

execution of this Act shall, except where otherwise provided by this Act, be sufficiently authenticated if signed by the chairman or registrar or any two members of the board." The fourth paragraph of the schedule provides that all powers vested in the board may be exercised by the majority of members present at any meeting and all questions shall be decided by a majority and by open voting. That same paragraph also provides that if a member refuses to vote, his vote shall be counted for the negative. A further paragraph sets out that if any member refuses or neglects to attend any meeting of the board all lawful acts of the board shall be as effectual as if they had been authorised by the full board. From this it will be gathered that the Bill cannot be other than, as I said at the commencement, a measure to provide a close corporation, a corporation of a dangerous type. The whole thing is bristling with anomalies and I feel sure it will not be allowed to go through the Chamber. It provides, amongst other things, that if any person has sold spectacles to another in the country, the seller is not even given an opportunity to sue for payment after a certain period unless he be a member of the board. Can anything more drastic be imagined? This is a clumsy measure altogether. There are no references in the marginal notes as to where the clauses came from. We were told by Mr. Nicholson that they were gleaned from Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I did not tell you anything of the sort.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: We were also informed that a similar measure was under consideration in South Australia. We were given to understand that the Bill was not one of very great importance and that it should be allowed to pass the second reading without much opposition. But from the anomalies which appear in the Bill I cannot see my way clear to support the second reading. If we agree to the second reading it is tantamount to saying that we are in favour of the system. I am not going to favour any system which is going to limit free trade, which is going to hamper people who are not so favourably circumstanced for obtaining a pair of spectacles without having to journey to Perth to get them, and then have to pay considerably more for them under the proposed close corporation.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Who said so?

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The Bill is too cunning; there is not the shadow of doubt. That is the top and bottom and the beginning and the end of the whole thing.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Oh no.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The Bill is going to create a close corporation and it will have the effect of limiting the supply, and that supply will be less than the demand. It will have the effect of putting out men who are just as capable of conducting an optician's business as any member who would be appointed by the Governor under Clause

4. In the circumstances there is no alternative but to vote against the second reading of the Bill, and if Dr. Saw calls for a division I shall support him.

On motion by Hon. T. Moore, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.38 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 18th November, 1920.

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

RESIGNATION, Mr. G. J. FOLEY.

Mr. SPEAKER [4.32]: I have received the resignation of the hon. member for Leonora (Mr. Foley). His letter reads—

The Hon. the Speaker. Sir, I hereby resign my seat in the Legislative Assembly as the member representing Mt. Leonora electorate in the State of Western Australia. George James Foley, 17th November, 1920.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.33]: I move—

That in consequence of the resignation of the member for Leonora, the seat for the electoral district of Leonora be declared vacant.

Question put and passed.

QUESTION—"JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE."

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, Have the Government yet given the promised further consideration to the question of re-establishing the "Journal of Agriculture"? 2, What decision has been arrived at?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Not to issue the journal at present.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.37]: I move—

That for the remainder of the session Government business take precedence of all motions and orders of the day.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.38]: I recognise that we have reached the stage in the session when it is necessary for private members' business to give way to Government business, but before the motion is agreed to, I should like the Premier to give an assurance that, if possible, an opportunity will be afforded to deal with some of the business on the Notice Paper in the names of private members. I do not suggest that the Premier should undertake to give an opportunity to discuss all the private members' business, but there are some matters which members consider to be of importance. I have one at least which I would like the House to consider before the session closes, and if the Premier will agree that an opportunity might be given to discuss some of the more important matters, I shall have no objection to the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.40]: I think I can give the assurance asked for by the leader of the Opposition. I realise that there is some important business in the names of private members which ought to be considered. I cannot undertake to afford an opportunity to discuss every item of private members' business, but the more important matters will receive consideration.

Question put and passed.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.41]: I move—

That after the 19th November this House shall meet for the despatch of business on Fridays as on the days already provided.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.42]: It is somewhat unusual for the Government to ask members to sit on Friday. I know that it has been done—

The Colonial Secretary: It is done every session.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Not every session; it has been done in some sessions. Generally speaking we have been able to get through the business of the House on the ordinary sitting days. I am afraid that this proposed method of conducting the business of the House is not in the best interests of the country. The reason why we are being called upon to sit on four days a week—and probably we shall be asked to sit very late at night from now until the end of the session—is that the Government did not

call Parliament together until late in the year. If the Government insist on enjoying a recess of seven or eight months and do not call Parliament together until the month of August, they must expect to have a rush of business at the end of the session. We are being asked to sit on four days a week when the whole of the business of the session, with the exception of one or two Bills, has yet to be passed by this Chamber. The result will be that another place will be inundated with work, and members realise that it is impossible to give full and proper consideration to the matters coming before the House if we have to sit late on four days in the week.

The Minister for Works: Besides, it tries our tempers.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It does. Even I went very close to getting bad tempered late one night last week.

The Minister for Works: Snake-headed

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. It is not the best way of doing business, and so long as we agree to sit an extra day a week, we shall be encouraging the Government to delay calling Parliament together at the proper time. Parliament should meet not later than the month of June in each year. It is not fair for the Government to call Parliament together in August, and then rush the whole of the work through during the last three or four weeks of the session when proper consideration cannot be given to it. The question arises whether we could not better meet the situation by starting earlier on three days in the week. I know that an experiment was made with day sittings a few years ago, and it was held to be not successful, but at that time we met in the morning. If we met at three o'clock in the afternoon, it would give us one and a half hours extra per day, or four and a half hours extra per week.

Mr. Maley: It would not suit metropolitan members.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That may be so, but I understand that members seek the privilege of representing their fellows not in their own interests, but in order to serve the public. It may be that day sitting would not suit metropolitan members. The member for Greenough has made that statement.

Mr. Smith: The hon. member has no right to speak for metropolitan members. We are prepared to meet at 2.30 if necessary.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Possibly it would suit the convenience of some of the metropolitan members better to meet late in the afternoon, because in those circumstances they have an opportunity of attending to their private business during the day; but public business should come even before private business. That being so, we ought to meet earlier in the afternoon. The Federal Parliament, indeed, meets in the morning. I think our hour of meeting should be 3 p.m.

Mr. Johnston: Say half-past two.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Any convenient hour after lunch. Then we shall be able to get through the business without meeting on Friday. However, there would have been no necessity to ask for the extra sitting day had Parliament met in June. Then we should now be well through the work of the session, and in position to prorogue by Christmas. Without moving an amendment, I suggest to the Premier the advisability of meeting earlier on the three sitting days.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.48]: I have no objection to the House meeting on Friday provided that we meet earlier in the day. Country members are placed in a difficult position. The majority of the members on these cross benches have not transferred their homes to the metropolitan area, and we want to get to our homes for the week-end in order to meet our constituents and attend to our affairs. I suggest that we meet each day including Friday, at 2.30 p.m. I hope the Premier will consider the convenience of members residing in the country as regards getting to their homes. Such members have to stay in Perth during the whole of the week, and they have no private business to attend to in Perth. Moreover, early meeting should obviate late sitting.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [4.50]: Speaking as a representative of a far out district—there is only one further out in this State—I am prepared to vote for sitting on Friday. I claim consideration in the respect that I am not able to go home to my constituency during the session at all. Any business I had in my constituency when I was elected I had to forfeit entirely, in order to take up this position in Parliament. Therefore I contend that for the last three or four weeks of the session members generally should be prepared to stay in town if necessary. Let me emphasise that the representatives of the far out electorates, as distinguished from the urban electorates, have to relinquish their private businesses entirely in order to sit in Parliament. As regards the hour of meeting, I am prepared to be here at any time of the day. Some city members do not care what hours this House sits. If the House sits after 10 p.m. they are gone, and if the House meets before 4.30 p.m. they will probably not be here. Possibly after the next general election some of them will not be here at all. However, we want to clean up the Notice Paper as soon as possible, and to accomplish this we should sit on Friday and meet earlier.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams - Narrogin) [4.53]: I urge the Premier to accept the suggestion that the House should meet at 2.30 p.m. on each sitting day. This has been tried in the past, and found very successful. All our experience has been that day sittings are better. Members are paid to attend to the work of the country, and that work ought

to be done in the day and not during the night. In regard to Friday sittings, I urge that we should meet at 10 a.m. on that day. Such has been the practice for many years in Victoria. Moreover, the Federal Parliament meets at 10 a.m. on each sitting day. Federal Ministers manage under such an arrangement, and State Ministers should be able to do so as well. I ask for 10 o'clock meeting on Friday only, with a view to allowing country members to catch their trains at four or five o'clock on Friday afternoon. Friday is the day which Ministers as a rule give up to deputations, and we may as well sit during the day time on Fridays for the short remaining period of this session.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [4.55]: While I appreciate the position of the last speaker, I must point out that South-Western members are differently situated. Their train leaves at 7.45 a.m., and if the House sits on Friday they will have to wait until Saturday morning for a train. I would prefer that the House should meet at 3 p.m. on the ordinary sitting days, instead of sitting on Friday. If I do not leave Perth on Friday morning, I cannot attend to my duties in my electorate.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [4.56]: I hope the Premier will accept the suggestion to meet at half-past two on ordinary sitting days, and to refrain from introducing Friday sittings. Murchison members, if the House sat on Friday, could not visit their constituencies without losing the best part of the week. The Murchison train leaves Perth on Thursday at 8.15 p.m., and the return train leaves the Murchison on Monday night, which means that one cannot be here before Wednesday. Meeting at 2.30 p.m. on the three sitting days, we should have no difficulty in getting through the business of the session. Friday sitting may suit metropolitan members and some country members, but it will not suit South-Western members and Murchison members.

The PREMIER: (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [4.57]: I am glad to find hon. members in so accommodating a mood, prepared to sit at any time.

Hon. P. Collier: That refers to some members who blow in occasionally, and do no work. The position is different as regards those members who do the work of the House.

The PREMIER: I am naturally anxious to make it convenient for hon. members to get back to their constituents, but let me point out that the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo), from that aspect of the matter, might suggest that we should sit only on Wednesday, so that he could motor up to his constituency every week. We have had some experience of meeting earlier in the day, and I do not think that expedient helped business very much.

Mr. Pickering: That refers to morning sittings.

The PREMIER: It also refers to meeting at half-past two in the afternoon. If business could be done in the day time, it would be very much better, for Ministers as well as for private members. Every man who has been a Minister knows that he has to do his administrative work before he comes here. While Parliament is in session, members naturally want to see Ministers in their offices and do business with them there. It is true that the Government were late in calling Parliament together, but that circumstance arose from our having a very distinguished visitor during July.

Hon. P. Collier: In July, or in June?

The PREMIER: In July. I hope hon. members will agree to the motion. If it is found that we do not get on with the business as fast as is desirable, we can arrange to sit at 3 p.m. on three days of the week.

Mr. Thomson: Make it 2.30 p.m. on Fridays.

The PREMIER: I do not know that it would be much to the advantage of the hon. member to meet at 2.30 p.m. on Fridays when the Great Southern train leaves at 4 p.m. I am willing to meet the convenience of hon. members, appreciating as I do the fact that many of them live in the country. The proposal to meet on Friday will only last for two or three weeks so that no one should be very greatly inconvenienced. If it is found that the hour of meeting on the additional day can be improved upon, we can alter it.

Question put and passed.

BILL—PRICES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 4th November, Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The leader of the Opposition had moved to insert a new clause as follows: (1) The sittings of the Commissioners shall be held at such time and place as may from time to time be fixed by the chairman, and shall at all times be open to the public. (2.) No evidence of any person shall be received by the Commissioners unless given on oath or affirmation.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: On looking closely into the amendment suggested by the hon. member, I find that if it is adopted, it will be impossible for the Commission to sit at any time, even for the purpose of conferring, without the proceedings being open to the public. It will not even be possible to collect evidence unless that is done in public, and that would be contrary to some of the provisions of the Act itself. I do not think the leader of the Opposition desires quite that. What he desires, I think, is that when evidence is being taken with regard to the fixing of the price of a commodity, that evidence shall be

heard in public and taken on oath. Having no objection to that, I asked the Solicitor General to suggest an amendment which would meet the wishes of the hon. member, and he submitted one as follows—"The sittings of the Commissioners at which witnesses are examined shall be held at such time and place as may be fixed by the chairman, and except so far as the Commissioners in their discretion may think fit to sit in camera, shall be open to the public, and the evidence shall be taken on oath." That amendment I think will meet the wishes of the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am prepared to withdraw my amendment in favour of the one just read by the Minister which meets the object I have in view. It is not my desire to make it compulsory for the Commission to hold all their sittings in public. I recognise that the amendment suggested by the Minister meets the situation better than the one I have moved. I ask leave to withdraw my proposed new clause.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move an amendment—

That the following new clause be added to the Bill:—"The sittings of the Commissioners at which witnesses are examined shall be held at such time and place as may be fixed by the chairman, and except so far as the Commissioners in their discretion may think fit to sit in camera, shall be open to the public, and 'the evidence shall be taken on oath.'"

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1920-21.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 11th November; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Business undertakings:

Vote—Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage, £97,213 (partly considered):

Mr. SMITH (Perth) [5.10]: I desire to refer particularly to the supply of water at North Perth. Attention was drawn last year to the shortage of water in that suburb, and a promise was made that something would be done to remedy the defect. I am afraid, however, that very little has been done, and the prospects for the coming summer are just as bad, if not worse, than they were last year. Since that time the population of North Perth has increased considerably and many more houses have been erected and gardens made. Altogether settlement has gone on apace, but I am afraid the water supply has not kept up with the require-

ments. I recognise the difficulties the Minister has to face. He is short of water, short of money, and short of pipes.

The Minister for Works: And short of temper.

Mr. SMITH: The Minister has been in a very good temper to-day, strange to say, and I have no inclination now to ruffle it, because I am hopeful that he will make a promise that he will do something very shortly to remedy the defect to which I have referred. I can assure him that the shortage of water in North Perth is a real grievance. It is almost impossible to get enough for ordinary cooking purposes.

The Minister for Works: It is not so bad as all that.

Mr. SMITH: Last year the Minister restricted the quantity of water for use in gardens in such a way as to absolutely ruin many. It may be argued that gardens are only a luxury. That is quite true, but a garden is one of those luxuries that should be encouraged, because it helps to make a home beautiful. I think the Minister is beginning to look into things. In the past he has looked at things through the wrong end of the telescope. Now, however, being of a practical turn of mind, I hope he will set about to effect the improvements that are necessary without any further delay.

Hon. P. Collier: In fact, what is required is that he should get a move on.

Mr. SMITH: Another matter to which I wish to refer is that of sewerage. I am not going to touch on the septic tanks; I will leave that to the member for East Perth.

Hon. P. Collier: It is his special province.

Mr. SMITH: For the past six years I have drawn attention to the matter of the delay in completing the scheme of deep drainage. We have an almost perfect system in existence, one that has cost a great deal of money, but in Perth there are over 300 services still being conducted under the pan system. Hon. members will agree it is time that a definite move was made to complete the work.

Mr. Pickering: What is the reason for the delay?

Mr. SMITH: The Government departments are the biggest offenders. They offer a variety of excuses for not going on with the work, the principal one of course being the want of money. Almost everybody can put up that excuse. Still, private individuals have not been given any latitude, but have been compelled to find the money as best they can. The Government have wasted a great deal of money in other directions which would have served to complete this system of deep drainage.

The Minister for Works: Where have they wasted money?

Mr. SMITH: Only a little while ago the Premier was offered two million pounds, but he did not want it.

Mr. Pickering: Would you spend loan money on the system?

Mr. SMITH: The cost of deep drainage has been provided out of loan money. The Premier deliberately refused two million pounds offered to him, and so the excuse that there is a shortage of money will not go down.

Mr. Maley: You do not call sewerage a reproductive work?

Mr. SMITH: Certainly, for the people who have the service pay for it, and at a rate which leaves a handsome profit to the Government. The existing system is absolutely spoilt by the allowing of a partial continuance of the pan system. Then there is the question of the storm water drainage. In several parts of North Perth properties are flooded by storm waters, and occupants of houses cannot get into their homes without having to wade through big pools of water requiring only drainage to take them away.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Where is the local authority?

Mr. SMITH: The local authorities are doing their part by providing subsidiary drains, but the Government will not put in the main drains. I have here a letter from the town clerk of Perth which reads as follows—

I am desired by my council to inform you that for some time past they have been urging the Government to proceed with certain urgent extensions of the main stormwater drainage system in the city and suburbs of North Perth, Leederville, and Victoria Park, but the hon. the Minister has now replied to the council stating that owing to the financial position the Government are unable to put the work in hand. For your information I may perhaps point out that under an arrangement made between the Government and the council some years ago, the Government undertake the construction of main drains of 18in. diameter and upwards, while the construction of all subsidiary drains of a lesser diameter than 18in. is carried out by the council. During the last two winters the council have received innumerable complaints from ratepayers in regard to the flooding of their premises owing to the lack of proper drainage facilities, and in order to avoid a recurrence of the trouble next season an expenditure of £10,000 has been authorised on the construction of urgent subsidiary drains. If, however, the Government do not immediately proceed with the extensions to the main system it will not be possible for the council to afford ratepayers any relief during the next rainy season. In view of the extreme urgency of the matter the Minister has been asked to reconsider his decision and put the work in hand.

That puts the case very clearly. The Minister put forward the excuse that the work could not be proceeded with on account of

shortage of money. It is extraordinary that a small corporation like the city of Perth are able to raise £10,000 for their share of the work, while the Government of the State are unable to find the money for their section. I earnestly ask the Minister to look into this question again.

The Minister for Works: Do you know how much is involved?

Mr. SMITH: I suppose about £10,000.

The Minister for Works: More than that.

Mr. SMITH: Well, make it £100,000.

The Minister for Works: That would be all right if we had the money.

Mr. SMITH: You can borrow it all right.

The Minister for Works: I cannot borrow; all I can do is to spend.

Mr. SMITH: At any rate, if the Minister will properly represent the position to the Treasurer, the Treasurer no doubt will find the necessary money. I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that in submitting these Estimates he has not borne in mind the resolution passed by the Committee last year when it was agreed that items should not be lumped together, but should be clearly specified. Only the other night we sent back the Estimates of the Agricultural Department for the same reason. I do not suggest that we should do that again, for probably the lesson will be remembered.

Mr. BROWN (Subiaco) [5.24]: I want to emphasise in respect of Subiaco what the hon. member has said in respect of North Perth. Since coming into this Chamber I have continually advocated deep drainage for Subiaco. Apparently there are in Perth some 300 services still required. In Subiaco the number is over 3,000. If there is any justification for stressing the requirements of Perth in this regard, the need is ten times greater in regard to Subiaco. I know that the difficulty is finance, but I also realise that the metropolitan area must be properly served with deep drainage and sewerage. I merely take this opportunity to ask the Minister to do his utmost to see that the affairs of the country are so administered that we shall be able to get the necessary money to carry out these very important works.

Mr. HARDWICK (East Perth) [5.25]: Not very often do I find myself in agreement with the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith), because he almost invariably holds such very extreme views. But on this occasion I agree with most of what the hon. member has said. It certainly does seem to have taken far too long to establish the sewerage and drainage system entered upon so many years ago. The health of the city is inseparably bound up with the questions of drainage and sewerage. The metropolitan area has been somewhat unfortunate in succeeding Parliaments of this State, in that members representing metropolitan seats have not had their share of representation in Cabinet,

representation to which those seats are entitled. No doubt some improvement will be made after this.

Mr. Munsie: You will be wiped out altogether, that is what will happen to you.

Mr. HARDWICK: I feel that the millions of pounds collected from the sale of our agricultural lands, the money that has come in from our pastoral leases, and the revenue derived from the goldfields, have not been in sufficient degree spent in beautifying the city of Perth. It is all very well for Ministers who live in the pure atmosphere of Claremont and Cottesloe, but we who have to live in the city know only too bitterly the effect of faulty sewerage and a system of vans rumbling through the city at midnight.

The Minister for Works: How many are there?

Mr. HARDWICK: I met a few of them the other night, and had to go round another street to dodge them. To have a healthy city we should have a good water supply. If we had a much better supply than we have, there would be fewer complaints from various parts of the city against the filter beds, which are blamed for smells created by quite other causes. It is certain that we cannot go on as we are going, for a great quantity of sewerage water is being emptied into the river through the storm water drainage. This, and not the filter beds, is the explanation of much of the pollution of the river. Something must be done in the near future to cleanse the Swan River and to reclaim the mud banks, cover them up, and deepen the channels as has been done elsewhere along the river foreshore. Before the reclamation works along the city foreshore were carried out, residents along Adelaide-terrace and St. George's-terrace suffered from the obnoxious smells which came up from the river, from the decayed leaves and putrid matter which found their way into it. To-day these people do not suffer any inconvenience at all from odours arising from the river. It would be well for the Government to look into this matter in the near future. In the month of March, smells from the river at East Perth are very strong. Some people lose no opportunity of telling my electors that I am responsible for it all. I do not think that will cut any ice this time, but I would certainly prefer that the elections should be held in the winter months rather than in the summer months. I agree with what the member for North Perth has said. I am sure that metropolitan members will in the future have to form themselves into a party something like the producers' party, in order that they may make a forcible demand for what they know to be their rights. Future Governments must be induced to give closer consideration to the wants of the people in the metropolitan area.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5-33]: I have just had handed to me a list of the premises in Perth which are not connected with the sewerage system. I am astounded to see that there are so many houses in the centre of the city that are still served with the pan system. There are no less than from six to eight places in Roe-Street which still have the old system, and there is a place called Love Lane in which there are six houses on the same basis. In Maley-street there are two buildings, and there are also three or four tea rooms in the city which are not connected with the up-to-date sewerage system. This is inimical to the health of the people. The Emu Brewery is not connected, the Swan River Bowling green, the Tennis courts, the Perth Flying Squadron, and the Royal Perth Yacht Club are in the same position. The Minister should draw the attention of these bodies to the convenience that is available but of which they have not taken advantage. The Newmarket Hotel is not connected with the system, and that is close to the centre of the city. It has been the policy of the presiding magistrates at licensing courts to insist that all country hotels shall be provided with the septic tank system.

