

# Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 27th November, 1919.

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

## QUESTION—PERTH SANITARY SITE.

Mr. BROWN (for Mr. Smith) asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that the present city sanitary site and rubbish depot is within two and a half miles of the Perth town hall and within a quarter of a mile of existing settlement? 2, Is he aware that a deputation from the Perth road board waited on the Colonial Secretary and pointed out the grave danger to the public health? 3, Is he aware that the Colonial Secretary has replied to the deputation that he has agreed with the city council to remove the depot half a mile further away? 4, Does he think, in the interests of the public health, that the sanitary depot should be so close to settlement? 5, Does he know that the sanitary depot is situated in an area of 1,000 acres that should be used as a people's park and recreation ground? 6, Will he take steps to have the Perth depot moved to the northern end of the reserve, alongside the present Maylands depot? 7, Will he take steps to have this reserve made available as a people's park and recreation reserve and vested in the local authority?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, Yes. 4, It is considered that if removed to the selected site no danger should exist. 5, It is suggested that Perth is well supplied with parks and recreation grounds. The present use of this area will not prejudice its future use for this purpose if such becomes necessary. 6, No. The depot is best placed in the centre of the block, as it is then a reasonable distance from settlement on all sides. The new site is already seven miles from the furthest point of collection. 7, Not at present.

## QUESTION—PUBLIC BUILDINGS, ROOFING MATERIAL.

Mr. BROWN (for Mr. Robinson) asked the Minister for Works: 1, What public

buildings are in course of construction by the Works Department? 2, Are they specified to be roofed with iron or tiles? 3, If with the latter, why is the locally made article passed over?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, See list attached. 2, See list attached. 3, All buildings that have been erected during the war have been roofed with second-hand iron, stocks being collected from the gold-fields and obsolete buildings not required. In addition to second-hand iron, the Government Stores have in hand a large quantity of iron purchased during the war. This iron we are now drawing on for all buildings, and will continue to do so until it is exhausted. For any buildings in the city or metropolitan area every effort will be made to utilise local materials, but the cost is the governing factor.

## BUILDINGS IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Name of Building.	Iron or Tiles.	Remarks.
Gulldford School, Additions	Iron	
Nalkain Hall and School ...	do. ...	Country.
Perth Repatriation Department, Tradesmen's Workshops ...	do.	
Cunderup School ...	do.	
Woodman's, Point Quarantine Station, Laundry Store, etc. ...	do. ...	Additions.
Balingup School Quarters, Additions ...	do.	
Wyndham Post Office, Additions ...	do.	
Moora School, Additions ...	do.	
Perth Postal Stores, Additions ...	do.	
Pemberton School and Quarters ...	do. ...	Country.
Collie Infants' School ...	do. ...	Additions.
Narrogin Savings Bank ...	do. ...	do.
Albany School, Re-roofing ...	Shingles	Departmental.
Ellis Creek School, Additions	Iron	
New G.P.O., Perth ...	Asphalt	
Merridin Hospital, Removal from Bulong ...	Iron ...	Removal and re-erection.
Claremont Old Men's Home, Additions ...	do. ...	Small.

## DEPARTMENTAL WORKS.

Government Printing Office, Store ...	Iron
Clackline School Quarters ...	do.
North Cunderdin School Quarters ...	do.

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## QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (for Mr. Jones) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is he aware that a petition is being circulated at the Claremont Hospital for the Insane, during hours of duty, for signature by the attendants, expressing confidence in the Inspector General? 2, Is he aware that the petition was drawn up by the Inspector General himself, or one of his staff? 3, Was this petition drawn up with the knowledge of the Government? 4, If so, does the petition refer to the members

of the select committee as "amateurs"? 5, Does he approve of public servants being confronted with a petition which affects the head of their department, who has the power to discharge them?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, A petition expressing confidence in the Inspector General has been received. 2, No. 3, No. 4, Answered by No. 3. 5, There is no objection to public servants expressing their views to a Minister by means of a petition. It is the right of the humblest subject.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I shall read the petition later on.

#### QUESTION—ARBITRATION COURT AGENT.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yesterday I asked a question of the Premier regarding the agent appearing in the Arbitration Court. No reply was given, and the question does not appear on the Notice Paper to-day.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Premier stated that the information was being obtained.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I want a reply through the Notice Paper. Will the Premier have the question restored to the Notice Paper to-morrow?

Mr. SPEAKER: It will be put on the Notice Paper to-morrow.

#### QUESTION—AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Hon. P. COLLIER (without notice) asked the Premier: Can he give any information as to when the Auditor General's report will be ready.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We have had the Queensland Auditor General's report.

The PREMIER replied: I cannot give any definite information. Some time ago I explained the cause of the delay, and I think I then told the hon. member that the report would be here at the end of the month. I believe that is the position still.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a most extraordinary delay.

The PREMIER: Yes, due to no fault on the part of the Auditor General.

Hon. P. Collier: You will see by this morning's paper how up-to-date they are in Queensland, and how valuable their report is.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Hudson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Underwood (Pilbara), on the ground of urgent private business.

#### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

##### 1, Divorce Amendment.

Returned to the Council with amendments.

##### 2, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

#### BILL—SALE OF LIQUOR REGULATION ACT CONTINUATION.

Second reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. P. Draper—West Perth) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short Bill; it is simply meant to continue the provisions of the Sale of Liquor Regulation Act of 1915. The object of the Bill is really to continue the present trading hours of nine to nine. It is desirable that these hours shall be kept. At this stage of the session it would be impossible to bring forward an amendment to the Licensing Act which might involve contentious clauses. I think all parties are agreed that nine to nine are suitable hours for the keeping open of hotels, and I trust the House will pass the measure. It is really important to the community that the present hours should be kept. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. DUFF (Claremont) [4.41]: I support the Bill. When the Act was passed in 1915 the Government intended that the clubs should fall into line with the hotels. Apparently this has been overlooked and the result, as most of us know, is that when a troopship arrives, a notice is inserted in the Press by the military authorities stating that the hotels will be closed from a certain hour, perhaps from mid-day till 9 p.m.

The Attorney General: That does not come under this measure.

Mr. DUFF: I am just referring to the treatment of clubs in comparison with the treatment of hotels.

The Attorney General: This Bill does not affect that.

Mr. DUFF: We find that hotels are closed rigidly at 9 p.m. while the clubs then have a rush of business. This is not fair to the hotels which pay heavy license fees and have to carry out the Licensing Act in its entirety.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing the Licensing Act under this Bill. He can refer to it by way of argument, but must not discuss it. This is merely a continuation Bill.

Mr. DUFF: I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

# BILL—CARNARVON ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 11th November; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Special rate:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move an amendment—

That the words "to be called the 'lighting rate'" in lines 3 and 4, be struck out. The rate should be an ordinary loan rate.

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

Clause 5—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

# BILL—DOG ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [4.53] in moving the second reading said: This is a little Bill which I think will receive the kindly consideration of hon. members, as I understand its object is to provide additional powers, principally of a machinery nature, to those under the Dog Act of 1903. The proposed amendments have been well considered by various road board conferences and also by individual road boards, and the opinion is that they are necessary. As I proceed, I shall endeavour to make the necessity plain. A section of the existing Act provides that before a person can be summoned for non-registration of a dog it must be proved that he has had the dog in his possession for 21 days. When attempts have been made to put that section into force, it has generally been found that the dog is not there. The road boards desire an amendment which will enable them to make it difficult for that kind of business to proceed. Then there is a difficulty as regards the licensing of sheep and cattle dogs. Many of the owners of these dogs have an idea that it is not necessary to obtain a license for them, as they are part of a man's tools of trade, in the same way as an artisan's implements are. Under the proposed amendment a difficulty might arise regarding the dogs of travelling drovers, and for such dogs half fees are prescribed. Under the existing Act, if a stray dog be captured it must be kept for three days before it can be destroyed. Now in country districts as much damage is caused by so-called tame dogs as by the dingo, and very often more. I do not think any dogs could be more destructive than the kangaroo dogs are in my district. This Bill therefore provides that if a road board officer finds a dog worrying cattle or sheep, he may, if he cannot catch the dog, shoot it at once.

The Premier: That is done now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. At the same time one has a certain delicacy about shooting a neighbour's dog. The amendment here proposed will allow of a case of that sort being dealt with promptly. Under the existing Act aborigines are allowed to keep dogs. The Bill provides that their dogs must be registered and wear identification discs in the same way as other dogs. It is proposed, however, to register an aborigine's dog free of cost. Yet another difficulty under the existing Act is that dogs must be registered when three months old. This has occasioned inconvenience in the case of those aristocratic dogs called pomeranians, which are largely bred for sale. It is proposed to extend the period to six months, which I am informed can be safely taken as covering the weaning time and the selling age, thus allowing the animal to reach its permanent owner before being registered. Another amendment proposed by the Bill is to make the close of the financial year the 30th June, as is the common practice now. Attempts have been made to introduce various amendments in another place. I am given to understand that the Kennel Club are much interested in the matter, and are desirous of introducing those amendments here. I think, however, that the Bill will be found to be quite complete without the setting up of any authority besides that of the Government. There are one or two small amendments which I shall move in Committee. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 5:

Mr. PICKERING: The amendment is to delete the words "twenty-one days." Is it intended that, immediately a dog comes into one's possession, it shall be registered forthwith, or alternatively the owner be liable to the penalty?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has been found that a person keeping a dog has pleaded the 21 days' notice on the first visit of the inspector, and that on the second visit the dog is not to be found. The clause certainly provides for immediate registration.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is an unreasonable clause. Whilst the 21 days' grace may have enabled some owners to escape registration, this is going to the other extreme. If a strange dog were to follow one home, one would be liable to the penalty for not having registered the dog. Surely some period should be allowed, if only 10 minutes, between the acquiring of the dog and its registration. An owner in the country would

forthwith have to make a special trip to the registry office, perhaps 20 miles away.

The Minister for Works: Make it seven days.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, I think 14 days would be more reasonable. Indeed, I think the 21 days might well remain.

Mr. PICKERING: I cannot see the reason for the proposed amendment. I prefer the provision in the existing Act.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is reason in what has been said, but I should like to see the period of 21 days reduced. Seven days would be quite sufficient to allow before registration.

Hon. T. WALKER: I agree with the leader of the Opposition. The thing is not worth tinkering with, and there is a danger in making any alteration. Take the case of a dog in the country straying to a neighbour's farm a few miles away. An inspector pays a visit before that neighbour has a chance to return the dog, and so that man with whom the dog is temporarily staying becomes liable to the penalty. If dogs have been going unregistered because of the 21 days period, it is merely evidence of the neglect of the local authorities.

Clause put and negatived.

Clauses 4 and 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—amendment of Section 15:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Why is this list to be supplied to the police? Is it merely to place additional duties on the police?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The road boards have asked for the assistance of the police in seeing that dogs are registered. If it is found that the duties on the police are more than they can carry out, some relief will be afforded them.

Hon. T. Walker: Let the local authorities do the work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The local authorities cannot do it all. If the police have a list of the dogs they can drop on to the owner of an unregistered dog.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I object to loading up the police with all sorts of duties, even to the responsibility of catching stray dogs. It must be the intention of those responsible for the Bill that it shall in future be part of the duties of the police to go looking for stray dogs.

The Minister for Works: It is part of their duty now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Nothing of the sort. Picture the 60 or 70 policemen who report for duty to the Roe-street barracks every morning lining up to scan the list of unregistered dogs, which will be altered every day. Why, each policeman would use up a note-book once a week in putting down the particulars of each stray dog? The duties and responsibilities of police officers are important. They should not be degraded, as it were, by their being made to pursue street pups. Fancy a policeman getting into an argument with some fashionable lady who had a poodle in her arms and re-

fused to register it. We can picture the struggle between the constable and the lady when the constable tried to seize the poodle in order that he might take it away and destroy it, according to the Bill. The fees go to the local governing bodies and they should take the responsibility of collecting them. I am opposed to making "poo-bahs" of the constabulary of the State.

The Minister for Works: That is not so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is not a policeman's work to chase dogs about the street and to shoot unregistered dogs, or carry them down to the river to drown them there. I object to the clause altogether.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the Dog Act of 1903 provision is made for the seizure of dogs, and for the officer of the police station to sign an authority for such being done. This Bill, therefore, is not adding any further duties to the police.

Hon. P. Collier: This is a chance of amending the law.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are going to make them do something which they did not do before. The police are to collect the fees.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not in Perth that the Bill will be of most use, but in the country districts.

Mr. Chesson: There are not sufficient police there now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This clause will be of assistance in enabling the police to see that dogs in the country are kept under proper control. The greatest trouble the sheep farmers have is not so much from the dingoes as from the dogs that are kept as kangaroo dogs.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then the local officers should attend to that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: How can they do that in the Darling Ranges, for instance? The police travel through these ranges at stated intervals, and can take steps to see that the dogs are kept under control. From Armadale to Bridgetown there are numerous dogs kept by timber hewers for the purpose of hunting kangaroos, and these dogs frequently become sheep killers and the farmers have to suffer.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This Bill will not protect the sheep.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will. If a constable sees a dog without a disc, he has power to deal with it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then it is the disc that protects the sheep.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The constable knows from the list he has whether people have registered their dogs or not.

Hon. T. WALKER: The dogs the Minister refers to are most of them registered.

The Minister for Works: They are not.

Hon. T. WALKER: Then there is some laxity in the administration of the Act and this Bill will not help it.

The Minister for Works: In the particular district of which I am speaking, the

road board office is 25 miles away from the mill.

Hon. T. WALKER: Even so, it has its officers. Apparently this is a scheme to enable road board districts to shirk their duties. It depends on the road board officers whether this measure will be effective or not. Some of the road board secretaries find office work more congenial than they would find this hunting after dogs. They want to keep all the revenue they can and have their salaries paid, at the cost of the police. If the local authorities are to get the revenue they should take the responsibility. I object to these methods. The road board should perform its functions. Whether the police are required to undertake these duties or not, the fact remains it will not prevent stray dogs from destroying sheep. Most of these dogs are trained and they will kill sheep, whether registered or not. The owner of the sheep has his redress in the ordinary course. It is not for the policeman to protect the farmers in the way suggested.

The Minister for Works: You are assisting the road boards.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, but at whose expense? The suggestion is that it should be at the expense of the policeman, degrading him in his duty.

Mr. Maley: It is not more degrading to a policeman than to an officer of the road board.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, it is, because it is not the legitimate functions of the policeman, whereas the road board secretary is paid to do this work. The road board officers should not be permitted to shirk their duty in this way and pass it on to the policeman. There is another point to be considered and it is this: how often is a policeman seen in Yelbeni, Kununoppin, or triets? For instance, how often is a policeman seen in Yelbeni, Kununoppin, or Yorkkrakine? Who registers the dogs in the meantime? It is the road board secretary who performs that function. It is absurd to expect a policeman whose headquarters may be, and very often are, a long distance away from different centres in his district, to go and see whether new-born pups are registered or not.

The Premier: They must be registered now.

Hon. T. WALKER: And the active road board secretary sees that they are registered. It has nothing to do with the work of the policeman at present. Suppose this were applied to Perth and Fremantle. What would be the effect?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In Perth they would pay off an officer at once.

Hon. T. WALKER: And in other places they have officers to deal with these matters.

Mr. Piesso: The clause does not say that the police must take action.

Hon. T. WALKER: If that is so, what is the good of the clause?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If members will turn to the original Act they will see that Section 15 provides for the posting up of a list in the office of the local authority, showing the persons who have registered dogs in the area during the current year, the registered numbers of those dogs and so on, and any person who applies may, on payment of one shilling, secure a copy of the registration receipt and other particulars regarding any dog so registered. This list, it will be seen, has to be made out and all that is meant is that a copy of the list has to be handed to the police. This means that the convenience of the people in the country districts will be met by providing another place where they can inspect the list of registered dogs and owners, instead of perhaps having to go 20 miles or so to the road board office. Members have made fun of the provision but the Bill is a practical one and the provisions will not work in any direction such as suggested by members. We are not attempting to degrade the policeman in any way.

Hon. P. Collier: Let us postpone this Bill and get on with some important work.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister said at the outset that the purpose of this clause was to enable the policeman to collect fees. Now he says that it is not.

Hon. P. Collier: He is shifting his ground.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are several police stations in some districts, so what would be the use of one extra list? Undoubtedly it is the duty of the road board officer to collect the fees. We have made the police traffic inspectors; in the country districts they are collectors of licenses for vehicles and now you want them to be collectors of dog licenses.

The Minister for Works: We are not asking them to collect dog licenses.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What is the good of it? I hope this clause will be struck out.

Mr. MONEY: We have been discussing some matters quite outside the amendment of the Act. There is nothing proposing any extra duties upon policemen at all. The duty is imposed upon the road board secretaries. The only thing that the clause provides for is an additional list, being the copy of that which is to be made out in any case, and this has to be forwarded to the nearest police station.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What for?

Mr. MONEY: Evidently the conference that was held went fully into this matter and asked that this provision should be made to assist in carrying out the law and in the preservation of property. The object of the Bill is to prevent the destruction of sheep and that does not imply any extra duty on the police officers. It is their duty to preserve property alive or dead and if this clause works in that direction, it is very moderate. If the road boards after

due consideration, have asked for this amendment, the Committee should pass it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Let us look into the logic of the hon. member's remarks. This clause he says imposes no extra duty upon the police and he immediately proceeds to say that it does impose a duty on the police.

Mr. Money: No, I did not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member said that the purpose of this clause was to protect the sheep. If it is not going to impose an extra duty upon the policeman, how is it going to prevent the killing of sheep, any more than the present Act? The hon. member gave himself away by arguing that no extra duties would be imposed upon the police, and ten seconds afterwards saying that it would be the duty of the police to protect property.

Mr. Money: Yes, to protect property.

Hon. P. COLLIER: How could they do that unless they were more vigilant or administered the Act in a more energetic way than they have done in the past? One of the hon. member's arguments was destructive of the other. What is the object of the clause if nothing is to be done?

Mr. Money: The police will not be compelled to read the list.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then why send the list to the nearest police station. I suggest that we should report progress and get on with more important work. Every clause in the Bill is objectionable and I intend to oppose each one as it comes up.

Progress reported.

## BILL—SAND DRIFT.

### Second reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [5.53] in moving the second reading said: This is only a small measure and a perfectly simple one. The object is to repeal the Sand Drift Act, 1889, and to re-enact that statute with amendments which experience has shown us are necessary. One of the object of the Bill is to enable local authorities to require an owner or occupier of land where a drift of sand is causing a nuisance to plant the ground with marram grass, in order to abate that nuisance, or to adopt such other means as the local authority may think fit. It is 20 years since marram grass was first planted at Fremantle, and its growth has proved a complete success in the direction of preventing the drift of sand. There are other places also where the grass was successfully planted some years ago, namely, along the ocean beach at Cottesloe and elsewhere, but there are lands which are privately owned and which have been cut up into allotments and sold, from which drifts of sand have taken place and created a nuisance over constructed roads.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The greatest nuisance arises from the drifts from Government owned land.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That may be so. The object of the Bill is to compel owners or occupiers of blocks to do their duty by way of planting marram grass wherever it is found that the planting of that grass will have the effect of preventing the drift of sand, and if that is not done, power is given to the local authority to carry out the work and recover the cost from the owner of the property.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The sand from Government land will drift again as quickly as it is moved.

Hon. P. Collier: Why should not the Government plant their land with marram grass?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no doubt that if the matter is brought under the notice of the Government it will receive consideration. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On the motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin debate adjourned.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1918-19.

### In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Vote—Railways, £1,746,521.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [5.57]: I wish to enter a protest against the neglect on the part of the Railway Department to provide sleepers for second-class passengers on the train from Perth to Meekatharra. This is the longest railway journey in the State, and whilst the department make every provision for stock, they entirely neglect human beings. We see the Murchison train leaving the Perth station overcrowded so far as the second-class carriages are concerned, the travelling public being crammed in the compartments like sardines in a tin. On the eastern gold-fields line and on the Albany line some attention is shown to the second-class passengers. Sleeping carriages are provided on those lines, and the passengers are made as comfortable as possible. Why should not the unfortunate people who have to travel the longer distances to the Murchison be shown the same consideration? We do not ask for a dining car, because we know that would mean extra weight to carry, but we do think we are entitled to sleeping accommodation for those who cannot travel first-class. Another matter to which I wish to refer is the closing down of the Day Dawn station. There is a population at Day Dawn at the present time of 300, half of that number being adults. A little while ago a petition containing 90 signatures was presented to the Minister protesting against the closing of the station. The Minister received a deputation on the subject consisting of Mr. Troy, the member for Mt. Magnet, Mr. Mills, M.L.C., and myself. We put the case on behalf of the people, but we were

met by the argument that there was a main station four miles distant, that the department were out to economise and that if things at Day Dawn did improve, we might get a station master again. I had information from the Fingal Company and from some of the station owners which enabled me to make the statement that there had been an improvement in the business of the railway station during the previous month. On the 16th October I moved in this House for a return showing—

1, The amount of cash paid at Day Dawn as fares and freight during the months of July, August, and September, 1919, separately. 2, The amount of freight on goods, stock, etc., from Day Dawn for the months of July, August, and September, 1919, which was paid at other stations during the above-mentioned months.

The information supplied by the acting Commissioner of Railways<sup>s</sup> was as follows—

1. Cash paid at Day Dawn as freights and fares: Fares and freights, July, £268 19s. 1d.; August, £352 18s. 6d.; September, £434 19s. 11d.; total £1,056 17s. 6d. 2. Freight collected by other stations on goods, live stock, etc., forwarded from Day Dawn: July, goods, £357 6s. 6d.; livestock, £897 7s. 9d.; parcels, 3s. 3d.; total for July, £1,254 17s. 6d. August, goods, £294 13s. 6d.; livestock, £296 6s. 10d.; parcels, nil; total for August, £591 0s. 4d. September, goods, £296 17s. 1d.; livestock, £495 5s. 7d.; parcels, 14s. 6d.; total for September, £792 17s. 2d. Totals for the three months, goods, £948 17s. 1d.; livestock, £1,689 0s. 2d.; parcels, 17s. 9d.; grand total, £2,638 15s. 0d.

