	1312
Bills: Land Tax and Income Tax, 1R.	1312
Gold Mining Profits Tax Assessment, 1R.	1312
Timber Workers, 2R., defeated	1318
Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2), further report	1320
Financial Emergency Act Amendment, 2R.	1320
Dried Fruits Act Continuance, 2R., Com. report	1327

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

QUESTION—MINERS' PHTHISIS ACT.

Hon. C. G. ELLIOTT asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What was the number of beneficiaries in each class—men, wives, children—under the Miners' Phthisis Act who received compensation during each year from the inception to June, 1934? 2, What was the number of persons who died in each year? 3, What was the number of new beneficiaries in each class in each year? 4, What is the explanation of the increased cost in each year?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, 1925-26—109 men, 62 wives, 94 children; 1926-27—191 men, 122 wives, 196 children; 1927-28—233 men, 150 wives, 212 children; 1928-29—239 men, 174 wives, 246 children;

1929-30—288 men, 230 wives, 299 children; 1930-31—352 men, 281 wives, 342 children; 1931-32—365 men, 303 wives, 351 children; 1932-33—346 men, 316 wives, 323 children; 1933-34—316 men, 317 wives, 280 children. (Note.—Wives include widows.) 2, 1925-26, 11; 1926-27, 26; 1927-28, 30; 1928-29, 38; 1929-30, 47; 1930-31, 42; 1931-32, 45; 1932-33, 42; 1933-4, 24. 3, 1925-26—109 men, 62 wives, 94 children; 1926-27—93 men, 60 wives, 103 children; 1927-28—68 men, 28 wives, 28 children; 1928-29—35 men, 25 wives, 42 children; 1929-30—85 men, 57 wives, 71 children; 1930-31—106 men, 55 wives, 72 children; 1931-32—50 men, 27 wives, 39 children; 1932-33—24 men, 15 wives, 24 children; 1933-34—7 men, 5 wives, 5 children. 4, The number of additional men prohibited each year on account of tuberclosis.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—GOLD MINING PROFITS TAX ASSESSMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 6—Assessment (partly considered):

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Last night Mr. Miles raised the point as to whether Clause 6 conflicted with Section 6 Subsection 9 of the Dividend Duties Act. I placed the matter before the Crown Solicitor this morning, and he has replied as follows:—

1. Apparently it has been suggested that Clause 6 of the Bill is inconsistent with Subsection 9 of Section 6 of the Dividend Duties Act.

2. Clause 10 (1) of the Bill, however, expressly provides that the exemption given from dividend duty under Section 6 (9) of the Dividend Duties Act shall not apply to gold mining profits tax; and Clause 10 (2) of the Bill expressly provides that although a company is exempt from dividend duty under Section 6 (9) of the Dividend Duties Act, such company nevertheless shall, for the purposes of gold mining tax assessment, furnish a return of its profits in accordance with Section 6 (1) of the Dividend Duties Act.