Mr. Smith: The Newmarket Hotel is owned by the Government through resumption.

Mr. PICKERING: In the course of carrying out my profession as an architect I have had to put in septic tanks in country places, and this has cost the owners a considerable sum. Yet we find people in the heart of the city who persist in continuing under the present distasteful form of sanitary service. I am sure the Minister for Works, with his usual thoroughness, will appreciate the serious menace that this constitutes to the health of the people.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George-Murray-Wellington- in reply) [5-35]: I must thank the Committee for the manner in which they have treated my Estimates, and for the atmosphere of good humour which has prevailed.

Hon. P. Collier: Don't disturb it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will endeavour not to do so. The member for North Perth has made some very strong statements. He said that we did not make provision for sufficient water last summer in North Perth for cooking purposes. If the hon. member means that we "cooked" the gardens, he is right, but if he means that for household purposes we did not give sufficient water, his statement is incorrect. There was no house in North Perth or in the city that had to do without the requisite amount of water for domestic purposes. I would prefer to see all the gardens in Perth ruined than I would see any man, woman, or child in the metropolitan area go without the necessary amount of water. If the member for Sussex will show me the list he has of unsewered premises I will have the matter investigated. The Department in the last annual report say that they are aware of the necessity for connecting these premises in the sewerage areas which still remain unconnected, and that some progress has been made in this direction. The Railway Department have decided to connect their properties, and approval has been given to connect other Government properties when circumstances warrant.

Of the list of 310 places there are many railway premises. The member for Sussex says that we have been waiting for years, and have been told that these premises will be pulled down. That is quite true. Many of the premises are in Marquis-street, and in that neighbourhood land has been resumed for some years for the purpose of enlarging the goods yards. No doubt the Minister for Railways was actuated by the same feeling that Ministers for Works have been actuated by in regard to the old Barracks and other Government buildings. We have hoped against hope that proper offices would be provided, and we did not wish to spend a sum of £500 or £600 in connecting the sewerage system with the Barracks if we could avoid it.

Mr. Smith: What about the menace to health?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What little is left of the pan system is wonderfully in advance of what used to be the case some 30 years ago. If anyone had proposed the installation of the pan system then they would have been told that it was quite unnecessary. We have had a very good pan system, and what is left of it I will try to get abolished as quickly as possible. One of the hotels not yet connected in the city is His Majesty's and the theatre, which belong to Mr. Molloy. The hon. member would have Mr. Molloy forced to connect this property up with the sewerage system. We have been trying to get this done ourselves. I would point out that this place is connected up with a most efficient septic tank system, and that therefore the pan system does not enter into the question so far as these premises are concerned. If we do press for some of these sewerage connections that are on the list, I know we shall find that there are some people who are not in good circumstances, and I trust I can take it that every member of this House and of another place will not write to me or ask me to have extensions of time given for payment. Some members of Parliament, out of sympathy or through philanthropic motives, have in the past endeavoured to secure these extensions of time. Of the expenditure of £348,379 on these connections, by way of advances to owners of properties, the sum of £332,933 has now been repaid.

Hon. W. G. Angwin: Some of our loan money is coming back.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It shows that we can rely upon Western Australia to pay its debts. I would inform the member for North Perth that some portion of a scheme which will eventually give that part of the city more water is now being carried out, namely, the enlargement of the main, which has been started from Guildford towards Perth, from eight inches to 12 inches. As we can get the pipes so shall we carry on this 12 inch main, and that will relieve the trouble to a great extent. Another reason why some of the larger pipes have not been installed is owing to their enormous cost. We have had to pay about £20 per ton for pipes which not long ago only cost £7. Some of the pipes that have been laid down in the past 12 months weighed three tons each and are only 12ft. in length. It will thus be seen that we cannot go far without spending a large sum of money. The Hume Pipe Co. is, I think, about to start manufacturing in the State. It is the intention of the department to give these pipes an exhaustive trial and see whether or not we can

save a considerable sum of money in adopting them in places where they are suitable. Where they have been used in the other States the reports of the engineers have been good.

Hon. W. C. Angwin : I hope you will give them a good trial before you spend a lot of money on them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : We will do so. I am not likely to allow a lot of money to be spent until we are satisfied that they are good. My personal opinion is that they are all right. The member for North Perth also referred to the storm-water drainage, and in that he became the mouthpiece of the Town Clerk of Perth. It is true the Perth City Council have been in communication with the Government in connection with the report of the City Engineer, Mr. Galbraith. The work has not been put in hand, but when the Loan Bill comes down, if the Treasurer is able to include in it the money required, we will start the works at once. I regret that Item No. 9 was not given in detail. The itemisation of this escaped my notice, but I will look into the question. Regarding the member for Subiaco, I would like to inform him that negotiations have been proceeding with reference to the acquiring of land for many months past, for a site upon which to erect the necessary buildings, so that arrangements may be made to go on with the sewerage system.

Hon. W. C. Angwin : I hope you will see that a proper water supply service is provided before you go on with the sewerage. There is not so much hurry about that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : I think that it is all right. A question has arisen as to whether the land which we have been endeavouring to acquire will not be required in connection with the extension of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. Until that question is decided, it would be injudicious for me to authorise expenditure which in a little while may prove of no avail. However, this matter is being kept in view. I will take great pleasure in placing before the Premier and other members of the Cabinet the representations which were made by the member for East Perth. I am quite satisfied that they will receive the consideration they deserve. There is no necessity for me to say more beyond thanking the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) for giving the House the benefit of his professional experience in relation to the work of my department.

Hon. W. C. Angwin : Perhaps he is looking for a job.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : Not at all. It is gratifying to find a member giving the Committee the benefit of his professional experience gratuitously.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [3-47] : I hope the Minister for Works will consider whether he should do anything in connection with the extension of sewerage operations before providing an efficient water supply for the people. It is not only a matter affecting Perth but Fremantle as well. In North-East Fremantle when men come off shift they cannot get sufficient water to wash themselves and they have to go back to the sea in order to get a wash. It is essential that the water supply should be improved, and when the water supply has been

improved, then we can go ahead with the extension of the sewerage system. I am not like the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) who waited until last session to discover the necessity for an improved water supply. I have been speaking about this for years past.

Mr. Smith : So have I. Look at "Hansard" for the past six years or so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : When the present position is improved, then the Committee will be willing to consider the extension of the sewerage system.

Mr. Harrison : Is not the sewerage system a great consumer of water ?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : The sewerage system naturally decreases the supply available for washing and domestic purposes. The member for North Perth referred to Government institutions not being connected with the sewerage scheme. Would it not be ridiculous for any Government to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds, which, in the course of a very little time will have to be absolutely lost, seeing that the offices will be done away with and replaced ?

Mr. Smith : That was said years ago.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : It is very easy to say that these offices should be connected up, but if it is simply a matter of wasting money, it is ridiculous to put up such an argument.

Mr. Smith : They have to pay for the pan system now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : Of course they do. They will have to pay interest and sinking fund on the large amount which would be involved in connecting up with the sewerage. The work of connecting up the post office and the departments in those buildings was started before the Labour Government went out of office.

The Minister for Works : That is completed now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : To carry out the suggestion of the member for North Perth would mean a sheer waste of hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Mr. Smith : Surely there should be a time limit.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : We have to consider the question of money. It has to be realised that if the sewerage system is extended, Government money will have to be supplied to private individuals to connect their premises up with the system.

Mr. Smith : But the people pay that money back and the Government get interest.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : But if the Government have only £100,000 available and private people want it, the Government have not that £100,000 to spend in other necessary directions. I am pleased that the Minister is making some provision for an improved water supply in Fremantle, but at the same time it is rather hard lines for the Fremantle water rates to be jumped up from 6d. to 1s. 2d. in the pound for the purpose of paying for the heavier capitalisation for the city of Perth. That is wrong, Fremantle got just as good a water supply for 6d. in the pound, and yet when the Government connected up the two schemes we had to pay 1s. 2d. in the pound.

Mr. Harrison : Unification does not always pay, then.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : Not always, but even that would not be so bad if it were not for the

fact that we find that the city always gets first attention and the outer suburbs come in afterwards. The requirements of Perth have to be met before Fremantle can be considered. Even the report by the Melbourne expert, Mr. Ritchie, deals wholly with the question of how water can be got to Mt. Eliza. There is no reference to Claremont, Cottesloe, and Fremantle, which keep the city going.

The Minister for Works: You know we are putting the mains down there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know the Minister is doing something, but there was no water to be got through the mains.

The Minister for Works: You will get it yet.

Mr. Hudson: Yet they charge for excess?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is air in the pipes. It has been shown that although the tap is turned on and water does not come out on account of the air in the pipes, yet the meter works.

Mr. Harrison: That is a profitable part of the water supply scheme.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know that the Minister can be blamed so very much regarding the water supply position. We realise the necessity for money being expended in the agricultural areas, and we have always supported that expenditure. In the circumstances the Minister has probably not been able to secure the necessary money to go on with the water supply improvements. With the funds he has had at his disposal the Minister has not done so badly.

Mr. DUFF (Claremont) [5-58]: People seem to be under the impression that Cottesloe is well off regarding its water supply. I do not blame the Minister for the shortage down there.

The CHAIRMAN: I thought the Minister had replied and the general discussion had finished.

Mr. O'Loughlin: The last was the third time the Minister has replied. He replied to the general discussion last week.

The CHAIRMAN: I thought we were discussing items. The general discussion has finished: the Minister closed it.

Mr. DUFF: You allowed the member for North-East Fremantle to speak, and I thought I could continue as well.

The CHAIRMAN: I thought the member for North-East Fremantle intended to refer to an item, and for that reason I allowed him to go on.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If I committed a breach of the Standing Orders I apologise, but I knew that the Minister had spoken last time, and as other members had spoken since I desired to take up some time.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that the vote stand as printed.

Item, Under Secretary, £100:

Mr. PICKERING: I desire to draw attention to the small amount of salary set against the office of under secretary.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is on the Works Estimates.

Mr. PICKERING: Surely it is unnecessary in any case to have both an under secretary and an assistant under secretary. Could not the two positions be combined?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Prior to Mr. Munt being made assistant Public Service Commissioner he occupied the position of Under Secretary for Works and Water Supply, and the salary was divided between the two departments. At present we have an acting Under Secretary, and the amount provided in this vote must be added to what is provided in the Works Estimates. It is absurd to suggest that the Under Secretary is receiving only £154 a year.

Item, Engineer Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage, Metropolitan area, £636:

Mr. ROBINSON: For some years we have had a sewerage system having an outlet into the river. I do not think the present engineer is to blame for that.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. member discussing the salary of this officer?

Mr. ROBINSON: No, the subject matter.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member may discuss only the amount. If I permitted him to discuss the subject matter, we would never get through the Estimates.

Hon. P. Collier: We held up this vote the other night in the hope that you would speak on it.

Mr. ROBINSON: I thought I could mention this matter and still comply with the rules. I feel somewhat aggrieved that other members have been permitted to indulge in general discussion.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Other hydraulic undertakings chargeable to revenue, £39,767—agreed to.

Vote—Perth City Markets, £1,081:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Is this item in any way connected with the new city markets which have been opened in Wellington-street?

The Minister for Mines: They are run by the city council.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Which Minister is in charge of this vote?

The Minister for Mines: All of us.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Perhaps the Minister for Works can answer my question.

The Minister for Works: I should say it is not connected with the open markets.

Mr. Smith: These Estimates were prepared long before the idea of open markets was conceived.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Perhaps the Minister could accommodate in the Perth City Markets the people who attend the open markets.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the Perth City Markets were first established they were run by the city council.

Mr. O'Loughlin: You used to buy rabbits there in the early morning.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The kerbstone markets are run by the city council. I cannot give any further information.

Hon. P. Collier: Perhaps one of the four other Ministers can.

Vote put and passed.

Department of Minister for Railways, Hon. J. Scaddan, Minister.

Vote—Railways, tramways, and electricity supply, £2,426,048:

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Seaddan—Albany) [6-5]: It is usual for the Minister in charge of an important department to make a few remarks by way of introducing his Estimates, but I would point out that the operations of our railways are by Act of Parliament placed under the control of the Commissioner of Railways who submits a comprehensive report to Parliament. The report has been before members for some time and it should therefore not be necessary for me to deal with these Estimates, in the same detail as if the report had not been presented. We must recognise that the railways constitute an important part of our system of government. When we consider that the estimated revenue this year is six million pounds, and that we expect to receive more than 50 per cent. of that amount from the operations of our railways, we get a better appreciation of what the railways mean to the Government. I am not stressing the importance of the railways merely from the point of view of pounds, shillings and pence. What I wish to emphasise is their importance to the various industries of the State. The total expenditure, including interest and sinking fund in respect of all State loans, is estimated to exceed seven million pounds during this financial year, and the amount required for interest and working expenses on our railways alone is approximately two and a-half million pounds. The estimated revenue for this year is a little over three million pounds, which shows that the railways are an important earning as well as a large spending department. I do not know whether I should open up a discussion on all matters affecting the railway system. Very reluctantly we have had to increase the freights and charges on commodities carried on the railways. We are entitled to say that as this is a service rendered to a section of the community—a very big section I admit—it is but right that those people who benefit thereby should pay something approaching at least the cost of the service.

Mr. Harrison: Your estimates last year were more than realised.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I shall come to that presently. We do not suggest that the railways under existing conditions should pay both working expenses and interest. This year we shall fall short by about £200,000 and when we add the amount from general revenue for sinking fund account, the actual loss on the railway system will approximate £300,000 or £400,000 for the year. While this theoretically speaking is correct, in actual practice it is not quite correct. A fair percentage of the expenditure from revenue is increasing the capital value of our railway system year by year. Although the general revenue has to provide a certain sum to meet sinking fund charges, the actual expenditure from revenue is adding to the asset which is a permanent asset. The Commissioner of Railways in his annual report points out that the total capital expenditure chargeable to the railways exceeds 18 million pounds. Taking into account our mileage, this amount is smaller than the capital expenditure in other States in comparison with their mileage. For this expenditure we have over 3,500 miles of main line not including sidings, but notwithstanding this our system is a heavy burden on

the community, and must remain so for a number of years to come, because this State is still in the developmental stage. If the lands of this State where railways are operating were under control as are the Canadian lands held under the land grant system, the difference would have been made up by revenue earned from the land. We do not take credit for earnings from the land in this way. We have district railways at Ravensthorpe and in the Pilbara district, which railways are responsible for heavy expenditure each year over and above the revenue actually earned. To impose freights and charges to meet working costs and interest on those lines would result in closing them down. The districts concerned could not pay such charges. Therefore, portions of our railway system must be accepted as a general charge on the community until further development takes place. I think that in connection with Government owned railways, the correct system would be not to hand over railways designed for developmental purposes to the Working Railways for some period except for the purpose of operating them. They should not be included in the revenue and expenditure accounts of the Railways. They should be kept separate from the main system which is serving a definite and settled community and which should pay the cost of operating. The developmental railways should be kept in a general account so that the people might be informed to what extent our industries were being so subsidised. So far we have not adopted this course. We keep no details of the operations on the various sections of our railways and it is frequently said that our railways are not paying, but it must be realised that a portion of the system was never expected to pay until development took place. There are many places where railways are constructed on the same principle that the Perth City Council intend to construct their tramway, namely, in order to open up the country and thus earn the revenue required. Under our system of finance, all our railways are lumped together and we refer to the whole system as paying or failing to pay. If we exclude those portions of our railway system which were intended to be means of development rather than means of earning revenue, we may fairly claim that our railway system is serving us well.

Mr. O'Loghlin: Your scheme would involve sectional returns.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

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

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I said at the outset that detailed information regarding the working of the Railway Department has been submitted to members in the report of the Commissioner of Railways, who is charged by Parliament with the control of the railway system. Apart from financial policy, therefore, little remains for the Minister to say. Owing to the additional cost entailed on the Railway Department in the matter of salaries and wages, the Government have been reluctantly compelled to increase fares, freights, and charges to those to whom the services are being rendered. The increase in wages under last year's

award amounted to £162,000, although the award was made late in the year. Increased salaries arising out of the same award amounted to about £42,000. Thus the total increase was about £200,000. Taking into consideration the additional staff rendered necessary by the increased mileage, and taking into consideration also the increase in the cost of coal, about £50,000, and the increased cost of material, it will be seen that the increases in freights and fares were necessary. Since then there has been another arbitration award affecting the minimum rate of wages in the railway system, and it is estimated that that award will mean an increased expenditure of about £280,000 per annum. That additional amount will have to be found during this financial year, plus an amount of approximately £93,000 required to pay retrospective wages due under the award. I think hon. members will appreciate the task with which, in the circumstances, we were faced in trying to make our railway system, while serving the best interests of the various industries, approach somewhere to paying the cost of operating. We have also endeavoured during the last 12 months to provide additional facilities. Recently I asked the Commissioner of Railways to furnish me with information regarding facilities which, during the past financial year, have been provided at sidings and stations for the purpose of enabling, particularly stock, and to a lesser extent goods, to be more conveniently handled than was previously the case. From the point of view of handling stock, anyhow, the last financial year has been a record in the matter of providing additional facilities. In most cases the new facilities are on a more up-to-date plan than was previously followed, which means a very large saving to those who have to use our railways for the conveyance of stock. The method of catching sheep in a wire-netting press and then carrying them one after another to a truck is altogether obsolete. The railway system must be made convenient not only from the point of view of those actually running it, but also from the point of view of the users. I can, if desired, furnish details of the stations and sidings where such additional facilities have been provided, and also of new sidings established, and also of stations and sidings where the accommodation has been amplified. The amount of expense involved is very heavy. I have attempted, with the co-operation of the Commissioner, to lay it down as policy that if we have funds available they shall be expended rather in supplying facilities where none exist, than in replacing obsolete facilities. The traffic of course increases at, for instance, a siding where improved facilities are provided, but then it falls off at more distant and less convenient sidings. However, the users of the railway system are saved considerable amounts, partly thanks to the reduction of the distance over which they have to drive their stock, and partly thanks

to the lesser time occupied in loading stock. The one serious trouble we have at present is the question of rolling stock, particularly locomotives. So far as we are able to judge at the moment, the cost of locomotives in future is going to be anything up to three times higher than it was before the war. I believe the last locomotive landed in Western Australia, a purchase of the Midland Railway Co., cost, by the time the company had it working, something over £12,000; whereas a similar locomotive could, prior to the war, have been landed and put in working order for less than £5,000. If we are going to increase our railway mileage, we must provide additional rolling stock—not only carriages and trucks but also locomotives; and the cost is going to be very heavy indeed. However, the rolling stock will have to be obtained. We cannot expect the country to produce unless there are ways and means of enabling what is produced, to be efficiently handled and brought to market. Those are the main features which have characterised the working of the railway system during the past 12 months and are likely to manifest themselves during the current year. The Commissioner of Railways has busied himself tremendously in personally ascertaining what is happening throughout the system. Colonel Pope has laid himself out to make the railways operate not only to the convenience of those running them, but especially to the convenience of the users. In that respect he has effected enormous improvements during the past financial year, having regard to the limited funds at his disposal for that purpose. If we can supply the additional facilities he is anxious to obtain in the way of rolling stock, locomotives, and sidings, I think our railway system will be satisfactory from every point of view. I regret, however, that the necessary funds are not at present available. Still, I believe that the users of our railways to-day may, in spite of the formidable difficulties which have confronted the Commissioner, be described as receiving better facilities than ever before.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [7.39]: I had intended on this occasion to deal with several matters to which I referred last session; but, having been given an opportunity of perusing the report of the Commissioner of Railways, I shall confine myself, in the matter of criticism, to the conclusions which the Commissioner has formed regarding the working of the 44-hour system. I wish again to point out that locomotive and train staffs are still working very long hours. Time tables still run over 11 or 12 hours. Admittedly it is very bad from a railway point of view to have to work men long hours, involving possibilities of accident and loss, as well as inconvenience. In my opinion it is not impossible to arrange a time table which will allow the men to work the ordinary eight hours per day, and I think serious consideration should be given to that particular as-

pect when the time table is again under review. Further, there are a large number of trains working at night which could easily work in the day time. Some sections of the railway system are practically unoccupied during the day, but at night trains are running in both directions over them. That policy could be reversed with advantage to the department, and to the men, and to the customers along the line. Wherever possible, trains should be run in the day time rather than at night time. On the Collie-Narrogin line—I think, though I am not sure—during one period the trains ran at night, and then the running was done during the day, but the last time table reverts to night running for what reason I do not know. Last night we heard that in connection with the Commonwealth departments there was extravagance, and that there was a policy of building up Federal departments. I must give the present Commissioner of Railways credit for having brought about some considerable measure of reform, and for having done fairly good work generally; but I do not think he is altogether on the right track in building up new branches as he has been doing during the past three or four months. Where a certain staff have done certain work comparatively satisfactorily over periods of seven or eight years, another set of administrative heads are being appointed in connection with the working railways. The Commissioner is undoubtedly a good railway man, with his finger on the pulse of the whole of the working; but if he is going to appoint a considerable number of additional administrative heads, involving considerably increased expense, the value of his own experience is lost. There are too many sub-heads being appointed. I understand that two extra district superintendents are about to be appointed—one at Northam and one at Perth. At Perth, before an ordinary train can be got running, the matter has to go through the District Superintendent, and then the Superintendent of Transport, and then another head called the Chief Traffic Manager, and on top of him the Commissioner of Railways—four administrative heads in one branch. The same thing applies elsewhere. At Northam a man called “traffic inspector” has been appointed to look after the running of traffic. And now it is proposed to appoint at Northam a district superintendent. There has never been a district superintendent at Northam since the railway service was established. That district superintendent will require to have his chief clerk, and his typist, and his administrative officers—costing £1,000 per annum at the very least. In spite of that, the office of inspector is to be continued.