Taking the total cash paid at Day Dawn as fares and freights and the freight collected by other stations which should have been credited to Day Dawn, the amounts for the respective months were, July, £1,523 16s. 7d.; August, £943 18s. 9d.; September, £1,227 17s. 1d. The total for the three months was £3,695 12s. 6d., or an average per month for the three months under review of £1,231 17s. 6d. On these figures there was no justification for closing down the Day Dawn station. In Day Dawn there are five hotels, three stores, one club, one butcher's shop, and one bakery, and there are several big stations in the vicinity which send their wool and receive their goods through Day Dawn. Day Dawn is one of the best stations on the line in that three wagons can pull in at the one time and, when loaded or unloaded, can pull out by another way. At Cue there is not the same accommodation for wagons. We have had no crushing facilities in Cue or Day Dawn for over two years. In October the Government battery was opened in Cue and most of the stone, after the first round of crushing, will come from the Fingal mine. That mine is connected with the railway by a loop line and the battery in Cue was connected with the siding to the railway, so that all the stone

from the Fingal mine can be sent by railway. The outlook for Day Dawn is brighter than it has been for 12 months. The mines are let on tribute and there is talk of 50 additional hands being employed. This will mean that each individual will carry others with him and it is fair to estimate that 150 more persons will shortly be living in Day Dawn. I visited the town about three weeks ago and found that 40 trucks were ordered for the Fingal mine to convey 150 to 200 tons of stone from the mine to Boogardie battery at Mount Magnet. There was also 40 tons of scrap iron which had been collected at the Fingal. In view of the business and the amount of freight passing through this station, there was no justification for closing it down. Under the existing arrangement there is no station-master at Day Dawn. If anyone desires to book trucks from Day Dawn, he has to order them through Mt. Magnet. Mt. Magnet is not connected with Day Dawn by telephone, while Cue, which is only four miles from Day Dawn, has telephonic communication. When anyone desires to consign goods through Day Dawn, he has to fill in a consignment note in a book left in a box on the station and, when the guard comes along, he collects the notes and hunts up the goods. This system entails many delays to through trains. Nearly all the trains from Perth reach Day Dawn after midnight and when perishable goods are sent to the town, they are left on the station over night. There is no policeman in the town and complaints have been made that goods have been missed. At day-break, herds of goats make their way to the station and a good portion of the perishable goods is destroyed by them. It will be only a matter of time before we shall find goats waiting on the platform for the trains to arrive, as they seem to know there is no one in charge of the station. Many have been the complaints regarding loss through these causes. There are no fewer than six or seven big sheep stations in the district which send their wool and stock through Day Dawn. The superintendent of the Fingal, who is chairman of the road board, has made the statement that during one period of six years, the Fingal mine alone paid to the railways freights amounting to £82,000. Yet no provision is made for the people in this town simply because the place happened to go down a little. I do not blame the Commissioner of Railways. No doubt he is trying to economise, but it is unfair to the people of the town that the whole cost for the transit of goods from Cue should have to be borne by them. I have a letter from the secretary of the road board dated 9th October, 1919, dealing fully with these matters. It states—

At a meeting of the above board held on Tuesday evening last I was instructed to write to you direct and enter a further protest against the closing of the Day Dawn railway station. The board consider that the taking away of both officers and closing the station in one step, and with-

out any intimation that the department was considering such a step, was entirely unjustifiable and shows an absolute disregard of the requirements of the inhabitants of the town and district. While admitting that the traffic has gone down and that one officer could probably do the work, though it would necessitate him working long hours on account of the awkward times the trains come in, we do not admit that it has gone down to the extent stated by the Commissioner; the figures given by the Commissioner do not give a proper record of the business done. If you called for a return of all traffic originating from Day Dawn whether freight was paid in Day Dawn or not, you would find a considerable difference on the Commissioner's figures. The stock yards here are the trucking yards for a big area of country and a large number of stock is sent away to Midland weekly for which Day Dawn gets no credit. Another grievance is that now the station is shut people requiring trucks to send away goods are referred to Magnet which is 40 miles away and is not connected with Day Dawn by telephone, whereas there is a station at Cue four miles away with which we are connected by telephone.

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

Mr. CHESSON: Before tea I had partly read a letter which I received from the secretary of the Cue-Day Dawn road board. The letter continues—

It is now the practice to place all the goods for Day Dawn on the platform, where they remain till morning, and people have to go there and take them, as the goods are on the platform from 12 midnight till 8 or 9 a.m. It will not be a matter for wonder if a large number of parcels do not reach the right owners, especially as there is now no policeman in Day Dawn, he having been moved to Cue. It is stated that goods could be sent to Cue, but that means for business people four miles extra freight, then sending a cart to Cue and back, eight miles, meaning a big addition to the already high price of living. A man appointed caretaker at 10s. per week certainly cannot be expected to be of much use as far as the district is concerned. We earnestly hope that you will give this matter your consideration and prevent such an obvious injustice being done to a district which in the past has paid large sums to the Railway Department and may at any time do so again, and which at the present time is certainly entitled to have one man and a station of its own. If this station is to be closed because it is only four miles from Cue, why not close all the stations within four miles of Perth, or why not send the business to Magnet, which is 40 miles? Yours faithfully, G. A. G., Secretary.

That is the position. The people there would be satisfied if they had one station-master. We should provide every facility for people in the outback country, instead of which we are taking away their facilities because the traffic happens to have decreased. It might be argued that we are out to economise in every direction. But it should be considered that during the last month no less a sum than £1,227 17s. 1d. was taken in freights and fares which should have been credited to Day Dawn. We ask people to go out back, but what assistance do we give them? The first time there is a little slump we take away their facilities. If their goods have to come to Cue and be carted eight miles, it means that the people have to pay increased cost. If we reverted to the old time table it would save three station masters along that line. Instead of leaving Perth at 7.30 p.m. the train should leave at 7.30 a.m., and the train from Meekatharra should leave at 10 a.m. It would mean that the stations along that section would be passed in daylight and there would be no need for night station masters. This would save three station masters and we could then have one at Day Dawn. This scheme was put up to me a long time ago by one of the guards on the line. Our present train service suits only the commercial travellers. Under the old time table the train would go through the stations below Mullewa at night time, but that would not necessitate any extra expenditure, for they have two station masters at that point. If we wish to make the railways pay, the only possible way of achieving it is to impose a land values tax, which would force the land owners to use the land along the railway. At present we are merely penalising the outback settlers. During the war there were two increases in railway freights, both of which fell most heavily on the people outback.

Mr. Hardwick: There will be another shortly.

The Minister for Mines: But not of the same kind.

Mr. CHESSON: I ask the Minister to go thoroughly into this question and see if something cannot be done in the interests of the people outback.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [7.40]: I wish to emphasise the point raised by the hon. member in regard to any future increases in railway freights. The Government will have to take into consideration the question of making the railways pay. I hope that, in doing so, they will remember that during the war period there was an increase in railway freight on almost every commodity used in mining. It had a very bad effect on the industry. If there is to be any increase in railway freights, the Government ought to see whether they cannot hit upon some more equitable means of raising revenue from those who use the railways. In my opinion those who make their money through the use of the railways should be asked to pay.



The people at the terminus do not use the railways with the same profit to themselves as do those city traders who supply goods to the people at the end of the line. Big firms in Perth doing business with outback residents should be compelled to meet the increased railway freights. Under our present system the whole of the increase falls on the people at the end of the line. I have heard many adverse comments on the appointment of Mr. Backshall as railway inspector. During the war period it was popular to say that nothing was too good for our soldiers, and it was held that if there were any appointments in the Public Service to be filled, they should be left until the soldiers returned and had an opportunity for applying for the vacancies.

Mr. Wilson: It was a good old promise.

Mr. FOLEY: Personally I was heart and soul in favour of it.

Mr. Troy: It was a promise made by the crowd you were mixed up with.

Mr. FOLEY: I have no regrets for any of my actions during the war period. On the other hand I am proud of every action I have taken in any direction in which I could assist those men who went away to fight. Every ounce of energy I have had and every hour of my time that I have been able to spare since the war started has been given freely and voluntarily in the cause of those who went away to fight for us. If the hon. member had done a hundredth part of what I have done, and had endeavoured to enlist as I did, and having failed in that endeavoured to do everything possible to assist those who had enlisted, he would be in some position to express an opinion.

Mr. Troy: Go on with your heroics. Keep at it!

Mr. FOLEY: I am not putting up a bad job on the hon. member I think. This is a job on which every man must speak for himself. I am speaking for myself.

Mr. Troy: You tried hard to!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This discussion must cease.

Mr. FOLEY: There was a cry that nothing was too good for the soldier. Since the soldiers have come back they have not had the opportunity of getting some of those positions, which have gone to those who did not even attempt to enlist. This is one of those positions. We have now at the head of our railways a man who did go to fight, and I am glad that a soldier has had the opportunity of getting that position and to hear that he is making good in it.

Mr. Willecock: Do you not think he would give the soldiers a fair chance?

Mr. FOLEY: An opportunity recently presented itself to the Commissioner to help at least one of those who, before going to the war, held positions in the railway service. Many of these returned soldiers, old railway servants, were eligible to fill the position that was given to Mr. Backshall, but they had no opportunity of getting it. I know of the case of a railway employee who held the position of inspector before he went to the

Front, and whose son also went to the Front, but instead of being given an opportunity of getting this position he has now been sent to some remote portion of the State. I know of many other instances of the same kind. The man who got this position, however, did not go away to the Front. He had not even filled the highest position in that particular branch of the service before being given this important post.

Mr. Willecock: Neither did the Commissioner himself.

Mr. FOLEY: If there had been no returned railway employee fit for the position, and if it had therefore to be given to a man who had not been to the Front, there might be no cause for complaint, but in my opinion there are men in the service, who have returned from the Front, quite capable of filling the position. The first opportunity the Commissioner had of putting into practical effect the principle that was put into effect, so far as he himself as a returned soldier was concerned, he allowed to go by. I contend that the acting Commissioner has not stuck up for that policy which the country put into effect as regards himself. I am sorry to see that this was not done.

Mr. Willecock: You are implying that he did not give the soldiers a fair deal.

Mr. FOLEY: I say that those soldiers who held positions as inspectors in our railways, and who had at ordinary times to perform the services which Mr. Backshall will be called upon to perform, should have had an opportunity of getting that position.

The Minister for Mines: There is no man in the service who has done it.

Mr. Willecock: It is a new position.

Mr. FOLEY: It is a position of inspector. There are many returned soldiers who are inspectors in the service. I want the Minister to justify the position, and the acting Commissioner to justify his position, through their having given this position to Mr. Backshall when there were other men who went away to fight, and who were fully qualified to fill it.

Mr. Wilson: I do not know that he is any better qualified than some of the returned soldiers.

The Minister for Mines: The Commissioner of Railways should be a better judge of that than you are.

Mr. FOLEY: I am sorry that our inspectors who went away to fight were not given an opportunity of gaining promotion in the railway service. This position was new to everyone and all should have had a chance of getting it. It only shows that, whereas we have given preference to returned soldiers in appointing a man to fill the position of Commissioner of Railways—

The Minister for Mines: We did not.

Mr. FOLEY: At all events we gave him equal opportunity with others, and I contend that the soldiers who fought side by side with him, and who previously held positions in the railway service, should have had equal opportunity with a man who did not go away to fight. The man who got this position is not necessarily more qualified for it than any of the returned soldiers.

The Minister for Mines: That is your opinion.

Mr. FOLEY: I think the Minister and the acting Commissioner should do something to justify the attitude they have taken up in this matter. There are those who went to the Front and risked their lives for us, and it is a poor recompense to those men that, after all they have done, they should be passed over in this fashion.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [7.53]: I wish to refer to the question of the use of Collie coal during the summer months. Towards the end of last year one of the worst fires which has ever devastated the York and Beverley districts swept through those electorates in December. On New Year's Day I was approached by one of the prominent farmers of the York district, who lost all his crop and all his feed, and he informed me that the settlers were calling a big meeting in York which they asked me to attend. So much damage had been done that it was thought that the Government should compensate these people for the loss they had suffered, seeing that the damage was due to a fire caused by Collie coal.

The Minister for Works: Was that proved?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: At that time the Government were using 100 per cent. of Collie coal, which is sufficient proof of the origin of the fire.

The Minister for Mines: Fires often happen quite apart from the railways.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: At this meeting, at which there were about 100 persons present, a resolution was passed as follows:—

The residents of the town and district of York urge upon the Government, owing to the extensive loss of crops, stock, pasture and fencing caused by fires in the district, the immediate necessity of abandoning the use of Collie coal in the agricultural areas during the months of November, December, and January.

This gentleman who induced me to attend the meeting had, during the time that he has been on his farm alongside the railway, lost considerably over £2,000 owing to fires which had been caused by sparks from the engines. When I got up to speak I stated plainly to the people of York that the Collie coal industry was of just as much importance to me as the wheat industry. I said it was one of our primary industries, and that I was quite prepared to do all I could to help that industry. At the same time I felt that if the Government could not affix a spark arrester to the engines or provide some safeguard to the crops by eliminating this spark nuisance during the dry months of the year, I would be quite in accord with the resolution, that if the Government could not remove that danger they should protect the farmer by using Newcastle coal during the dry season. The member for Forrest the other evening made some joacular reference to myself and my knowledge of spark arresters. I do not claim to be particularly well versed as to the merits or demerits of any particular spark arrester. The member for Collie informed me recently that a spark

arrester had been tried on an engine, and it had proved so satisfactory that no spark was seen to escape from the smokestack between Brunswick and Perth, and that there was only a matter of a loss of some 10 minutes on the trip.

Mr. Wilson: That is correct.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If that is so, it should remove any objection to the use of Collie coal. I have in season and out of season urged that we should encourage our local product, and that it was a shame that we should be paying out a large sum of money as well as the freight, in bringing Newcastle coal from the other side when we have large supplies of coal of our own, which with proper safeguards ought to be used to the extent of 100 per cent. on our railways. I am now endeavouring to answer the member for Forrest, and in doing that would like to read an extract from a published letter of mine in reply to a correspondent signing himself "A. R."—

Many people in Collie are much alarmed at the attempt of some people to cripple one of the most important primary industries of the State—Collie coal. I have yet to learn that farmers or any other people want to cripple the industry. If "A.R." will read his paper closely he will find that no one has such a desire. The farmer says: "Make Collie coal safe to use in the dry months, otherwise you must use a coal that will not burn us out of house and home." If "A.R." or the Government would purchase the netting and wire, cut the posts and fix up fences, rebuild sheds, homesteads etc., burnt down, purchase the equivalent stock destroyed, and repay the losses in feed, crops and other property, the farmer would not mind so much the using of Collie coal during November, December and January, but the Government burn us out and refuse to refund, and we refuse to submit quietly to be ruined. "A.R." asks a question: "Have the farmers seen the sparks set the crops alight," and expresses the opinion that York people are undecided as to whether Collie coal is the cause. There is no shadow of doubt as to its being Collie coal. The drivers, inspectors, chief mechanical engineer, and the Minister know and admit it; do they not publicly state that 100 per cent. of Collie coal has been used on the railways during some considerable time past? Again, farmers have men following each train along their holdings on horseback to put out fires. One settler, Mr. C. Clifton, had his crop set alight three times in one day by three successive trains, but fortunately the wind was moderate and the outbreaks were scotched. "A.R." would ask the farmer if he has firebreaks. Of course he has. Where these fires were worst there is probably one of the best firebreak protected properties in the State, but hurricane winds laugh at ordinary firebreaks. In regard to cutting

down of coal orders, does "A.R." really live in Collie or in Perth. One wonders, considering that all Collie must know that their biggest customers, the Railways, have been using very little Newcastle coal for a long period; in fact, 100 per cent. of coal used to-day is Collie. It is therefore hard to understand coal orders being cut down and miners idle. Yours etc.

The point I want to make is that the Minister should give us some definite information regarding spark arresters. The dry season is getting close up, and I understand that one of the difficulties in regard to spark arresters is the variety in our types of engines, a spark arrester suitable to one type proving unsuitable to another. I hope with all my heart to see 100 per cent. of Collie coal in general use on our railways throughout the year. I hope that will be made possible by the reported evolution of an efficient spark arrester which will remove the danger of fires. In backing up the Collie coal industry the member for Collie has no heartier supporter than the member for York. But farmers cannot be expected to sit down quietly and see their crops burnt.

Mr. Wilson: If Newcastle coal is used and sets fire to the crops, what will you say then?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Is it not a fact that Collie coal is more liable to set crops on fire than is the Newcastle coal?

Mr. Wilson: No. There are more fires in New South Wales than here.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I remember travelling to Perth from Greenhills just about the time when fires were so prevalent, and the train stopped nine times for the purpose of extinguishing a fire. However, I want to see Collie coal in general use on our railways throughout the year. Some time ago a resolution was handed to me by the Farmers' and Settlers' Association asking that the Country party should take steps in Parliament with a view to imposing greater responsibility on the Government in cases where their locomotives caused fires. If the member for Mt. Magnet, for instance, whose property is alongside a railway line, had 2,000 acres of feed burnt, and sheep burnt, and fencing and a harvester destroyed, he would squeal loudly.

Hon. P. Collier: In such a case there would be compensation.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: A man at York took up the matter with the Government in such circumstances, but he did no good, on account, I understand, of not having been on the spot when the fire started. I desire to congratulate the Minister on his business acumen in establishing trucking yards. They are an absolute necessity. The Government have been very good to my electorate in this regard, but trucking yards should be established wherever sheep have to be loaded. The subject of motor ambulances I referred to the other

evening. They represent an excellent move. With regard to the Commissionship I myself think the appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel Pope a wise one, and I very much regret that some members have spoken disparagingly of it.

Mr. Willecock: Who did?

Mr. Troy: No one did.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The railway service was in a peculiar position. It was seething with discontent, and the exercise of tact and ability and a certain kind of firmness was necessary. From the "Railway Gazette" I gather that Colonel Pope approaches the men from the personal side; and that in my opinion is a very tactful move. I believe that Colonel Pope is going to fill the bill. The financial forecast furnished by the Minister is somewhat alarming, and should make members think. Heavier freights and higher fares are forecasted.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The finances should not worry you, seeing that last night you wanted millions spent.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I did not ask for millions. The question to be considered by Parliament is whether the whole of the burden of interest and sinking fund on the railways should be borne by the people in the mining and agricultural areas, whether some alteration of our railway policy in that respect should not be brought about. I would suggest as an alternative the imposition of a tax on the unimproved value of all land in the State. That seems to me much the fairer course. At present the owners of city land, who benefit so largely from the railways, escape their share of the burden. Now a word in regard to the train service. Whenever the tourist season comes round there is an outcry from the southern seaport for a more rapid and more frequent train service. As the member for Albany is Minister for Railways, I presume something will be done in that direction. I hope the Minister will see if the inordinate wait at Spencer's Brook cannot be cut out, now that there is a dining car on the train; and the unnecessary waits at sidings should also be abolished. In that event an hour or two could be cut off the time which the journey to Albany now occupies, and there would be a proportionate reduction in time of transit as regards stations along the Great Southern railway. The Minister told us last night that at present requests for painting and renovation are unreasonable. Nevertheless, I venture to urge that the covering-in of the platform at York station should be extended. Indeed, the long promised and long overdue improvements at York station should be carried out. During the war the department removed the goods office from the goods shed, transferring it to the little box that serves as the ordinary parcels office and ticket office. At present five men are working in that little box, and it must be very difficult for the staff to carry out their duties while cooped up in such a small

space with telephone bells ringing and telegraph instruments buzzing. The whole of the goods traffic of the station passes through that little office, as also work connected with parcels and tickets and general routine. Probably York station is one of the worst to be found on the Great Southern railway. With regard to cancellation of trucks, I have been asked to investigate a complaint. I have written to the department on this subject, and also made inquiries; but I do not seem able to get much further in the matter. On the 10th September, 1918, a Mr. Taylor ordered through Elder Shenton & Co., half a small truck to catch the Midland Junction market on the 18th September. On the 11th September Elder Shenton advised him that the market was full, but that they would order a truck for the 25th. On the 12th Mr. Taylor wired Elder Shenton to cancel the truck if possible. As Elder Shenton's market of the 25th was short, they advised him to forward the stock. On the 20th Mr. Taylor requested that care should be taken to instruct the York station-master to cancel the truck, and on the 21st he wired Elder Shenton following up his previous action. When the train arrived on the 23rd or 24th there was no truck. He tried to find out whether it was coming by the return train. When the train arrived the next day, he asked the guard about the truck; but there was no truck, and the guard knew nothing about it. It is quite right that people should not be allowed to order trucks indiscriminately and then cancel their order and so disarrange matters. But in this case the man tried to cancel in reasonable time. Notwithstanding, he has had to pay £1 11s. 6d. That may be right according to the regulations, but to me there seems an element of unfairness in it. The Royal Commission on the agricultural industry directed the attention of Parliament to the use of oil traction engines as likely to be advantageous on spur lines. The Commissioner recommended that inquiries should be made into the matter. Mr. J. D. Connolly, when in America, went carefully into the subject; and he furnished a report which was laid on the Table of the House. On the 15th May, 1918, I asked the then Minister for Railways what had been done regarding the report, and whether he had read it. The Minister told me he had read the report, but he proceeded to speak in very evasive terms regarding the use of oil traction engines, saying that two of them had been tried in the Eastern States and had proved failures. That was not dealing with the main issue. I have information that at Lake Louise, in the Rocky Mountains, they have a traction oil engine operating very successfully. I got a report from Mr. Darbyshire of the Transcontinental Railway, and he pointed out that there was no reason to suppose but that these oil locomotives could be successfully used with our system of spur railways.

The oil locomotives would lend themselves to use on our lines and would aid materially in reducing the cost. That is of course if oil were available. He seemed to think it was a matter worthy of consideration. He pointed out that so far as this class of engine was concerned, the failure was not altogether the fault of the engine, but it was due to the wrong type of locomotive used. More than a hundred railways in South America are equipped with motor trains in many instances for general traffic, and in some cases they have a trailer which carries 40 passengers together with their parcels and luggage. It is claimed that the operating expenses are very light, these being under 3s. per train mile. This result has been obtained in Chili, but of course we know that wages are very much lower there than they are in Western Australia. The report says—

Looking at the map showing the West Australian railway system, it is very apparent that the South-Western portion lends itself in a remarkable manner to a trial of the system outlined in your letter. There are so many short spur lines branching off the Albany line at close intervals that it would appear a provision of the motor trains would give each branch a bi-weekly service. This I take it would meet practically all requirements, especially if the train ran both ways on the same day. During the busy season in the agricultural areas the ordinary train service would meet all requirements, and the motor service would then be confined to lines in the other areas, and permit of necessary repairs, etc., being effected.

Before sitting down I would like to express my pleasure at seeing amongst us once again the member who represents the Collie coal industry in this House. I am glad to see him here and I hope he will represent Collie electorate for many years to come.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [8.20]: I do not want to adversely criticise the working of the present railways. I congratulate the Government on having appointed a Commissioner who, I think, will make good and whose influence on the service will be of benefit to the industrial conditions, and to the men working in that service, and whose influence will also be of advantage to the people who use the railways. Also from a railway point of view, I am sure he will make the best use of the material he has at his disposal. I think the appointment is a good one. Colonel Pope has had many years of experience, and if the Government decide to drop the Bill which appears on the Notice Paper, having for its object the appointment of three Commissioners, and will allow Colonel Pope an opportunity of showing what he can do, say within the next 12 months or two years, I am convinced that there will be no further talk about appointing three Commissioners. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) referred to the coal used on our railways. I would like to have a word to

say in connection with that, because it is one of the things that we have no control over in regard to the fixing of the price. The price of Collie coal is dependent on the price of Newcastle coal which is set by the board in New South Wales. There can, however, be a considerable improvement effected in the transportation of the coal. We know it deteriorates seriously through delay on the road and we find that there does not appear to be anybody in charge of the transportation of the coal. If a truck of coal is consigned from Collie to Kalgoorlie it does not appear to be anybody's business to see whether it takes that truck five or six days or five or six weeks to reach its destination.

Mr. Maley: That does not apply only to Collie coal.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The transport department is supposed to deal with these matters, and it should know whether the coal reaches its destination in a week or whether it takes a month. We know that when Collie coal is exposed it deteriorates to the extent of fully 50 per cent.

Mr. Davies: Does it take as long as you have stated to reach its destination?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Trucks have been known to be three or four weeks in reaching the Murchison goldfields and other places. During the previous industrial trouble in Kalgoorlie no one appeared to wake up to the fact that not so much coal would be required in Kalgoorlie as had been used before the trouble began. They continued to send the quantities that were used when things were normal, and consequently after the strike had been in progress for some little time there were 70 or 80 trucks of coal standing in the yard deteriorating. If ordinary business methods had been followed, somebody in control there would have reported the fact that there was then not the use for the same quantity of coal. Instead of that, day after day and week after week, the same quantities continued to arrive in Kalgoorlie only to remain exposed and to deteriorate. The member for Collie was one of the Royal Commission which investigated the Collie coal industry, and he will bear me out when I say that mixing the various coals that come from Collie improve the quality. It was demonstrated that the hard and the soft coals when mixed gave a 10 per cent. better result. We find, however, that no practical steps have been taken towards carrying out the recommendation made by the Commission in that regard. Perhaps it was not possible at the time to do that, but to-day this should be very easily and simply carried out. It is only a question of someone being in charge, and on the coal reaching its destination it could be mixed without any difficulty in the overhead bins. These are in existence in Perth, Fremantle, Geraldton, Northam, and Merredin. Then the mixed coal could be transferred to the loco. tenders, and the better result which it was demonstrated by the Commission could be attained would naturally follow. There does not appear to be any reason why this mixing of coals

should not be carried out. With reference to the transport of goods service between Midland Junction and Northam, the men who are engaged on that work are employed inordinately long hours, and we know that long hours are not good for anyone, besides which they prove very expensive. The Premier himself knows that long hours are not good. He does not like sitting here after midnight. The men on the railways do not like long hours either. It is not good from the point of view of health, and we know that the very best service is not given in consequence. Practically the same complaint was made before with regard to the goods service between Perth and Pinjarra and Brunswick. The condition of things on that line, however, has been altered by the running of trains short. There is a train now which shunts between Perth and Pinjarra, and which takes eight or nine hours to get there, whereas before, each train used to do certain roadside work, and a train which left Perth for Brunswick would take from 12 to 14 hours to do the trip. By means of organisation it was arranged that trains should only do a certain work, and now we have one train doing all the work and running short distances. The same thing could be done in connection with the stations between Midland and Northam and also other places in the State. If the change were brought about, we would find the trains, instead of taking an average of 11 or 12 hours, would reach Northam in eight hours, which is a reasonable time for anyone to spend on a locomotive at one stretch. There is another matter to which I would like to allude, and the Premier will be cognisant of the facts. I refer to allowing stock agents to handle trucks. It is about time that we reverted to the old system, and allowed the Railway Department to handle their own stock.

The Premier: There are always two sides to a question.

Mr. WILLCOCK: A majority of the people will be prepared to put up with a little inconvenience rather than have the stock controlled by a few agents who are interested in keeping that stock off the market, which is the position at the present time. A favoured few agents, whenever stock commands a high price, manage to get trucks, while those who are not so favoured cannot get trucks. There is a certain amount of rolling stock available, and I do not know that it is the proper policy for a Government institution to hand over the control of some of that rolling stock to any particular set of individuals whose intention it is not to use it for the benefit of the people as a whole. The argument may be used that the course followed by the department may be of benefit to the owners of the stock, but it certainly is not of benefit to the consumers, and it is from that point of view that the Government should give the matter consideration. I think they should certainly do what was done previously, and that is to allow the stock to be controlled by the department itself and not permit what is being

done at the present time. I understand the Premier has given some consideration to the question, but we have heard nothing as to what decision has been arrived at, notwithstanding the fact that this phase of the question has been before the Government for three months. There is another matter to which the Minister referred in introducing the Estimates, and it is the percentage of locomotives out of repair at the present time. Experts say that it is bad policy to have more than 10 per cent. of the rolling stock out of commission. At the present time we have 118 out of a total of 400 locomotives out of use. This means there is a capital expenditure of about £400,000 lying idle and not earning even interest. I know it has been difficult to obtain suitable material to effect repairs but, with better organisation, this big percentage of idle locomotives could be considerably decreased with benefit to the service and benefit to the State. It is discreditable to those in charge that over 25 per cent. of the rolling stock should be idle. If a little thought were given to the matter those responsible, instead of putting men off when things were slack, would get the locomotives put into a state of good repair so that, when the busy times returned, there would be sufficient locomotives to cope with the whole of the traffic. If this were done, the delays so often complained of during the last few months would not have occurred. I believe the Minister was a passenger by a train which was delayed for 3½ hours owing to a locomotive defect; and the Governor on the occasion of his visit to Northam had a somewhat similar experience. I do not think he was too well pleased at being hung up for an hour and a half.

Mr. O'Loughlin: It would not hurt him.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, but with a little care, such delays would not be necessary. The same engine had failed once or twice during the previous week, but it had to be kept on the road because another engine was not available to replace it. If a big proportion of the locomotives are kept idle, we cannot expect to have engines available to replace those in need of repairs. I asked several questions recently regarding washaways on the northern line. These washaways are a periodical occurrence. They occur every time there is a flood in the district, with the consequent stoppage of transport, serious inconvenience to the people, and a loss to everyone who uses the railways, in addition to the expenditure necessary for repairs. At the 193-mile on the northern line, I have seen the road washed away for a distance of a mile. Every time the washaway occurs, instead of making permanent provision to prevent a recurrence, the bank is merely re-constructed as before and things go the same until the next flood occurs. Last time a washaway occurred, it was decided to lower the line to the level of the surrounding country and about 2ft. of ballast had to be taken out. This was thrown alongside the line for a distance of about a mile. Consequently, the water banked up; it had only one little out-

let and the line was again washed away for a distance of 200 or 300 yards. This policy of laying the line on a level with the surrounding country might be all right in some parts of the State but, in big flat tracts such as we have in the North, the policy is not a good one. At present there is four or five miles of track laid on a level with the surrounding country and at flood time the water runs over it to a depth of 2ft. or 3ft. Even if the line were not washed away, the effect of the water running over it is such that the line is rendered unsafe for a few weeks afterwards. When the line was being built, a washaway occurred 10 miles further west. Provision was made to prevent a recurrence, and there has not been a washaway since. It is rather unfortunate that a washaway did not occur on the other part of the line when the railway was being built, because, though it would have meant a little extra expenditure at the time, a sum of £100,000 or £150,000 since expended on repairs at this one particular place would have been saved to the State. I do not know whether the Government have considered the question of issuing only single tickets. In most parts of the world, if a man wants to travel from one part to another he buys a ticket and is done with it. Here we issue return tickets. People might save a little money but the return ticket is of considerable inconvenience to them. Very often they do not know whether they are going to return, and I see no justification for carrying a passenger over a certain distance for a specified amount and bringing him back for half of that amount. It costs so much to take an individual a certain distance, and it should not be a matter of concern to the department whether he returns or not. A single ticket to Cue costs £4 or £5 but the return trip can be made for about £2 10s. The only advantage from the point of view of the department is that they have the use of the money free of interest for probably two or three months. There is no reason for issuing return fares.

Mr. Davies: There is a chance of a man losing his return ticket.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, and there is the difficulty of ticket scalping and the expense of employing inspectors and all sorts of disabilities. The system of issuing single tickets has been found successful in New South Wales, America, India and other parts of the world, and if the department went seriously into the matter, I think they would come to the conclusion that it would be good business to cut out the return tickets altogether. It might be all right to issue return tickets for short journeys in the metropolitan area, but even there they could be abolished. On the trams no one objects to paying single fares. In view of the amount of money spent in auditing and tracing these tickets, the trouble due to scalping and the cost of the devious methods of checking, the Government should consider whether the issuing of return tickets is worth while. They should get down to a simple business proposition by

undertaking to carry passengers to certain places for certain fares and be done with it. Supervision in the railway service is costing too much. We were told that the new loco. depot at East Perth would enable a considerable reduction to be made in the expenditure for supervision. In that depot there are 250 men, and over them are 13 or 14 foremen who do nothing but supervise. We have loco. foremen, three sub-foremen, three shed drivers, leading boilermakers, leading fitters, leading examiners, leading carpenters, and leading painters. Now that we have an up-to-date depot and everything necessary for its successful operation, we should be able to cut out some of this expenditure. It should be sufficient to have one or two men in control. In all the districts we have a large number of men who do no work at all. In the Ways and Works we have an engineer, an inspector of buildings, inspectors of permanent way, leading fitter, leading carpenter, leading painter, and so on, all of whom do no work at all. It is about time the department got down to work and cut out some of these bosses. If one walks through the Perth yards, every second or third man he comes across is a boss who does no work. This policy has been carried on for so long that the men who do the work do not receive the remuneration they earn. The railways are going back; bosses are to be found here, there and everywhere, and every bit of correspondence from a man in the service has to pass through eight or ten bosses before it can reach the Commissioner. The appointment of Mr. Backshall, although adversely criticised by the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) was, I think, a good move on the part of the acting Commissioner to obviate the need for many matters passing through so many hands. When there is a derailment three different departments are interested, the permanent way, the traffic, and the loco., and a joint inquiry is held. The object of each is to sheet home the blame to the other fellow. The permanent way chap pretends that his track was safe and he blames the Traffic Department. The Traffic Department blames the loco. man and he, in turn, puts it on to the permanent way.

The Minister for Mines: Finally it goes to the office boy who was away on long service leave at the time.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It does not matter whether there is a reprimand or not, the bosses walk about and take no responsibility. We never hear of them being reprimanded. We want the Commissioner to find out who is responsible but he cannot find it out. If it could be determined who was to blame steps could be taken to obviate a recurrence of the trouble. In the superintendent of operations, the Commissioner has a man with practical experience in many branches of the service, a man who will be able to interview people on the spot and report direct to the Commissioner as to the party responsible. In the past the object of the reports which passed through so many hands seemed to be not to assist investigation, but to satisfy some one without blaming anybody.

The Minister for Mines: Unavoidable!

Mr. WILLCOCK: The policy of the Commissioner should not be so much to find someone whom he can hold responsible and punish as to ascertain the cause of the accident and take steps to avoid any recurrence. In railway working, the employees have to take certain risks in order to get through the work. In some parts, if the railway men acted on the regulations of the rule book, the service would be hung up for days. Therefore the men do take risks and do things which, although contrary to the rules, come off ninety-nine times out of a hundred, to expedite the working of the service. If a man happens to make a mistake in those circumstances and it is proved against him, there should be no occasion to punish him. I think the appointment of Mr. Backshall, who has had considerable experience in railway work, will be a good thing for the service. Also he has had a great deal of industrial experience. He understands what the men want and so can avoid what has been the cause of much of the industrial unrest in the past. Another thing which has a bearing on the industrial question is the system of turning up the records of the men in the service. In Queensland the system is that if a man has done anything wrong he is punished and fined but, if for the two succeeding years he maintains a good record, his previous delinquencies are wiped off the slate. Under our system a man may have 10 or 15 years of unblemished service to his credit, yet if he applies for promotion his record is turned up, and if it be found that he did something away back in 1901 it counts against him. That is not a proper system at all. There is nothing more discouraging to a railway man than to be continually fined and reprimanded and then after a clear run of three or four years, if he applies for an improved position, to have the old charges raked up against him and his chance of promotion spoilt. If the Government were to adopt the Queensland policy of wiping off the crime sheet, as the military term it, after a given period of exemplary conduct, much more satisfactory results would be achieved. Two or three years of good faithful service should be sufficient to wipe off at least minor blemishes of an earlier period. I myself have experienced the discouragement of finding old scores raked up against me when I applied for promotion. It does not give much encouragement to try to avoid black marks. The member for Cue (Mr. Chosson) referred to the disposition of officers. I do not think the best use is being made of men in the department. On the northern line a station like Wurarga with a traffic of about 10 tons per month has a station-master, whereas Pindar, the next station, with ten times as much traffic, particularly when the wool is coming in from the Upper Murchison, has no station-master. In regard to the recent arrangement made at Geraldton for the handling of wool, the department was collecting one shilling a ton from the wool

merchants and the men in the town were paid 13s. 4d. for handling the wool, while the men in the Railways were paid only 11s. Industrial trouble ensued in consequence, but the department would not increase the rates, and finally an arrangement was made with the merchants that they were to load and unload their own trucks. The department allowed 7d. per ton rebate to the merchants for loading their own trucks. On this rebate an ordinary man could earn for his employer 17s. or 18s. per day on the average output, and the department, instead of paying the men 13s. 4d. and retaining the difference, gave this rebate to the merchants, who paid the men 13s. 4d. and received from the department, on the ordinary working of one man, about 18s. 6d. per day. The department could just as easily have done the work itself and saved the difference. The work was given to the merchants solely because the department did not wish to create a precedent by paying its men the same rate as was paid in the town. The department should take control again of its own men and pay the rate paid in the town and so avoid industrial trouble. I hope it will not be found necessary to increase the railway freights very considerably. I trust the Government will not introduce this session an amendment of the Railway Act to provide for three Commissioners, but will give the acting Commissioner an opportunity for showing whether or not he can run the service. Given that opportunity he will be able, I am sure, to work the system to such advantage that we shall not be losing in administration the amount we have lost during the past few years.

Mr. ROCKE (South Fremantle) [8.55]: Considering all the circumstances attendant on abnormal years, there are facts indicated in the Minister's speech which give food for reflection. Not all of those facts are discouraging. Undoubtedly the magnitude of this trading concern known as the Railway Department gives cause for anxiety, especially when we look carefully over the figures placed before the House by the Minister last night. The loss during the war period, namely, £942,000, is said to compare favourably with the results in the Eastern States; but that might mean anything or nothing. Unless we have the figures of the other States for comparison, we cannot arrive at any conclusion in this respect. The figures representing revenue and expenditure are rather serious when we get down to bedrock. Although we find that the surplus of earnings over expenditure is £300,000, we are faced with the very serious deficit caused by the interest charges of £665,000. That gives a deficit of exactly £1,000 per day for every day in the year. The estimated receipts and expenditure for the current year are very similar to those of the year just gone by, but those figures, we are told by the Minister, are without making allowance for the new scale of

wages which has been decided upon by the Arbitration Court. But in the forecast for the coming year we find the interest charge increased by £8,000, making a total of £673,000. The serious questions which have to be faced are how to meet the interest charges upon our railways and, again, what is the cause of our high expenditure and consequently high interest bill? Dealing with the figures we cannot lose sight of the fact that we are but a handful of people in a vast territory and consequently our railways, when we take into consideration their mileage, amount to something of considerable magnitude. But that is not the only reason. We find that we take our railways through many miles of unimproved land; and in this case we have the peculiar anomaly that whereas land, strictly speaking, is one of the only two sources of real wealth, here we find that some of the land becomes the cause of poverty in respect of our railways. The remedy has been mentioned time and again in the House. It has been touched upon to-night. I will not worry the Committee by going over it again, but I remind the Committee that I believe the remedy lies in subjecting that un-used land to a tax on its unimproved value. It is necessary to bring that land into use, and if the land were taxed so as it would have to come into use, it would be revenue producing, and would help us to carry our abnormal railway charges. It is not fair to the farmers who have had to go outback to have to pay the freight through that country which is not used. If it were brought into use, then the people whom the member for Sussex professes to represent should get considerable relief from the burden they are carrying at the present time. The question of bringing into proper working order the non-paying lines of the State is one of considerable importance. I must repeat my appreciation of the work which is being done in connection with the attempt to place upon the railways a system of motor transport. I hope the Minister will give further consideration to the question of extending the use of motor charabancs. I believe if this were given effect to not only would the non-paying agricultural railways benefit, and of course the people to whom these railways take goods and from whom they receive them, but also the other lines which are at present non-paying. We have several of these not far from the metropolis; in fact we have one running out of Fremantle to Jandakot and Armadale. If we could instal on that line a charabanc service we would be able to give the residents a better service, and at a cheaper rate compared with that which they are getting at present. If we could institute that service we would probably solve the problem which is facing us in the near future in connection with the prospective line from Rockingham to Mandurah. It is the intention of the Government to open up that district of fine land. A system of drainage has first of



all to be installed, and already I believe the Government are in receipt of information from their engineers to the effect that a drainage system can be successfully installed. This should have the effect of reclaiming many thousands of acres of first class land.

The Minister for Mines: We have not got enough land in Western Australia with good water on it.

Mr. ROCKE: I hope this system of locomotion may be encouraged, so that the non-paying lines may be made to pay. The abnormal seasons through which we have passed have resulted in decreased earnings on the railways, and in increased expenditure. With the return of normal times we have every reason to believe that the position of the railways will be improved, provided they are capably managed and given every chance of recouping the loss they have suffered during the last few years. We, of course, will expect increased traffic from the timber industry which was crippled during the war period, and from other industries which were partially paralysed. Taking everything into consideration, I believe the future has much encouragement in store for us. I must congratulate the Government upon the appointment of Colonel Pope to the position of Acting Commissioner of Railways. If he continues to give satisfaction, which apparently he is giving to the department, I hope the appointment will be made permanent. Harmony existing in the service means efficiency, and if we can have an efficient service then the people will reap the benefit of it. The Minister let drop some hints last night in connection with railway management. He mentioned two instances in particular, one of which I am concerned in, and that is the reference to refreshment rooms. I hope the reform mentioned by the Minister has reference to the conduct of these refreshment rooms.

Mr. Lutley: I hope we will get the bar back on the express.

The Minister for Mines: You have no chance of that.

Mr. ROCKE: If the closing of the bar means improved conditions in the railways, I hope that the bar will remain closed.

The Minister for Mines: It is closed.

Mr. ROCKE: Whilst everyone knows I am opposed to the liquor traffic because I believe it to be opposed to the best interests of the people, I have on every occasion claimed that justice should be done to the licensed victuallers. Those who are called upon to pay heavy license fees and are given the privilege of selling fermented liquors, whether that is right or wrong, have to conduct their business within limited hours. Some refreshment rooms on the railways, particularly those in the metropolitan area, are no better than public houses, but they have the advantage of hours of trade which the licensed victualler does not possess. That is not fair. The talk about catering for the travelling

public so far as the metropolitan centres are concerned, is more piffle. There are one or two refreshment rooms which are drinking shops and nothing else. I hardly know how to deal with the question of level crossings.

The Minister for Mines: Not level crossings.

Mr. ROCKE: Then I would call them road crossings over railways. How we are to overcome the difficulty of these crossings I do not know. If the system of gates and gate houses, which was in vogue some years ago in Victoria, were instituted here we might have been able to save some of the lives that have been lost. I do not know if the cost of that system would be prohibitive.

The Minister for Mines: It would cost £10 per week per crossing.

Mr. ROCKE: We have lost many lives in Western Australia at these railway crossings, and I think that £10 per crossing per week would not be an excessive expenditure compared with the value of human life.

The Minister for Mines: Someone has to find the money; it does not come from the clouds.

Mr. ROCKE: People who are called upon to pay for the public services which are given to them would have to pay for this.

The Minister for Mines: It is not a service at all; it is merely an additional warning to the people who should know their own job.

Mr. ROCKE: It is necessary to put a gate keeper there, and a gate keeper renders a service to the public. He need not be a man in robust health. He might be a man who has given some years of his life to the service of the railways, or the gates might be kept by the widow of some railway employee. That is the policy followed in Victoria. I should like to see a system somewhat on those lines instituted here. We are only a handful of people and cannot afford to lose even one life.

The Minister for Mines: We lost a few people on the river the other day. Do you imagine that people will not go on the river in consequence? Everyone knows that when they cross a railway crossing there is danger, and they must look out for it.

Mr. ROCKE: People notice what they believe to be a danger. If we go into the question of the manner in which fatal accidents have occurred we will find that a person has waited for a train to pass and, thinking the line is clear, has stepped on to it only to be knocked down by a train coming from the opposite direction.

The Minister for Mines: They ought not to think. There are notices placed up for them to look both ways before crossing.

Mr. ROCKE: They do look both ways. People usually are careful not to cross the line when a train is in sight, but it may happen that another train coming from the opposite direction is tem-

porarily hidden from view, and people cross the line after the first train has passed thinking they are safe in doing so. I hope the Minister will make the railways as safe as possible from this point of view. There are several grievances from the country and metropolitan areas in regard to the service that is given to the public. Between Perth and Fremantle at certain hours of the day it is hardly possible to get seating accommodation. The whole thing could be rectified in a simple manner and at very little cost if one or two additional coaches were attached to certain trains. The cost of haulage would not be much, and great relief would be afforded to the travelling public.

The Minister for Mines: Each engine has a maximum load which it can haul.

Mr. ROCKE: I do not think the engines are working up to their maximum; I have not heard it said that they are. I have seen engines hauling, during the excursion season, two or four extra coaches in addition to the normal train. The engines, therefore, cannot be working at their maximum. I hope the Minister will do all in his power to promote the welfare of the railways.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [9.11]: One hon. member stated that he apprehended danger from the use of Collie coal in the agricultural districts. Farmers would be glad to see 100 per cent. of Collie coal used on our railways, provided the Commissioner takes in time the necessary precautions to establish firebreaks along the line.