Mr. Smith: Perhaps the district superintendent will be able to save £5,000 a year.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Too many people are being placed in charge of departments, and they are engaged in building up staffs in order to make their own positions of greater relative importance. I do not think it is necessary to have all this administration. The

majority of the men in the Railway Department know what to do, and, on the evidence of the Commissioner's own report, do it fairly well. The Commissioner says he is very pleased with his staff, and he praises their work. In spite of that, however, new administrative heads are being appointed in various directions. I do not think the railway men need all this looking after. In private establishments we do not find the administrative heads running all over the place. So far as Northam was concerned the traffic inspector there was doing satisfactory work; yet we find there is to be a traffic superintendent appointed and with him all the paraphernalia that is associated with the appointment. There should be a tendency to cut down administrative expenses. Of course there must be a certain number of men to do the work, but we can go on multiplying offices needlessly. If the Commissioner did not happen to be a good railway man himself, he would naturally require to have a lot of foremen and superintendents around him and all over the place, but his policy is to get out amongst the railway workers and suggest from his own experience what should be done. Therefore he does not require all the administrative heads that it is proposed to appoint. The railway mileage has not increased during the last eight or nine years, at any rate, not to a great extent. In 1916 the mileage was five millions, which was a record. Last year it was 4,800,000 miles and only a certain number of administrative heads were necessary. As the mileage has not increased, but has on the contrary decreased, there should not be any need to pile up administrative expenses.

The Minister for Railways: Is it not possible from the very figures you have quoted that these administrative heads are now necessary? You know that the weakness in our railway system is in connection with transportation.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I know that certain districts had more train accommodation than was necessary, but that could have been reduced without appointing more administrative heads. The fact remains that the trains were running and were not paying, and the conveniences which were being supplied were more than the country could afford and consequently they were reduced. In spite of the fact that during the period of the war the train mileage has decreased, and we have not constructed any new railways to speak of, yet we have a proposal that all these new appointments are to be made, and we know that in their trail there will follow new staffs. These appointments will mean that the administrative charges will be increased by at least £10,000 a year. It is not necessary to have all these increased charges piled up in connection with the railway system of the State. In the Locomotive Department we find that in Fremantle, Midland and Perth there have always been three loco. foremen. Now it is suggested that the loco. foreman in Perth should be in charge

of the three depots, while the others will be subsidiary, and will receive the same salary, and in six or eight months time we will find that the man who has been appointed in Perth will consider it necessary to travel over the system and that some one will have to be placed in the office he was in, in Perth, to do his work. I said at the commencement that I intended to confine my remarks to the question of the 44 hours. The Commissioner states that since the introduction of the 44 hours, the production of the railway department has decreased by about 8½ per cent., particularly in connection with the railway workshops, and the permanent way, he states, is getting into a bad condition. I did not have any special information in regard to this matter until I looked up the Commissioner's report.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It has been quoted all over Australia.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I noticed in the "Daily News" the other day that what the Commissioner had to say on the subject of the reduction of the hours was quoted in New South Wales. But the Commissioner's report is only an opinion, and the Commissioner said that it was not possible to base any definite conclusion on less than a twelve months comparison. The remarks of the Commissioner, however, were accepted by New South Wales as an expression of opinion that since the introduction of the 44-hours week there has been a decrease in the output. I have looked carefully through the report to see whether that statement was justified, and I failed to find that there is any warrant for it. The Commissioner states that no additions were made during the year, but that 107 locomotives received general overhauls while 23 had heavy repairs. Then he compares what was done in the previous year under the 48 hours weekly, and states that the numbers were 82 and 12 respectively; so that about 23 per cent. more work has been done since the introduction of the 44 hours so far as the general overhauls were concerned and over 100 per cent. in regard to the heavy repairs. It has also to be remembered that what was known as a kerosene overhaul was given to locomotives during the period of the war owing to the inability to get material.

Mr. Johnston: And dozens of engines were hung up everywhere.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Because they could not get material with which to effect repairs. Now that they have material enough we find that 25 per cent. more work is done in the shorter hours of work in the general overhauls, and over 100 per cent. more in connection with the heavy repairs. Looking through the Commissioner's report we find that similar conditions also apply in the boiler shops. Fifty per cent. more work was done there than in the previous year. In connection with passenger stock, 73 vehicles were given a general overhaul and 163 had heavy repairs as against 55 and 144 in the previous year. Therefore, I cannot see where decreased pro-

duction comes in. Of course the Commissioner qualifies his remarks by saying that he is not prepared to make a comparison with previous years, but from the evidence we have before us we find that the percentage of work done was greater in the year just closed than in the year which preceded it.

The Minister for Railways: They worked a lot of overtime.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Commissioner points out in his report that better results have been obtained since the reduced hours have come into operation. There was not much overtime worked until the beginning of the present financial year, and he says that overtime is now being worked at the locomotive shops, and every effort is being made to overtake the accumulation of arrears. The results, according to the Commissioner's report, do not justify the statement that the reduction of hours by eight and a third per cent. has been followed by a corresponding reduction in output. If the Railway Department during the last ten or fifteen years deliberately set themselves out to allow the permanent way to get into a bad state, they could not have gone about it in a better way than they have done, that is by reducing the man power systematically. If overtime is worked it results in putting the men into that state of inefficiency in which they were when working 48 hours.

The Minister for Railways: The point is that we should have got the 44-hour results and the overtime results if they had worked on Saturday morning. But they were afraid of losing the 44 hours, which was never intended.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That may have been the case. If a man works short hours he is in a better state of efficiency than if he works long hours. We have to determine where the limit is.

Mr. Thomson: The same argument can be applied to reduce the hours from 44 to 40.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, but we must find the point at which a man is in a proper state of efficiency for all the time during which he works. We have not reached that yet. Until we do reach it we cannot get the best possible results out of the men. The same principle applies to children studying at school. In that respect there is a general tendency to cut out home work, as putting too great a strain on the children.

The Minister for Works: You think that men ought to stop work when they get tired.

Mr. WILLCOCK: They cannot work well if they are tired. We sometimes continue to debate here after we are tired, but we do not then make much progress. To revert to the permanent way: if the department had wanted to allow the permanent way to get into a state of disrepair, they could not have adopted more satisfactory means than they have. Man power has been reduced, train mileage has been increased, and the tonnage of the trains also has been increased. During the last ten years there have been considerable decreases in the load in various

parts of the State, but there have been ten times as many increases. The train miles run in 1916 were 5,149,000, and in 1920 the aggregate was 297,000 miles less. But as against that lesser number of train miles, 163,000 additional tons were carried. Then there has been a serious decrease in the staff, and the train services have been speeded up. Heavy loads are detrimental to the permanent way, just as in the case of a road. This was strikingly illustrated in connection with the accident to the Royal train. A heavy train was taken over a road not intended for heavy trains.

The Minister for Works: It had had heavier trains on it.

The Minister for Railways: The ordinary loads over that line were generally heavier than was the Prince's train.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It was reported in the Press that the Prince's train was the heaviest that had been over it.

The Minister for Works: The heaviest passenger train, yes.

Mr. WILLCOCK: And with longer spans between the wheels.

The Minister for Works: Yes, but that was not the cause of the accident.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Well, what was it? I hope it was not Bolshevism.

The Minister for Works: No, it was an accident pure and simple. I ought to know, for I was there.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, you were well and truly in it. In 1904 there were 1,720 miles open to traffic, and there were 292 gangers with 679 men, or 971 persons to look after the tracks, representing one man to every two miles. In 1912 the mileage was 2,400, there were 146 gangers and 691 men, or a total of 837; although the mileage had increased by about 600, the total number of men had decreased by over 100, giving an average of one man for every three miles. In 1919 there were 3,538 miles open to traffic, 220 gangers and 814 men, or a total of 1,034 persons to look after the tracks, being only one man for every three and a half miles. On top of that, there is the increased train mileage and the increased tonnage. Apply the same argument to the dining room here, and we could put on another course, reduce the staff, and expect better service.

The Minister for Works: Those spur lines do not require the same maintenance, and in addition they have not the same traffic.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, that is so, but those lines have been built for ten or twelve years. The point is the increase in the train mileage and the decrease in the men. If the permanent way has deteriorated in condition, the fact that the working hours of the men have been reduced from 48 to 44 is not responsible for it. In the evidence given in the New South Wales court the remarks of the Commissioner of Railways were quoted. It was pointed out that the Commissioner had said that since the introduction of the 44 hours the railway track had deteriorated, and that he saddled the responsibility on to the reduction of hours. I say that a dif-

ferent set of circumstances altogether has been responsible for that condition of affairs. The Commissioner qualified his statement by saying that, after all, he could not give comparative results. It would have been considerably better if the Commissioner had said nothing at all on the subject, because his remarks have had a very serious effect on the conditions of the working class all over Australia. Wherever an inquiry has been held, the Commissioner's statement has been put in as evidence and, of course, without the Commissioner's qualifying remarks. The Commissioner on that occasion made a grossly partisan employer's statement, which he should not have made without being supported by the facts.

Hon. P. Collier: The statement carries its own refutation.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is so. Everywhere we look throughout the department there is more work being done. The Commissioner says also that the lathes have been thoroughly overhauled. Everywhere throughout the service he reports there is more work being done, while he maintains that there is decreased production owing to the number of hours which have been worked. The staff has not increased in ratio to the amount of work which he details has been done. Before his next report is available I hope the Commissioner will have some more reliable data to go upon and that he will furnish it. He says that he has data and that it is available for criticism, but up to the present time I have not been able to get it. No one in connection with the railway unions has been supplied with such data up to now. When a statement of this kind is made public the unions should have an opportunity to criticise it. That opportunity has not been given to us up to the present. We can only go on the figures supplied in the report, which do not bear out the statements of the Commissioner. If we were to accept this statement without protest, we would deserve all we got and that would not be shorter hours. So far as the hours of labour are concerned, the organisation of industry about which we hear so much, the inventions, the new machinery and all those things which have made such rapid strides, and the improvements of mechanism in its application to power, during the past 30 years or so, have all meant benefit to the people who have owned the machinery that has been so greatly improved. The hours of the people who are operating this machinery, however, have not been reduced during the whole of that period. Before the Commissioner again makes statements of this kind in his report he should go into the matter, and give the people who have some knowledge of the question an opportunity to study the data from which he draws his conclusions. If that is done I feel sure it will be found that the production resulting from the 44 hours work will be equal if not superior to that which was the case before the introduction of the 44 hours system.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [8.17]: I wish to express my satisfaction at the facilities provided at railway stations by the Railway Department during the past 12 months, particularly in regard to trucking yards. It is pleasing to notice that the railway department have got away from the extravagant system of constructing yards, and have introduced the more economical style of using old sleepers which make very good trucking yards. This has been a long felt want in the past, and the reason why these yards have not been supplied has been because of the high cost of construction. By the aid of old sleepers the yards are more cheaply constructed, and have many years of useful service before them. I feel sure they will be of great benefit to the districts concerned. We are again in the midst of a most anxious time through the fires caused by locomotives that pass through the grass country. These fires are of daily and nightly occurrence, and it only needs the close observation of those who travel through the districts between Baker's Hill and Northam for them to notice how often these fires occur. The small farmers along the line are put to great expense by being forced to employ special labour to watch their properties as the trains dash past. Many people will agree with me that the trains daily set fire to the country. On our last trip we saw 20 fires within three or four miles, and men dashing for their lives to rescue their crops. This must appeal to members and the Government as something which should be obviated. Just near Tipperary I saw a place where a fire from an engine had destroyed a growing crop of wheat. The wheat was not ripe, but there was sufficient dry grass to carry the fire.

Hon. P. Collier: Did you say Tipperary? It must have been a Sinn Feiner.

Mr. PIESSE: It was pitiful to see good wheat destroyed in this way. The department from time to time have done their best to encourage men to use the best of their talents in devising a suitable spark arrester. What would obviate the trouble would be to burn wider guards along the line. Certainly the department must be prepared to go to more expense in this regard. The Commissioner will tell us that it is the duty of the farmers to prepare his own guard. On many occasions the Railway Department have failed to provide sufficient guards along the railway boundaries.

Mr. Johnston: It was pretty expensive for the department in the case of Gamble's place.

Mr. PIESSE: That case occurred at Mt. Marshall, and cost the State a considerable sum of money. There was apparently gross carelessness on the part of the railway men who were making the guard. I should like to impress upon the Minister the need for a better system in the matter of fire brakes that are made by the department. Within the last four or five years many of these

guards have been ploughed by contract, but unfortunately the work has been put in hand too late in the season. I pointed this out last winter to one of the railway officials, and said that the track should have been made earlier. There is no fear of a fresh growth of grass. When the ploughs get to work under the present system the ground is too hard and the guard is only an indifferent one when it is made. I feel sure the Minister is unconscious of the great necessity that exists for an improvement in this direction throughout the farming community, as well as in regard to the use of Collie coal. We know it is almost impossible to get other coal at present, but I hope every effort will be made to minimise the danger that exists. One other matter I would like to mention is as to the policy not so much of the department as of the Government of the day. I refer to railway freights. It is impossible for settlers or selectors to develop their agricultural lands that are 300 or 400 miles inland with any hope of success under the present high railway tariff. Something should be done to help that particular section of the community. The cost of everything is so great, including machinery and necessities that are required for the successful development of farm lands, that if we cannot devise some zone system which will meet the case the Government should give special consideration to those who have endeavoured to make productive those lands which would otherwise be non-productive. If we cannot help them by means of railway freights, I would suggest that the land should be given to the people provided they developed it, rather than that we should impose such heavy railway freights as is now being done. The same thing may be said to apply to all industries. There are men in the mining industry who no doubt are being heavily taxed so far as the railage of necessary foods and tools are concerned. I hope this point will be noted by the Government, and that they will give every consideration to those who are trying to make productive that land which is at present entirely non-productive.

Mr. MONEY (Banbury) [8.25]: I was very gratified to hear the Minister express his satisfaction at having given increased facilities for the transport of livestock. The figures show an increase of 25 per cent. in the revenue for the carriage of livestock for the past 12 months. That is pleasing to note, especially by those who agitated for increased facilities on existing lines. If we can only secure still further increased facilities for getting to our stations by means of an improvement in our roads, such as has been advocated here before, the Minister will be equally pleased with the results that will follow. There has been in this case an expenditure on the part of the railways in order to give increased facilities for the transit of livestock. What has been asked for in this

House in the past is not expenditure on behalf of the railways, but that they should give increased facilities for the making of better roads. Up to the present the railways have had practically no traffic in the carriage of road material for the road boards. If they will co-operate with and assist road boards in their endeavour to make better roads, and carry the road material at cost in the same way that they carry material for the ballasting of their own lines, the railways themselves will benefit by the giving of these facilities, for they will lead to the making of better roads to and from the railway centres. This will also tend to give the railways increased traffic. For years past the Railway Commissioners have placed every obstacle in the way of the carriage of road material. I am sure the Minister for Works will bear me out in that. I am not speaking of the present Commissioner but of past Commissioners.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why should they put obstacles in the way?

Mr. MONEY: Why should there be a railway? The answer to that question is the answer to the other question in regard to roads. At first this road material could not be carried. I am pleased and gratified to know that the Minister for Railways now admits that the railways are prepared to do this.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They always carry road material when they are employed to do so.

Mr. MONEY: Not at cost.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are carrying most things at under cost.

Mr. MONEY: This would be a public benefit. The railways would not lose anything at all because at present there is no such traffic. If it is carried at cost hundreds of miles of roads will benefit extensively. The road boards will be able to repair and construct three miles of road to every one mile they can do to-day. That will be of immense benefit to the people of the State, especially in the country districts, and will mean no loss to the railways. The road boards and the people are prepared to pay the cost of transit exactly on the same basis as the railways pay the cost of ballasting their own lines. We often forget what the railways are really there for. Our roads are main roads and if the two could only pull together in the interests of the State, much good would result. I hope that the Minister will appreciate the importance of the question I have brought forward, and I hope that, in his reply, he will be able to assure the Committee that both he and the Commissioner are prepared to carry out the proposal.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [S.32]: There have been two increases in fares and freights on our railway system since we last considered the Estimates. There was

a storm of criticism at the time the increase was made in December of last year. I wish to complain regarding the figures which were asked for as a justification for the increase. The Commissioner made certain comparisons regarding what he suggested were similar conditions in the Eastern States and here. Unfortunately for us we found that the comparison was made on the capacity of the respective stock trucks. The comparison was drawn between the stock trucks carried on the broader gauge lines in the East and with those on our smaller narrow gauge railways here. I contend that the comparison was not a fair one. The increases proposed recently are such that they have become an absolute burden on the producer. The increases have reached the absolute limit and the effect is noticed in the returns from the sales at the stock yards at Midland Junction. It is a matter for complaint also that the users of the railway system were penalised when an award was given against the Commissioner in the Arbitration Court. Inevitably the increased cost has to be passed on, for I do not know where else the money can be secured. It is interesting to note, however, that when the tramway employees secured an increase in wages, the Government took the opposite point of view. They immediately introduced penny sections on the tramways, although the trams were already overcrowded on the threepenny basis. Where is the consistency there? What sort of a policy is that?

The Minister for Railways: If you have been amongst us down here, and are not able to see it for yourself, it is no good attempting to tell you.

Mr. MALEY: It reduced the revenue.

The Minister for Railways: I have not heard that. You may be right, of course. You may know.

Mr. MALEY: It only stands to reason—

The Minister for Railways: It does not stand to reason at all.

Mr. MALEY: The system was overcrowded on the 3d. basis and the Minister says that by the introduction of penny sections he has got more revenue.

The Minister for Railways: Don't you know that there were certain hours when every tram is crowded? We are making the trams crowded all the time by taking money which we formerly lost.

Mr. Willcock: They increased the workers' fares from 3d. to 4d.

Mr. MALEY: It is having the same effect as in the country. Those on the outside areas have to pay more.

The Minister for Railways: We abolished transfers.

Mr. MALEY: The farther the people are from the centre of the city, the more they have to pay.

The Minister for Railways: It is the same as before; you cannot help that.

Mr. MALEY: It can be overcome; the difficulty is not insurmountable.

The Minister for Railways: The same old story; there is no business I could not make pay if I had the management of it. That is what you say.

Mr. MALEY: It is rather astonishing to hear that the penny section business has increased the earnings instead of decreasing them. If that principle can be applied to the tramways, why should it not be applied to the railways?

The Minister for Railways: How do you mean, reduction? There has been an increase of fares on the tramways. We do not carry passengers over the same distance for the same amount as previously.

Mr. Johnston: People pay 1d. now for what they paid 3d. for.

The Minister for Railways: They pay 1d. now, where they walked formerly.

Mr. MALEY: I congratulate the department regarding the extra facilities they have been providing for stock throughout the country and I would like to emphasise the point of view expressed by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse) regarding the risks from sparks from engines throughout the agricultural belt. Last week one farmer lost 400 acres of crop which would have gone about 20 bushels to the acre. Unfortunately that farmer's insurance policy would not have come into operation until four days after the crop had been burnt out. I am aware that the Commissioner has urged farmers annually to plough their fire-breaks, but that is not sufficient because the necessary precautions by the Commissioner of ploughing his own fire-breaks, are taken too late. While we naturally feel that it is hard that these increased fares and freights should be imposed, I suppose the money has to be found somewhere.

Mr. Brown: You pass it on.

Mr. MALEY: I don't think we have the power to pass it on.

Hon. P. Collier: You pass it on in the shape of 9s. a bushel.

Mr. Thomson: We have not got it yet.

Mr. MALEY: That is still a sort of promise.

The Minister for Railways: The complaint before was that it was not 9s. a bushel. Now the complaint is that you haven't actually got it.

Mr. MALEY: We have not got the opportunity of passing on the increase as quickly as the member for Subiaco can do so.

Hon. P. Collier: The increase goes on next day in his business.