The Minister for Mines: We do our part.

Mr. MALEY: I brought up the matter last year, when the Minister was not in the House, and moved the adjournment of the House to draw attention to the question. I did not do this for the purpose of preventing the use of Collie coal, but to draw the attention of the Commissioner to the necessity for fire breaks being made at the proper time of the year. In this morning's paper we find published the recent award which, it is stated, means an additional expenditure of approximately a quarter of a million a year on the railways. I have no objection to men getting a fair wage, and a right wage. When, however, it comes to a question of another shilling a day all round, involving a sum of no less than £250,000 a year, we must ask ourselves the question as to which portion of the community will have to pay this money. That money has practically to be found by the users of the system, namely, the producers, and this will mean an additional burden being placed on the producer.

The Minister for Mines: The producer should have awakened to that long ago.

Mr. MALEY: I do not know where this policy of automatic increases will end or land the State. I have no quarrel with the worker receiving his rights, because he is due for them.

The Minister for Mines: Why is he due for them?

Mr. MALEY: Apparently by some process—

The Minister for Mines: He is given the money with which to purchase that which he requires, namely, that which the farmers produce.

Mr. MALEY: The farmer has a prospect—it has not materialised yet—of getting a payable price for his wheat in one year out of four. Apparently he is going to receive 5s. per bushel this year; but that price will not represent a real advance, in view of the increased railway freights which have been foreshadowed and the inevitable increases in his cost of production. If we recognise our railway service as a link in the general scheme of development of the country, we can regard with a certain degree of complacency the fact that a large proportion of the interest and sinking fund charges may have to be borne by the general revenue. The same thing obtained in the development of the Eastern goldfields through the Coolgardie Water Scheme. That scheme has never since its inception paid interest and sinking fund charges, but has always been a burden on the general revenue.

The Minister for Mines: The sinking fund charge on the Coolgardie Water Scheme is three per cent., whereas on the railways it is only one-half per cent.

Mr. MALEY: The difference is only one of degree.

Hon. P. Collier: It makes a considerable difference as regards the loss you speak of.

Mr. MALEY: Our railway service has got into such an abominable condition of red-tapism and multiplicity of regulations that it takes an ordinary official fully an hour to make up his mind how he can deal with your business at all. He turns up regulations galore that govern his conduct. There is a lack of co-ordination between the various branches of the department. I can give an instance in point, and I may remind the Minister for Railways that when he was Premier of this country he had various instances brought under his notice. It is an extraordinary fact that the Geraldton Flour Milling Company were engaged for three or four years endeavouring to get a railway siding put into their property. The Minister knows of the matter through having been taken over the site by Mr. Stone, a former member for Greenough. In the meantime, owing to resumption of land for the enlargement of the Geraldton railway yards, Millars' Timber and Trading Company had to shift from their site, and they acquired land adjoining the site of the flour mill and farther away from the railway station. The door of the Geraldton flour mill happens to be only the width of the street away from the locomotive yard, and an expenditure of a couple of hundred pounds would have put a siding in. However, Millars' succeeded in getting a siding into their property on the other side of the road. That being so, the flour milling company entered into an agreement with Millars' to pay half the cost of putting the siding into Millars' property if the Railway Department would agree to extend the siding to the door of the flour mill, a distance

not much over a chain. Millars immediately entered into negotiations with the district engineer, whose function is to say whether these things can be done. The officer said that it could be done, and undertook to do it. A turntable was procured from the old Northampton railway station and brought to Geraldton and installed. Then the siding was carried to the mill door. No sooner had the district engineer completed his portion of the work, than the district traffic superintendent announced his refusal to work the siding. Surely there is something wrong when the two heads failed to consult beforehand in such a case. The flour milling company were not much concerned, because in the circumstances they simply refused to complete their agreement with Millars. Eventually the flour milling company did get a siding in, but for that purpose they had to buy land on the other side of Millars' property, which is on the eastern side of the flour mill. This additional land was needed for the purpose of a dead end, to get sufficient land to enable the Railway Department to shunt trucks. Instead of getting a siding into the mill for £200 or £300 at the outside, it has cost the flour milling company no less than £1,860.

The Minister for Mines: The siding could not have been put in for £200 or £300.

Mr. MALEY: For £300 at the outside. It only required a chain of line. The Railway Department have a rule that no siding can be put in except off the main line, and in this respect it sometimes seems impossible to obtain from the department assistance to industry in the shape of siding communication. I can give another illustration of how the Railway Department have assisted the same flour-milling company in the development of their industry. Some time ago the company decided to double the plant in their mill. After assembling their machinery, which owing to war conditions was obtained at very considerable expense, they had to close down the plant for, as they thought, three weeks. They kept sufficient stocks of flour on hand to supply the district during that time. They had decided as soon as they closed down to send the old rolls to Adelaide, which was the nearest place where they could be re-grooved and re-ground. This was during the shipping strike, and arrangements were made at the Geraldton goods shed for the quick despatch of the rolls to Perth, whence they were to be sent to Kalgoorlie for transport by the Great Western Railway to Adelaide. The freight on the three cases of rolls, amounting to £21, was prepaid; and all arrangements, it was thought, had been made for quick delivery. The rolls left Geraldton on the night they were consigned, and they arrived in Perth on the morning of the next day but one. After that, they lay in Perth goods sheds for a period of no less than three weeks before they were sent to Kalgoorlie. I understand that the Commissioner made inquiries into the cause of delay, and that three or four people were found to be responsible. However, it could not be found that one person was more responsible than any other. Event-

ually, I suppose, a porter or a ticket boy got the blame. If the Commissioner owing to the methods of appeal against censure or dismissal, cannot deal with the railway servants, that state of things requires altering. Here was a specific case in which it was proved that two or three men were responsible; yet no action whatever was taken. The result of the delay was that the mill, instead of being closed down for three weeks, was closed down for six. The mill has a turnover of about £10,000 per month, and it lost 1½ months' turnover. The staff were unemployed for at least a month. Moreover, our stocks in the Geraldton and Murchison districts became exhausted, and supplies had to be obtained from Perth at an extra cost to the consumer of £2 10s. per ton. We asked by wire whether the first lot could be sent by passenger train and the other two sets, when completed, by goods train. It is a singular thing that the last set which was sent by goods train got here before the set which was sent by passenger train. It seems to be an extraordinary thing that, on top of the first breach, an additional handicap should have been imposed upon the milling company. Let me give another instance. A man on the Murchison had the misfortune to break the differential of his motor car. He wired to an agent in Perth to see if he could get another, and he received a reply that none was to be obtained and that it would be necessary to wire to Adelaide for one. The man asked that an order should be given for one in Adelaide, and that a request should be made that it be sent over by passenger train from Adelaide, so that no time should be lost. The man in question waited for over three weeks and nothing happened. Then he received a telegram from the firm in Adelaide stating that the differential had been reconsigned from Perth to Adelaide marked "Address of Yalgoo was not known in Western Australia." It was a remarkable thing that anyone with so much initiative could have been found to return this article so promptly to Adelaide. With regard to the attention which should be given towards development in the country, I would urge that the provision of overhead bridges or subways in the metropolitan area, for the protection of life, should be suspended until something more has been done for the country districts which require attention more urgently than the metropolitan area. I sincerely trust that before there is any more expenditure in the metropolitan area in connection with overhead bridges, or even in connection with tramways, something will be done to develop the industries in the country. There is too big a proportion of the population in the city already.

The Minister for Mines: And you want to thin them out.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That was a very unfortunate remark of yours.

Mr. MALEY: I only mentioned that in order to correct any impression that may remain on the mind of the member for North-East Fremantle. My only desire is to see

the finances of the State restored by means of increased production, but if we adopt a policy of increasing freights in order to meet the obligations which have been thrown upon us as the result of the Arbitration Court award, we shall give a set back to the producing community and put one more nail into the coffin of further production.

[Mr. Picse took the Chair.]

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [9.35]: With regard to the railway freights, I understood from the Minister's remarks last evening that, in order to meet the increases provided in the Arbitration Court award, it was proposed to impose increases in various directions. I ask, however, whether other means cannot be found by which it will be possible to meet the obligations that the Government will have to accept as a result of the recent award. Surely the Government can find some other means of raising the necessary revenue.

Mr. Davies: What do you suggest?

Mr. TROY: I will make my suggestions as I go along. If the Government do increase freights and fares, they are going to increase the burdens which have already been imposed on the primary producer of Western Australia, whether he be engaged in the mining, pastoral, or agricultural industries. Ever since the war began the primary producer has borne almost, if not the whole of the burden. The railway freights were increased by the Wilson Government, and in my electorate that had a very bad effect on the mining industry. The mining industry to-day is not flourishing, because the cost of production is excessive, and a great deal of that cost is due to the railway rates. Gold has not increased in value, anyhow not to the producer since the war began, and the person responsible for the gold production, whilst he receives no greater value for that which he produces, has to pay considerably more, in some cases 100 per cent., for the commodities he requires. Again, the worker employed in the mining industry has been compelled to pay more for his food supplies and clothing than he did previously. It must also be remembered, in my electorate on the Murchison, not one worker has secured a solitary penny by way of increase in wages since the war began. Those people have borne with extraordinary patience the heavy burdens imposed on them, but if any of those men went out on strike the Press of the State would condemn them as being unpatriotic and opposed to law and order. I want to point out that those people cannot remain passive for all time, and if they are asked to bear additional burdens in the shape of extra railway charges, they will become exasperated. The workers must ask for increased wages in order to live and when they do that the people who are producing gold, whether they be prospectors or mine owners will insist that they will not be able to carry on the industry. The same thing applies with regard to the agricultural industry. A per-

son engaged in agriculture has to bear the heavy freights. Do we imagine for a moment that he will be advantaged by the additional burdens in the shape of increased freights? The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) suggested that Parliament impose a tax on the unimproved value of land and make the city lands pay their fair contribution to the taxation of this country. I agree with him heart-whole. I see no reason why the people living in the city should not bear some of the burden of the taxation of this country since they share in the services of the railways. I agree with the hon. member that it is time we imposed a tax of that character to relieve the primary producer. The Minister, by way of interjection, when the member for Greenough was speaking, said that the reason for the increases in wages was the fact that the producer was receiving more for his product.

The Minister for Mines: I said he needs more to purchase his requirements.

Mr. TROY: I will admit that there is a reason for the requirements of the people being more costly than they were formerly, but the Minister will not deny that the curse of our present system is that the man who makes money out of the community is the man who escapes taxation. Take the merchant in the city and the importer also in the city. These men do not pay one cent. in railway rates. They pass the whole of the burden on to the community. That is the curse of our present system and it is wrong.

Mr. Davies: It is the curse of every country.

Mr. TROY: The hon. member knows that he cannot deal with that curse by sitting where he is.

Mr. Davies: Would he be able to do better if he were where you are?

Mr. TROY: Yes, and the hon. member knows it. If the hon. member ever did profess any principle worth professing, he must admit that while he sits cheek by jowl with the profiteers and the merchants, whom he recently represented at the National conference in Melbourne, he will never be able to vote against them. The man who produces and who is building up the country is a more useful citizen than the man who sits in his office in the city and escapes the burden by passing it on. Why do not the Government compel this man to pay his fair share?

The Minister for Mines: In what direction?

Mr. TROY: Take R. P. Vincent: He is a profiteer. His profits during the first year of the war were far greater than they were before the war. Why not make him pay a fair share? He has made his profits at the expense of the community and he has not paid one penny towards the railway rates, because he has passed this on.

Mr. Nairn: Some men in the country have made just as great profits. I know one man who made £1,500 out of potatoes the other day.

Mr. TROY: That man should pay his fair share of taxation. I will do all I can to assist the Government if they will bring in a Bill to compel such men to pay their fair share of taxation. That is the trouble with our whole system, that while shipping companies and other commercial institutions can raise prices and thereby increase the cost of production, wages in consequence must go up and the State service will not pay. If the railways were privately controlled, the same thing would operate there. This is the reason for the existence of the vicious principle that, no matter how we raise wages, the worker and the producer are robbed by the exploiting profiteer. It is alleged that because the farmer is receiving 5s. a bushel for his wheat at the siding this year, he is making an extraordinary profit. I do not think he is.

Mr. Nairn: Would he take 6s. if he could get it?

Mr. Davies: He would take 9s.

Mr. TROY: He would take it, but I say the Government should take from him a fair share of taxation.

Mr. Pickering: They take it in the shape of freights.

Mr. TROY: The gold producer is getting £3 17s. 6d. to £4 an ounce for his gold. The man who works in the mining industry and receives an average wage of £3 10s. a week has to pay considerably more for his commodities than prior to the war, and he does not receive one penny more in wages. His patience cannot continue; it will soon become exhausted owing to the conditions under which he is labouring. I strongly object to that body of people living in the outback portions of the State under the worst possible conditions having heavier penalties imposed upon them. The Minister, in suggesting increased railway rates, should take into consideration the position of those people who have borne too great a portion of the burden during the whole term of the war. If it is fair and justifiable, as the member for York suggested, to tax the unearned increment on land, it is equally fair to tax the unearned increment of the profiteer who made his money out of the blood and sorrow of people during the war. The money which the profiteers have taken represents the unearned increment of anguish and sorrow during the war, and the Government ought to take that from them. This is the one thing that brought me to my feet. It is not fair to impose further disabilities on the pioneers of the country when the people of the city go comparatively scot-free. I have nothing to say in opposition to the appointment of Colonel Pope as acting Commissioner. I know nothing of his qualifications and I am not going to criticise a man until I know something of his capacity. I have interviewed him several times and I can say he has a very pleasant manner. If he says no, he says it in a very pleasant way. Therefore, if I feel at all antagonistic towards his decisions, I am disarmed because he states

them diplomatically. I confess I am personally wanting in these forms of diplomacy.

Hon. P. Collier: You ought to interview him frequently and try to cultivate it.

Mr. TROY: I have no objection to the appointment of Mr. Backshall. I do not know that the acting Commissioner was imbued with any reason other than that of getting the most suitable man. I came into conflict with the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) because I objected to his everlasting posing as the apostle of the returned soldiers and, though Mr. Backshall is not a returned soldier, he probably is the best man the Government could find for the position. I do not know whether he is or not.

The Minister for Mines: He has to serve the Commissioner and the Commissioner should receive some consideration.

Mr. TROY: If a returned soldier had the qualifications, he should have been appointed but if not, I do not object to the acting Commissioner appointing Mr. Backshall. If Mr. Foley thinks an injustice has been done to the returned soldier, why does not he give way in regard to the appointments he holds?

Mr. Davies: He means the returned soldier employees.

Mr. TROY: The member for Leonora enjoys considerable patronage in the way of motor cars, free telephones and free trips and expenses over East. For his apostasy he has received these advantages and why does not he give place to a returned soldier? I am not going to insist that a man should be appointed to any office in order to curry favour with any section of citizens. If the Commissioner can satisfy me that the man he has chosen is the best man for the position, I shall be satisfied to support him. I hope that when the Government are considering the question of railway freights, they will consider it from the aspect that the primary producer cannot carry too great a burden. The Minister objected when the late Mr. Wilson raised the railway freights.

The Minister for Mines: On what I termed the rule of thumb method.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He reduced them in one direction to the extent of £60,000.

Mr. Pickering: That was for manures.

Mr. TROY: I do not believe in the railways carrying manures at a loss. We should pay a fair thing. I am not prepared to give a concession in one way and take it away in another. It is pure deception. Let us pay a fair and reasonable thing, but let the Government tax the body of men in the city who have had so much influence with them and who have practically controlled the Government during the last five years. Let them be made to pay a fair share, for the time is coming when the people who are pioneering the country will strongly oppose any further burdens being imposed upon them. While I am told that the railway service is not satisfactory in the metropolitan area, it is equally unsatisfactory in the country districts. The member for North-East Fremantle

(Mr. Angwin) referred to the fact that people had to hang on to the straps when travelling from Fremantle.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not refer to it, but it is quite right.

Mr. TROY: In the back country we suffer greater disadvantages.

The Minister for Mines: It is the same all over the world.

Mr. TROY: In the Murchison we have two through trains per week. That is a very poor service for people who are pioneering the country but we have to put up with it. My constituents frequently raise the question but I do not blame the Government. I tell them the country in its present position cannot afford more and we have to put up with it. To the danger of my own popularity I fear, I frequently defend when probably I ought to attack. At the same time, I must admit there are services in my electorate which do not pay. I am indebted to the Railway Department because they run a weekly service to Sandstone. That service does not pay, but it is a boon to the people to get a train service and mail once a week. I should like a better service but I cannot reasonably ask for it and I am not going to attack the Government for not giving a better service. I thank them for what they have given.

Mr. Pickering: A very humble attitude.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You must be wanting something.

Mr. TROY: No. I discussed with the acting Commissioner the positions of station-master at Sandstone and Day Dawn. I admit the member for Cue (Mr. Chesson) has very strong arguments to support the retention of the officer at Day Dawn, but I have not similarly strong arguments to offer for the retention of the officer at Sandstone. I do not see why, for a very doubtful advantage, people should stick out for one facility when they are being met to a greater extent in some other direction. We are being met very reasonably, and I hope nothing will be done to interfere with the service because it is a boon to a body of citizens who are carrying on the development of the far back areas of this country. I could wish that the Murchison railways might be improved and that the Commissioner might carry out the promise given some years ago by Mr. Lord, that the two trains running to the Murchison would cut the time down by four hours.

The Minister for Mines: There must be a reduction on the new time table.

Mr. TROY: No there is not. I hope the Commissioner will see that decent travelling facilities are provided for the passengers. I have frequently found the water supply inadequate and sometimes lacking; during the summer this is a great hardship. I oppose any proposal to increase freights and fares which would be a burden on the people of the country.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [9.59]: Outside the appointment of the acting Commissioner of Railways, I suppose the appointment of Mr. Backshall has aroused more criticism

than anything done in the Railway Department during the last few months.

The Minister for Mines: There has been no criticism.

Mr. DAVIES: I know there has been much criticism but, whether it has been justified, I shall not say at present. Last session the Government brought down what was known as the three-Commissioner Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was thrown out, and it will be thrown out again if it comes back.

Mr. DAVIES: Apparently there will be no need to bring down the three-commissioner Bill this session. If the Minister is correctly reported in this morning's Press, he has said that the Acting Commissioner has the qualifications of three average men. If Colonel Pope is what the Minister believes him to be—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Give him a trial.

Mr. DAVIES: I think he will have a trial. The railway men are out to give him a fair deal, and I believe he is out to give them a fair deal. In the appointment of Mr. Backshall, I think a wise choice was made. I have known Mr. Backshall for a number of years, and I can say there is no man in the State who stands so high with the workers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If he can get the same result for the department as he got for the men, he will be all right.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so. The Acting Commissioner had the courage to depart from the custom of the service and promote a man from the ranks, just as the Government were courageous enough to promote Colonel Pope himself over others higher in the service. I hope the appointment will prove to have been a very wise one. The Acting Commissioner is going on right lines. Already he has the thanks of the community for having cut out the liquor on the Kalgoorlie express dining car, except when served with meals. If he could but hear the blessings called down upon his head by the great bulk of the passengers he would be gratified.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The member for Coolgardie had something to do with that.

Mr. DAVIES: I think the Acting Commissioner could cut out the liquor on that train altogether. Recently I visited the Eastern States, and I feel safe in saying that the Kalgoorlie express is the only overland train in Australia with a "wet" dining car. Reference was made by the member for Greenough (Mr. Maloy) to the increases given to the men in the railway service. I congratulate those men on the Arbitration Court's award. Let hon. members, particularly those representing the farmers, consider what it would mean to the community if the railway men of this State adopted the tactics that other workers have adopted to secure improved conditions. Suppose they had adopted direct action! As far back as last August the State Arbitration Court declared a basic

wage of 11s. a day, yet we allowed the railway men to continue working on 10s. a day and we said nothing.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You support a Government that paid 9s. 7d. a day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I raised the question in the House.

Mr. DAVIES: So did I, on the Address-in-reply. Had those men taken the bull by the horns, the authorities would have had an unpleasant awakening. However, the Arbitration Court has now delivered its award. I congratulate the Minister for Railways upon his statement, made last night, that the Government intend to offer to the rest of the service an increase commensurate with the Arbitration Court's award. I hope they will not only offer it, but will actually bring it into operation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That statement applies only to the railways.

Mr. DAVIES: The Minister said that it would apply to the rest of the service. During the Address-in-reply I urged an amendment of the Arbitration Act, with a view to making the basic wage a common rule. If that were done there would be no need to wait till the Government extended the award of the court.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Arbitration Court gives a spinster barmaid in Perth £3 14s. a week, and gives only £2 17s. to a timber worker with seven or eight children.

Mr. DAVIES: Of course there are anomalies. In the case of the shop assistants' award the assistants get a minimum of £3 6s. by an industrial agreement, in addition to which they get a reduction of about 15 per cent. on the prices of groceries and draperies. Consider that in comparison with the position of the timber workers! The question of level crossings is a most difficult one. I appreciate the position of the department, but I congratulate the Minister on having declared that he will arrange for a conference. I should like to point to the want of lighting in railway carriages, and compare that lighting with the lighting of the trams. In a second-class railway carriage there is only one small lamp in a compartment seating ten persons, yet on a street car—and both services are under the one Commissioner—we find from 15 to 20 bright lamps.

The Minister for Mines: But you have the electric current on the car.

Mr. DAVIES: And there is electricity on the train. The lighting of the railway carriages should be brought up to that of the trams. I understand that the debate has taken longer than was expected, and I have no wish to delay the business of the House. Probably I shall have an opportunity for saying a word or two on some of the items.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [10.10]: Last session I asked the then Minister for Railways whether he would obtain a report on the effect of the working of the motor train

service in Tasmania. I was promised that this question would be looked into. No information has yet been given.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We require to electrify the railways.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not think we shall be able to consider that for a long time to come.

The Minister for Mines: It would pay handsomely.

Mr. PICKERING: The service on the country spur lines could be greatly increased by the use of motor trains. There are on the Donnybrook line seven sidings which have not loading platforms. It puts a great deal of extra work on the settlers, and I think the Minister should endeavour to see if the department, in conjunction with the settlers, could not provide these facilities.

The Minister for Mines: You find us the material.

Mr. PICKERING: I think the settlers would assist the department in that direction. A town I represent is one of the most important seaside resorts in Western Australia, and I hope the Minister will see that an adequate time-table is provided for the coming summer season. Also, I think we should have a through carriage at least once a week from Perth to Busselton. Donnybrook, another town in my electorate, is suffering under the disability of not being classed as a market town. It is time that disability was removed. For some considerable time past the traffic at Capel station has been well controlled by the wife of a permanent-way man, there being no station-master there. The work is much too heavy, and the remuneration paid is altogether inadequate. The fruit season is coming on—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are we going to have cheaper fruit?

Mr. PICKERING: Very likely, and probably cheaper potatoes also. The amount of cream that comes through that station is very considerable. In consequence of not having a station-master at Capel every train is hung up there for about twenty minutes. The people of that district, which is an important one, consider that they are entitled to the services of a station-master.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a nice Arcadian spot to spend 20 minutes in.

Mr. PICKERING: It is not an Arcadian spot. It is a prosperous part of the State. It has in its district the Stirling estate, which has been well developed and is sending away big supplies of produce to the different centres. I want to see a station-master appointed to this particular station. The woman who has been occupying that office for a considerable time should have her claim for some allowance considered by the Railway Department.

The Premier: She has been there for years.

Mr. PICKERING: I wish to deal with the question which has been touched upon by the member for Leonora and the member for Guildford, namely the appointment of Mr. Backshall to a certain office of in-

spector. This matter was brought under my notice by several officers of the Railway Department. I should like to know whether the rule belongs to the railway service, which applies to the civil service generally, namely, that promotion should take place from within the service. I know one or two railway officers who occupied very high positions in that service before going to the war. They have come back fully equipped for such an appointment as that held by Mr. Backshall, but have had no opportunity of competing for it. The Government made every promise to those men when they left for the Front, and it would have been only fair that such an appointment should have been kept vacant until they had had an opportunity of putting in their applications. In the case of the Acting Commissioner himself, the appointment was made from within the service and this other appointment should also have been filled from within the service.

The Minister for Mines: It is filled from within the service. Mr. Backshall was in the service and took up a position affecting the organisation. He has a right to go back again.

Mr. PICKERING: The men of whom I speak were also in the service. They gave us their billets to go to the Front, and should have had a fair opportunity on their return of getting such a position.

The Minister for Mines: They did have a fair opportunity, because applications were invited.

Mr. PICKERING: I know men who were engaged in railway work right up to the front lines, who had no opportunity of making application for this post. This is not giving any encouragement to such men. I wish to draw attention to the great number of persons travelling on the trains who are under the influence of liquor. The other day travelling from Donnybrook I saw two or three passengers who were under the influence of liquor. I may say that we have corridor carriages now, and the whole train constitutes a parade for men who are under the influence of liquor. These men were using most offensive language and annoying the women in the carriages. I spoke to the conductor about it, and he said he would not remove them. He took up this attitude on account of an accident which had occurred some time ago. It appears that a man who was under the influence of liquor got out at an unattended siding. An effort was made to persuade him to get on the train, but without avail, and he was left at this unattended siding. He went to sleep on the platform and a passing train caught him and cut him to pieces. The conductor, therefore, said he would not put these other men off the train although they were drinking, lest a similar calamity might follow. Instructions should be given to the station-masters to prevent drunken men from boarding the train. If they do board the train they should be put off at the next attended siding. Instructions also should be given to the refreshment rooms that these

men should not be allowed to buy intoxicants of any kind when they are travelling on the trains.

Mr. Duff: Of course, if you are such a wowser!

Mr. O'Loghlen: People bring their own hamper.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not mind being called a wowser, because in this instance I am pointing out the danger there is through these people travelling on the train. It is a wrong thing that drink should be allowed to be served to such persons.

The Minister for Works: They cannot get it on the train.

Mr. PICKERING: They get it on the platform. These men were walking up and down the corridor with bottles of beer under their arms.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Have you written to the Commissioner?

Mr. PICKERING: Yes.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Then wait until you get his reply.

The Minister for Mines: You had better write to me.

Mr. PICKERING: I will do so. I am glad to know that the Minister has his eye on the question of the maintenance of the railway buildings. The station buildings are a disgrace to the State. The Midland Junction station is one of the worst examples. It has not been painted for the last 10 years. Most of the station buildings are in the same condition.

Mr. O'Loghlen: They are being painted now. You do not object to their being painted red?

Mr. PICKERING: They are not being painted before their time. It is false economy in a climate like this to defer the painting of buildings. I draw attention to the necessity for making provision for the freight for fruit for the coming export season. It is estimated that we will have one million cases of fruit for export and that this fruit will be available during the months of March and May. The transit has to be arranged quickly, and it is necessary that it should be suitable for the article which has to be conveyed. I do not know what number of louvered trucks the Minister has at his command, but that is the proper truck to use for the conveyance of fruit. If he has not these particular trucks he should have others equipped in such a manner that the fruit can be carried safely and so that it may leave the State in a good condition. A good deal of fruit will be coming from the district which is in juxtaposition to my own electorate. I would instance such towns as Manjimup, Bridgetown, Balingup Donnybrook, Brookhampton, and Capel, and also as far as the Brunswick State Farm, from which 50 per cent. will be sent. From Mt. Barker 25 per cent. of fruit will be coming, and 25 per cent. from orchards in the environment of Perth. I hope the Minister will see that adequate provision is made to contend with the coming traffic. A good deal has been said about the ordering of trucks through agents for stock. As one who was



largely instrumental in getting this regulation passed, I must express the hope that the Minister will not interfere with it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If a person wants a truck for his own stock he should order it himself through the department.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not agree.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member keep to the subject before the Chair? We are not discussing meat at the present time.

Mr. PICKERING: The arrangement arrived at with the Railway Department—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is that the Farmers and Settlers' affair again?

Mr. PICKERING: The Farmers and Settlers' Association were largely instrumental in bringing about this very necessary state of affairs.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was the most rotten thing that was ever done in the country. We are going to make a new party in order to protect the country against you people, and in order to prevent people in the metropolitan area from being robbed and from combinations being entered into against them.

Mr. PICKERING: A suggestion has been made by some hon. members in the direction of assisting the Minister in placing the finances of the railways on a better footing. One of the suggestions has been in regard to the taxation on the unimproved values of land. Some hon. members have put a wrong construction on this aspect. They have thought that it applied only to the country districts. That is not the intention altogether, for it is the intention to affect such towns as Perth and Fremantle.

Hon. P. Collier: Always the other fellow!

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is bringing in extraneous matter. I am aware that latitude has been given during the debate, but I must point out that land taxation has nothing whatever to do with the railways, and must request hon. members to confine their attention to the railway Estimates.

Mr. PICKERING: The Minister in introducing his Estimates said there was going to be a large deficit on the railways, and that he was looking for means by which to remedy that. So long as the policy is made to apply all round in fair proportions I am prepared to support that scheme for adjusting the finances, but when I think that the country people, who have to bear the whole of the burdens of the freights of the State both ways, are to have increased rates put upon them for the benefit of the townspeople, then I must voice my protest against it.

Hon. P. Collier: The townspeople pay it in buying the produce of the farmer.

Mr. PICKERING: They do nothing of the kind.

The Minister for Mines: You are getting 5s. for your wheat at the siding.

Mr. PICKERING: We should be getting 6s.

Hon. P. Collier: You ought to be getting the earth.

Mr. PICKERING: We are not unreasonable in our request. We had to see that the

people in the country got the justice which we cannot get from metropolitan members. They are out to get everything for nothing at the expense of the farming community. It is time the farming community made a stand. That our work is having some effect is evident from the remarks of the member for North-East Fremantle.

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.27]: I wish to congratulate the member for Sussex upon having let me know something which I did not know before, namely, that influence is brought to bear on the Railway Department so that only a privileged few can secure trucks for the carrying of stock. While meat was dear and selling at from 1s. 1d. to 1s. 6d. per pound butchers could not get trucks with which to bring their sheep to the market.

Mr. Harrison: They were bringing the sheep down in open trucks.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is a scandal that the Country party should use the Government for the purpose of keeping up the price of meat as they did.

Mr. Harrison: The Country party had nothing whatever to do with it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for Sussex has just stated that the Country party did this.

Mr. Harrison: Then he is wrong.

Hon. P. Collier: He has just said it.

Mr. Harrison: What was the date?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know.

Hon. P. Collier: Your deputy leader says so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He confessed it here a few minutes ago.

Mr. Harrison: Either you are wrong or he is.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He said it.

The Minister for Mines: I think they are both wrong.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The arrangement appears to be one by which private persons can have control of the trucks which really belong to the people. That is the first I have heard of it. If such amalgamations were formed, in order to see that the other people in this country get fair play. It is about time that the people of the metropolitan area realised that they are being robbed. Any Government who agreed to such a thing had no right to hold office—I care not what Government it may have been. The member for Sussex said that this had been done as the result of a deputation from the Farmers and Settlers' Association. I am afraid the Minister for Railways, by his usual openness of speech, has bluffed members as to the amount of the rise in wages given by the Arbitration Court to the railway employees. He has told us that that rise will re-act disastrously on the finances of the railways. He says that it will amount to £250,000 a year. From a report made last year, I find that a rise of 7d. per day amounted to £23,580 over a period of six

months. Therefore, a rise of 1s. 2d. per day in the wages of all the men employed in the service would amount to between £90,000 and £100,000 per annum. According to the returns the Railway Department on the 30th June, 1919, employed a total of 7,113 men. A thousand of these would be salaried staff, who are not increased in the same ratio as the wages staff. Again, there are a number of married men in the railway service who have been for some time receiving 10s. as a minimum. That was given them by the late Mr. Frank Wilson. However, a rise of 1s. per day, six days a week, for the whole of the men employed by the Railway Department would amount to £100,072 in a year.

The Minister for Mines: A number of the men are getting an increase of 2s. 11d. per day.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But a lot of them will not get any increase. The average increase cannot amount to 1s. 6d. per day; and that 1s. 6d. per day would mean £166,452 per annum—not £250,000 per annum.

The Minister for Mines: I hope you are right, but the Commissioner advises me otherwise; and I think he ought to know.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have been at this game before. When certain action is contemplated the departmental practice is to make it appear that the effect will be much more than it really can be, because then there is a better excuse for raising rates and blaming the increase on the higher wages. The increase granted by the Arbitration Court will not be within £100,000 of what the department state.

The Minister for Works: You cannot make the increase less than £200,000 per annum.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is all very well to bluff the public by saying that the increase will amount to so much, but £60,000 a year was given away in order to enable hon. members opposite to get office. Why not get that money back again?

The Minister for Works: How do you mean?

Hon. P. Collier: It was given away by the abolition of district railway charges and the reduction of fertiliser rates.

The Minister for Works: Whatever we gave away was given in order to do justice, and not to get office.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Justice was not considered at all. The only object in giving away this money was that hon. members opposite might apply their business acumen to the conduct of the State finances. They have conducted those finances splendidly. Western Australia has never been in such a position as it is in to-day, and it would never have been in that position if the Labour party had remained in office. I am surprised to hear some hon. members call themselves producers. Have they ever studied economics? I do not think they have. The railway servants are producers equally with the man on the land, because without them the produce of the land could not be brought

to market. I am also surprised to hear some hon. members condemn the people of the metropolitan area on the ground that they pay nothing and produce nothing. Those members declare that the 120,000 people in the metropolitan area are parasites on the people engaged in agriculture. But they are producers equally with the others, and they are being paid for their share in production.

The Minister for Mines: We all depend on one another.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the farmer had to make his own clothes, he could not grow wheat at the same time.

Hon. P. Collier: He would be like Robinson Crusoe.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The people of the metropolitan area are producers equally with those in the country. According to the member for Sussex, the Country party want to throw the increased burden of railway fares and freights on residents in the metropolitan area. I congratulate the hon. member on his openness of statement. He wants to put the extra burden on the people of Perth and Fremantle.

The Minister for Mines: He said he wanted to distribute it all round.

Hon. P. Collier: He qualified his first statement when he woke up.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Members of the Country party are not willing to treat the people of the metropolis fairly. Who is paying the heaviest prices for country products to-day? The people of the metropolitan area. Potatoes are being sent out of the State to bring a less price than is obtainable here in Western Australia. Last Saturday week I saw 150 tons of potatoes leave by the "Wandilla," while the people here are actually famishing for potatoes. Many persons to-day cannot afford to eat potatoes on account of the price.

Mr. Harrison: What is the price the potato grower obtains?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Whatever the potato grower, in concert with the potato merchant, can make it. The member for Mount Magnet has said it is only right that the people of the metropolitan area should put up with some inconveniences in the matter of train service. But does it pay the State to keep people waiting for an hour on the Claremont platform for another train, as I have seen them on an ordinary weekday—not a holiday? I quite agree with the member for South Fremantle that arrangements should be made to cope with the traffic. I do know, however, that if the railways were electrified they would be run much more effectively and much more cheaply.

The Minister for Mines: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: However, I rose merely to point out that the amount of the increase in railway wages has been overstated. It does not average 1s. 6d. per day on all the men employed.

The Minister for Mines: The Commissioner had the figures taken out, and he could not make the increase less than £250,000 per annum.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We know how these things are done. I wish to point out also that the railway carriages in the metropolitan area are always overcrowded.

The Minister for Mines: So they are in other parts of the world.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have spent the last 28 years in Australia, and I do not know much about other parts of the world. But I am in a position to say that our suburban railway carriages are more overcrowded than those in Melbourne.

The Minister for Mines: Not at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, it is so. At the same time I realise the difficulties of the Government in regard to the running of the railways. But I am not going to sit quietly and hear the people of the metropolitan area called parasites on the people in the country.

The Minister for Works: We are all parasites—town people and country people as well.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [10.44]: I wish to enter a strong protest against the recent action of the railway men's union in the matter of threatening to declare wool black. Hon. members may laugh, but it is a very serious matter, and probably the forerunner of still more serious threats on the part of the union. I maintain that the Minister for Railways should take such steps as will prevent the union from carrying out such a threat, or from even venturing again to threaten to declare any goods black. There was no justification whatever for that union to lay itself out to assist the shearers' unions. The shearers' union had every right to organise and they were quite able to carry on their organisation and to bring it to the condition they desired without the assistance of the railway union.

Hon. P. Collier: Union is strength.

Mr. PIESSE: I admit that. This kind of thing has a more serious effect upon the State's progress than anything else that I know, and I repeat that steps should be taken to prevent a recurrence of it.

Hon. P. Collier: What kind of steps?

Mr. PIESSE: Regulations should be framed to provide for the imposition of a penalty.

Hon. P. Collier: That would be a quick way of stopping it.

Mr. PIESSE: The Railway Department should be removed from political control.

Hon. P. Collier: You are trying to put back the clock.

Mr. PIESSE: The position is such that it demands the closest consideration at the hands of the Government and it is in the interests of all that immediate steps should be taken to prevent a recurrence of what I have stated. I did not rise to make a long speech. I merely wanted to enter this protest. Just a word with regard to trucks. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) referred to the shortage of trucks. He said that that was engineered by the Country party, and made other ridiculous suggestions.

Hon. P. Collier: He did not say that. The member for Sussex said that.

Mr. PIESSE: I am not dealing with the member for Sussex.

Hon. P. Collier: But it was the member for Sussex who said it.

Mr. PIESSE: The statement was made by the member for North-East Fremantle.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The member for Sussex said it and I repeated it.

Mr. PIESSE: In any case, the statement is not correct. Trucks are arranged for by the stock sale's agent.

Hon. P. Collier: With the consent of the railways.

Mr. PIESSE: And it is a proper arrangement too.

Hon. P. Collier: Through the influence of the Country party, so the member for Sussex said.

Mr. PIESSE: I hope the hon. member will cease his joking.

Hon. P. Collier: I am not joking; it is a fact.

Mr. PIESSE: I appreciate the hon. member's humour, but I am speaking seriously. The supply of trucks is arranged in such a way as to be very beneficial to all concerned, the consumer and the producer. Let me quote my own case. When this arrangement was not made, I was obliged to sell fat sheep at 7s. 11d. on account of the glut. Now we have a regular system of supply and the consumer is getting meat at a reasonable rate.

Hon. P. Collier: Was he not getting a reasonable rate earlier in the year through that provision?

Mr. PIESSE: The consumer to-day is getting his mutton at a just value, but it will be higher in the future than he has had to pay in the past, for the simple reason that the demand will exceed the supply.

Hon. P. Collier: And we are building freezing works all over the State.

Mr. PIESSE: The fat stock which was hitherto obtainable in the North will not now be available to the same extent. The local supply will not reach the demand and prices will be high.

Hon. P. Collier: And what will happen to the freezing works?

Mr. PIESSE: They are for the purpose of providing against a future over supply. Those works should have been in operation two or three years ago.

Hon. P. Collier: And is there not enough now for the local demand?

Mr. PIESSE: No. If the freezing works had been in operation two or three years ago, mutton would not have been sacrificed as has been done. I had sheep which cost me 14s., and after having fattened them I only realised 7s. 11d. for them. I trust in conclusion that the Minister will take action to prevent the railway union from using its power of organisation to assist another union in the manner that I have outlined.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [10.52]: One could speak till breakfast time if he dealt with every trivial little matter causing inconvenience to somebody; but this is not the place to discuss these things, for we have a Commissioner of Railways to attend to them. However, although it is open to the Commissioner, I wish to ventilate one question because I think an injustice is being done, and I hope the Minister will not be a party to it. It is in connection with the leasing of railway refreshment rooms. On two of our lines dining cars have been established. I have no wish to discourage the initial efforts of the new Commissioner to provide conveniences for the travelling public, but prior to the war, through competition in tendering for refreshment rooms, prices were put up abnormally high. I always objected to the attitude of the past Commissioner in seeking too much revenue from the refreshment rooms, which resulted in the public having to pay. The lessees of the railway refreshment rooms are working under an agreement which gives the Commissioner power to establish dining cars. But there is the question of equity. I have been shown the books of some of the lessees, disclosing that their takings have dropped over 50 per cent. That applies to two refreshment rooms.

The Minister for Works: In one such room their takings are down to 8s. 3d., whereas with one train a day they used to take about £10.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am glad of that testimony from the Minister. I want an assurance from the Minister for Railways.

The Minister for Mines: What effect would the dining car between Perth and Bunbury have upon the room at Boyanup Junction?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have seen the books relating to the business of that station, and I am told that it has this effect, that people who used to buy their commodities at the refreshment room now refuse to do so since, a few miles further on, they can get a meal provided by the department. In consequence, the takings at that room have dropped by from 46 to 52 per cent. It must be remembered that the rent of the rooms is £6 3s. 6d. per week. I know the Commissioner will say that these refreshment rooms should be put up to public tender. I saw this morning some reference made to it in the Press. But I wish to enter a plea for the lessees who hold their scraps of paper. They entered into the agreement in the expectation of having a long period to run. During the whole of the war they struggled on with little or nothing, hoping to reap a reward later. That reward has now been taken from them by the establishment of the dining cars. The Commissioner will not take over the rooms. The lessees' livelihood has gone, and the plea to-day is for reduced rent. The position of affairs affects Boyanup,

Pieton, Brunswick, Chidlow's Well, Beverley, Pinjarra, and Spencer's Brook. The Commissioner says he has no power. But the lady who keeps the refreshment room at Beverley had her agreement, which could be carried by the establishment of a dining car; four trains were cut out on that line, and the Commissioner reconsidered her case and reduced her rent. The same applies to Goomalling; when the trains were cut out the rent was reduced. In regard to Pieton, the lessee is asking that his rent be reduced to £1 per week. The lessee at Boyanup asks that his rent be reduced to £3 per week. In view of the fact that the public are getting an improved convenience, I think the public should pay, rather than that the lessee should suffer. I am not going to object to any action of the Government which will make the public pay for services rendered. There is an honourable transaction between the Government on the one hand and the refreshment room lessee on the other. If the position is as I have stated, will the Minister agree to reduce the rent?

The Minister for Mines: I shall certainly be prepared to take the question to Cabinet.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: An unanswerable case can be put up for consideration. The Commissioner will not move. He has the whip hand. He does not play the game. There is the scrap of paper to be honoured. There was an implied undertaking that those people would have a clear run and if, by a change of policy, they are deprived of their livelihood it is only a fair thing to reduce the rent and give the lessees a chance to make good. I hope that the Minister, when replying, will give me the assurance I ask for. I see the Minister for Works is going to support my claim, and so I will leave it to the justice of the Minister to see that the rent is reduced.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [11.0]: I know it is not usual for one Minister to talk on another Minister's Estimates, but I should like to say a few words on the subject. As far as the Pinjarra station is concerned, I can give evidence of what I have seen myself. I know that in connection with one main passenger train the refreshment room at this station only took 8s. 3d., whereas the usual takings have been from £8 to £10, and frequently more. The rent amounts to £18 a week. I hold the view in regard to these refreshment rooms that we should not take too much from the lessees. They are established for the purpose of enabling travellers to obtain a decent meal and at a decent price, and to get liquor if they require it. If the rents are too big then the lessee must reduce the quality of the supplies, and more money will be required to come from the pockets of the travellers. I commend this to the Minister for his consideration. No doubt the dining cars are a great conveni-

once to the travelling public. The fact that liquor is not being sold on these dining cars, except at meals, is a good idea. If we can save the selling of a quantity of liquor at odd times, also to render drunkenness less possible, we shall make our trains more attractive to the people than they have been in the past. No matter what the conditions of the leases may be, the country cannot afford, whether in the railways or any other department, to take a step which means the ruin of those people who have entered into business with the Government in all good faith. I am quite sure from what I know of the Minister for Railways, and of the acting Commissioner, that they will fully consider this matter and will mete out justice all round. That is what hon. members desire and what the people of the State desire.