Mr. MALEY: If it is a question of being a profiteer, I think those in the trade of the member for Subiaco are more profiteers than the primary producers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [8.40]: Speaking as member for Murray-Wellington I know that the question which was raised by the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) has

occupied the attention of the road boards for a long time. For seven years I unsuccessfully endeavoured to carry out what the present Commissioner of Railways, I am glad to see, has got fairly in hand at the present time. The Commissioner will now allow any road board to load up gravel in the trucks at actual cost to him. He will allow it to be stacked in the station yards and permit it to be carried away when the road boards can do so. There will be no charge for storage. I know that some have been charged storage, but that is to be wiped out. It is only right to state that the Commissioner realises that good roads are as essential to carrying on the railways as the railways themselves, and when the two system are carried to the best advantage, it is adding materially to the welfare of the State. In order to get good roads he has allowed the boards to draw upon the ballast and gravel supplies that he can spare from the quarries, and the Commissioner is prepared to allow the road boards to have it at cost price. The Murray road board have found this arrangement to work very well and they are satisfied with it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [8.43]: I endorse the remarks of the members for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse) and Greenough (Mr. Mailey) with reference to the spark nuisance. This occurs year after year and farmers are always being burnt out. We were told last year that a certain spark arrester had been introduced and had been tried on different types of engines, but the nuisance still continues. The burning season has again arrived and we are hearing of fires all round the country. A farmer has to be on the spot to see the spark actually set fire to his crop before he can get any redress. There should be an amendment of the Railway Act to throw more responsibility on the Commissioner, when the fault lies with his engine. The report of the Commissioner shows that the policy of using native coal has been continued during the past year, and he stresses the point that the consumption of local coal has, during that period, reached the highest point, while the use of New South Wales coal reached the lowest point during the year. It was in 1916 that I first voiced in this Chamber the necessity for something being done to utilise Collie coal to the best advantage. I, in common with the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson), do not want to see the consumption of Collie coal reduced. I should prefer to see it increase, but I want to see it used with safety. I have often pointed out that some attention could well be given to what is being done in America in respect of pulverised fuel. There is in this report by the Commissioner of Railways a short paragraph which shows that the department is at last awakening to the importance of this question. The Commissioner states—

The question of the use of pulverised coal in locomotives has been engaging the

interest of the department for some time past, it being claimed that the efficiency of coal, and particularly of coal having the characteristics of that mined at Colliie, is very greatly enhanced by use in pulverised form, which would at the same time probably do away with the sparking nuisance.

If that could be brought about, what a splendid thing it would be for the country, for the Commissioner, and for the Department! The Commissioner would then be saved the experience he had recently when a man on the Mt. Marshall line succeeded in securing compensation. There are in America some hundred railways using pulverised fuel. Particularly successful has it been where the coal was considered to be of an unsuitable nature. The Brazilian authorities did not wait for the North Americans to come to them with the system; instead they went to North America and followed the experiments being carried out, after which they got a plant into operation in Brazil. In 1917 I communicated with engineers expert in fuel. It was pointed out to me that in the first place this system of using pulverised fuel brought about economy. This is what they submitted to me—

Shortly put, the advantages of powdered coal are as follows:—1, An economy over hand firing of about 33 per cent. of fuel. 2, Utilisation of low grade coals up to 30 per cent. ash, subject only to the requirements that they contain an average of about 25 per cent. of volatile hydrocarbons. 3, It is smokeless, sparkless, and no ashes. Much reduced flue-dust and slag usually in liquid form. 4, Highest attainable temperatures if desired. 5, Complete control over temperatures and rate of combustion. 6, Instant forcing and instant shut down, etc. We might add that one of the Eastern States has inspected and purchased a loco. test equipment, and as the cost would be comparatively trivial we feel sure you will agree that our Government, with so much at stake, should not hesitate one moment to arrange for a test with an invention almost especially evolved to solve "our problem."

The Minister for Railways: You got that information from a man with a machine to sell. We got it long ago.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: On four different occasions have I given this information.

The Minister for Railways: Who is it from?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: From Mr. Soanes. He is simply stating facts, for it is in operation in the Eastern States.

The Minister for Railways: Yes, in New South Wales.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: When I was over there I learnt that such a plant was in operation.

The Minister for Railways: Merely as a test. Why not wait for the result of the test?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Listen to this. This is what a man wrote in the "Bulletin"—

Four years ago I drew attention in the "Bulletin" to the increased use in America of pulverised coal as a fuel, and suggested the process should be tried on Victorian brown coal. Quite recently a firm using large quantities of Newcastle coal in its factories imported from U.S.A. an expert in the manufacture of pulverised coal. This fuel engineer describes the local brown coal as being ideal for pulverising, and he threatens to save his importers £3,000 a year on their fuel bill. The low residue of ash in our best brown coal makes it easy to pulverise. The coal is first crushed, and then passed through a ball mill. The grinding chamber is surrounded by a screen of mesh, through which it is drawn by fans; 95 per cent. must pass through a sieve of 190 mesh. It is highly explosive and must be treated as tenderly as oil, and kept in iron tanks. The remarkable feature of the product is its high boiler efficiency. It must be thoroughly dried, so as not to contain more than one per cent. moisture.

It is very pleasing to me, after four years on this topic, to see that the department are at last taking active steps to determine whether this method of fuelling can be adopted in this State. Another thing I have been persistent about in the House—

Mr. O'Loughlin: Is there anything under Heaven you have not been persistent about?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I see that something in regard to it is being done at last. The late Engineer for Existing Lines pointed out to me that certain experiments were going on in the Midland yards. I presume the thing has since progressed to some further stage; but I should like an assurance from the Minister that all possible preparations are being made for the conversion of the rolling stock for bulk handling purposes. Mr. Sutton and his colleagues on the Bulk Handling Commission reported that a great deal of our rolling stock could be used with but very little alteration. I sincerely hope no obstacles will be thrown in the way of adapting that rolling stock to the bulk handling system. One other little matter: During war time we had to put up with many inconveniences. At York our goods clerical staffs was transferred to the passenger traffic building. I am hoping that something will be done to relieve the congested condition of that building, through which the whole of the business of that important railway station is conducted. I wish to thank the Minister for the facilities he has provided, largely without demur, in response to my plea. He is always ready to agree when a reasonable case is put up to him. Members do not always see to it that their requests are reasonable. On one occasion I went to a certain Minister with a

perfectly ridiculous claim. I had to do it, because it was requested of me by my electors. A week later I went to the same Minister with something really sensible and feasible. He at once granted the request, remarking, "You have put up a very different tale this week from that which I had from you last week." I explained the circumstances and told him that my later request was a reasonable one, whereas the earlier one had been utterly unreasonable.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And then, of course, you wrote to the people who had sent you the first time, and declared that you had done your very best for them.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [9.0]: I think members generally will endorse the action of the Commissioner in having issued instructions to the staff that every attention should be given to urgent medical cases in remote and sparsely populated portions of the State. The Commissioner in his report states—

In these cases the saving of the patient's life is before all other considerations, and the staff must bear in mind the principle that it is almost criminal to lose a life when any effort which the department could make would save it.

I would like to direct attention to the work done by the ambulance men in the railway service and the slight recognition given them by the Commissioner of Railways. I am acquainted with their work, and the Commissioner admits in his report that these men give a lot of their spare time to the advancement of this work. I know that the men devote many nights besides Saturdays and sometimes even Sundays, year in and year out, to qualify themselves to render first aid to the injured, particularly to those people injured on the railways. I would like to ask what is the Commissioner doing in return for the services being rendered by these men?

Mr. Willecock: You know he is doing nothing. Suggest that he should do something.

Mr. DAVIES: I hope members will assist me to urge that the Commissioner should do something for these men.

Mr. Willecock: Suggest what he should do.

Mr. DAVIES: I have not been in the service for some years, but I know that the requests of the men in the locomotive department who were doing this work were very small, and long before now the Commissioner should have granted them. One was that they should be issued with a free pass occasionally over the railway. This is a very small request.

Mr. Willecock: They get that now.

Mr. DAVIES: Some little allowance should be made in return for the work they do.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Is not almost every railway man a St. John ambulance man?

Mr. DAVIES: No.

Mr. Willecock: Not one half of them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A very large number are.

Mr. DAVIES: To get a St. John ambulance certificate involves considerable work. Many nights and Sundays have to be devoted to attending lectures by medical men and sitting for examinations before a medical man. Some of the railway men hold four, five, and even six certificates, and they are very highly qualified to deal with accidents. If the Commissioner regards it as almost criminal to lose a life through inattention on the part of railway servants, what can be said of the Commissioner if he does not encourage these men in their work? If it is criminal on the part of the men it is certainly criminal on the part of the Commissioner.

Mr. Willecock: Suggest two days' extra holiday every year for these men. That would be sensible.

The Minister for Railways: They get it now.

Mr. Willecock: Only those men entering for competitions.

The Minister for Railways: They get consideration with regard to promotion.

Mr. Willecock: Promotion goes by seniority.

The Minister for Railways: They get the best jobs, and all sorts of consideration.

Mr. O'Loughlen: When you sat over here, you spoke differently.

Mr. DAVIES: The Commissioner in his report refers to the fact that the matter of a superannuation scheme has been before the service for the last 20 years. To-day I suppose it is no nearer to a solution than on the day when it was first mooted. Yet it has been talked about for 20 years. Dealing with the administration of the department, the Commissioner refers to the retirement of the Chief Mechanical Engineer. He remarks that Mr. Hume had filled the position of Deputy Commissioner from the 1st January to the 30th June, and of Acting Commissioner from the 1st July to the date of the present Commissioner's appointment, and that, having reached the retiring age, Mr. Hume had retired from the service on a pension. During the last few days I have received a request from an ex-railway servant at Midland Junction. He is 70 years of age and had been for 29 years in the service when he was retired on account of old age. He has a wife and two children to support, and has nothing before him other than the old age pension of 15s. a week.

Mr. Willecock: I know of some men 75 years of age who were summoned for not putting in income tax returns.

Mr. DAVIES: I wrote to the Commissioner asking if he would endeavour to do something for this man. I desired that if possible we should find him a job at a lower rate of pay. I appreciate the position of the Commissioner. I realise that most of these jobs are reserved for men who are injured in the service, and that it is sometimes

difficult to find positions for such men. However, we must sooner or later provide a superannuation scheme for railway employees, and the sooner it is provided the better. As a matter of fact, we want a superannuation scheme for the whole of the employees of the State. I urge the Minister to bring under the notice of the Commissioner the need for getting something tangible done to bring such a scheme into operation.

The Minister for Railways: I have in front of me now a very strong recommendation from the Commissioner.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The other scheme for all the officers will be preferable.

The Minister for Railways: They can introduce a superannuation scheme at any time.

Mr. DAVIES: Dealing with the matter of superannuation in his report the Commissioner says—

My own view is that any such fund should be self-supporting, i.e., by contributions from the members, and that the Government should not be asked to accept any financial responsibility in connection therewith.

When we realise that, as set out in the report, the men in the service contributed during the war £40,000 to the dependants of men who lost their lives at the Front, and that the Government generously rendered assistance to the extent of £11,650, surely it would be possible for the Commissioner and the men in the service to draw up a scheme and avoid the distressing instances of men with 20 or 30 years' service to their credit being retired and having nothing but the invalid or old-age pension of 15s. a week in front of them.

Mr. O'Loughlin: The same thing prevails throughout private employment, only it is worse there.

Mr. DAVIES: On these Estimates we cannot deal with the whole of the workers of the State, but Parliament should certainly move itself a little with regard to this matter. It is difficult for one who may be justified in regarding himself as a new member in the House to take action, but I promise to co-operate heartily with any member who will take the matter up. The Commissioner refers to the fact that the superannuation proposals are before the Government Actuary. He says—

The proposals agreed to by the conference of delegates of the various railway and tramway unions have been submitted to the Government Actuary for investigation and report, after which the question will be further gone into.

Mr. Willecock: It was before the Government Actuary two months ago.

Mr. DAVIES: The Commissioner adds—

As a result of this latest development I am hopeful that a satisfactory scheme will eventually be evolved.

Then he goes on to say that he considers that any such fund should be self-supporting. In conclusion, I would like to refer to the Commissioner's remarks regarding the loyalty

of the service. A week or two ago the employers of Australia met in conference in Perth and Mr. Fairbairn, the president, expressed the opinion that the atmosphere of the Court of Arbitration was not conducive to the promotion of good relationship between the employer and employee. The Commissioner of Railways, in his report, expresses the opinion that the Arbitration Court is a very good thing, and that on most, if not all occasions, disputes should be sent to the court for settlement. I take it that he, as Commissioner, prefers that disputes between himself and the employees should be settled by the court instead of by the parties themselves.

Mr. Willecock: Of course, because he takes no responsibility then.

Mr. DAVIES: I appreciate the position of the Commissioner. In nationalised industries there is a difference between the Commissioner and his men as compared with the manager of a private concern and his employees. The Commissioner is faced with greater difficulties than would be the case of an officer holding a similar position in a private company. The Commissioner, on the subject of Arbitration Court awards, remarks—

The court, dealing with every class of labour, must be well qualified to assess the values of all the respective classes of labour in all the industries of the State, awarding to each class in each industry its proportionate remuneration. Settlements of disputes or renewals of agreements by round-table conferences are recommended by many; but where, as in the case of this department, the State is the employer and the payer, it seems to me better for everyone that advantage should be taken of this tribunal established by the community for this especial purpose, and expert in all questions of conditions and payments for labour services throughout the community. To this fact may justly be attributed the avoidance of strikes which have so ruinously affected many other industries.

I wish to pay a tribute to the railway men throughout the State for the manner in which they have stuck to the Government and have remained loyal and continued work in often very trying circumstances. Everyone will agree that they got their reward when the court laid down the basic wage of 13s. 4d. a day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Could not the officers go to the court on the same way?

Mr. DAVIES: They have the right to go to the court.

The Minister for Railways: They went to the court.

Mr. O'Loughlin: They are getting a wages board.

The Minister for Railways: A classification board, which is a very different thing.

Mr. DAVIES: They will forfeit their right to go to the court once the new board comes into operation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why should they if the court is so beneficial?

Mr. DAVIES: I shall have something to say on that aspect when the Railways Classification Board Bill comes before the House. The railway officers' board will be an innovation, but I believe it will mark the introduction of the wages board system in this State. However, I am not permitted to discuss that matter at this stage.

Mr. Johnston: We should like to hear your views.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member cannot have them at present. It may be news to some members that an innovation in the shape of merit increases have been introduced in the railway service. I have not heard of the adoption of this principle elsewhere.

Mr. Thomson: A very good system I should think.

Mr. DAVIES: I believe there is much heart-burning in the service on account of the introduction of this system. The position of the railway officers, and especially that of the Commissioner, is most difficult. I hope they will be able to evolve some scheme whereby they may obviate the dissension which is bound to arise through granting to one man an increase which the majority of the men may consider improper. In the railway service, where there are approximately 7,000 employees, it is quite possible for the foreman or some other official to recommend a man for an increase and thus favouritism may creep in. While I am in favour of increasing men's wages as far as possible, the officers of the service will have to be very careful or sooner or later favouritism will creep in. After 13 years in the service I know that the service is not free from favouritism.

Mr. Willecock: It is not free from smooth-gers.

Mr. DAVIES: I could give concrete instances of where this has been shown. It is very satisfactory to note that during the past 12 months only 17 appeals have been lodged before the Appeal Board, notwithstanding that the service employs something like 7,000 men. I think that 10 of these appeals were dismissed, and only seven upheld. This shows that there cannot be very much in the charges of favouritism. I congratulate the Minister and the Commissioner upon the satisfactory services which have been rendered to the State during the past 12 months, and upon the harmonious relations which have existed between them and their officers.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9.17]: I wish to deal briefly with the question of road material and its carriage by the Railway Department. There are certain road boards in my electorate which are suffering from scarcity of material required for road making. Instead of the material being carried at "M" rates, the price at which

the material can be delivered at the siding or spot most suitable for its use makes the material of no value to the road board. I agree with the member for Bunbury that the Commissioner should establish a closer alliance between the railway system and road boards, because it would be to the advantage of the department that we should have better roads, and it would lead to more business. It should be the object of the department to encourage by every possible means an increase in business. The better the facilities that are given to the producers of this State for the transport of their products over the railway system the greater prospect will they have of successfully developing their holdings.

Mr. Smith: Might not those roads become competitors of the railways?

Mr. PICKERING: It would be a good thing to have better roads in any case. I notice that the refreshment car on the South-West line has been removed for the last six or nine months.

Hon. P. Collier: It should never have been put on.

Mr. Smith: It was never used.

Mr. PICKERING: It was used in the early stages during the summer season. It would perhaps have been wise if the car had not been removed until the winter. To take it off just at the beginning of the summer seems to me to be an unwise policy, on account of the greater number of people who travel at that time of the year. I patronised it consistently myself. The fault lay with the menus that were put on in the dining car. If there had been a more simple meal provided at a reasonable charge greater use would have been made of it. To charge 3s. 6d. for a dinner is too much. If passengers had been provided with cold joints and salad, and perhaps one sweet, for a charge of about 2s., that would have been sufficient for them and should have paid handsomely. Fruit also could be provided on the railways as an advertisement for our industry.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not think you have much to complain of in the charges for meals.

Mr. PICKERING: I am not complaining about the charge for the meals as supplied, but I say that the meal is in excess of requirements.

Mr. Maley: They are a dead loss and should be cut out altogether.

Mr. PICKERING: During the summer months, when people are travelling most, it is a great convenience for them to get a meal on the train.

The Minister for Railways: You complain about that, but you are agreeable to other things being run at a loss.

Mr. PICKERING: A cheaper meal would be more popular and would pay the railways better.

Mr. Johnston: You have to pay 4s. for a meal in Victoria.

Mr. PICKERING: I am glad to have evidence of the sincerity of the department in the matter of the provision of petrol driven cars. By the aid of these cars there should be a better prospect of a more adequate service being provided in some parts of the State. On the railway in my electorate a restricted time table is run for the greater part of the year.

Mr. Smith: To what line do you refer?

Mr. PICKERING: To the Boyanup-Busselton line. Now that the summer season is here we should have a better time table on this line. I hope something will come of these petrol driven cars. I see that tenders are being called by the Agent General in connection with the supply of three of these cars. I shall be glad indeed to hear that one of them has been placed on the Boyanup-Busselton section. We want at least six trains a week on this line during the summer. I wish to refer to the amount of water which had to be carted to Wyaleatchem last year for the railway system. I have had considerable experience of Wyaleatchem during the last two years. I have noticed that the dam there has for the most part been empty. This was due to the cutting out of some of the main drains which conveyed the rain water to it. This was the reason why the railways were obliged to cart water there last year. Unless the catchment there is extended by opening up these closed drains, this trouble will occur again.

Hon. P. Collier: Why were they closed?

Mr. PICKERING: They were closed in order to divert the water, because it was stated that the catchment brought the water from the town. That was not the case. Even if it had been so, seeing that the water was used mainly for railway services, the fact would not have been a detriment to it. I wish also to draw attention to the condition of many of the station buildings along the railways. Some of the larger stations are in a dreadful state of disrepair and are badly in need of painting. The Midland Junction station is one of the most disgraceful in the State. I do not think there has been any paint on the building for the last decade.

Hon. P. Collier: You appear to have a roving commission covering every constituency.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is the dirtiest station I have ever seen.

Mr. PICKERING: That is so.

Mr. Johnston: They might have painted it up when the Prince came.

Mr. PICKERING: I should like to add my thanks to the Commissioner for the additional conveniences that have been provided in the way of trucking yards.

The Minister for Railways: Have they been painted properly.

Mr. PICKERING: No, but they have been well built of discarded sleepers. The yards are very good. One or two more are

required in my electorate, and I hope a few sleepers will be left over with which to build them.

The Minister for Works: One can see excellent platforms made out of these old sleepers.

Mr. PICKERING: I should like the Minister in his reply to state what the policy of the Railway Department is in regard to sidings. Early in the session I asked him why these sidings were not being provided, and if it was due to a shortage of rails. He replied that such was not the case. I want at least five new sidings in the Sussex electorate.

Mr. Johnston: Before next March.

Mr. PICKERING: I should like a definite promise from the Minister that he will look into the matter.

The Minister for Railways: After the elections.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [9.25]: I have listened with much interest to the discussion on these Estimates. Ever since the session opened I have been expecting something in the nature of a violent attack from the cross benches.

Mr. Thomson: You are quite disappointed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: With the exception of the leader of the Producers' party, who has just entered the Chamber and may yet launch an attack, nearly every member who has spoken from that side of the House has spoken in words of appreciation. This is something I did not expect. Having regard to what has transpired in the way of increased freight rates and railway fares, and the important alterations which have taken place in the railway system during the year, I had thought that my friends of the Primary Producers' party would have had something to say to all this.

Mr. Harrison: We have had to pay.

Mr. Johnston: There has been an increase of £600,000 a year in freights.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is the first time I have ever known that party to pay without growling.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They do not pay; that is the trouble.

Hon. P. COLLIER: My experience has been that they generally enjoy immunity from payment, and also enjoy the freedom of growling.

Mr. Thomson: That is not a fact; it is only a statement.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not wonder that when the annual conference of the Primary Producers' Association comes round there is a storm of criticism from the delegates as to the manner in which their representatives in this House attend to their wants and requirements.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There will be a bigger storm next March.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The storm which has been brewing for the past two years, and will increase in violence and velocity as the weeks go by, will burst over their heads next

March. When the railway rates and fares were increased a week after the closing hours of the session there was a general condemnation of the Government throughout the country districts, particularly from the branches of that association represented by hon. members on the cross benches. That general condemnation was maintained practically throughout the recess—right up to the meeting of Parliament. When first the storm burst, there had been only one dose of increased freights and fares. That dose brought forth all the opposition I referred to. Apparently, however, our friends on the cross benches became used to the medicine; they took the second dose without protest. Or, I might say, they have become immune to the disease. Still, that is the concern of members of the Country party. They may be prepared to accept from the present Minister for Railways a medicine which they strenuously refused to take from his predecessor and others. The state of affairs may be described as a happy one. However, I wish to raise some objection to the increased fares as they affect the metropolitan districts.