Mr. NAIRN (Swan) [11.2]: The effect of the Railway Department on the finances of the State is greater than that of all the other departments of State put together. At the outset I must congratulate the Minister and Cabinet upon having created a precedent in regard to the method which was followed in the appointment of the acting Commissioner of Railways. In season and out of season I have contended that when there were high official appointments to be made within Australia, to go outside Australia in order to fill those positions, was a bad thing. This is the first time in the history of Western Australia that this policy has been adopted in regard to the railway service. I hope the results which the Minister expects will be achieved through the appointment of Colonel Pope. Another matter to which I desire to refer is the effect that the increase in the salaries and wages to the staff connected with the control of the railways will have upon the State. I am of opinion that there is no class of worker in Australia more deserving of these increases than are the employees of the Railway Department. They have suffered more patiently than any other employees of the State for a long period. I am glad they have received an award which makes their position better than it was, even though it may be not as good yet as it might be. At the same time this places further financial obligations upon the country and even greater responsibility upon Ministers. Notwithstanding what has been said to-night, hon. members appear to be reluctant to assist in making up any of that loss which must come from giving these increased wages. I say in all sincerity that the Minister must lay hold of this question boldly and make such rearrangement as will meet this increased demand. It is impossible for any department in the country to continue giving services such as the Railway Department are giving at the same rate as they did five years ago. From the porter's suit of clothes to the paint on the windows or the sheds, there has been a continuous increase in cost, as with every other commodity, which

has affected this great spending department of State. There is only one way in which to remedy the position and that is to meet it by distributing equitably over the whole State the contributions required to make up this loss. The sooner we adopt such a method the better it will be for all concerned. I see no alternative but to have an equitable distribution of this burden. It is all very well to talk about the general prosperity of the State and squaring the ledger, but that will not happen to such an extent as to meet this increased demand. I hope the Minister will fight against what has been the rule of thumb method of increasing revenue by putting up freights, and introducing a percentage increase. That is absolutely unfair. A third of the population lives in and around the metropolis, and an increase of 10 per cent. will not mean more than 1s. per ton to persons resident in the metropolitan area. On the goldfields and in the outlying parts of the State, however, where the people are paying from £10 to £12 a ton, the increase will mean anything from £1 to 25s. per ton. The Minister, I hope, will consider the question of a surcharge on every article that is conveyed by or used on the railway service. I want to see this spread over the community in an equitable manner. If we take the figures of £2,300,000 worth of goods that are carried over the railways in the year, an increase of 6d. on every ton will, we shall find, bring in a return of something like £60,000. I have discussed this question with men in the Railway Department who ought to know, and they say that such a system can be evolved. It is the only fair and equitable system to adopt and I see no other way to do it. That will get over the difficulty mentioned by the member for Mt. Magnet, who worked himself into a terrible state of anger so far as profiteering in the metropolitan area is concerned. This is one of the means by which the people in the metropolitan area can be embraced. I should like the Minister to consider, as he must consider, whether it is possible to work out such a scheme that a surcharge can be imposed which will be equitably spread over the entire State.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [11.8]: The most important item we have to deal with is the intimation from the Minister for Railways that it is the intention of the Government to raise freights and fares. People in the far back districts are already paying quite sufficient in this respect. True, there must be more money found in order to carry on the railway system, but I contend the Government are going the wrong way about the matter, and that they should introduce taxation on the unimproved value of land in order to meet part of the interest charges on the railways and to make a corresponding reduction in the freight charges. The Government seem to think there is no other way of doing this than to raise freights and fares on our railways. Some time ago the Legislative Council passed a resolution in this matter. This House is

looked upon by many adversely, but in this case it seems to have been a more progressive Chamber than this one. We have on the cross benches men who are pledged to the unimproved land value system of taxation, and I think the Government should have grappled with the matter and taken advantage of the fact that there are already in this House so many hon. members in favour of that system. It would be a relief to the producer and remove some of the burden from their shoulders, and place it where it should have been placed long ago, namely, on those people who have benefited so largely by the construction of our railways. Something like half of our loan money has been spent in the construction of railways throughout the length and breadth of the land, and this has mainly benefited the land owners in the metropolitan area. It is time these people paid their fair proportion instead of escaping as they have done in the past. Seeing the Government have practically an assured majority in both Houses, I hope they will bring down that system of taxation. I enter my emphatic protest against any increase in fares and freights. Notwithstanding the suggestion of the member for Swan (Mr. Nairn), consideration should be given to the people in the outback areas. If there is an increase in fares and freights, the producers in the outback districts will suffer again, as in the past. This is the most important question on the Estimates. Several nights could be profitably devoted to a discussion of this department, but, as the hour is late, I do not wish to stress it further. Another question is the concession to the Kurrawang Firewood Company to build a line from Kurrawang to Kamballie. This means cutting out a large amount of revenue from the department. Protests have been voiced in Kalgoorlie: the people are dissatisfied, because the line has gone through that way. I doubt whether there would have been a protest but for the fact that the loss to the State is proving a gain to the company. I would like to hear from the Minister regarding this concession.

Mr. WILLECOCK: It meant retrenchment of employees, too.

Mr. LUTEY: Yes. The State should have built a line in that direction many years ago, but now it has been done by a private company and the benefit is going to them instead of to the State. Reference has been made to the success of motor trains and motor charabanes. I am informed that one was given a trial in the South-West and that it proved satisfactory. The Minister for Railways knows the Brownhill loop line from which a number of trains have been cut off in late years. If the motors are satisfactory, they should be tried on that loop line. If we had a motor to run between the scheduled trains, it would be beneficial to the department and of great convenience to a large body of my electors. I hope the Minister will give some indication of the possibility of using motor trains on this loop line.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [11.15]: I am glad that a man has been found in our railway service who is considered qualified for the position of Commissioner. I believe a lot can be done to reduce the cost of running our railways. It is wrong to have on a train men from two different branches. Responsible for running the trains are the traffic department, which shows an increased expenditure of £24,941, and the loco. department, which shows an increased expenditure of £99,410. All the men running a train, whether on the guard's van or the footplate, should belong to one section of the service. I do not believe in the present method of paying men on the time basis. It is not a good one. There should be a minimum and a maximum wage for running the trains. If the trains running on our single lines are not kept up to scheduled time, delay after delay occurs, rolling stock is held up, and power is lost. On one occasion I desired to travel from Doodlakine to Perth and break my journey at Northam. I was told that a special train would leave Doodlakine at 12 o'clock on Monday. I was there to time and had to wait until 2 p.m. before the train showed up. It came just before the mixed train was timed to reach Kellerberrin, necessitating a wait of over half an hour. When we finally made a start we expected to reach Northam between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m., but obstruction after obstruction occurred and Northam was reached at 11.45 p.m. I had no opportunity to do the business I intended, and I had to continue my journey by the express on the following morning. On that occasion train after train was held up, and it would be interesting to know the cost to the State of that particular journey. There were power, rolling stock, and wages men on at least three trains, all held up. Such a system is not satisfactory. If men were paid a maximum and a minimum wage according as they run the trains to scheduled time, the system would work better. One section of the service should not be able to blame the other section for delays. All the men should be inspired with the one object of running the trains to time. The Minister told us that much of the rolling stock is not fit for service. The number of unserviceable locomotives has increased considerably since last year. If it is impossible to obtain the material to restore these engines, we should get the greatest power possible from those that are running. The late Treasurer expressed a wish that members who had any suggestions should make them and he would consider them.

Hon. P. Collier: Yours is not a suggestion; you are only relating that a train ran late.

Mr. HARRISON: I have stated my belief that the men on the trains should be under one department, and should be paid by results.

Hon. P. Collier: Do you suggest that these trains were deliberately held up; or what is your suggestion?

Mr. HARRISON: I feel certain that if those men worked with a higher degree of co-operation and were paid the maximum wage to keep scheduled time, better results would be obtained.

Hon. P. Collier: Then your suggestion amounts to this, that the men deliberately delayed the trains?

Mr. HARRISON: I care not what the leader of the Opposition makes of the suggestion. I stand by what I say. We want scientific research into all the departmental workings, and a man ought to have the benefit of the results of his energy wherever it may be displayed. If one man can do better than his fellow workers, he should receive higher pay.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [11.22]: I had no intention whatever of speaking on the Railway Estimates, but I must say a word or two in reply to the leader of the Country party. That hon. member says that he has offered a suggestion. What is the suggestion? Does any member of the Committee know? The member for Avon related some incident in which a number of trains were following one after the other on some line, possibly in the Doodlakine area. He was travelling in one of those trains, and was landed in Northam some three or four hours after scheduled time, which circumstance prevented him from doing any business on that day. He details all this to the Minister and suggests that the remedy is to pay the employees on trains maximum rates if they run to schedule time. What is the suggestion? If it is anything, it amounts to a straight out imputation that the railway employees deliberately delayed those trains. The inference from the hon. member's remarks is that if those men had been paid maximum rates for running to schedule time they would have got in on schedule time. It follows that they could have got in on schedule time had they chosen to do so. Thus the imputation is that these men deliberately held up the train along the road. And this kind of thing is offered in response to an invitation thrown out by the late Treasurer to members to offer suggestions for improving the departmental services. The member for Avon classified his suggestion under the category of "Scientific research." If the hon. member had investigated the matter at all, he would know that the failure to run to scheduled time was not the employees' fault. The Minister indicated the cause of delay when he said that a larger number of railway engines than usual are out of commission. Why are they out of commission? Simply because the State in recent years had not the money to keep them in order. The whole question is one of finance and material. At present the rolling stock is not in the state of repair that it ought to be in. There are other disabilities, too, under which drivers and guards labour. Those disabilities may not be the fault of the department, who in some cases have been unable to obtain material required and in other cases

have not been furnished with the necessary funds to purchase material. No talk about scientific research or offering bonuses to run to schedule time will overcome such difficulties. If we want a certain service effected by employees, we must furnish them with the necessary instrumentalities. The effect of the hon. member's remarks is that the employees deliberately loaf along the road. He should know better. I do not believe that any such imputation lies against our railway employees. I understand that a member of another place has stated that he saw railway employees deliberately dawdling along and running hours behind time in order that they might obtain overtime pay. Such an inference is utterly unfair, and ought not to be made when the cause of delays lies in another direction, as indicated by the Minister for Railways in his opening remarks.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [11.26]: I have listened carefully to the speeches on this vote. We have heard many suggestions for improving the position of the Railway Department, but probably the only true remedy is to increase the traffic. In my opinion sufficient attention has not been given to the development of the lands served by existing railways. There is little doubt that our railway mileage in proportion to population is much beyond the normal standard. More co-ordination is required between our various Government departments. Of what use are our railways without roads? And yet for many years it has been extremely difficult to obtain any assistance from the Railway Department for our road system.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Government have been spending about £20,000 a year on feeder roads.

Mr. MONEY: The roads have not received that attention which should have been given to them.

The Minister for Mines: What has that to do with us?

Mr. MONEY: I am disappointed at that remark of the Minister for Railways. That remark explains the trouble. It shows the want of co-ordination from which our public services are suffering to-day. The Minister's interjection really confirms my statements. Our roads have as much to do with our railways as the people themselves have to do with the railways. The Minister may as well ask, "What have the people to do with us?"

The Minister for Mines: That is a silly argument.

Mr. MONEY: I know that the roads, which are the feeders of the railways, are starved for material. The material for making and maintaining roads that run for hundreds of miles alongside the railways costs from 10s. to 12s. per ton in cartage, while that material might be carried by the Railway Department for about 3s. 6d. per ton. But the material is not carried and will not be carried by the railways because that is not the business of the Railway Department. I repeat, there is no co-ordination. The road boards of this State, and

particularly those of the South-West, meet annually in conference to consider ways and means of benefiting the State. At those conferences they have passed resolutions affirming that if the Railway Department can carry material for ballasting their lines at 3s. per ton, they can carry the material for the roads, which are the feeders of the railways, at the same price per ton. Is that silly? The people of this State are not silly. I should like an assurance from the Minister that road-making material will be carried by the railways at cost. Hitherto, the answer to that suggestion has been that the transport of road-making material is not the business of the Railway Department. I do not desire to go into details. It is a matter of management and co-ordination. It can be done and it should be done. There is no reason why a train load of material should not be dumped on any part of the road at convenient spots. We should encourage the construction of better roads, which would be feeders for the railways, and this could be done with a little organisation. Even the question of drainage should not be neglected. To-day there are drains cut for railway purposes. Yet there is the greatest difficulty experienced by settlers alongside railway lines in connection with utilising those drains to get rid of surplus water. If there were co-ordination the Railway Department would see the advantage that would be derived by giving every help in that direction. With regard to branch lines, it is known that these which act as feeders to the main lines, are the lines which pay. We should assist in the direction of increasing development on the area served by the branch lines, by giving the settlers a motor service, not only for passenger but for goods traffic. I repeat again that there is want of co-ordination, but I cannot stress that fact too much. We have had to suffer in the past from Government bureaucracy. One department seems to have no concern about another department. It is a question of—"it is not my business." It should be every department's business, because it is in the interests of the State that all these questions should be attended to. There is one matter in connection with which I desire to support the member for Forrest. It is perhaps a small matter compared with the more important ones which have been mentioned. I refer to the agreements with reference to the refreshment rooms. These have been considerably altered in consequence of the better accommodation given to passengers by attaching dining cars to the trains. I can support everything that the hon. member has stated. The passengers going to Bridgetown or to Boyanup are able to have their mid-day meal on the train before the train reaches the junction at Pictou, and on arriving at Pictou they naturally do not require refreshments at Boyanup. It is the same thing on the return trip, and I hope the

Minister for Railways will give an assurance to the House that the agreement with the refreshment room keepers will be equitably altered to meet the varied conditions which have arisen.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS** (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany—in reply) [11.35]: I will be very brief in my reply to the criticisms which have been offered, some friendly and some of an entirely different nature. At the outset I want to say that I was struck with the warmth of the remarks of the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) with regard to the detail operations of the Railway Department. I want to tell the hon. member that it is no business of mine to attend to details. The Government do not appoint a Commissioner of Railways under an Act of Parliament, with definite powers laid down, and at a salary greater than that paid to Ministers of the Crown, and then expect Ministers to take the responsibility for details. I am not going to take that responsibility. If I could have taken it, I would have been an applicant for the position of Commissioner. Members are continually approaching me in regard to matters of detail. But I have always been willing and anxious that they should meet the Commissioner and discuss these matters with him to see whether adjustments could be made. Am I to be asked to take all sorts of responsibility, even to the extent of declaring that the railway system should be for the convenience of road boards or for local authorities, and that the department should dump things anywhere for those local authorities? If co-ordination which has been so much stressed by the member for Bunbury means that, I am afraid we shall not get co-ordination in our public departments. If we start to do that kind of thing we shall be confronted with all sorts of difficulties. The hon. member does not appear to appreciate that the Railway Department must operate over every mile of the system, and if we are to set out on the basis of paying special attention to some little spot in the South-West, where will it end, and what sort of a railway system will we have?

Mr. Money: You dump material everywhere for ballasting.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** That is entirely different. The hon. member knows that we are compelled to do that so as not to inconvenience our general running, and we do it in train loads to get rid of it quickly. That is very different from taking one truck of material to some place and dropping it for the convenience of a local authority. If the hon. member can submit a proposition to the Commissioner whereby it will be possible to take a whole train load of material to a particular locality and get rid of that material without interfering with the working of the railway system generally, I am sure the Commissioner



will fall into line with the wish of the hon. member and render that assistance. The proposition put up by the hon. member, however, is utterly absurd. The department is continually assisting local authorities in every way that can possibly be done, of course wherever it is safe to render that assistance, but they are not going to take the responsibility of doing something which will be absolutely unsafe to carry out. If we are to have co-ordination let it be on lines which will be in the interests of the department conducting the service.

Mr. MONEY: The interests of the people.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We should first of all serve the interests of those who are operating the service.

Mr. MONEY: The roads are as important as the railways.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not suggest they are not. I am telling the hon. member that we can only co-ordinate from the point of view of safety, but we are not there for the purpose of providing the State with roads. That is a department which is controlled by others. What the hon. member wants is one dictator in this country who can take the whole of our departments and say, "You shall do this, you shall do that, or you shall do the other." What sort of a condition of affairs would we have in a short space of time? There is already quite enough for Ministers to do.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you give me £5,000 a year I will take on the job.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And the result would be that the hon. member would be dead in no time. But I am paying too much attention to matters that do not count. There are others of greater importance to which I desire to reply. With regard to what has been said about refreshment rooms, I will make further representations to the Commissioner, and if those who are interested fail to get what is considered to be fair and just treatment I shall then be prepared to consider the question and make a representation to Cabinet, because, after all, that is a question of policy. But I have no right as Minister to amend a question of policy without first consulting the Commissioner in order to give him an opportunity for showing his mettle. The present Commissioner is full of sympathy with his fellow men and would do no injustice to anybody. In regard to the appointment of Mr. Backshall, I may say I have known that officer casually for a number of years. I have known him in Labour organisations and as an engine-driver on the railway system. He was appointed not because he happened to have been an engine-driver on the system, but because the Commissioner required to create a new position in the service. In that respect the Commissioner has the same right as the Minister. If I desire to have a confidential clerk, one whom I can send round into all the departments to delve into confidential files and report to me, I have the right to make such an appointment. Surely, then, the Commissioner of Railways, control-

ling a service in which there are so many branches and sub-departments of vital importance to the service, has the right to call to his aid a man in whom he can repose the utmost confidence, a man of ability and personality, capable of carrying out his duties efficiently and without danger of creating friction. Colonel Pope's opinion may differ from those of hon. members, but he has the right to choose his man for such a purpose, and I would not raise the slightest objection except to point out to Colonel Pope that the policy of the State, through the Government, is that preference shall be given to soldiers, other things being equal. It is scarcely necessary to remind hon. members that Colonel Pope is himself one of the best of our soldiers, a man who suffered in more ways than one through going to the war. Colonel Pope is one of the best friends the returned soldiers have.

Mr. Foley: He has not proved it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member says that because Colonel Pope has happened to appoint one man who is not a returned soldier. If we were to pursue the hon. member's reasoning to its conclusion, no office boy could be appointed from outside the ranks of returned soldiers. It would be just as logical to say that none but returned soldiers should be elected to Parliament. All that is undertaken is that, other things being equal, every opportunity shall be given. But on the question of ability and personality, Colonel Pope had a perfect right to select his own man.

Mr. Foley: It is a poor old advertisement for our returned soldiers.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about, does not know anything about the position which Mr. Backshall has been called upon to fill.

Mr. Foley: I know there are men in the railway service better qualified for the job.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is purely imagination. The hon. member has no right to pit his knowledge of railway men against that of Colonel Pope.

Mr. Foley: It is a poor old advertisement for the railway men.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It am not saying whether it is good or bad, but Colonel Pope is charged with the responsibility of operating a railway system involving two million pounds revenue and 1¼ millions of expenditure. If he is to be subjected to criticism on the appointment of a man who is to supply him with confidential information, who will sometimes find it necessary to report against heads of departments, where are we to get to? All this pother is because Mr. Backshall does not happen to be a returned soldier; yet he has filled scores of other positions without any criticism from returned soldiers. Apparently one appointment is to condemn and damn a man who has done so much for Western Australia. It is an absurd attitude on the part of the hon. member. The hon. member should realise that, as Minister, I am going to accept the opinion of the

man with the expert knowledge. There is nobody in the service who knows better than Colonel Pope the individual men of the service. No man in the service will say that Colonel Pope is not an excellent judge when selecting a man.

Mr. Pickering: There is any amount of discontent in the service over this.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nothing of the kind. Attempts were made to stir up discontent, but they all failed. The member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) knows of one or two such attempts. That is the answer to all this criticism. It is true that some did criticise, and probably some were justified in expressing their opinions on the organisation most affected. The Commissioner has a perfect right to make his own appointment in such a case. The member for Geraldton knows the position. We have had accidents with loss of life, we have had hold-ups through breakdowns and other troubles; yet I do not know of a single instance in which the report from the head of the department has not been to the effect, "No one was responsible." Those things can happen day after day, year after year, and the report, when it finally reaches the Commissioner from the head of the department, is that no one was to blame. Possibly no one was directly to blame for the accident, but in all probability it could have been shown that, by foresight on the part of the responsible officer, the accident could have been averted. If the Commissioner is to be called upon to administer the department with expert men in charge of each of the branches, he cannot be a mechanical engineer and a civil engineer and—

Mr. Foley: The man he appointed is not a civil engineer.

Mr. Willcock: He is a civil individual, at any rate.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Commissioner cannot be all these things rolled into one; but he can be a man of judgment, and most decidedly Colonel Pope is that. He has the right to appoint a man to go out and make inquiries and submit his conclusions to the Commissioner, the only officer to whom he is responsible.

Mr. Foley: Why should the Commissioner go outside the service for such a man? Is there not a suitable man in the service?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not a question of the men in the service. The Commissioner has a perfect right to make his own selection in the case of an officer who is to furnish him with confidential information.

Mr. Foley: It is a poor old advertisement for the returned soldiers and for the men in the service.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is the same old question. If a man fails to please he is said to have no judgment. Everyone says that. It is a matter for the opinion of the acting Commissioner, because he has to take the responsibility. I am not going to take it. I told the acting Commissioner that so long as he knew the policy of the

Government it was his responsibility. He says he knows his policy as administrator of the railway system, and is prepared to take the full responsibility of the work, and he is taking it. He is entitled to hold that responsibility over anyone else.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for Sussex has lodged a complaint which I am going to take as being a serious one.

Mr. Foley: Mine will be more serious before I am through.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not care a twopenny dump what hon. members may say about that point. The question is one for the acting Commissioner to decide. It does not count a row of pins what they think. I do not care if the 49 members of this House hold a different opinion from that which I have expressed. I hold the view that we have appointed a man to a responsible position and that he must carry out that responsibility, except when it comes to a question of actual policy.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have never heard a railway man in my district say anything about it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I tell the hon. members on the cross benches that we are as concerned as they are regarding the sparking of Collie coal in the agricultural districts, and about the loss to the community from fires. Someone has suggested that they should insure against such loss, but that does not rid us of the fact that the community has lost money which it will be unable to recover.

Mr. Wilson: A good many fires are caused by Newcastle coal.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am coming to that. Hon. members cannot give a guarantee that if we do use Newcastle coal there will be no fires. I have never heard of Collie coal being used in New South Wales, but only a week or so ago I saw mention of one of the most disastrous fires that has ever occurred in the agricultural districts of New South Wales. As I have stated, no Collie coal is used there. I have heard of disastrous fires which have burnt out settlers in Canada, and no Collie coal is used there. Other fires which have taken place within the range of this Parliament have been said to have been caused by Collie coal. When a ship catches fire, say somewhere close to England, is it urged that Collie coal is responsible? All coals are liable to spontaneous combustion, the whole thing depending upon the manner in which it is bunkered in the ships. So it is with the agricultural districts. We realise that any coal will spark if the engine is overloaded, but the difference between Collie coal and New South Wales or Welsh coal is that the sparks from Collie coal will carry a greater distance before they lob on the ground, with the result that the sparks are liable to catch dry grass a greater distance away from the railway than might be the case with other coals. On the other hand, Collie coal sparks are of such a light nature

that they are liable to go out before they reach the ground.

Mr. Wilson: That is the point.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have seen sparks from an engine from my house at Mt. Lawley which appear to be going to set fire to the place, but they go out before they reach the ground. With all these charges against Collie coal of having burnt out farmers, it is remarkable that there are fires probably just as frequently far removed from the railway line as there are in the vicinity of the railway line. There are members here who were with me at Mt. Barker when they heard the resolution carried that I should get the Commissioner of Police to take action against settlers who had been burning off before the date laid down by law, and who were setting alight to other people's grass paddocks as a consequence.

Mr. Duff: Glass bottles do a lot of damage.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I submitted the matter to the police, with the object of their ascertaining the dates in question and setting the law in motion in connection with those who were implicated, and yet we are told that all fires are caused through Collie coal.

Mr. Griffiths: No, we are not.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We did not hear anything about it for three years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am really concerned about the matter. The Commissioner has agreed that where it is possible to get a spark arrester which in actual practice and not on paper, or as a model, will prevent Collie coal or any other coal from sparking, we will put it on our locomotives in the agricultural districts so as to prevent any possibility of fire.

Mr. Foley: If a good model comes along, would you go into the matter?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know. I have seen many models which never go any further than the model stage.

Mr. Foley: You would not give a man a chance if he did have a try.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They get all kinds of chances. I ask, however, that it should not be a model but a complete appliance, one that will not only arrest sparks but will at the same time not arrest the engine. I can get a spark arrester, for I have only to have the funnel of the engine closed up, but we want to get some steam and keep our engines moving. It is not an easy problem. Men tried to provide an effective spark arrester before we knew anything about it, but they have not yet succeeded. None of the appliances that have been invented are perfect. So long as we have to raise steam by forced draught through a low funnel we are going to get sparks, or else our draught will be choked. When the draught is choked it is impossible to raise steam. We are doing our best and cannot do any more. The whole thing requires a lot of consideration, but that consideration is being given to it. Collie is suffering tremendously from a lack of employ-

ment for many of the men. Orders have fallen off for bunkering coal and this will mean that numbers of men will be thrown out of work. It will of course increase the volume of work for the Newcastle miners if we have to bring in Newcastle coal to this State, but that will not assist us here. We must do our best on behalf of our own industry and our own producers. Other matters mentioned are questions of detail affecting the administration of the department. I will ask the Acting Commissioner to take a note of the remarks which have been made by hon. members, and I know he will give all the matters concerned the utmost consideration. I do not think I am entitled as Minister, although I am in charge of the responsibility of answering to this House, to take the responsibility of also being commissioner of Railways. Colonel Pope is a man who will fill the position with credit to himself and also to the people of the State. I intend to give him a chance first of all to deal with these problems before I attempt in any way to interfere with him.

Mr. Jones: What about the Kamballie wood line?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It would take me some time to tell the whole story. I have held the opinion in the past, and I hold it still, that wherever a Government department can remove the cost of handling a commodity it should do so. That cost of handling a commodity has to be borne by someone in the community, and someone in the community has to pay. It is all very well to talk about continuing the old methods of handling a commodity half a dozen times, because it gives work. That work has to be paid for, and it means that the work is being done in a way which will not be for the benefit and well being of the community. For years past we have been hauling coal to burn in engines which haul wood 15 miles, which wood has already been taken 100 miles to be used as firewood on our locomotives. That charge has to be borne by the mining industry. I took the responsibility of saying that if we could reduce that charge we were entitled to do it. That is all we have done. One member remarked that the Kurrawang Firewood Company were doing what we were doing. If the company are doing it more cheaply, and the mines are getting the benefit of it—

Mr. Jones: But are the mines getting the benefit?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, of course. The hon. member knows that when the strike occurred, every one desired that a solution of the difficulty should be found as soon as possible. The attitude adopted was that one side would not continue to provide the firewood to the companies at the old rates, owing to the increased cost of living. The companies said they could not afford to pay the increased demands, unless the mining companies paid them a higher price for the firewood. The men were quite correct in their demands for an increase in wages to meet the increased cost of living.

If the wood companies were working on a narrow margin, as was asserted, they had no alternative than to call upon the consumers of the firewood to pay the enhanced price. That higher price would have meant that some of the mines, working to the nearest possible point of bankruptcy and some of them actually working at a loss but still employing men, would have had to close down. Firewood is a big commodity in connection with the mining industry. Since the mines have been operating they have used no less than 40 million tons of firewood.

Mr. Foley: And all that time they have been running parallel to our line for 80 miles.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: What-ever the opinions we might hold in normal times, we had to waive them in order to meet the abnormal conditions then prevailing. The mines were held up. We had to provide sustenance for a big community in Kalgoorlie and Boulder and the cost of this sustenance during the week before we discontinued supplying it was £6,000. Surely there was no force in continuing that outlay if we could find a simple way out of the difficulty. We found what we considered to be the simplest and easiest way out, a way which would be of advantage to the mining industry. Let us remove the restrictions on industry and on the cost of commodities for the carrying on of mining. If the mines could carry on without firewood they would do so, but firewood is necessary to enable the industry to continue. Although our action involved on paper the appearance of a loss, the few pounds per annum, said to be £8,000, has to be off-set by the amount of £6,000, value of the sustenance provided during the last week of the difficulty. Our action brought the dispute to an end; the men were able to get what they demanded only in another way, and the companies were able to carry on the firewood business at the same price. Surely this was worth the little sacrifice we made.

General debate concluded; items discussed as follows—

Item—Electrical Engineer and telegraph superintendent, district and assistant engineers and superintendent of signals and interlocking, £4,400:

Mr. WILLCOCK: When we look for the causes of industrial unrest, we often find that one of them arises from the favouritism of bosses. Through the action of the district engineer at Geraldton towards certain individuals under his control, the general impression is that favouritism has been responsible for the dismissal of two men.

The Minister for Works: What is his name?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Sergeant, the man who was concerned in the matter of giving preference to Chinese storekeepers at Geraldton for material to repair washaways, and I am glad the Minister has decided that this policy

shall be discontinued. The complaint made is that a man named McDonald, a contractor of Sandstone, had some dealings with Sergeant in connection with land at Mullewa and the general impression is that, in return, McDonald was promised a position in the department. To make way for McDonald, someone had to go and a man named Eadie was dismissed ostensibly for the offence of not having turned up for work until half an hour after he was due. Eadie took the case to the appeal board and was reinstated. To make room for McDonald, it was decided to retrench two men named Garfoot and Wheelan. They, however, complained that a man who had been in the department for only six months had been kept on, though they had been employed much longer. When their complaint was sent in, the officer shifted his ground and said their retrenchment was due to incompetency. The incompetency was alleged to have occurred 18 months before and the charge was not brought forward until some justification was required to sack them in order to keep McDonald on.

The Minister for Works: That is a serious thing to say.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, but I have said it is the general impression of the men in the district. This occurred some time ago and an inquiry should be held. It is said that McDonald bought the land from Sergeant, and the impression is that one of the conditions on which he bought it was that he should be given a job in the department. Apparently, the two men were then sacked to make room for him.

The Minister for Works: If that can be proved, Sergeant should be put out.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I agree with the Minister.

The Minister for Works: It is a serious charge to make.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I recognise that, but I have stated it is the general impression of the men in the district. My informants have a good inside knowledge of the department, and I am satisfied there is some ground for their complaint. It was said that the men who were put off were joiners, but one of them stated that he had done only three months' joinery work during all the years he was employed in the department. It was said that these men were put off and McDonald was put on because the latter was a better man. McDonald is a single man; the other two are married men.

The Minister for Works: It is hardly fair play to make charges like this.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Minister should remember that these men are suffering under a deep sense of injustice and have been unable to obtain redress, though an inquiry was promised them.

Mr. Foley: Has the Commissioner a report on the matter?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, and the matter has been delayed for seven or eight months during which time these men have been deprived of their livelihood. The impression of the

employees is that it is distinctly a case of favouritism.

Mr. Foley: This does not show much contentment in the service.

The Minister for Works: I have not heard of any charges like that.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I have here a very lengthy report of a deputation which brought the matter up. A man was charged with incurring too much expense in shifting a 12ft. by 8ft. room from one side of the line to the other. The acting Commissioner is reported as having said to the deputation that if the facts were not as stated he would hold an investigation into the matter. Instead of a 12ft. x 8ft. room, it was actually a three-roomed cottage that had been built as a store when the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line was built. The structure was dug into the ground, and its removal cost £30 or £40 instead of the £17 which was the departmental estimate for the removal of the supposed 12ft. x 8ft. room. And yet this cost of £30 or £40 was the only justification which could be raked up for the man's dismissal. On the face of it, a gross injustice was done in that case. The other man was sent to erect a stock yard. He found the work too much for him to do by himself, and forwarded a recommendation that another labourer be sent to assist. It was found necessary to blast out the site. That man also was sacked. One of the Commissioner's officers went to the union secretary's office and perused the file there, and he was astonished. These two men having been retrenched from the railway service, the appeal board ruled that there was no ground for appeal. When the question of the retrenchment of these men in place of other men who were their juniors was raised, the charges I have mentioned were raked up against them. Had they been dismissed, they would have had an opportunity of disproving before the appeal board the charges made against them. I wish to emphasise that the charges were never made against them until there was a row about certain other men being kept on while these men were retrenched. McDonald is a single man in the eyes of the department because his wife does not live with him, and therefore when he is away from where he is stationed he receives 4s. per night expenses. I trust the Minister will have a searching inquiry made into the truth of the allegation that there have been land transactions between McDonald and the district engineer, and as to whether the men retrenched can do their work. They are willing to submit to any reasonable test. There is another phase of the question regarding the removal of the cottage: the inspector of buildings ought to have been consulted regarding the removal from Sandstone to Mullewa. If as the result of inquiry it should be found that there is no justification for the retrenchment of these men, who have been employed by the department for seven or eight years, they should be reinstated. I hope the Minister will direct the Commissioner to make a

searching investigation into the whole business.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I desire to bring under the Minister's notice the case of John Gurney, an old fettler who had been working for the department at York for 18 years when he was taken seriously ill. The illness incapacitated him for his duties as a fettler. His doctor ordered him to get lighter work, saying that otherwise he would not answer for the consequences. Gurney is absolutely unfit to go back to fettling. He laid his case before the foreman in charge at York, and asked whether a lighter job could be found for him. He was told that an endeavour would be made to find him something suitable. After some lapse of time he was informed that the department could do nothing for him. Thereupon he wrote to me, and I communicated with the department pointing out that the man had contracted his illness while in their service. I got a reply that the matter would receive attention. After some further time had elapsed I wrote again to the department, and was then informed that there was no light billet in which the man could be placed. I do not, of course, expect the department to be converted into a refuge for disabled men but still I consider that a man who has given the department faithful service for so long a period might be found employment when he is incapacitated for heavy work. I am inclined to think that the applications in this matter did not reach the right quarter, and were dismissed without proper inquiry.

Item, Timber mill manager, £425:

Mr. PICKERING: This item, I understand, refers to the sawmill which supplies the Railway Department with sleepers. I believe the mill is not capable of supplying the full requirements of the department, and in view of the contemplated sale of the State sawmills, I shall be glad to learn whether the Minister intends to increase the capacity of the mill so that it may meet all the requirements of the railways.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Wait till the State sawmills are sold; they are not sold yet.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The matters raised by the members for Geraldton and York will be inquired into after the acting Commissioner has made reports. In reply to the member for Sussex I have to say that I do not like anticipating things as to which I am not certain. The mill in question is operating on the Flora and Fauna Reserve, and the Forestry Department are opposed to the erection of another mill there, which would mean the speedy cutting out of the reserve. It is true that the mill is unable to provide all the sleeper requirements of the Railway Department; but there are other portions of our forests being operated by sawmills, and I consider that the State requirements ought to have the first call on timber produced in this State.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—State Batteries, £60,327—agreed to.

Vote—State Dairy Farm, Claremont, £3,151—agreed to.

Vote—State Trading Concerns, £8,443.

Item—Meat Distribution—Loss of trading, £224:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What is the meaning of this item "Meat Distribution"? There has not been any for years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no notes dealing with this matter. I really do not know anything about it. I think probably it is closing up an old account.

Item, Shipment of cattle from the North-West—Loss on trading, £8,219:

Hon. P. COLLIER: This seems to be rather a huge sum to have lost on trading. Was it actually lost last year, or is it expected that it will be lost during the coming season? Each year's Estimates as they come round show a considerable sum debited to this item. Cattle have been fetching a fair price, a price which should be remunerative. It must be that some contract has been made at rates which have been too generous.

The Premier: The loss is that of last year on the cattle which were bought and brought down.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How could you lose on cattle when they were fetching such high prices?

The Premier: The amount was not charged up last year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The whole business of the shipment of cattle from the North-West has been most unsatisfactory because of the bungling contracts which have been made. Who is responsible for the management and the bringing down of the stock from the North-West? Two years ago there was a loss of £30,000 through a contract made by a member of the then Government which was a deplorable thing from every point of view. The Government should have benefited by the experience gained on that occasion and in connection with cattle brought down since they should have been able to make something like a business deal. Last year stock brought the highest prices in the history of the State, and how such a loss could have been made is difficult to understand. We have our own boats and we should bring down stock at a cost not greater than it costs those who are trading privately. There is something wrong somewhere. If a Labour Minister had incurred the loss of £30,000 to which I have referred, he would have been impeached for his incapacity.

Mr. Foley: That man is manager of the State Steamship Service now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That contract was made by a Minister of the Crown with the owners of the stock. Some explanation of this ought to be given.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Previously this has been included in the State Trading

Concerns division. Last year the vote was £12,870, and the estimated receipts were £20,000, the estimated contribution to Consolidated Revenue being £7,130. This year it has been struck out from the State Trading Concerns division and put under that of Business Undertakings. This has been done on purpose to mislead members.

The Premier: I have not tried to mislead them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, but the officer who put this where it is tried to do so. There is a difference of £15,000. Last year we were told it was on account of a lot of cattle purchased and sent to Yandanooka to be fattened. The department gave up dealing in meat, closed down the butchers' shops and sent the balance of the cattle to Yandanooka. Last year the vote was under State Trading Concerns, whereas this year it is unrecognisable under Business Undertakings. It was first put under State Trading Concerns in a year when there was a loss of £26,000, it being the desire to make the State trading concerns look bad.

The PREMIER: I assure the hon. member I had no hand in placing this vote here. I am told it is to cover a loss which ought to have been charged up in the previous year, this being the balance of the loss.

Hon. P. Collier: If that is so, the Estimates are not properly presented.

The PREMIER: When dealing in cattle one might easily make a considerable loss at any time. I do not know very much about the transaction. I think it was in the year before last that these cattle were brought down and sent to Yandanooka. However, this is the balance of a loss on bringing down cattle from the North-West, and I am told it should have been charged up last year.

Hon. P. Collier: We voted £12,870 for the purpose last year.

The PREMIER: This comes through from the year before last. A loss was made, and made over a year ago.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Where is the revenue of £20,000 which it was estimated would result?

The PREMIER: This is a loss which cleans up the whole transaction. That is all I know about it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I can quite understand that this has been handled by the Minister for Agriculture and, therefore, the Premier is not au fait with it; but the department responsible should have supplied the Premier with particulars. The explanation offered is that this is a debit which has been standing over since the year before last. An account of £8,000 has been allowed to stand over for two years, notwithstanding that we voted £12,870 last year to meet the expenditure! If that is the explanation, I am inclined to think the Department of Agriculture has not supplied the whole of the particulars.

The Premier: They certainly have not supplied much information.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And we were promised that £7,130 should go into Consolidated Revenue. We have no surplus. No expenditure was incurred.

The Premier: The loss on the trading in these cattle altogether was £15,722. That is in connection with this transaction.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier should postpone this matter and let us know something about it later. Last year by voting £12,000 we were supposed to square the whole thing up and have a return of £7,000, but this year instead of getting that return we have another loss of £8,000. The vote last year was £12,870, and the estimated receipts were £20,000, leaving a balance due to Consolidated Revenue of £7,130. Instead of there being a balance we have a loss of £8,433 and no vote at all for last year. The whole thing is wrong.

The Premier: The loss is not wrong.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But the Estimates are wrong. Why not postpone the whole thing?

The Premier: I am ready to postpone it for a month.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is a difference of £15,000 and we ought to know where it is.

The PREMIER: I move—

That consideration of this vote be postponed.

Motion put and passed.

Vote—Tourist resorts, Cave House, etc., £9,753:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is an anticipated loss of £753. Does that mean a loss on the Cave House or on advertising?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The increase is made up in advertising, printing, etc., £650. There were improvements to the value of £250, making a total of £9,753. That is with the head office expenditure. The Cave House at Yalingup accounts for £5,475, motor fares, spirits, etc., £800, and improvements and minor additions which were necessary account for the balance.

Hon. P. Collier: Is Rottneest expenditure included?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, plans have been prepared for extending the buildings, involving an expenditure of £15,000. It is hard to say how long we shall have to go before we have to expend that amount. It will be absolutely necessary to obtain the accommodation that is required. At present it is all taken up and many people have to be turned away during the summer months. We could fill double the accommodation we have to-day. Owing to the state of the finances the Government are not prepared to go on with the proposition of extensions for the present.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Tramways, £125,902—agreed to.

Vote—Yandanooka Estate, £12,223:

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I should like some information regarding this item, as it may

throw some light on the other item that we dealt with a little time ago. I understand that a lot of the cattle from the North-West went to Yandanooka, and has been grazing there for some time.

Mr. Maley: They were the rejects.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have been informed that the Government have a fairly large number of cattle there in splendid condition and ready for the market. It was also stated that they would hold that condition until January or February, and that it was not proposed to put them on the market until that time when the price would be high and a greater profit returned. If these cattle are as represented to me during the last one or two days, it may place a different complexion on the item which we previously discussed.

The Minister for Mines: We may make a better profit on them.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The argument used is that they will not bring the same profit now as they would bring in January or February, when the prices are likely to be higher. It may be that the department is holding these cattle in order to obtain a greater revenue. If that is so, it may throw a different light on the point raised by the member for North-East Fremantle.

Mr. Money: Beef is scarce in January.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If these cattle will hold their condition and can be put on the market in January, it may be that instead of there being a loss on this other concern, there will be a profit.

The Minister for Works: I expect that is the case.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Government property sales fund receipts, £1,003,802 7s. 1d.—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

#### STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington [12.50]: I move—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair for the purpose of considering the Estimates of State Trading Concerns in Committee of Supply.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You have just reported progress on the Estimates; now you want to go back on to Estimates again.

The Minister for Mines: The Minister is merely going to introduce them.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	..	12
Majority for	..	..	..	..	7

## AYRS.

Mr. Angwin  
Mr. Broun  
Mr. Draper  
Mr. Duff  
Mr. Foley  
Mr. George  
Mr. Griffiths  
Mr. Harrison  
Mr. Hickmott  
Mr. Hudson

Mr. Maley  
Mr. Mitchell  
Mr. Money  
Mr. Nairn  
Mr. Pickering  
Mr. Plesse  
Mr. Scaddan  
Mr. Stubbs  
Mr. Hardwick  
(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Angwin  
Mr. Chesson  
Mr. Collier  
Mr. Holman  
Mr. Jones  
Mr. Lambert  
Mr. Lutey

Mr. Rocks  
Mr. Troy  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wilson  
Mr. O'Loghlin  
(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

## In Committee of Supply.

Mr. Foley in the Chair, Hon. W. J. George, Minister for Works, in charge of the Votes.

Vote—State brickworks, £13,600.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [12.55]: The State brickworks are in full swing and are making good sales at what we consider satisfactory prices. The estimated receipts for the year will amount to £15,500 and the estimated expenditure will be £13,600. The expenditure shows an increase of £3,402. This is in consequence of extra wages and material being required to maintain our output. The bricks produced at the State brickworks are recognised as a first-class article and they are coming into full favour right through the building trade. I have kept prices down. I have not allowed them to soar so high as they might easily have done, because I held it was more important to encourage building and to keep employment going than to make a few pounds or even a few thousand pounds. The loss on the brickworks during last year amounted to £1,435 after making provision for all charges. The depreciation was £1,151 and interest £1,515. Members will see, therefore, that the brickworks last year paid depreciation but were able to contribute only £80 towards the interest bill. There is no doubt that a considerable and respectable and also a legitimate profit will be made during the year now before us.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [12.53]: I move—

That progress be reported.

The Minister for Works: The Premier desired that these items should be introduced in order that we might get on a little further with the Estimates.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is it permissible for the Minister to discuss a motion for progress?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Motion put and negatived.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [1.0]: The Premier said that these Estimates would merely be introduced, and that no attempt would be made to carry them through. I expect the Premier to keep a promise when he makes it. There has been a good deal of complaint regarding the management of the State Brickworks, complaint directed not so much against the officers of the works as against the Government. Undoubtedly the works have not been operated in the manner most beneficial to the building trade. The demand for bricks has been strong, and the State Brickworks have done very little to meet that demand.

The Minister for Works: We have been making all the bricks we can.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That may be so now, but it was not the case all through the year. On scanning the balance sheet one can only come to the conclusion that the works have not been operated to their full capacity as they should have been, having regard to the number of bricks sold during the past 12 months. The Government failed to rise to the occasion. They had the chance of a life time, and missed it. True, the building trade was dead for a little while; but the Government had not the foresight to prepare for the revival. It was well known that large numbers of bricks would be required for soldiers' homes, but the Government made no provision to supply that demand. If the brickworks had been worked in the best interests of the State during the last financial year, they would have made a profit, instead of showing a loss of £1,435.

The Minister for Works: I would defy you or anyone else to make a profit in the circumstances of last year.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If there had been bricks in stock, they could have been sold at a profit.

The Minister for Works: We made all the bricks we could. We could not make any more.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Does the Minister mean to tell me that bricks were turned out at the rate of 600,000 or 700,000 per month during the whole of last year?

The Minister for Works: No, of course not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The kilns would turn out that quantity.

The Minister for Works: But we could not get the men.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: All the other brickworks were closed down. Where were all the men?

The Minister for Works: We had our stacks full.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: To say that men could not be got is an excuse that will not avail the Minister. Men could have



been trained for the work, as they were before; and then the works would have shown a profit.

The Minister for Works: Not with bricks at 40s. per thousand.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. A profit has been shown with bricks at 40s. per thousand. I do not say that that price would be payable now, seeing that wages have increased. But at the time the State brickworks were selling at 40s. per thousand, they showed a good profit.