Mr. Maley: Where there are more votes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And less representation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There are not nearly as many members representing the metropolitan area as there ought to be, having regard to the population. Apart from the question of votes, however, the matter goes further as it affects the people of the metropolitan area. I have not at hand just now details of the increases which have been made, but I know the increases are very considerable even for such distances as those from East Perth and Mount Lawley to Perth. They amount to as much as 60 or 70 per cent. True, the costs of operating the railways of Western Australia are very heavy as compared with corresponding costs in the Eastern States. When the New South Wales railways, for instance, were obtaining their coal for 6s. or 7s. per ton, the Western Australian Railway Department were paying up to 22s. per ton. Having regard to the quantity of coal used by our Railway Department, the difference would amount to a huge sum in the course of a year. However, when the increased railway charges were imposed last year, we were told that the extra amount to be realised would not be more than sufficient to cover the increased expenditure occasioned by the arbitration award. I was not in the Chamber when the Minister for Railways introduced this vote, and I do not know whether he has given any information regarding the total amount to be derived by reason of the increased railway charges. I know that the increase in revenue for the last half of the financial year amounted to £148,000. On that basis the amount of the increase for 12 months would be roughly £300,000. If I remember rightly, the Minister when making increases last year stated that the amount to be derived from them would be approxi-

mately £250,000. I do not know whether the figures given by the Railway Department are correct or not, but I do know that there has always been a disposition on the part of the railway authorities to take advantage of any increase in wages in order to raise freights and fares—to raise freights and fares so that the increase would not only meet the additional expenditure in the shape of higher wages, but would leave a fairly considerable surplus for the revenue of the department. The public will accept increased charges without demur when they are told that those increased charges will only just cover the increase in wages. But the public would not accept increased charges if the ratio of increase was such as to bring in a considerable amount above the increase in wages. Taking the figures of the departmental report, and basing my calculation on the total number of employees throughout the service, from top to bottom, including wages staff and salaried staff, I allow the increase of 2s. 4d. per day granted by the Arbitration Court in respect of the minimum wage, and I apply that increase to the 6,000 odd members of the railway service.

Mr. Harrison: The total is some 7,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes; about 7,600. Allowing 2s. 4d. per day in respect of each of those 7,600 employees, I find that the total amount of the increase for the year will be roughly £280,000.

Mr. Harrison: Have you calculated the increase in respect of Collic coal?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, because I do not think that at that time there had been any such increase.

The Minister for Mines: There was £50,000 increase on coal last year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, there was an increase in the price of Collic coal last year, and there has been another increase recently. I think the first increase was 3s. per ton, and the second 4s. per ton. Undoubtedly those increases would represent a very considerable sum. There appears to be no way out of it except as mentioned by the member for Greenough (Mr. Maley). The increased cost of operating the railway system must mean increased charges to the users of the railways. But I do not know how far we can go in that direction. If wages and other costs keep on increasing, and if railway charges continue to rise accordingly, we shall reach the point, if we have not reached it already, of seriously hampering production in this country. As regards our primary producers, and more particularly those situated at some considerable distance from port of shipment, railway charges can be raised to such a point that they will, if not kill industry, at all events hamper it to such an extent that the eventual effect of increases in railway charges will be the direct contrary of that anticipated. It is a fact that people engaged in various occupations and callings do not have occasion to use the railways at all. On the other hand, the people engaged in occupations and callings which necessitate

the use of the railways, have levied upon them this toll in the form of increased railway charges. It is urged that the increases in railway charges can be and are passed on. That, no doubt, may be so with regard to some of our industries. It may be the case in the agricultural industry and in the timber industry, but it is certainly not the case in the mining industry.

Mr. Harrison: It is impossible to pass on the increases in the case of the agricultural industry.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Just now, when there is in this State an authority empowered to fix the prices which the farmer can obtain for his various products, it may be possible for him to pass on the increases; but when he has to sell in the open market, it will not be possible for him to do so.

Mr. Thomson: It is not possible for him to do so to-day.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The various Governments of the Commonwealth are to-day in a position to fix the price of wheat, and in fixing it they can take into consideration the increased railway charges imposed upon the wheat grower. In other directions, no doubt, the farmer is prevented from passing on the increases. But the mining industry cannot pass on any portion of the increases.

Mr. Harrison: There has been a material increase in the value of gold, through the efforts of the Gold Producers' Association.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know there has been an increase in the price of gold, but the producers of gold have no control whatever over its price. That price fluctuates. It is fairly high now, but there is no guarantee that it will be high next month.

Mr. Harrison: Similarly, there is no guarantee as regards the price of wheat.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, because the price of wheat has been fixed at 9s. per bushel for 12 months.

Mr. Harrison: Not in this State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But it has been so fixed in other States. If it is fixed similarly here, the farmers of Western Australia will know what they are going to obtain for the whole of their product during the coming season.

Mr. Harrison: For local consumption.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but does the hon. member expect that the farmer will get less for the wheat he exports?

Mr. Harrison: Quite possibly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am glad to have the admission from the hon. member. Now we know why the price of 9s. per bushel is being fixed. I shall not pursue the subject at present, but the information I have received will be very useful next week, when we are discussing another matter. The position is just as I anticipated.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not dealing with the price of wheat.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so, and I shall pass from the subject. However, I have it on the authority of the leader of the Coun-

try party that the price of 9s. has been fixed for wheat because it is believed that 9s. will prove to be above the world's parity.

Mr. Johnston: Give us the world's parity in shillings.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. P. COLLIER: If, as the hon. member interjecting would have us believe, the farmer can obtain a still higher price for his exportable surplus—

Mr. Thomson: The price to-day is 17s. 6d. per bushel.

Mr. Underwood: Why do not the farmers sell their wheat at 17s. 6d. per bushel?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) knows more than anybody else in this House knows.

Mr. Thomson: The information is in to-day's newspaper.

Mr. Harrison: We could have had that price for the past eight months.

Mr. Mailey: One can get 10s. 6d. or 11s. per bushel to-day for export wheat.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Without the backing of the Government of this State, that is to say without the backing of the people of this State, the farmer could not get 2s. per bushel for his wheat. The world's parity would not be worth 2s. to the farmer if it were not for the fact that behind him were the organised power of government and the credit of the State. I suggest to the Minister that with the high prices ruling for wheat—we hear that 17s. is the world's parity—he might give serious attention to this matter. If there is a 12 million bushel crop, local requirements will amount to about two millions and on the balance of 10 millions, the farmers will be able to secure the world's parity of 17s.

Mr. Thomson: It would be a good thing for Western Australia if we got that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the farmers are going to get 17s. on 10 million bushels of wheat, it opens up to the Minister for Railways a very fine source of revenue through increased freights.

The Minister for Railways: I will give it consideration.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I should think you ought to. There will soon be no necessity to issue any deficit bonds and the Government might increase the rates on super. The member for Sussex referred to the dining cars on the Great Southern Railway. I thought the introduction of those cars was a mistake, and I observe that the Commissioner has found that such is the case on the results achieved. Perhaps it was in the eagerness of his new appointment that he introduced those cars. It is unnecessary to have dining cars on a small run of 100 miles, with excellent refreshment rooms midway. The experiment was bound to fail and I am pleased to see that the Commissioner does not intend to continue making a loss on those cars. While dealing with dining cars, it is as well that I should draw the Minister's attention to one or two aspects of the Kalgoorlie express dining car. The Minister re-

presents the Mt. Barker district which is supposed to grow some of the best apples in the world. When travelling on the Kalgoorlie express a few weeks ago, I noticed some fruit on a table in the dining car. We have to remember that people who desire to proceed overland by the Great Western Railway, have to journey to Kalgoorlie by the State railway, and tourists from overseas often get their first introduction to our products in the dining car. In order that the Minister might know what sort of fruit was presented to travellers on the express, I took an apple, which I can assure him was a fair average sample of the fruit that was on the table. Here it is.

Mr. Johnston: What is it; a cherry?

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is supposed to be an apple. It was not selected for the occasion, but was a fair average sample of what was there. What sort of an impression would such a sample give to visitors? This State produces the finest apples in the world, which is borne out by the fact that just prior to the war our fruit, particularly our apples, secured the highest prices in the markets of Europe. This is a poor sample of what we can produce.

The Minister for Works: Are you sure it is not a small plum?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Another aspect of importance, which I desire to deal with is the 44-hour week, as its effects have been apparent in the local workshops since the beginning of the year. With the member for Geraldton, I regret very much that the Commissioner of Railways should have referred to this matter in his report. Doubtless the Commissioner considered it his duty to refer to it seeing that it is an experiment of very great importance, not only to the Railway Department, but to the State generally. The Commissioner was very injudicious, however, in the language he employed. It would not matter if this concerned the railways of Western Australia or the Government of Western Australia alone. For many years past, the question of the 44-hour week has been the subject of much discussion. It is, in fact, a highly controversial subject. It has been debated in various Parliaments in Australia and has been made the subject of investigation by various tribunals. Because of that very fact, there should have been no pronouncement regarding it from the Railway Commissioner, unless he was in a position to present definite and conclusive figures regarding its operations.

Mr. Thomson: Honestly, do not you think that it will result in decreased output?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Most emphatically I do not. Certainly the information so far available as the result of experience in the railways of Western Australia, does not justify any conclusive opinion in that direction. The Commissioner says in his report—

The output of work from an establishment of this kind gives a difficult measure of comparison.

That is true. I do not think it will be possible except as the result of experience over a very lengthy period indeed, to arrive at any definite conclusion. The Commissioner continues—

Repairs of locomotives and vehicles differ in detail. On the whole, however, it must be assumed that the law of averages applies. In the production of castings, for instance, and similar work, a measure of weight can be applied which must be regarded as fairly accurate. Output has been gauged on a man-hour basis. So far as the comparison has gone, the general indication is that, taking the work of the shops, as a whole the reduction of hours by $8\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. has been followed by a corresponding reduction of output. It must, however, be added that it would not be wise or fair to base any definite conclusion on less than 12 months' comparison.

Mr. Willecock: Then he proceeds to do it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Commissioner says it would not be wise or fair to come to a conclusion on any period less than 12 months, and admits that in any case it is difficult; yet he practically asserts that there has been a corresponding reduction in the output. It is not right to put forward any opinion on the matter at all. This particular portion of the report was telegraphed to the Eastern States as soon as it was published here. We saw where it was being used in evidence before a tribunal in Sydney. I have no doubt that the report or extracts from it were presented to the tribunal probably without the qualifications embodied in the language of the Commissioner. If the Commissioner thought it was neither wise nor fair to express an opinion on less than a 12 months' comparison he had no right whatever to say that the indications were that there was a reduction in output corresponding with the reduction in hours. The Commissioner contradicts himself in his own report. Had he expressed an opinion in more general terms to the effect that so far as he was able to judge regarding six months' operations, the indications were that there would be a reduction, it would not have been so bad, but he goes far beyond that even to the extent of stating the reduction. How can the Commissioner be so definite when he himself says that it would be neither wise nor fair to make a comparison on anything less than 12 months' operations? The Commissioner should be more careful in a matter of this kind. If it were only a comparatively unimportant matter in connection with the working of the railways it would be different, but on such a question as the reduction of hours, a question so big that it is engaging attention all over Australia, no statement of the kind should have been made until a thorough trial had been given to the experiment, until he had definite reliable figures and data, which would show the definite results. As a matter of fact the Commissioner contradicts himself. The

very language he employed shows that he had no right to say there had been a reduction in output corresponding to the reduction in hours. I should not be doing my duty if I allowed that portion of the Commissioner's report to go without challenge. The opinion expressed by the Commissioner was not warranted. That is seen by his own statement. The facts should have been given in the report. There have been increased repairs, increased results all over the system, yet he claims that there has been a reduction of output. I doubt whether 12 months would have been a sufficient time for comparison, having regard to the difficulties in getting out a comparison in shops where such a wide variety of work is carried out.

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

Mr. DUFF (Claremont) [10.3]: I congratulate the Commissioner on the many improvements he has effected, more particularly in the travelling in metropolitan and suburban districts.

Hon. P. Collier: You have not to pay any railway fares.

Mr. DUFF: I am referring, not to myself, but to others. The removal of the "ladies only" from the trains has been a great boon. It has allowed the ladies and gentlemen to mix, as they should. After all, why should we have "ladies only" on those very short journeys, with the train stopping every few minutes?

Hon. P. Collier: Why, indeed?

Mr. DUFF: The Commissioner has done his level best to make travelling on suburban and country trains comfortable. Anyone who has travelled from the goldfields must admit that the alteration in the arrangements in the dining car are very acceptable. The drinking that went on in that dining car, more particularly as returned soldiers were getting back to their own districts, was altogether too great. They were allowed to get a bit full, and others had to suffer for it. I do not say that it was restricted to the returned soldiers, for it extended to their friends as well. However, I think the Commissioner was very well advised to effect the improvement. I believe it was the leader of the Opposition and the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) who suggested that the alteration should be made.

Hon. P. Collier: Not I.

Mr. DUFF: At all events, those travelling on the train appreciate the reform. I wish to refer to Cottesloe. Members may think I am electioneering, but I am not. Down there we are feeling very keenly the increase in the fares, and are looking forward to the Christmas season, when we shall again have excursion fares. It is to be hoped the Commissioner will provide more excursion trains than in the past. The railway returns show that we have had 30,000 and even

34,000 people travelling to Cottesloe in one week. Surely those figures warrant a reduction in the fares, if only in order to maintain that traffic. Much inconvenience is felt on the journey between the railway station and the beach. The department should consider the advisability of constructing a tramway, to start at Osborne and come out on Cottesloe Beach. It would pay well, for the traffic is increasing, and the summer returns show that such a scheme is distinctly worth considering.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is a local authority matter.

Mr. DUFF: The local authority will never have the means to carry it out.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They can borrow the money, as the Government would have to do.

Mr. DUFF: Regarding refreshments to be secured along the line: when a stranger arrives here from the Eastern States his eyes are opened to the accommodation provided. At Merredin, a most important junction, we have nothing but a dog box for a refreshment room, while the accommodation for the staff is really a disgrace. The only good thing there is the interlocking gear. At Merredin the passengers have to wait three and four hours, and the accommodation is not fit for animals. The Minister might have a look at Merredin and see if he cannot improve the accommodation for those who have to wait on the platform.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I hope you are not going to contest that seat.

Mr. DUFF: No, I am quite satisfied where I am.

Mr. Brown: We all are.

Mr. DUFF: Another thing required is increased ticket office accommodation at Cottesloe. On the beach side of the line the population is increasing very rapidly. Passengers coming from that side to go to Perth have to cross the long bridge, descend the steps on the eastern side, visit the ticket office, and re-cross the bridge to catch their train. If only for six months of the year, during the hot weather, some amendment of this arrangement might be made. It would be sufficient if ten minutes before train time an officer of the department crossed to the opposite platform and there issued tickets. On the question of superannuation, there was recently brought under my notice the case of a station master with 22 years of service. This officer died, and his widow is now in a very bad way. The son was smashed up in the war. He came to see me to-day. I have not yet got the full particulars, but I know that the father was 22 years in the service and that while others have received pensions he was refused. I think the Minister might well go into so deserving a case and see if something cannot be done for the widow. I again emphasise the necessity for increased excursion trains to Cottesloe Beach.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.11]: I should like a little information. In the first place, we are entitled to know what the State gets per passenger over the Trans-Australian railway.

The Premier: Too little.

Mr. Wilcock: Only 12s. 6d.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This State cannot afford to carry for such a sum passengers from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle or vice versa, since the State has to pay by taxation some £3 or £4 for every passenger so carried. The position requires immediate attention. I realise that we should do all we can to encourage passengers; but this State gets no advantage whatever, because visitors by railway from the Eastern States are carried across Western Australia by night, and so have no opportunity for seeing anything of the agricultural areas, whereas in South Australia they travel by daylight. At all events, the House is entitled to know what proportion of the fare comes to the railway revenue of Western Australia. The Trans-Australian railway has been of some benefit to the other States, but it has not been of any important benefit to Western Australia. We are not justified in wasting the funds of this State in the provision of accommodation for passengers over the Trans-Australian railway. I am told that this State receives only about 12s. 6d. per passenger.

The Minister for Railways: Give notice of the question and I will find out for you.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If that is true, something is wrong somewhere.

The Minister for Railways: I do not think it is true.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If that is all the State gets from the passenger traffic over the Trans-Australian railway, that railway is by way of becoming a burden to Western Australia.

The Minister for Railways: But I do not think the figure is right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not referring to the sleeper. I am referring to the proportion received by this State of the through fares to the Eastern States. This requires attention by the Government, and I trust that the Minister will go into the matter and see that we get a substantial return for the through passengers whom we carry over our railways. I noticed a paragraph in the Press relating to reduced rates for junior workers, and I should like to know from the Minister whether it is correct. There have been several paragraphs in the Press which the Minister has told us were not correctly reported, and I would like to know whether the statement relating to the reduced rates for junior workers travelling to their employment is correct.

The Minister for Railways: You saw it in the paper.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes; is it correct?

The Minister for Railways: Absolutely correct.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A statement was made to the Press previously, and I was told that it was not correct. I am satisfied with

the Minister's assurance that this statement is correct. I would direct the attention of the Minister to the need for additional officers at the Fremantle station when the season tickets are being issued. Owing to the increased charges, many people are purchasing monthly instead of quarterly or yearly tickets, and at the beginning of last month there was a long queue at the station and some of the people who should have been at work by 8 o'clock only managed to reach there by 10 o'clock. They were unable to get their tickets in time. It is necessary to make adequate provision for the issue of season tickets. People should be able to get them on the night before, or additional facilities should be provided on the first day of the month to ensure that people do not miss their trains. It was almost a scandal.

The Minister for Railways: It will be worse next month.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Numbers of people missed their trains, and lost half a day's work simply because they could not get their tickets. I am pleased that the accommodation on the trains running between Fremantle and Perth has been improved a little. We no longer have to hang ourselves to the straps as we used to do, and people can now travel to and fro with a greater degree of comfort than previously. I repeat that I hope people will get away from the erroneous idea that residents in the metropolitan area are not paying their fair share of the increased rates. Everything they eat and every article they purchase bears its proportion of the increased railway charges.

Mr. Thomson: Not quite so great as in the country.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, equally as great. When the hon. member takes his wheat to the siding, the price is fixed for the wheat at the siding. When the wheat reaches Perth the wheat board adds the cost of carriage plus additional profits. The board thus sees that consumers in the metropolitan area pay their full share of the railway rates charged. It is ridiculous to say that people who live in the metropolitan area do not pay their fair share of the additional charges.

Mr. Thomson: But the man in the metropolitan area pays on ten miles as against the man in the country who pays on 200 miles.

The Minister for Railways: But the man in the country pays once in the year as against the man in the metropolitan area on 300 days in the year.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister may find it advisable to revise some of the railway charges for the suburbs around Perth; otherwise he will have to provide additional framcars. People will not pay double the fare to travel by train.

The Minister for Railways: Trams are the proper method for handling suburban traffic.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, but we have sufficient trains to carry the present population, and cars now cost nearly double what they cost a few years ago. While we have sufficient carriages to carry the passenger

traffic, there should not be any necessity to build additional tramways. There is another matter affecting the railways to which the Government should give attention. The same problem arose in England when motor cars first came into general use. Unless the rates are raised on heavy motors, which carry a large quantity of goods, the railways will lose a lot of goods traffic between the various centres adjacent to the metropolitan area. There will be considerable competition by road, and while people are taxed to maintain our railways and roads, one or two companies running motors should not be permitted to take traffic from the railways and cause the State to suffer. The Minister for Works should increase the license fees for heavy motors, and thus enable the railways to retain this traffic. Regarding the tramways, the Minister has pointed out that the introduction of penny sections has resulted in increased revenue. I am not in a position to say whether this is so. The returns do not show the number of passengers carried and the average fare per mile. Though penny fares have been introduced, they have really resulted in additional charges being placed on those people who live in the outlying suburbs, and these are the people who provide the true paying traffic for the trams.

The Minister for Railways: We are following your Fremantle example.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, you are not.

The Minister for Railways: Our fares are cheaper than those at Fremantle for the distance travelled.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not think they are.

The Minister for Railways: I am sure they are.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister has reduced the fares for people living close to the city, and has increased them for people living further out.

The Minister for Railways: I am speaking of distant parts.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: At Fremantle we can travel from one end of the system to the other for 3d.

The Minister for Railways: Do you call it a system? It is not much more than equivalent to a block in Perth.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If we had as large a population to deal with as has the Minister we would show better returns. As a result of the introduction of penny fares the Perth trams have run 7,000 additional miles. This has meant the employment of 50 or 60 additional hands, and the heavier charges have been placed on those people living furthest from Perth. I do not think it was in the best interests of the service, considering the shortage of cars, to introduce the penny fares in the city. The time is not far distant when the Minister will find it necessary to increase the fares even within the city boundaries.

The Minister for Railways: I agree with that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is all very well to cater for those persons who live within a quarter or half a mile of the Perth Town Hall, but these people cannot be relied upon to regularly patronise the trams. It depends on the whim; the distance is short and they can walk into the city if they feel inclined. But the people who live further out can be relied upon as regular users of the cars. To get regular customers for our trams it is necessary to encourage people to live far out from the centre of the city rather than within half a mile of the Town Hall. In view of the present shortage of cars, I doubt whether the alteration has been of benefit to the service or to the people.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [10.28]: Members have followed the discussion of the Railway Estimates fairly well, and consequently I do not wish to unduly detain them. It was somewhat of a surprise to me to find that such an avalanche of eulogy should have been showered on the Minister for his administration.