The Minister for Works: Only for about four weeks.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is the only period during which they worked at full strength. The only occasion on which they worked for a month right through, they manufactured their bricks at—

The Minister for Works: At £1 12s. 10½d. per thousand.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. If I had thought the Minister was going to raise the question of cost, I would have had the figures here. I have particulars of the cost of the bricks for 13 months, each month separately. During the period the brickworks were operated at full strength, the cost of the bricks was £1 2s. 6d. per thousand, apart from overhead charges.

The Minister for Works: During May of 1916 they cost £1 2s. 6d. per thousand without overhead charges. With overhead charges, the cost came to £1 11s. 10¼d.

Mr. Pickering: Was that on trucks?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. That was the cost of manufacturing the bricks. A selling price of 40s. per thousand paid well at that cost of production.

The Minister for Works: But the works could not continue to make bricks at that cost.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They could have done so if they had had the necessary orders to carry them on. Moreover, they were under the disability of their men leaving for the war; new men had continually to be trained for the work. At that time all the kilns in the State were working at full strength; but, later, various kilns closed down, and the Government could easily have secured men to keep the State works in full operation for 12 months. Then the undertaking would have shown a handsome profit, instead of a loss of £1,435.

The Minister for Works: I can prove that we did everything possible.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister, or those in charge of the works, failed to examine carefully into the prospects of the building trade. The Government should put in another kiln there to make bricks for inside walls.

The Minister for Works: We put up two Scotch kilns which cost £3,000.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The machines are there to turn out the bricks and those machines could have been kept fully occupied. Instead of that, building remained for some time without being completed, and no attempt was made to see that the work was

carried on. That meant a loss not only to the State but also to those who were engaged in the building trade. Other kilns have since been started, and the consequence is that we show a loss of £1,400 which could have been avoided.

The Minister for Works: It could not have been avoided.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is a matter of opinion.

The Minister for Works: You do not know; you only think. I know.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I give way to the Minister on engineering matters, but I think I can teach him something in this respect. I notice also that some comments have been made by the auditor with regard to the balance sheet, though it is nothing serious. The bricks which have been turned out at the State works are as good as any on the market, and the contractors who would not look at them a few years ago are now more than anxious to get these bricks. Even the second class bricks are almost as good as the first, so I am told, and there is no doubt that the works did fair to become very successful. This is one of the industries which the Labour party brought into existence. I noticed a little time back that the Government advertised for a manager. What was the advertisement for? There was a manager there at the time, and he was under an agreement to the Government. The Government would act wisely if they took steps to extend these works. They are better situated than any other in the State and they can make bricks with less handling of material than at any other works. The result is that they should be made cheaper than elsewhere. If the building trade keeps up there is no doubt that we shall have in these brickworks a source of considerable profit to the State. The large area of land on which the works are established contains a very large deposit of valuable clay, and there is nothing better to be found anywhere. There are different kinds of clay there, and it is possible to turn out fire bricks as well. The manager who is there understands his job and understands it well. He is an engineer as well as a brickmaker, and constructed various kilns in Victoria and knows the business from A to Z. I feel confident that if he is given a free hand he will make these works second to none in the State. The Estimates show that only a very small profit is anticipated, but I hope the result will be better than the Minister expects.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [1.18]: I believe we are on the right track in connection with the brick works, but if there had been sympathetic management they would have been in a better position than we find them in to-day. There has not been behind the works that enthusiasm which should have been necessary to make them a pronounced success. I know Mr. Bradshaw. On the mechanical side he is one of the best men who could be secured for the position.

I am suspicious regarding this particular trading concern, because I have seen the tactics of other Governments in Australia respecting the same class of work. I remember that in Victoria, some years ago, the brick combine and the builders had the people by the throat and were charging enormous prices for bricks. The Premier of the day, "Tommy" Bent, threatened to start State brick works, but when vested interests got to work it was decided to supply bricks to the Government at a satisfactory price while still keeping a hold on the throat of the general community.

The Minister for Works: There is nothing of that sort here.

Mr. LUTEY: When we consider the uncompromising attitude on the part of members opposite towards State trading concerns, we are bound to be suspicious.

The Minister for Works: Nothing but fair play has been given to the concerns.

Mr. LUTEY: In Victoria, as I say, the Government by their threats secured better treatment from the combine, although the people were still left at the mercy of those brigands. In New South Wales also the combine had the people by the throat, but the State Government took on the work of brick making themselves and saved many thousands of pounds. At the present time in this State the builders cannot get bricks. I feel sure that, had foresight been exercised, the position to-day would have been different. The necessity for a large quantity of bricks could easily have been foreseen, notwithstanding which there is to-day virtually a famine in bricks in this State and the State brick works are not in a position to supply the demand.

The Minister for Works: We are supplying 140,000 bricks per week.

Mr. LUTEY: It would be much better if we were supplying 280,000.

Mr. Chesson: They are not working at their full capacity even now.

Mr. LUTEY: I can hardly believe that that is so.

Mr. Jones: Yes, they could put on another shift.

Mr. LUTEY: While the demand is here, why is the other shift not put on?

The Minister for Works: We have not the plant or the machinery.

Mr. LUTEY: The machinery could be manufactured.

The Minister for Works: Where is the money to come from?

Mr. LUTEY: You have the demand for as many bricks as can possibly be turned out. The present affords an opportunity for building up the trade. If it were desired to get the machinery, the finding of the money would not be an insuperable obstacle. If the bricks were available for building I am satisfied there would be a large number of these men who would quickly be in employment. If the orders for machinery have not been placed I hope the Ministry will immediately give them either in Victoria or elsewhere so that the machinery may be in-

stalled as quickly as possible to supply the demand. The member for North-East Fremantle referred to the fact that it was lack of statesmanship that greater stocks had not been made up, and the yards kept going *times gone by* in anticipation of this rush of work. It needs no prophet to say that in the next few years there will be a great demand for bricks. In any case orders for the machinery I have mentioned should be telegraphed so that there may be as little delay as possible in overtaking the demand. I have heard traders saying that firms in Australia did not take the advantage they should have taken of the position created by the war when they had almost absolute protection afforded to them. They had no competition and they had sole control of the trade, but they did not take advantage of the opportunity of manufacturing their machinery in large enough quantities or at a fair enough price in order to obtain a sound footing in the manufacturing world of Australia. Some of the firms did not do this, but I believe that if the Minister will make representations to the firm that supplies this class of machinery it would put forward a strenuous effort to see that it was provided. Reference has been made to the manager of the brickworks, Mr. Bradshaw. I am convinced that if the Minister would instal the necessary machinery this officer would be able to proceed with the production of more bricks in order to meet the demand in this State. This is a matter which is well worthy of discussion because the whole basis of our economic system is involved. The whole management of the household is an economic question. I could have thrown my hat in the air when I saw the announcement by the late Labour Government that they intended to go in for the manufacture of bricks. I have keenly watched the position in the Eastern States. In New South Wales, irrespective of the strenuous attempt that was made to prevent the Government from manufacturing bricks and despite the criticism of the press and every obstacle being placed in their way, they went on with the business and saved New South Wales many thousands of pounds. Victoria did not go so far. The late Premier, Mr. Thomas Bent, bluffed the people and as soon as he had done what he wanted he had no further concern about the general public. The same thing applies to the question of coal in Victoria. Instead of this being utilised for the benefit of the people it was only used in one direction. I hope this question will receive the careful consideration of the Minister for Works so that the bricks that are required for building in this State can be turned out, and that people can continue an industry which at present is being strangled through the lack of bricks.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [1.33]: The member for North-East Fremantle made some remarks regarding the management of these brick works. I am

satisfied that if he knew of the circumstances in connection with them, such as I could show him, he would be quite satisfied that there was little cause for complaint in that respect.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I would have said nothing if you had reported progress.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe thinks that the Government have not taken up a sympathetic attitude in this matter. I say emphatically, and if Mr. Bradshaw were here he would support me, that at every opportunity everything has been done in connection with the supply of bricks that could be done. He has had to meet tremendous handicaps. The difficulty has been to keep a full staff employed. If we could keep a full staff on the works, we should be able to turn out 180,000 bricks a week, but we have not been able to keep a full staff and, consequently, our costs have gone up. During the last 12 months, in order to keep the men there, we have built four cottages at a cost of £1,200, for each of which we receive 7s. 6d. per week rent. We are going to provide further accommodation in order to make the conditions of life such that men will be content to stay there. Under the circumstances, we cannot make bricks regularly at the low cost of 22s. 6d. per thousand, exclusive of overhead charges. The bricks are now costing about 29s. a thousand, or with overhead charges 43s. per thousand, and we are selling them for 48s. to 53s. a thousand. The whole of the output of the brickworks up to the 1st April next has been sold.

Vote put and passed.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

#### BILL—PRICES REGULATION.

Returned from the Council with requested amendments.

#### MOTION—PARLIAMENTARY ALLOWANCE, to INCREASE.

Mr. WILSON (Collie) [1.45]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House, the Parliamentary allowance made to members is inadequate and should be immediately increased.

I make no apology for introducing this motion, which has for its object the payment of a better allowance to members of Parliament. When the late Sir John Forrest, the then Premier, introduced his Payment of Members Bill in this House in 1900, he is reported in "Hansard" as having made the following remarks—

We are willing to consider this matter in the light of the precedents established in other parts of the world, especially in other parts of Australia. I do not desire,

because I have an opinion on this matter which may not be acceptable to others, to be obstinate or press my idea unduly; I am willing to be guided by the precedents elsewhere rather than follow my opinions in a matter of this sort.

I hope members of this House will view the matter with the same open mind as the late Sir John Forrest, and will discuss it from the standpoint of the principle of the payment of members. The allowance granted to members is £300 per year, but when one considers the election expenses which a member has to incur and the subsequent calls upon his purse, one finds that the average member is left with an allowance that is not equal to an ordinary labourer's wage. The life of a Parliament is three years. Members know that to fight an election costs at least £100. Then there are many charity calls upon members. I do not wish to inflate my estimate but I am safe in saying that any member who gets off with a minimum of £20 a year for charity calls is an exceedingly lucky man. To be well within the mark, let us say that he donates £50 to charities during his three years' term. That, plus the cost of contesting the election, represents an outlay of £150, so that his allowance for each of the three years averages something like £250. Let us consider the case of a country member. I understand the allowance was intended to permit a member and his family to live in a certain degree of comfort. I do not ask for anything in the way of luxury. A man who enters parliamentary life with the idea of getting luxury, and who has nothing outside his allowance to depend upon, will find himself grievously disappointed. I shall take my own case as typical of that of many members who at present occupy seats in this House. It is all very well for the man who has a profession behind him, or who is able to carry on his business and at the same time attend to his parliamentary duties, but we must not overlook the man who formerly was a miner, working on the goldfields or in the coal mines, or the case of the man who formerly earned a livelihood in the timber mills. Such men, having been elected to Parliament, cannot follow their previous avocations, and I maintain it is up to the Government to see that they receive a decent allowance to enable them and their families to live. Some people argue that the duties of members of Parliament do not require them to work the whole year round. I say advisedly that the member of Parliament who does his work conscientiously with a desire to do justice to his constituents, must work every week in the year.

Mr. Jones: And seven days a week, too.

Mr. WILSON: That is my experience; I find that I do not even get Sunday to myself, and I believe that 49 other members in this House are in precisely the same position. This being so, it is up to the Government to see that members are adequately recompensed for their labours.

A country member comes to Perth, and it costs him something to live here—at a very low estimate, £2 per week. That leaves him, out of his salary, something like £2 17s. per week to keep things going at home. Really, a member of Parliament is paid under 10s. per day, or less than hod-carriers or even some boys are now earning. Then it is said that members of Parliament have various privileges. The only privilege I know of is that of paying up. Certainly one has a gold railway pass; but that merely represents, to the average member, his fare to and from his work. To a man in a large business the pass may be of material benefit, saving him from the necessity of putting his hand in his pocket for railway expenses, which the business should bear. But the man who is in Parliament because he has been sent there by the workers has no use for the pass other than that of travelling to Perth to do his work for them and going home again. During his recent candidature for a seat in the Legislative Council Mr. Lovekin published a manifesto which, among many other statements, contained the following:—

It was suggested that members of Parliament intended to increase their own salaries. He was opposed to that. Parliamentarians were adequately paid. Members of Parliament had the opportunity of doing a day's work before entering upon their Parliamentary duties.

How can any sane man write such a thing? Imagine me working one day in a mine at Collie—say Monday—and then catching the 8 p.m. train and travelling all night in order to be here on Tuesday! That is what Mr. Lovekin suggests. Even if I could follow his advice, where am I to find an employer willing to employ me for one day in each week because I have a seat in Parliament? Mr. Lovekin's manifesto proceeds—

They worked about four months of the year, and should really not work more than two months if they put aside the party bickerings.

I understand that this gentleman occupied practically a whole evening on the first day he sat in Parliament. Was he indulging in bickering? His manifesto further states that members of Parliament have "various other privileges." Can anyone tell me what privileges a member of Parliament has other than the gold pass?

Mr. Angelo: Sitting up all night.

Mr. WILSON: Just here let me say that people may argue members of Parliament knew when they went up for election what salaries they would receive. My reply is that I, for one, did not know that the cost of living was going to increase all the time. Further, I am elected by the people, who are the judges of the man they want here. Having elected me, the people of the country have a duty to see that I am adequately paid for my work. When moving the second reading of the Parliamentary Allowances Bill on the 2nd February, 1911, the late Mr. Frank Wilson, who was then Premier, said—

I often have to ask myself as to whether we are paying members a reasonable salary for their services; and I feel that we command work from members in this House at any rate of our Legislature which is strenuous in the extreme. At any rate, during the last three or four months it has been strenuous so far as members on the Government side are concerned, and I believe that members on the Opposition side have made it very strenuous for themselves. However, the fact remains that there is a great amount of work demanded from hon. members, and I must conclude that the sum that has been paid as honorarium, or salary, if we like to term it such, both to members and Ministers, is totally inadequate for the time they give. A salary of £200 a year—

It was £200 then—

—is not sufficient for hon. members to live on decently; in fact, it is not sufficient for them to live on at all; and, although I approve myself of hon. members utilising their abilities, their undoubted abilities, in earning additional income for themselves, yet we have to recognise that some hon. members cannot do that, that their time is fully occupied and they have not the facilities for taking on temporary work during recess.

Those words are as true to-day as when they were uttered. Many members cannot do work during the recess; and the late Mr. Frank Wilson fully recognised that fact; and most members of the present Government recognise it, seeing that they voted with him. It is stated that during the last election candidates were followed round by professed adherents of the Labour party, who asked questions as to reduction of Parliamentary salaries. They had no authority to do so. In this connection let me quote the mouthpiece of the Labour party in 1911, Mr. Seaddan. In supporting the Parliamentary Allowances Bill he said—

I am prepared to accept the Bill so far as it provides £300 for members; still I hold the opinion that £400 would be adequate remuneration for the services members render to the country.

That was said in 1911, and the cost of food-stuffs and other commodities has increased by nearly 100 per cent. since that time. I have here cuttings from the newspapers of 1911 showing that in those days a hundred-weight of corned beef could be bought for £1. I have also the prices of commodities in a number of Perth shops at that time, and the figures show that prices have since increased by from 50 to 100 per cent. Next, there is the question of who is to deal with this matter. Some people say it should be left to a referendum of the people. In 1911 some members of Parliament wanted to refer the question to the people in that way. But only one of those members is in Parliament to-day. The people would not have them any more. Mr. Frank Wilson said—

I leave the measure in the hands of the House to deal with as they may deem best

their abilities, their undoubted abilities, according to their consciences.

In Great Britain a member of Parliament receives £400 per annum, and there is an agitation at home for a considerable increase. I have here a cutting from the "West Australian" of the 9th November, stating that—

The British Miners' Federation is subsidising those miners who are members of the House of Commons, making the total salary of each member £600 a year, and adding travelling expenses.

Our Federal members, as we all know, receive £600 a year; and I believe that Senator Lynch has taken up the cudgels on the ground that the payment is inadequate.

Mr. O'Loughlin: They are on a good wicket.

Mr. WILSON: I am satisfied that the Federal salary will be increased. In New South Wales members receive £500 each per annum and free railway pass. Members of the Queensland Parliament have during the last few days had their salaries raised from £300 to £500. In addition, they receive free railway pass, and travelling expenses to and from the place of nomination in each electorate. The leader of the Queensland Opposition receives an allowance of £200 per annum in addition to his ordinary remuneration; and members other than those in receipt of official salaries receive a further £2 per month to cover cost of postage and telegrams. Queensland members get £524 per annum in addition to travelling expenses to and from the place of nomination in the electorate. We, at the present time, receive £300 per annum. I am one of those who believe in either one thing or the other. We should either have payment of members and make that payment adequate, or we should do away with it altogether. I could not secure employment and devote the necessary attention to the affairs of my electorate, as some members are able to do. If it were possible for me to secure employment outside, I would only be able to work for a time because the attention which I would have to devote to my parliamentary duties would prevent me from fully carrying out any other duties that I might engage in. On the other hand, if I devoted the whole of my time to employment outside, the interests of my electors would suffer. As I said at the opening of my remarks, I make no apology for bringing this matter forward. I consider that I am worth more than £300 as a member of Parliament. Out of that sum I have to pay all my expenses. He is a cheap man who thinks he can carry out the work associated with parliamentary duties for this salary. I sincerely trust the Premier will, before the session closes, introduce a Bill which will have for its object the increasing of the salaries of members. I am proclaiming from the housetops the fact that the salary paid to members of Parliament in this State to-day is far from sufficient. I am not ashamed of my poverty, but I am ashamed of the salary which I am

drawing as a representative of the people. Barrington wrote a prologue for the opening of a play house in New South Wales a century ago and to paraphrase a couplet by that poet I would say—

True patriots all; for be it understood

We rule our country for our country's good.

If we do our duty faithfully and well, then we are entitled to better remuneration than we are receiving.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [2.5]: I have listened to the remarks of the hon. member with much interest and I desire to say that I am very much in accord with what he has said. It has been argued by some hon. members that there is some sort of analogy between civil servants and members of Parliament, but when we consider the lot of the member of Parliament, we must arrive at the conclusion that there is no such analogy. A member of Parliament is domiciled between the electorate he represents and the seat of government, and the expenses which are incurred by members of Parliament in looking after the business of their electorate and attending to their duties in Parliament are considerable. Only last week I had occasion to go to Donnybrook to open a bazaar and I can assure hon. members that it cost me nearly £5 to attend to that little ceremony.

Hon. P. Collier: You got off lightly.

Mr. PICKERING: I suppose I did, when we remember what pitfalls are always before members of Parliament. The member for Collie mentioned that we have a railway pass, but I would like to remind hon. members that we are not the only people in Western Australia who are given free passes over the railways. Every commercial traveller who moves from one end of the State to the other receives a free pass over the railways, and in addition to that the firm he represents makes him an allowance of at least £1 a day for travelling expenses.

The Minister for Works: Where does he get his free pass from?

Mr. PICKERING: He receives it from the firm he represents and by whom he is employed. We are employed by the people of the State and they supply us with a free pass, but we get nothing whatever in the shape of travelling allowances as the commercial man receives. Take the Estimates we have just been considering. We find that right throughout the civil service grade increases have been given and in connection with the higher salaried officers we find that in some instances the increases have been beyond those of grade. It is thus generally conceded that increases are required in every walk of life to-day. That is how the position appeals to me. The member for Collie has given an excellent exposition of the case and has covered the period since 1911 when the Premier and the then leader of the Opposition spoke with regard to an

increase in salaries. It will be generally admitted that what has been said by the member for Collie is quite correct. We know that rents have advanced considerably and we know also that we have to look forward to further increases in that direction. If the cost of living continues to increase as it has done in the past few years, it will be impossible to build a home for a worker and let it to him at anything less than 25s. and even at that rental the accommodation which will be provided will be poor. It has been suggested that a member of Parliament can find an occupation in addition to that for which he is paid by the State, but as the member for Collie says, unless a man has a profession it is absolutely impossible for him to obtain any additional emolument outside. What employer will engage a member or Parliament, remembering the limited hours that a member of Parliament has at his disposal to devote to any other service? The greater part of his time is taken up in the fulfilment of the duties attaching to the position he occupies as a representative of the people, and it is absolutely necessary that, even when the House is not sitting, a member should attend to the duties of his constituency. I have found that out, too. While I have been practising my profession in Perth, I have found it necessary to visit my constituency at least once a week, in order to attend to parliamentary duties. It will thus be seen that there is no relaxation for a member of Parliament. Sundry matters crop up every day which cannot be neglected. The correspondence which has to be attended to is very often considerable. I have the reputation of being the third biggest correspondent in this House.

Mr. Lambert: You are the biggest talker.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not think that is quite true, but even if I am I claim that I sit in this House and attend to my duties conscientiously by listening to the debates and giving the closest attention to Bills which are placed before us, and I claim that I have a perfect right to express my views on any matter that comes before the Chamber. While I have that right I shall not hesitate to exercise it, unless, of course, I am ruled out of order. I regret that my position as a member of the Country party will not permit me to record my vote on the motion of the member for Collie as I should like to do. When I joined the Country party I signed the platform, one of the planks of which provides that the question of an increase in the salaries of members of Parliament must be determined by means of a referendum to the people. I do not hesitate to say, however, that it is quite impossible for a member of Parliament to represent his constituency adequately on the paltry salary which he receives to-day unless he possesses other sources of income.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 2.10 a.m. (Friday).

## Legislative Council,

Friday, 28th November, 1919.

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Merchant Shipping Act Application Act Amendment.
- 2, Land Tax and Income Tax.
- 3, Perth Mint Act Amendment.
- 4, Intoxicates Act Amendment.
- 5, Licensing Act Amendment Act Continuance.

### STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

Close of Session.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.35] I move—

That for the remainder of the session so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable Bills to be introduced and passed through all stages at one sitting and messages from the Assembly to be taken into consideration forthwith.

It is customary to submit a motion of this kind in the closing days of the session, and as it is hoped that the session will be brought to a close next week it is necessary that the motion should be carried. I need hardly assure hon. members that, as in the past, it will be applied, not only in deference to the wishes of the majority, but also in deference to the wishes of any considerable minority. The carrying of the motion is quite necessary to avoid delay.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.37]: I should like to take the opportunity to ask the leader of the House whether he can indicate to us his own wishes in regard to Friday sittings. We all appreciate the manner in which he tries to