The Minister for Railways: I do not too often get bouquets.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The eulogies were for the Commissioner, not for the Minister.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister gets a share of the limelight. He is the directing genius; in many matters he has to give his approval and sanction and in others his advice is sought. A few years ago when the Minister occupied even a higher position than he holds to-day—though he may not have then been the power in the Cabinet that he is to-day, because we understand that he is pretty pronounced in his opinions—when he was Premier a few years ago—

The Minister for Railways: Be careful, you will wake the Premier.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Premier is fast asleep; that is why I am mentioning it.

The Premier: No, he is not.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Various changes were made in the running of the railways. Economy necessitated the cutting out of suburban trains and a slight increase of fares, and I can well recollect the howl of derision which went up from the metropolitan districts. Indignation meetings were held by the dozen in order to protest against the change of policy on the part of the Labour Government. Now we find that not only have tram fares been increased, but that train fares and freights have been increased on two occasions. The representatives of the farmers have been up in arms. In the corridors and down the street they have voiced their protests, but to-night they are as mild as sucking doves.

Mr. Thomson: You know why the fares were raised.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It only shows that we can have a little hypocrisy at times. We can criticise to some extent when there is a tinge of politics in the whole business. I have been in conversation with farmers' re-

representatives, and they have told me that the increased fares were throttling development in the rural areas. I know that is so. The freights in the country districts are bringing about stagnation in many localities. People who are trying to develop the regions of the State remote from Perth are reluctantly obliged to give up the battle and are flocking to the city. Every city in Australia is becoming flooded with too many people, and there are not enough in the country. The Minister himself will be found expressing those opinions in a few months' time. I agree that the man who is producing in the country is deserving of more concessions in the direction of reduced fares than are other people. The opportunities for social enjoyment and of living a rational, civilised life, such as every human being has a right to, do not exist in the country in the way that they exist in the more favoured areas. To-night there has been no criticism from members of the cross-benches, unless it is to come later from the leader of that party, or the member for Katanning. The others have told the country that everything in the garden is lovely. They are prepared to accept increased freights and fares, a double-barrelled proposition, and they will go back and tell their constituents that everything is all right. In view of the reception these Estimates have received to-night, the Minister need have no hesitation in obtaining additional revenue from this source. He has had nothing but approval from those who are supposed to be most concerned. That is not what I got up to talk about.

Mr. Harrison: You have given us a good advertisement.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I got up principally to talk about dining cars and railway refreshment rooms. I am not going to voice any protest against the taking off of the dining car from the South-West line. When the Commissioner told me that he intended putting on a dining car there, I told him over the telephone that he was making a mistake and that it could not pay. As a result of the competition of this dining car, the lessees of the railway refreshment rooms have been hard hit. In one instance, however, a concession was made, nearly equivalent to the takings by the dining car, in the matter of the rent charged for the refreshment room.

The Minister for Works: A concession was made all through.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Not at all.

The Minister for Works: It was made at Pinjarra, Boyanup, and Brunswick.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister is misinformed. I give him credit for justice being done at Pinjarra. A small reduction is made at Brunswick, but as far as I know none at all at Boyanup. The refreshment room at Chidlow's Well is subject to severe competition from the dining cars. The Commissioner has abolished the dining car on the south-west line, and I suppose there will be an ad-

justment of the rents of the refreshment rooms.

The Minister for Works: They are up now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not object to that. There is a dining car on the Great Southern and another on the Goldfields line. It happens that the best system is not always followed. In some of the trains, prior to the meal hour, refreshments are brought round, which prevent the people to a certain extent from taking the regular meal, and the department is thus deprived of revenue which would otherwise be obtained. I have sat on the Chidlow's Well station and seen as many as 120 to 200 passengers on it. The volume of trade that is done there in a few minutes is by no means commensurate with the rent that the lessee has to pay.

The Minister for Works: We used to sell from 200 to 250 cups of tea on the station with each train.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There were no dining cars in those days. It is a fair thing for the Minister to consider the question of reducing the rents. I know the member for the district has made representations to him, and that representations have also been made to the Premier, who has some knowledge of that locality. Although the dining cars on these two trunk lines are being retained, they have been abolished on the South-West line. I am not quarrelling about that, but, where the cars come into actual competition with the railway refreshment rooms, it is not fair to the lessee if he does not obtain a reduction in the rent somewhere in proportion to the revenue that is being derived from the business done on the dining cars. I put it to the Minister as a reasonable proposition that relief should be given in this direction, wherever a good case can be made out. If he will arrange to meet me I will show him figures dealing with the operations prior to the installation of the dining car system, and those that have followed since their introduction. As things now are the passengers are reluctant to leave the train, and do any business in the refreshment rooms.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Were these places let before the dining cars were brought into operation?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The dining car on the goldfields line was installed and the lessees knew they would have competition to face on that account, but there was no car on the Great Southern line. In another instance I had a talk with the Commissioner, and as a result there was a reduction made in the rent of £7 a week. In the case of Chidlow's Well I hope it is not through any personal vindictiveness on the part of the Commissioner that nothing has been done.

The Minister for Works: It would not be that.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Commissioner claims that the business has not suffered seriously, and that there has been no definite effect as the result of this competition.

The Minister for Railways: Did he ask for particulars showing whether there had been any detrimental effect?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Will the Minister assure me that he will look through the figures?

The Minister for Railways: The figures the lessee would supply might be of no value. If he has proper books and will produce them we will make inquiries.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If you will undertake to see me in the matter, I will be satisfied.

The Minister for Railways: It is a matter for the Commissioner.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: What if we do not get satisfaction from the Commissioner?

The Minister for Railways: Have you made out a case to him?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes.

The Minister for Railways: Did you produce the statements he required?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes.

The Minister for Railways: It is very strange.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes. In one case the Commissioner makes a reduction, and in the other case he fails to do so. If a lessee takes a proposition from the Railway Department he has a right to a fair crack of the whip. One can see in this case from personal observation the difference that this competition has made to the lessee, and he is thus entitled to a review of the position and to some relief. I accept the assurance of the Minister that he will discuss the matter with me and go through the figures. I will therefore make no further observations on the matter, and will assist him in the passage of his Estimates.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [10.38]: There have been several complaints from passengers on the two loop lines coming into Merredin, both from the north and the south. Their difficulties have been increased since the running of what is termed the limited. I think that is the fast train from Kalgoorlie to Perth, which carries passengers. The present time table means that on three nights in the week the passengers have to wait at Merredin on the platform for a considerable time. If they were allowed to take the limited they would only have to wait about an hour, or an hour and a-half. They would get to Perth very much earlier. But I am informed that they are not allowed to get on that train even though there are empty compartments. The one train arrives here between 6 and 7 a.m., and the other at about 10 minutes to 12. To be located on a country station from, say, 11 p.m. until 5 the next morning, without being able to secure hotel accommodation—the hotels being generally filled—is disagreeable in the extreme. I hope the Minister and the Commissioner will give consideration to my representations. There is another point I wish to raise. During the last 18 months or two years there has been a large extension as regards trucking yards for both small and big stock. Those extensions have proved of great service to the farmers, and

I have no doubt the railway traffic has also benefited. But the recent increases in railway rates tend to bring small stock, such as sheep and pigs, more into line with cattle and horses; and thus there is being imposed on our country areas an excessive cost of transport as regards store stock, an increase which would interfere materially with farmers in the wheat areas who are about to go in for mixed lines. I trust the Minister will consider with the Commissioner whether something cannot be done to revise the railway charges on store stock. I believe that a reduction in this respect, though immediately involving a direct loss would eventually bring more revenue to the Railway Department by increased traffic in fat stock. Moreover, grass which is now wasted would be eaten by the additional stock raised. The increases in railway charges have, according to the returns before us, brought in during four months a total of £148,400, of which about £120,000 has resulted from goods traffic. It is the goods traffic that mainly produces the increased revenue; and therefore we should endeavour to increase the goods traffic, which is more profitable than the coaching or passenger traffic. As mentioned by the leader of the Opposition, the increased freights and fares bear more heavily as one gets further from the ports. Still, the surcharges are very much more favourable to the farmers than increases on a percentage basis would be, though when we in the country use the railways for a long journey the increases bear upon us more heavily than they do upon the city people.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [10.46]: The Railway Department is a subject on which one could speak at great length, but I will touch upon only one or two matters. The first is a subject which affects the constituency of the Minister for Railways, but more particularly my own. I should like to see introduced a system of week-end excursions, particularly in the summer time, when numbers of country residents scrape up a few pounds and send their wives and children to the seaside. It would be a very good thing indeed if the Railway Department would offer facilities to allow the husband an opportunity to go down and see his wife and youngsters at the seaside. I do not suggest that special facilities should be provided: the trains run in any case. Week-end excursions might be arranged to run down on Saturday and return on Monday, so that the husband would lose only half a day.

The Minister for Railways: It would be necessary to provide special trains. At that period of the year we cannot allow more accommodation.

Mr. THOMSON: I have frequently travelled on those trains during that period, and there has been room for additional passengers on them.

The Minister for Railways: On Saturdays and Sundays?

Mr. Thomson: Yes.

The Minister for Railways: We double-track every Saturday and Sunday.

Mr. THOMSON: I offer a suggestion as to what is required by the country people, and I see no reason why the department should not adopt that suggestion.

The Minister for Railways: I have given you the reason—that we should have to put on special trains.

Mr. THOMSON: My experience tells me that the department could find room for those desirous of spending week-ends at the seaside, and do it without putting on any special trains.

The Minister for Railways: It is easy to say that; but it cannot be done.

Mr. THOMSON: I believe it can be done. The department are not sympathetic towards the proposal.

The Minister for Railways: Rubbish!

Mr. THOMSON: It is not rubbish. I have put up that proposal year after year to the Railway Department, and they say that what they are really afraid of is that they may lose a little revenue by it.

The Minister for Railways: Who said that?

Mr. THOMSON: I am giving the effect of the words used by the Chief Traffic Manager. The department are afraid of someone travelling from the country districts to the seaside at excursion rates, and then handing the return ticket to someone else, who would thus travel at a cheaper rate. This is one of the objections of the Railway Department to issuing cheap excursion tickets. They would prove a convenience to a great many people who might feel disposed to visit Albany, Busselton, or Bunbury at the week-end.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What about those living at the port who want to go to the country?

Mr. THOMSON: There are excursion fares.

The Minister for Railways: Where are you going to get the rolling stock to run the trains you suggest?

Mr. THOMSON: I am surprised at the opposition coming from the Minister.

The Minister for Railways: I want something practical. I will be sympathetic enough then.

Mr. THOMSON: I think it is practical and it should receive consideration. It would not mean a special train. God bless my soul—

The Minister for Railways: He won't.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister says that it will require special accommodation. If he were to see the conditions on the six o'clock train which leaves for the South, he would see that people stand all round the corridors at the start and before the train goes far along the line, the passengers thin out.

The Minister for Works: Where will the extra passengers you speak about stand if the corridors are full?

Mr. THOMSON: I said that the passengers thinned out as the train went along. The Minister recognises that there is a demand for a special service because he has provided that on Saturday afternoons there shall be two trains. If the Commissioner were to give instructions to carry out the suggestion I made, I think he would find that there would be ample room for passengers travelling from Katanning and Wagin downwards on the train which leaves here at four o'clock. The member for Forrest in dealing with the increase in freights said that he was surprised that members on the cross benches had eulogised the Government regarding the increase in railway fares. We have not eulogised the Government for raising the fares and freights, but we recognise that on account of the increase in wages there had to be increases in fares and freights. Should there be the necessity for further increases I suggest to the Government that in arriving at a decision on that matter consideration should be given to country industries. In one case I know that a mill is being moved down to the metropolitan area.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The mill is coming to Fremantle in order to get to the seaboard.

The Minister for Railways: Because the Australian Wheat Board want to get the last fraction of a penny from the mill.

Mr. THOMSON: It should be the policy of the Government to afford every assistance to these country industries and not force them to come down to Fremantle and other parts of the metropolitan area. I congratulate the Commissioner on his action in cutting up the railways into districts and giving district superintendents a little more power than they possessed in the past. I do not know how far their authority goes now, but under existing conditions if anyone requires a sheep truck at Katanning the application has to go through a number of officers, ultimately being wired to Perth before the application can be granted.

The Minister for Works: There are only a limited number of cattle trucks, and that is the reason presumably.

Mr. THOMSON: The Government are to be congratulated upon their decision in appointing a commissioner possessing local knowledge and experience. Our railways should be the training ground for our future commissioners, and it should be possible for a porter to become Commissioner. I would like to see the Commissioner encourage an element of competition between the district superintendents.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How can the district superintendents compete with one another when they depend upon the amount of traffic in their district? The district superintendents cannot make the traffic for their districts.

Mr. THOMSON: Even the Traffic Manager in such a simple matter as arranging for a special train, has to refer the application

to the Commissioner. The Minister for Works may shake his head. I speak from practical experience. I know what I am talking about. I went to the Railway Department to arrange for a special train on "Kating Day," and after discussing the whole details with the Traffic Manager, he had to submit it to the Commissioner.

The Minister for Works: They never had to do that in my time.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Perhaps he was trying to cut down the price.

Mr. THOMSON: The Commissioner could encourage the element of competition between district superintendents by asking one superintendent to explain why he was not able to run his district as economically as the running results of another superintendent's district showed was possible. There are many difficulties in connection with this, but my object is to decentralise as far as possible. Unfortunately at present everything must come to Perth, but under the system I have suggested there would be a distinct improvement. I agree that those ambulance men who have rendered good service should be recompensed to the extent of at least 6d. or 7d. per day. I know of one man who is called out at all hours of the night because of his ability as an ambulance man. I trust there will be no necessity to increase the railway freights. The system adopted is fair and equitable, and I hope no Government will re-introduce the percentage basis. I am in favour of a flat rate.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [11.1]: Regarding the provision of shelter sheds on the Brownhill line, the Minister some time ago, in reply to a question, said that railway was now looked upon as a tramway, and that therefore shelter sheds were not necessary. But the Minister knows that the tramways company have provided shelter sheds at different points along their tracks. I was asking, not for any elaborate buildings, but merely for shelter sheds. The provision of such a convenience would render the line more popular. I hope the Minister will use his best endeavours with the Commissioner to secure that small concession, not only in the interests of the people using the line, but in the interests of the State generally, for it would probably result in increased revenue.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Seaddan—Albany—in reply) [11.2]: I propose to reply very briefly to just a few of the comments made.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you sit down we will put your Estimates through.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Well, I should be sorry to do anything to prevent you. The remarks of most hon. members have been very interesting. Of some it might be said they were intended for local consumption. Obviously, it was meant that the balance should go into cold store until March next. With the latter

class I am not going to interest myself, because I expect the market in March will afford a better opportunity. To the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) I say that while he may hold certain views in regard to the introduction of the 44 hour week, and while he and I may agree to the desirability of working men just so long as they can be kept fit, the fact remains that a machine will not do in 44 hours the same work as it previously did in 48 hours. The machine cannot continue without its attendant, and obviously a machine fully attended for 48 hours will do more work than if attended for only 44 hours. The workshop which the Commissioner had in mind when making his statement is largely operated by machines. I question whether the Commissioner's statement will not be borne out by actual practice during the period over which it is proposed to continue the review.

Mr. Willcock: With the introduction of all this machinery, surely the hours worked by the men can stand a reduction.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There is a great deal to be said in favour of the argument that if wealth-producing machines are introduced, human beings should get the advantage—at all events in the gross. But that should not prevent the Commissioner from expressing his opinion on what is happening. However, by introducing the 44-hour week, what we did was, not to reduce the number of hours worked per day; we cut out the Saturday morning, and worked only five days in the week, with the result that each day put the same strain on a man as before.

Mr. Willcock: But he had a good weekend in which to recuperate.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That was all right while they worked the same number of hours on the five days. But they refused to come in on the Saturday morning and take it as overtime. They insisted upon working by way of overtime extra hours on the other five days. This has been detrimental to all concerned.

Mr. Willcock: Of course it has.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Well, I ask the hon. member whether he cannot induce them to accept the position.

Mr. Willcock: I will see whether I cannot get you some more men.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Even that would be an advantage. The department never put up the position that Saturday morning would interfere with the 44-hour week; we merely desired that the men should not be too long on the job on any one day. But they persisted in working the five-day week, because they fancied they saw in the Saturday morning proposal a deliberate attempt to rob them of their 44-hour week. That, of course, was never intended. Those men did something which, in my opinion, the rest of the movement should have taken strong exception to. If the hours, although limited to 44, were spread

over six days in the week the men would keep fit; but they have deliberately gone back on that and said, "We want overtime and we will get it by working extra hours on five days in the week," and refusing to work on the Saturday morning. I have reason to believe that the men in the shops were satisfied that the Commissioner had no ulterior motive in asking them to work on Saturday morning, but that somebody—I believe, the secretary of the organisation—went along and told them that the Commissioner was actuated by the desire to rob them of the 44-hour week.

Hon. P. Collier: But the 44-hour week was embodied in the agreement. How, then, could they be suspicious?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know, but Dennis went up there and talked the men into it, said that if they worked on the Saturday morning it would be the end of the 44-hours week. Actually it was he who was bringing about the end of the 44-hour week. They are working more hours now on five days in the week than previously, because they are working overtime, which I am convinced is a wrong thing to do.

Mr. Willcock: And is very expensive in addition.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Exactly. It would have been far more satisfactory all round if they had agreed to work Saturday morning as overtime. Most of the other points submitted are matters of administration which, by Act of Parliament, lies with the Commissioner. If, after 12 months of office, the Commissioner submitted a report to Parliament and no members could be found to criticise any of his actions, I should think it was time we got rid of the Commissioner and put in somebody else. A man who does nothing cannot be found fault with simply because he has to his credit no actions on which criticism may be based. Colonel Pope has given close attention to his duties; in fact he is seldom off duty. He has a good knowledge of the technical operations of the railways, in fact as wide a knowledge as can be expected in any one man. It is impossible to get a man who combines the knowledge of a railway engineer, a civil engineer and a traffic manager. The Commissioner is a man with a good all round knowledge of the working of the railways and possesses sound common sense. He knows the men and is known by the men and can easily be approached. In my opinion he is doing very well. Though we may differ from his opinions, he at any rate has the courage of his convictions. I have differed from him many times, but on matters of policy I have always insisted that my point of view should prevail. When a question of policy was not involved I have said to Colonel Pope, "This is a technical operation, you are charged with the responsibility for that; I shall not intervene." Even when asked for an opinion I have refused to give it. I think that our railways are being oper-

ated fairly successfully and any credit is due to the Commissioner and to myself as Minister. Of course we look to the Commissioner for advice as to the basis for increased freights or charges to make our system a paying concern and not a heavy burden on the community. The Commissioner is expected to be able to recommend an equitable basis which will not do harm to our industries or to any one section of the community. The actual responsibility for increasing the rates must rest with the Government, because this was a matter of policy. I recommended to Cabinet that rates be increased and Cabinet, having adopted my recommendation, must take the responsibility for it. I have happened to be Minister for Railways on two different occasions when it became necessary to raise freights, and I do not propose to take the actual responsibility for this step. I faced the position as I found it. The heavier costs due to arbitration awards and dearer coal and material placed upon me responsibility and I went to Cabinet and said, "We must make certain adjustments in freights and fares." Members should make it clear to the public that a big concern like the railways, responsible as I have previously pointed out for, roughly, one-half of the State's revenue and expenditure, should not be regarded as a safe department to criticise. Parliament has to accept its share of the responsibility. Members should make it plain to the community that we are rendering this service and that those who are benefiting from it must pay the cost.

Mr. Pickering: You did not come to Parliament and ask Parliament to increase the freights.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: When freights and charges are increased and Parliament permits the Government, who made the increase, to remain in office, Parliament then takes the responsibility for their action.

Mr. Thomson: That is not a fair statement.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is a fair statement. A member has no right to remain silent if he contends that such action on the part of the Government is detrimental to the interests of the country, and he has no right to go to his constituents afterwards and tell them that he had no part in it. Of course members have a say in it. Parliament must take the responsibility, and it is desirable that Parliament should do so in order that the community may rise to a sense of their responsibilities. The member for North-East Fremantle complains of the charges levied on the community by increasing the passenger fares. The leader of the Opposition complains of the increase of fares in the metropolitan area. The country members complain of the freights on live stock; in short everybody complains and naturally enough, too. But the community must recognise that they have to find the increased wages demanded and fairly demanded in most cases. It has been shown by the Commissioner's

figures that the increases recently made and those levied in December of last year, have been equitably distributed, and each section of the community has been asked to carry about an equivalent share of the burden. It would be impossible to have anything fairer than that. We have not deliberately sought an opportunity to impose a burden on the people, though, judging by the amount of abuse which one receives, it might almost be concluded that some people hold that view. One is abused for having imposed a small increase in this direction, though at the same time people are paying merchants and manufacturers greatly increased charges for their commodities without any question whatever. I made some inquiries with regard to fertilisers and I found that, while we had increased our rates by about 3s. a ton, the merchants had increased their price by £2 3s. a ton. We are not making a huge profit on our railways and we are not placing an unfair levy on one concern to build up another. To increase freights and fares was an unpleasant task, but some one had to face it, and if the Minister was not prepared to tackle it, he would be undeserving of consideration from the general community. I have taken a note regarding the sample of apples obtained from the dining car. I am satisfied that those apples did not come from Mt. Barker.

Mr. Pickering: They did not come from my district either.

Mr. Munsie: I never saw worse fruit on any table.

Hon. P. Collier: The attendant said that a case had been ordered from Kalgoorlie and that was the quality sent.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The same thing applies to the trans-Australian line.

Hon. P. Collier: It would be better not to put such fruit on the table.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If the quality is so poor it would be better not to have the fruit on the tables. Visitors who have heard of the excellent quality of Western Australian grown apples would have good reason to be disgusted at having such a sample put before them.

Mr. Munsie: At the same table were two Queenslanders making their first visit to Western Australia, and they directed attention to this fruit.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The local people are entitled to get some of the best quality fruit, but they do not always get it. I have taken a note of several other matters, including that of the super-annuation fund which is under consideration, and rolling stock for bulk handling. The Railway Department had a representative on the Commission which made the inquiry and it is recognised that the department must be prepared in this way.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I hope they will not take the advice given in the newspaper tonight.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Regarding the use of pulverised coal for locomotive purposes, for years past we have been obtaining all the information available. A month or six weeks ago I notified the Commissioner that if he would provide a locomotive with the necessary fittings, the Mines Department, being interested in the use of our native coal, would join with him in making a test.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you not think it would be advisable, in view of the recent amalgamation of Colliery coal companies, to get a coal mine of your own?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do, but I shall not say anything more. If the hon. member thinks that this would be desirable, he should not mention it publicly and he knows the reason why. I wish to assure the member for North-East Fremantle that the new rates as applying to apprentices apply to junior workers under the age of 21, subject to their producing a signed statement from their employer showing the rate of wage they receive and a declaration as to their age. If the wage is less than 12s. 6d. per week, they will be given a rate at one-third, which they have never previously received; if the wage exceeds 25s. a week, the rate will be one-half; and if the wage exceeds 35s. a week the rate will be two-thirds. That is a fair concession to grant to junior workers. With regard to the question of cheap week-end excursions, raised by the member for Katanning, I agree that if practicable this ought to be instituted. The time of the year when the hon. member desires these week-end excursions to operate from Katanning is the very time when we have a tremendous rush of traffic that is difficult to handle. If we could anticipate only one or two such excursions it might be possible to fit them in and comply with his request. The time when most people would be travelling from Perth would be the time when others would want to join the train at Katanning, and the result would be that there would be complaints from both ends. Requests would also be made for a similar provision in other parts of the State.

Mr. Thomson: Could you not put on a special carriage at Katanning?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Then one would be wanted at Colliery, at Northam, and other centres. Where are we going to get all these special carriages? Our system encounters difficulties every day in the summer time for the want of sufficient carriages to carry our traffic.

Mr. Thomson: There is one lying at Katanning from Saturday morning until the following Friday.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If that is so inquiries will have to be made. I can assure the hon. member that if it is there now it will be gone by next week. When he says that the department is not in sympathy, and that there is no desire to encourage traffic, he must remember that there

are many difficulties in the management of the system that he does not understand.

Mr. Thomson: The department is frightened of ticket scalping.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Oh, no!

Hon. P. Collier: Have you been to the Commissioner about it?

Mr. Thomson: I have.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If this question can be arranged without serious inconvenience it is possible that it will be done. Members must realise that we have to comply with similar requests elsewhere, and that we have difficulties to contend with in other directions. I appreciate the references made by hon. members to the work of the department. I will confer with the member for Forrest with regard to the lease of refreshment rooms, and will go into the question of shelter sheds on the Brownhill loop line, raised by the member for the district. I agree that we ought to afford some protection to passengers from the heat of the day during the five or six months of the summer. It is little short of murder to ask people to stand in the sun waiting for their trains.

Mr. Money: And there is the question of the carriage of road material.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I will discuss that matter with the Commissioner. There are difficulties, such as the fitting in of time tables, which are not understood by the ordinary layman, and can only be properly handled by the experts themselves.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—State batteries, £62,576:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Can the Minister for Mines say what progress has been made with the erection of a State battery at St. Ives? The Government have decided to erect one there. A statement appeared in the goldfields Press a few weeks ago to the effect that the battery was not to be completed for some time because of the difficulty of obtaining labour. There must be some misunderstanding on this point. I am sure the necessary labour could be obtained on the goldfields. A stage has been reached in that field when the mining investors require to get back some of the money they have put into it. It is a matter of the utmost importance to many of them that the battery should be erected at an early date. Practically no capital is coming in now from outside and everyone wants to see some returns for his investment. I hope the Minister will see that the battery is made available as early as possible.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Although there is a difficulty with regard to labour, the main difficulty is to get the necessary plant. We have to collect it from different parts of the State. We cannot take any one plant and erect it straight away at St. Ives. I assure the leader of the Opposition that we are pushing on with the question of obtaining a

suitable plant and having it erected as early as possible. The Chief Inspector of State Batteries has received definite instructions that he must waste no time in having the battery erected. His staff is working on it as fast as possible.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—State dairy farm, £3,000; tourist resorts, Cave Houses, etc., £11,963; Yanda-nooka estate, £9,000—agreed to.

Vote—Government property sales fund receipts, £1,096,544 19s. 1d.

Item, Roads and bridges throughout the State, £25,000:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: These are loan moneys that we are dealing with, and there is no direct return so far as this item is concerned. In the Estimates there is also another £30,000 provided, which makes up a total of £55,000, in the distribution of which we have no say. In all probability, when the Loan Estimates come down, we shall have another vote of the same kind placed before us. There is a sum of £141,462 of loan moneys and trust moneys which can be put into the ordinary revenue of the State to carry out works which used to be provided out of ordinary revenue. Altogether there is a sum of £11,545 provided more than last year. The municipalities, however, get nothing at all in the way of advances, and yet we are providing this sum of £55,000 to go to road boards only. Is this amount of £30,000 for special roads, or is it to be handed over to the road boards, or is it to be expended on making feeder roads to the railways?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The £30,000 is to be spent in providing bridges which are very badly needed in various parts of the State to enable producers to travel in winter as well as in summer. The funds of the State have not proved adequate to meet all the demands very properly made on them in this connection. Probably there will be a grant for the construction of special roads, with which the ordinary funds cannot cope. If we put people on the land, we must furnish them with facilities for getting to the railways. To enable a man to do two trips in a day with his team instead of only one, is to increase the national wealth.

Item, School of Mines, Kalgoorlie, additional class room and experimental plant and equipment, £5,500:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not objecting to this item, but for what purpose is the experimental plant?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The intention is to erect something more than a toy plant to illustrate to students the various methods of dealing with different ores. There is a good deal of machinery to be put up, and a suitable building has to be specially designed.

Item, Claremont Hospital for Insane, medical officer's quarters, £1,500:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Is it proposed to make additions to the existing quarters, or to erect new quarters? If the latter, for whom are they to be provided?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I regret not being able to furnish full information regarding this item, but I assure the hon. mem^r that the money will not be spent until I have been thoroughly satisfied as to the necessity for the building and as to the design being a proper one.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I particularly wish to know whether any new building at all is necessary; and that is a matter which rests, in this instance, not with the Minister for Works but with the Colonial Secretary. I view the item with suspicion. There has been sufficient accommodation for the medical officers at Claremont for years past. Is it intended to erect elaborate additions to existing buildings, or are quarters to be provided for some medical officer who has not a residence now?

Mr. Teesdale: In the latter case, how has he managed up to now? It seems to me that this item is intended to provide accommodation for the two additional medical officers who have been cut out.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Those in charge at Claremont have a way of getting what they want.

The Colonial Secretary: There are no medical officer's quarters to be built at Claremont, so far as I know.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then how did this item stray on to the Estimates? I move—

That the item be struck out.

The Colonial Secretary: New buildings come under another vote.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is no money for the recreation hall at Wooroloo.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am agreeable to the item being struck out if only to emphasise the point that I have nothing on my notes regarding the matter.

Question put and passed; the item struck out.

Item, Land Titles, extra accommodation, £13,000:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What is this expenditure for? Is there to be an early re-arrangement of offices? This is a lot of money, and members should realise that it is loan money that we are spending on works. This is not being provided for out of revenue.

Mr. Malay: It is necessary, surely.

The Attorney General: The work is absolutely necessary.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I understand it is the intention of the Government to make extensive alterations in the Government offices, but whether it is to be at the Crown Law Department or the Lands Department we do not know. I trust that this does not mean a new building, because we have too many of the Government departments scattered about now.

The Minister for Works: It will be two or three years before we can get the General Post Office from the Federal authorities.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We should have an explanation about this item at any rate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There can be no doubt as to the necessity for this extra accommodation. The Attorney General could probably tell members that he is worried to death on account of the limited accommodation provided for the Land Titles branch. There is no proper place provided for keeping the titles, which are exceedingly important to the State and to the community. The accommodation which is now provided has grown altogether too small. There is an ever-increasing demand for extra accommodation. It has not been decided yet exactly what is to be done. I believe it is the intention to make certain arrangements by which the ground occupied by the Savings Bank will be made available for the Land Titles office.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Will they be housed in the same building.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We want to get them in together if possible. When the Commonwealth vacate the post office, there should be sufficient accommodation for the whole of the State departments provided certain re-arrangements are made. I am averse to spending any large amounts in providing separate offices. Some people have stated that if the Treasury building site were sold, it would enable the Government to erect a big block of administrative buildings in some other part of the city. That will be discussed in due course, but at the present time we must provide accommodation for the Land Titles office. The amount of £13,000 has been provided in order that we may come and go to that extent.

Mr. Munsie: The sooner you get to work the better.

Mr. TEESDALE: Is the work in connection with the Land Titles office so important that we must spend £13,000 on it? The next item in the Estimates provides for £800 for the re-arrangement of Government offices, including extensive alterations and additions.

Hon. P. Collier: There was over £7,000 spent last year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The smaller amount is to finish off certain jobs which we had on hand during the year. We are not going to spend a lot of money in new public offices, for we will have plenty of room when we take over the post office buildings.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am not quite clear as to where the Government intend to put the Land Titles office, but it is absolutely essential that the present conditions should be altered.

Mr. Money: You are quite right.

Mr. MUNSIE: I had occasion to go to the Land Titles office last week, and I put in three hours there one day. Most of the time I had an escort with me taking me from office to office. In the end I came away

without seeing the right man. Eventually I had to go to the Premier himself before I could get the information I wanted.

Mr. Underwood: Was that due to the structure of the building or the lack of intelligence on the part of the officials?

Mr. MUNSIE: It was due to the lack of accommodation for the officers. I am not complaining regarding the efficiency of the officers, for even if we had the most competent officers in the world it would be impossible for them to carry out their duties successfully under existing circumstances. It is an absolute scandal.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am sorry that the hon. member regards this as a scandal. Certainly the position is serious, and this work is essential. The operations of the Land Titles Office are increasing enormously. I mentioned this matter on the Estimates last year. The position now is that the building is no longer safe. If a fire occurred I do not know what the result would be. I do not know how the officers carry out their work now, and they cannot continue in the present building very much longer.

Item, Police stations and quarters, £10,000:

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is a large sum of money for police accommodation in one year. Last year £2,579 was provided under this heading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Only £997 was spent last year. The £10,000 asked for is towards the cost of the following works: Nedlands, purchase of site, £500; Nedlands police station, £1,900; Broome, quarters, £2,000; Collie, extensions, £1,545; Beria, station and quarters, £650; Fremantle, quarters and conversion, £736; Esperance, quarters and station, £1,870; Albany, new quarters, £2,050; Denmark, station and quarters, £2,300; Westonia, station and quarters, removal from Coolgardie, £350; Celebration, station and quarters, £1,870; Junction, station water supply, £450, and Tableland, replacing buildings destroyed by fire, £2,000. These are works which have been asked for by the Police Department and, seeing that the stations are so widely scattered throughout the State, I do not think the amount can be complained of.

Vote put and passed.

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

Resolutions as passed in Committee of Supply granting supplies amounting to £4,708,950 were formally reported.

STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Minister for Works (Hon. W. J. George) in charge of the vote.

Division—State Brickworks, £16,380:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Considering there is over a million of money involved in these votes, midnight is scarcely the proper time at which to discuss them. We should know what is to be done in regard to the brickworks. Building contractors are everywhere crying out for material. Great difficulty is experienced in obtaining bricks. In consequence of this the State has lost a large number of tradesmen, including bricklayers.

Mr. Thomson: I thought we had plenty of bricks.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I understand there is great difficulty in getting bricks. The State works have been of great importance and have exercised considerable check over the price of bricks. If the plant were worked continuously, we could turn out bricks at a much lower price than we are doing to-day.

Mr. Pickering: Good bricks, too.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The best bricks in the State. A good man is in charge, the best of clays is available, and the works are most economical in their operation. Everything is run by gravitation, and consequently we ought to be making bricks at a much lower price than they are made at other brickyards. Instead of that, I am told we have entered the ring and agreed to a fixed price of £3 5s. per thousand at the kiln, which is a very big price.

Mr. Mullany: It ought to show a good profit.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, but the State will suffer for these high prices. It is the duty of the State at such a time to provide bricks at the lowest possible price compatible with a profit.

Mr. Willcock: You do not suggest that they are profiteering?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am doubtful about that, they are members of the combine. When I took charge of the Works Department I found that the sawmills were in the combine. Does the Minister intend to extend the plant at the State Brickworks in order to keep up a good supply of the best quality brick at a cheaper rate? I am pleased that the brickworks are now likely to show a profit, though this depends on our ability to supply material at a reasonable price and enable people to build. It is impossible for people to build if the cost of material is exorbitant. I hope that the Minister will be satisfied with a price which will show just a small margin of profit over the cost. It is not the duty of the State to make big profits. We should supply bricks at the lowest possible rate.

Mr. MUNSIE: I want the Minister to answer a few questions with regard to the State Brickworks. I do not know whether the position has altered within the last two or three weeks, but some little time ago the brickworks while accepting orders, could not guarantee that the bricks would be supplied

within three months. Orders were booked well in advance.

The Minister for Works: Yes.

12 o'clock midnight.

[Hon. G. Taylor took the Chair.]

Mr. MUNSIE: I am pleased to have that admission from the Minister, because I want to know why he appointed an agent who is paid commission for selling State bricks, particularly seconds. I do not know the gentleman, but he advertises in the "West Australian" every day as agent for State bricks.

The Minister for Works: His name is Barrett.

Mr. MUNSIE: He is also a lime merchant. For ordinary cottages, seconds are used to a considerable extent. A contractor who was building some cottages applied to the manager of the State Brickworks for some seconds and was referred to the agent. The agent admitted that he had seconds for sale, but the contractor could not get a single brick unless he purchased his lime requirements from the agent. The contractor, however, had already secured sufficient quantities of lime.

Mr. Teesdale: Is that a fact?

Mr. MUNSIE: I have it in black and white.

Mr. Teesdale: Then the quicker he is emptied out, the better.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Government have also appointed an agent for State timber, and yet they cannot supply one half of the demands. Why the necessity for an agent for State bricks? The Government are paying this agent commission for selling State bricks which cannot be supplied at less than three months' notice.

Mr. Teesdale: Surely we have plenty of officers to do this work.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, but there is no necessity to have an agent for State bricks. If the State Brickworks were competing against other works for custom, it might be necessary to have an agent, but the Minister admits that it is necessary to wait for three months before the brick works can supply an order. The position now is that if a contractor does not buy his lime from the agent, he cannot get bricks.

The Minister for Works: That agent has been acting for five years.

Mr. MUNSIE: There is also an agent for State timber.

The Minister for Works: Who is that?

Mr. MUNSIE: We will come to that later. I hope the Minister will tell us why this agent was appointed and what commission is paid him.

Mr. Teesdale: And what his lime has to do with our bricks.

Mr. LUTEY: When dealing with the State brickworks some considerable time ago, the Minister for Works informed us

that it was impossible to get machinery to turn out the number of bricks required.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. LUTEY: I have a clear recollection of it.

The Minister for Works: We required kilns, not machinery.

Mr. LUTEY: We were told that the works required machinery, but I have since discovered that the instalment of a Hoffman kiln would enable the works to turn out the additional bricks required. That explanation was not made at the time. It was said that there was a shortage of machinery, and that it was impossible to get the particular machinery in Australia at the time.

The Minister for Works: I do not think I said that, because I knew all about it.

Mr. LUTEY: I am certain that this was the reply given by the Minister.

The Minister for Works: I was asked about the kilns and the answers can be found in "Hansard."

Mr. LUTEY: If the Minister turns up "Hansard" he will find that I was speaking of machinery. Perhaps the Minister can inform me why it has been impossible to build a Hoffman kiln during the last two years in order to meet the heavy demand for bricks. There has been a shortage for years past, and I hope that the kiln will be erected so that this crying need for bricks will be met.

Mr. HOLMAN: I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	..	20

Majority against .. 13

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Holman	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Broun	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Collier	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Draper	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Duff	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. George	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Johnston	(Teller.)
Mr. Maley	

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. Munsie: Before this vote is passed I should like some information from the Minister in charge of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for North-East Fremantle spoke of the difficulty of getting bricks. There is machinery at the State brickworks which

could manufacture many more bricks than it does, but we have not the kiln accommodation there to burn them. To erect a new kiln and increase the output would run into £6,000 or £7,000. If we were to erect another Hoffman kiln to turn out a larger quantity of bricks we should need some additions to the plant that we have at present. When the price of bricks began to move, I kept our prices down and did not move them for a long time, although I was pressed to do so by the other brickmakers. I expressed the opinion that we should keep our price down as low as possible to meet the requirements of the public and encourage the revival of building. Until we were called upon to pay increased wages and had to meet other increased expenses I determined to keep the price down to something like normal. At present the price for first class bricks ex kiln is 64s. or 65s. per thousand. That is a low price for the quality we are turning out. I do not believe there are any other brickworks in Australia turning out bricks equal to ours at the price. We are said to have entered into a ring. I object to the use of that word "ring," just as I objected to the offensive use by the member for Perth of the word "ramp." It is indeed a most objectionable term. When a member uses a word of that description he should be careful to ascertain that it does not mean more than he intended. We do not belong to a ring, and we can always alter our prices whenever we like. We have no one to ask before we do so. Other people have been getting whatever price for their bricks they liked to ask, but 65s. is our price. That is a fair price and gives us a fair return for what we are doing.

Mr. Munzie: Mr. Law is selling at a price not above 67s.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He has the advantage of from 2s. to 2s. 6d. in freight, because he is so much nearer to Perth. It is not a question of a ring as I understand the term. We are not banded with others to make unholy profits. In view of the cost of wages and material, the price we ask for our bricks is not unfair. We are making a perfectly legitimate effort now to write off the accumulated deficit of the lean years. In order to keep the brick works going, apart from the question of wages, accommodation is necessary for the men working there; and we have erected a number of cottages, and are about to erect more, and have erected bachelors' huts, and will shortly put up a boardinghouse. In the absence of proper accommodation we were unable to keep our men. I believe they are now well satisfied. I may say that the same policy has been adopted as regards the State quarry. It is a right and just policy. With reference to our not guaranteeing delivery of bricks ordered, the fact is that orders were simply pouring in, and we could accept them only on the understanding that each order would be delivered in its proper turn and at the price ruling at the time

of delivery. Among the orders on hand I found about half a dozen which in my opinion were not bona fide orders for buildings but orders intended to corner the market. I declined those orders. Not one brick has been supplied to those orders. I refused to allow the State Brickworks to be used as a means towards profiteering. With regard to the agent, Mr. Bradley, he held the agency before I became Minister. I believe his commission is 2½ per cent. on any orders he secures.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not remember the name Bradley.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At any rate, we have an agent, and he takes quantities of our second-class and third-class bricks and stacks them and finds a market for them. The arrangement operates very favourably, because there are buyers whom we will not credit and the agent takes the responsibility in those cases.

Mr. Munzie: Do you fix the price at which he shall sell those seconds and thirds?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know that we do that, and I do not know that at present we could very well do it. For the last 12 months we have had an average production of 135,000 bricks per week. That quantity, or double that quantity, had we been able to supply it, could have had no appreciable effect upon the sale or price of bricks in the metropolitan area. I and my officers were watching very carefully the manner in which private brickmakers were trying to re-open their closed-down works in order to take advantage of the boom. Had we started to build the Hoffman kiln, our output would have been materially decreased during its erection, as the work would have required a considerable proportion of our weekly output. Before we could have got that kiln built and cured—the latter operation takes some time—the boom might have burst. I exercised business caution in that respect. Last year we made seven million bricks, and sold a little over seven millions. At present we are not stacking, but sending the bricks out as fast as we make them. A certain newspaper proprietor rang me up the other day to let me know of the scandalous quality of the bricks supplied to him by the State. He asked me to call and see them. He was paying £5 5s. per thousand and for best facing bricks, he said. When I saw the bricks, I recognised that they were not facing bricks at all, and that many of them were in fact clinkers. I put that newspaper proprietor right. The profit the works made last year enabled us to pay the Treasury about £3,400 on account of the debit against us. If this year continues as it has started, even without a further rise in prices, I hope that whoever is in charge of the State Brickworks next year will be able to report to this Committee that the indebtedness has been cleared off.

Mr. TEESDALE: The Minister's explanation was very satisfactory, except as regards the agent. I take strong exception to a State agent using his position as such to bludgeon the public into buying some of his particular ware. Rather than have such an agent, we should do without one altogether. A certain statement is made in this Chamber, and is published, and the public immediately believe it.

Mr. Munsie: What need is there for an agent at all when the supply cannot meet the demand?

Mr. TEESDALE: True. If the State brickworks are so much behind with their orders, there is no occasion to pay any man 2½ per cent. commission to sell a product the demand for which cannot, for the time, be met. I hope the Minister will investigate this matter for it seems to be pretty strong that a man should demand the purchase of his lime, if he is to sell State bricks.

Mr. Willcock: That complaint has been made before.

Mr. TEESDALE: It is the first I have heard of it.

Mr. Munsie: I brought the same thing up last year on the Estimates.

Mr. TEESDALE: Well, I hope it will be cleared up by the Minister on this occasion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When business is slack, it is necessary to have an agent, even if he is selling State bricks. In connection with the building trade, the system is that in some suburbs the various brickworks appoint agents who are carriers, and these men go around to various works and pick up orders. They benefit by getting the carting. Unless the State works are placed in the same position as the ordinary firms, they will be left every time. That was what happened when the brick works were started first.

Mr. Teesdale: I do not object to the agents, but I object to the agent's attitude regarding his lime.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It may not be necessary to have an agent at the present time.

Mr. Thomson: The price of lime is fixed so that there is not much hardship in any case.

Mr. Munsie: Suppose the contractor had plenty of lime, should he not have the right to buy seconds if he wanted them?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If such a man were prevented from getting seconds, I think he should have complained to the department.

Mr. Munsie: The agent always sells seconds.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If this matter had come before the Minister I think he would have ordered the kiln to supply the bricks. We had to appoint a timber agent in connection with the sawmills for some time because the other firms had agents going round the State. Unless the Government department goes on the market in the

same conditions as the private firms, it will not get the business.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is no need for a timber agent to-day.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am pleased to hear the Minister say that these brickworks are proving successful, particularly when it is realised that they have been condemned for so long. In some quarters the whole responsibility for the financial position has been put upon the State trading concerns. It is hardly possible for a trading concern to start paying in the first few months of its operations, but in this instance the brickworks have always paid interest from the start.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So far as the agent is concerned, the man was doing his best to get orders and when we had two and a half million bricks stacked in the yard, this man was selling them for us where we could not sell them ourselves.

Mr. Lutey: If you had two and a half million bricks on hand, why did you not construct a new kiln?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Having that number of bricks on hand, with no demand for bricks at all, would anyone expect a Minister to put the State to the expense of constructing a kiln?

Mr. Lutey: There has been a demand since.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member may be able to look into the future, but I cannot. However, I will look into this matter and will try to get further information regarding it. We started a timber yard at Carlisle.

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with State brickworks, not timber yards.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is what I am dealing with. We have got the timber yard at Carlisle and we send bricks there as well. Since then we have found the demand for bricks has increased considerably. If a person required 100 bricks or so to finish some job, the agent at the timber yard would not be expected to say, "I will not sell you the bricks unless you take our timber." I would expect him to say, however, "If you want timber at any time, remember that we have assisted you in supplying the bricks, and remember to give us an order next time." In the particular instance quoted, if the agent refused to sell bricks unless an order was placed with him for lime, I would not tolerate such a position if it were brought under my notice.

Mr. LUTEY: The Minister in his reply last year said that he could not supply the bricks because he had not got the machinery. The Minister, according to the "Hansard" report, asked where the money was to come from. Yet there was a demand for bricks at that particular time.

The Minister for Works: Not for any quantity.

Mr. LUTEY: There was a demand. Men were walking the streets and contractors could not get bricks. We were told that a Hoffman kiln was necessary before more bricks could be turned out, but that the

machinery was not obtainable. Now the Minister says he would not have gone on with the work because there was no demand for bricks. If the bricks were there, why did the Minister not go on with the construction of that kiln? It is patent to me that the Minister's attitude is the same now as it was in the past when he was criticising the Labour Government in connection with State trading concerns. They have been throttled all along the line. The State brickworks are being throttled, as they have been for years past.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member is not right in saying that. There has been no throttling going on at all. At the time when we had two and a-half million bricks on hand there was no building boom on, nor was there any rise in the demand for bricks such as he refers to. I told the hon. member that although we had the bricks on hand to construct the kiln, I would have to buy other machinery to complete it. The hon. member gets heated over the question, but I think he will find on reflection that there is no occasion for it.

Item, Interest on fixed and working capital, £1,600:

Mr. MUNSIE: In view of the increased sinking fund, how it is that the interest is increasing? Surely it should be decreasing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The rate of interest is fixed by the Treasury. It varies with the rate they have to pay. I have no control over the interest. As to the sinking fund, that is a statutory provision. At any rate, it is not money lost, but money put aside.

Item, Sinking Fund, £100:

Mr. MUNSIE: It seems peculiar that not only the interest, but the sinking fund also should be increasing. I do not think the Treasury fix the sinking fund.

The Premier: They do.

Mr. MUNSIE: Under the Act they have no right to do so.

The Premier: Yes, it is a statutory requirement.

Mr. MUNSIE: No. That is where, I contend, the State Trading Concerns Act is unfair to the State trading concerns. They are not given the same chance as a private concern. Last year the sinking fund was £71. This year it will be £100.

The Premier: No, it may be £100.

Mr. MUNSIE: Why should there be an increase in the sinking fund of a concern which is expected to show a profit of £2,000?

Mr. Maley: Sinking fund has no connection with profit.

Mr. MUNSIE: Surely when the sinking fund is deducted each year it should grow less and less.

The Minister for Works: No, it is invested as an accumulated fund.

Mr. MUNSIE: I want to know why it is £25 more when it should actually be less.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Last year we erected four new cottages, and we are now constructing 10 additional huts for the accommodation of single men. It is only business precaution to provide on the Estimates for the sinking fund which will be required. It is merely money placed aside.

Vote put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I call the next vote, it is only right that I should draw attention to the Trading Concerns Act, passed in 1917. Section 16 reads as follows—

Annual Estimates of the revenue and expenditure of every trading concern shall be prepared under such heads and in such manner as the Colonial Treasurer shall direct and submitted to Parliament separately from the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates.

Section 18 reads—

The profit or loss for each trading concern for each financial year when ascertained shall be treated in such manner as the Colonial Treasurer shall direct, but any profit available in cash and not required for the purposes of the concern shall be paid to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

I take it these Estimates are wrongfully under discussion, that they should be submitted to the House separately and laid on the Table by the Minister controlling them, and that he should then move that the Estimates be adopted, whereupon a general discussion in Committee of the whole of the Estimates would follow, and that would close it without any discussion of the items, and if the motion were carried the Estimates would thereby be adopted. I say we are taking up time which the Act never intended.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You mean that the Committee has no right to question any item on the Estimates?

The CHAIRMAN: Only by general discussion. I think that is the intention of the Act.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Act does not say so.

The CHAIRMAN: Practically.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It only says that the Estimates shall be submitted separately, which was done.

Mr. HOLMAN: In view of the question which has been sprung on the Committee—

The Premier: Will you allow me to say a word?

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, after I have moved my motion.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member resume his seat, so that I may state the question.

Mr. HOLMAN: Very well.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that the vote "State Ferries, £7,049," stand as printed.

The PREMIER: I hope, Sir, you will allow the Estimates to be discussed.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, I shall allow them to be discussed. I am only making a suggestion.

Mr. HOLMAN: Do I understand you to say that we may discuss the items?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Division put and passed.

Division—State Hotels, £41,405:

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I wish to get some information from the Minister regarding the line of conduct adopted by the general manager. Will he explain why a discrepancy exists between the salaries paid to the different managers? The manager most recently appointed is getting the highest salary of the seven managers of our State hotels.

The Colonial Secretary: Who is he?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Mr. Baxter, of Bruce Rock. I understand that he is the brother of the Honorary Minister.

The Colonial Secretary: What is he getting?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Six pounds a week.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: For a hotel like that it is scandalous.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: He receives £5 10s. and 10s. a week while at Bruce Rock. The manager of the Gwalia hotel receives £5 per week and £1 additional, which brings him also to £6 a week. The other managers receive lower salaries. The previous manager at Bruce Rock was not paid a salary equal to that of the present manager. Apart from this, I protest against the scale of salaries paid to the managers of State hotels. When State hotels were first mooted the public throughout the State, with the exception of those in the Gascoyne electorate, endorsed the proposal, and we had an idea that the adoption of this principle would lead to a reform in the liquor trade and would be a source of revenue to the State, then sorely in need of funds. The opinion has been expressed here that owing to the administration of the department, the State hotels are coming into disrepute, and that the public ownership of the liquor trade as an ideal is losing ground because State hotels are not rendering the service expected of them. While the department have exercised care and have secured a staff of good managers, these men do not receive adequate recompense for their services. The State hotel in my electorate has been a gold mine to the State, and will continue to be for the next couple of decades at any rate. If it were put on the market tomorrow, I venture to say it would bring £10,000 and the building is only a shell. The returns from the Dwellingup State hotel are really staggering. However, the State does not look for big profits. If this hotel were run privately, the profits could easily be doubled. I was there on a Sunday when 150 bottles of whisky could have been sold; it was the occasion of a football match. None was sold, but if the hotel had been in private hands, the licensee could have made a welter of it. If a private person held that

license, he could make a fortune in less than a couple of years. The policy, however, is not to build up big profits but to give good service, and if we expect good service, we must pay our managers a decent remuneration. The managers are endeavouring to do their best, but the general manager has his whip over them all the time by demanding unduly high percentages.

The Colonial Secretary: Not necessarily. The increase of profits over last year is small. You do not want these hotels to show a loss, do you?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No. There is a vast difference between these hotels. One may be doing entirely a bar trade, and it is not very difficult to get the percentage. In the case of an hotel in another locality 75 per cent. of the liquor sold might be taken away in bulk, and it is impossible for the manager to show equally good results. I consider that the general manager does not show that discrimination between the different hotels which he should do.

The Colonial Secretary: He does.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I shall prove that he does not. He is demanding too high a percentage from some of the hotels. The member for East Perth, who was running a club, knows that one can show better percentages when the drink is consumed in the bar than when it is taken away in bulk.

Mr. Chesson: That is patent to everyone.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In order to get the percentage a manager has to be pretty alert. My objection is that we are not paying these managers sufficient for the responsibility imposed upon them.

Mr. Willecock: What does the manager at Dwellingup get?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Four pounds ten shillings a week is paid to the manager and his wife.

Mr. Willecock: Disgraceful!

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The yardman and his wife at the same hotel receive £4 a week.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But he is not the brother of a Minister.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister's brother is getting £6 a week.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And he is the last of the managers to be appointed.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister will probably tell me that, in addition to the salaries, the managers get keep for themselves, their wives and children.

Mr. Teesdale: Which doubles the salary.

1 o'clock a.m.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Will the member for Roebourne say that because the manager of the hotel has a wife and five children, some of them babies, he is adequately paid at £4 10s. per week, whereas the yardman and his wife, who have no responsibilities, receive 10s. per week less? The Minister will reply that we are keeping the manager's wife and children.

Mr. Maley: Does the wife work too?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes.

Mr. Hardwick: Is she on the salaried list?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No, but it is one of the conditions of employment that she has to work.

Hon. P. Collier: Very often she works harder than the husband.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister will say that he is feeding five children as well as the father and mother.

The Colonial Secretary: That is why the salaries vary.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But do they vary? A single man gets the same rate as the rate I am quoting. The man in charge of the oldest State hotel we have, at Gwalia, gets the same rate. Years ago the Dwellingup hotel was run by a man who was given £8 a week, and at Gwalia the salary was £10 a week, and is now only £6 a week. These managers and their wives are not getting a fair deal.

Mr. Hardwick: If they get £6 a week and keep they are getting more than the hon. member.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: And have more responsibility in a sense, and are doing more work. Some of these managers handle over £100 a week. The business could be made doubly profitable if that was the function of State hotels, which it is not. I think I was largely responsible for the Dwellingup being made a State hotel, although it was built as a private hotel. The point I wish to make is that the general manager is too exacting in the percentages he demands of his managers. It is almost impossible to obtain them.

The Colonial Secretary: I do not think he demands them.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Mr. Campbell demands more than a fair thing. He sends down a consignment of liquor to a State hotel. Unfortunately on one occasion he sent down to Dwellingup a consignment of inferior margarine at a cost of 1s. 6d. a pound. It was like candle grease and no one could eat it. It was also a bad advertisement for the hotel.

The Colonial Secretary: It may not have been intended for the table.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I hope it will not occur again, because it is a bad advertisement to put such things before customers. Very frequently breakages occur in the consignments that are sent down. The manager receives no credit for that, for the breakages are booked up against him. This makes it very difficult for him to get the percentages that he is required to show.

The Colonial Secretary: If he cannot get the percentage required that is the end of it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the manager is told week after week that his percentage is not what it ought to be he loses heart. The trade is of such a nature that it is not properly understood either by the general manager of State hotels or by the Minister.

The Colonial Secretary: I admit I do not know much about it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In some places the requisite percentages can be obtained, and

in other places it is impossible to get them. The Minister should at all times consult with the general manager. He should have a general review of the position regarding the high percentages demanded, and should not unnecessarily harass these managers to get impossible percentages. If the Government desire to be recognised as fair employers they should increase the salaries of these officers. The salary of the manager at Bruce Rock is £6 a week, the same as at Gwalia.

The Colonial Secretary: The salary is actually £5 a week.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is a brother of the Honorary Minister, Mr. Baxter.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: He gets £6 at the end of the week; that is his salary. It is not too much; indeed it is not enough. Other managers are not getting within £1 or 30s. a week of that. It is not right to ask a man who is handling up to £400 a week over the bar and carries great responsibilities to work for £4 10s. a week. If this policy is continued it will bring the State hotels into disrepute. State hotels were started with the laudable idea of bringing about reform in the liquor traffic, and at the same time supplementing to some extent the revenue of the State. We are now falling short of our original ideals. I could go on debating this matter for an hour.

The Minister for Works: That is not debating it; it is making a statement.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I only wish the Minister for Works was in charge of this vote.

Mr. Teesdale: He is not objecting to your remarks.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am making a statement of fact.

The Minister for Works: I do not say that is not so.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Colonial Secretary may not be able to give me the information I seek. He may not be able off hand to give me an assurance that the salaries of the men holding those responsible positions will be increased. But, at all events, I hope he will consult with the General Manager of the State Hotels and get the percentage question rectified. If the percentages are not adjusted, I shall ventilate the question in another quarter.

The Colonial Secretary: Do not use threats.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am not using threats. If the Minister says he cannot give me an assurance to-night, I shall not hold up the Estimates on that account; but then my opportunity here will be gone for another 12 months, and so I shall be compelled to proceed by way of deputation or otherwise. Certainly the Shylock methods now being practised must cease. I reiterate that the policy of paying £4 10s. per week to a manager and his wife in charge of a State hotel ought not to continue.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	18

Majority against	..	9
		—

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Holman	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Lambert	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Money
Mr. Broun	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Draper	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Duff	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. George	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Maltby	(Teller.)
Mr. Mitchell	

Motion thus negatived.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The statements made to-night, or this morning, by the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) should be inquired into. It is strange indeed that the last man to be appointed manager of a State hotel, and that man a brother of a member of the Ministry, should be drawing the highest salary paid for such a position. Because, some years ago, a man named Scaddan was engaged on the Fremantle sewerage works, the roof of this Chamber fairly vibrated with cries of "Spoils to the victors!" Have we not a case of "Spoils to the victors" in this instance of the man who is brother to a Minister?

Mr. Hardwick: Are you sticking to the facts?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Shut up!

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The same cry was raised when a distant relative of a member of this Chamber was labouring with pick and shovel on a Government job. No man has had more to say on the subject of "Spoils to the victors" than has the member for East Perth (Mr. Hardwick). Then there was the case of that hotel proprietor on a saw-mill station, Mr. O'Connor. The adjournment of the House was almost moved over his appointment to a Government position, and he was not related to any Minister and was not given any extra salary. Why should this brother of a Minister be shoved into a special job, and possibly into a special hotel? The State hotel at Bruce Rock cannot rank with State hotel at Gwalia or the Caves House. We find that men who have given good service to the State for years in this department and who have been in charge of several State hotels throughout Western Australia, are passed over and the brother of a Minister is put over their heads. No Government with any sense

of responsibility would attempt to take any such action. I do not take the stand that because a man is the brother of a Minister, he should not be given a position.

The Colonial Secretary: Do you infer that the Minister had anything to do with this appointment?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Why is he put in this position with a salary higher than those of other managers?

The Colonial Secretary: It is entirely a matter for the manager of the department.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We are not dealing with the manager of the department. We are dealing with the Minister.

Mr. Maley: Who made the appointment?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It would have to go through Executive Council. The significant part is that we find this man has been placed in the highest salaried position in the department, so far as the hotels themselves are concerned.

The Attorney General: Does he come under the Public Service Commissioner?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, the appointment would be recommended by the manager of the department and he would be appointed by the Government.

Mr. Maley: We heard a lot of this last year.

Hon. P. Collier: You will hear a great deal more.

Mr. Pickering: Where will we find these particulars?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Look up No. 9 "Hansard" for this session. You will find all about it there. A question was asked and members will find there is a list of the managers, the periods they were engaged with the department, and the salaries paid. Members will find that Mr. Baxter was the latest man to be employed by the department as a hotel manager and yet he is given more than those who have been in charge of hotels under the control of the department for much longer periods. I want some explanation regarding this appointment. I want to know what experience Mr. Baxter has had as an hotel manager and why he has been placed over the heads of others who have been longer in the service. This is no pick and shovel job at 8s. a day, regarding which we heard so much complaint when the Labour Government were in office.

Mr. Teesdale: We treat our men better.

Hon. P. Collier: My word you do.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: You have taught us a lesson that we will remember when we get over to the Treasury benches in due course. If it was considered necessary for the Labour Government to give explanations regarding 8s. a day men, how much more necessary is it that we should get an explanation regarding this matter? If we cannot get it, the Estimates should be postponed.

Mr. TEESDALE: I support the member for Forrest in a good deal of what he has said regarding the management of the State hotels. The discrepancy in salaries appeals

to me more than anything else. There is another point regarding which members should have some information, and that is percentages. I have had some experience in this business and to keep pestering a man who is handling big sums of money, to explain matters regarding his percentages, is extremely irritating. Such tactics are calculated to affect a man's honesty. I think it is very important that a reasonable and fair average percentage should be fixed by the department and that can be done if the manager is given credit for breakages. It is not fair that deductions should be made for breakages over which he has no control. If this is not done, it is an encouragement for him to "square the breakages." Nothing should be done which might be calculated to make the manager deviate from the straight honest course, and continual pestering regarding percentages might bring about that undesirable result. Regarding the salaries question, we should have some explanation as to why this man is receiving the highest salary.

Mr. O'Loughlen: No single man gets £5 in the State hotels.

The Premier: He has the misfortune to be a Minister's brother.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why is he getting this preference?

The Premier: There is no favouritism.

Hon. P. Collier: This sort of thing was a crime in our days.

The Minister for Works: I did not appoint him; I know nothing about it.

Mr. TEESDALE: If he is a new man compared with others in the service, and is getting more salary than men who have been there for years, even though it be only 10s. a week, such a position is calculated to cause trouble. I trust that the Minister will see to it without delay, will call upon the manager to go into it and have it fixed up, and thus prevent this annual objection.

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

Mr. LAMBERT: It seems to me that we are not getting a fair return for the money invested in State hotels. On the present showing, the principle of State hotels could scarcely be recommended. Before very long the electors will be asked to say whether or not they are in favour of State control of the liquor traffic. None of our State hotels has shown an effective control of the liquor traffic. There is no more important department than that which we are asked to discuss at half-past one o'clock in the morning. I am not so much concerned about the wages paid, but I am concerned about State control of the liquor traffic. I am not convinced that we are justified in continuing to run State hotels, expecting not only a return on the money invested, but also some remedy of a very great evil, namely the excessive use of alcohol. The Premier may laugh.

The Premier: Yes, without apology I hope.

Mr. LAMBERT: Up to date we have had no results from the State control of the liquor traffic. If the State hotels were performing their proper functions, it could be reasonably claimed for them that they were minimising the consumption of liquor.

Mr. Teesdale: So they do on Sundays.

Mr. Willcock: It does not matter to the manager whether they make £10 or £1,000.

Mr. LAMBERT: But the general manager demands a certain percentage. I have a recollection that on the Kalgoorlie express dining cars the men had to make a profit or be sacked. They were competing against one another, not to curtail the sale of liquor, but to make profits. To such an extent was it abused, that it became repugnant to nine-tenths of the travellers on the railways. I am glad to think the consumption of liquor on those dining cars is now cut out altogether. My idea of the establishment of State hotels was that they would be more in the nature of clubs, where the man who went in for a drink could afterwards enter a billiard room or a reading room and spend an agreeable hour. Do we find the slightest improvement in any one of the State hotels?

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, good wholesome drink for a start.

Mr. Hardwick: When will we finish?

Mr. Mullany: The Prices Regulation Commission have laid down that beer is a food.

Mr. LAMBERT: If the drink sold in other hotels is not wholesome—

Mr. Duff: They are better controlled today.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am glad to hear that. If they are not properly controlled it is the fault of another department. The Government should inquire into the whole of the workings of the State hotels. We have £80,000 or £90,000 invested in them; yet the amount received by the Government is disgracefully small as compared with the amount received by private investors from hotel property.

Mr. Hardwick: The hon. member would not have stonewalled like this a month ago.

Mr. Teesdale: No, the novelty soon wears off.

Mr. LAMBERT: The hon. member is a peculiar novelty who will never wear off. As there now appears to be a general desire to go home I shall not occupy further time.

Progress reported.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH ENDOWMENT LANDS.

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE APPEAL BOARD.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed not to press its requested amendment.

House adjourned at 1.47 a.m. (Friday).