

Mr. COVERLEY: But on a 500lb. bullock the difference amounts to something considerable. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) alluded to the proposed handing over of the North-West to the Federal Government. I wish to put the hon. member right as to the portion of that country which it is proposed to hand over to the Commonwealth. It is a long distance from the electorate represented by my friend. The matter was discussed by me on every platform from which I spoke during the election campaign. I have opposed, and do oppose, the proposition from start to finish. In every one of my speeches I advised the electors that if ever the matter came before them by way of plebiscite, they should vote against it. Both my opponents advocated the proposal, which amounts to separation, or in other words a separate State. If the result of the election is to be regarded as any indication of the wishes of the northern people the Treasurer would do well to be extremely careful in his dealings with the Federal Government. I suggest to the Premier that instead of worrying a lot about the Commonwealth proposal, he should proceed with the appointment of the Royal Commission agreed to by Parliament last session on the motion of the member for Pilbara (Mr. Lamond). That Royal Commission was to inquire into the position of the North-West. I consider it necessary that the Commission shall be appointed immediately, if for no other reason than to give members of this Chamber and the Government themselves the information necessary to enable them to start negotiations with the Commonwealth Government. If that course were adopted, it would at least furnish the Government with something concrete to place before the Federal authorities. If there is any likelihood of negotiations being opened up, the expenses involved in the appointment of the Royal Commission will not be wasted, because when the financial aspects are under consideration, we can include the cost of the Royal Commission and make the Federal Government pay for it. Recently I asked a question regarding the pastoral leases that expire in 1928. I asked that question for the purpose of protecting myself when the matter is brought before the House. I have not been able to make the inquiries necessary at the Lands Department and therefore I intend to reserve my opinion until

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the Bill is before the House. One other matter concerning the Kimberley district is the Vermin Act Amendment Act that was dealt with last year. I have heard a lot of criticism to which it is unnecessary to reply. Most of it has emanated from members of the Country Party. After all, the vermin tax does not represent a tax but merely a contribution towards the destruction of pests in the interests of the producing community.

Mr. Lindsay: It is in the interests of the whole State.

Mr. COVERLEY: Of course it is. The pastoralists are prepared to pay their quota towards the destruction of the vermin.

Mr. Sampson: Don't you think all the citizens of the State should contribute towards that cost?

Mr. COVERLEY: Why should they?

The Minister for Mines: Yes, why should everyone pay?

Mr. Sampson: Because it is of benefit to the State as a whole to get rid of the pest.

Mr. COVERLEY: In conclusion, I would again stress the importance of the appointment of the Royal Commission to inquire into the position of the North-West, for the reasons I have already indicated.

MR. ROWE (North-East Fremantle) [10.48]: At the outset of my remarks I desire to express my pleasure at the privilege conferred upon me of occupying a seat in this House. Particularly do I feel privileged in that I am representing a constituency formerly represented for so many years by the Hon. W. C. Angwin, one of the best men who has laboured in the interests of this State. I have been acquainted with that gentleman for close upon 30 years, and I am sure that he will fill the position he occupies at present with credit to himself and to the State. I realise the difficult part I have to play in following a man of the calibre of Mr. Angwin. With the march of time, however, and by strict attention to my duties and the business of this Chamber, I intend to do my best to follow as closely as I can in his footsteps.

Mr. Sampson: There can be only one Billy?

Mr. ROWE: I have listened attentively to the speeches delivered by various members and I am delighted to think that they are all of one opinion, namely, that the

prospects of the State are of the brightest. I refer particularly to the prospects of the agricultural industry and the wheat export trade. I was greatly impressed by the speech delivered by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay), for his statement awakened memories of 30 years ago. I recollect that in those days we could not grow sufficient wheat in Western Australia to meet the requirements of our own population and I well remember handling hundreds and hundreds of bags of wheat that had been imported from South Australia to meet the demand here. I have watched the progress of the State with interest year by year and now the time has arrived when we can grow sufficient wheat to serve our own requirements and to export to the world's markets as well. I have also watched closely the expansion of the Fremantle harbour. I wish to impress upon the Government that the time has arrived when matters relating to the harbour at our chief port must be taken into consideration seriously. On several occasions last season there was the spectacle of ships lying at anchor in Gage Roads because no berths were available at the wharves. I trust that that difficulty will be overcome during the forthcoming season. According to the reports in the Press it is anticipated that next season's wheat yield will represent upwards of 38,000,000 bushels, which will be a large increase on the quantity handled last year. In those circumstances the fact is pointed to conclusively that something must be done to provide extra accommodation for ships that will come to Fremantle to lift our harvest. I am also interested in the apprenticeship question. When passing along our streets and watching boys going to and coming from the various schools, I often ask myself what prospects they have of ever becoming artisans or mechanics, and of assuming their places on the road to independence. I trust sincerely that something will be done to enable the rising generation to have the opportunity of becoming tradesmen.

Mr. Sampson: Hear, hear! That is the spirit.

Mr. ROWE: I served my apprenticeship for five years and I would have served six years but for the fact that the contractor concerned would not take me because I was too small! Despite that, however, I have

now a trade at my finger tips, but for 35 years I have had no occasion to fall back upon my trade. At the present moment, however, I feel that I can compare myself to an apprentice surrounded by so many journeymen! I hope, by strict attention to business, I shall become a journeyman in politics in due course. I wish to deal briefly with the question of the supply of trucks for the forthcoming harvest. On several occasions recently men employed along the water front at Fremantle have had to cease work at 10 a.m. and sometimes at midday, merely because no trucks were available for carrying on operations. Nothing is more disheartening to men than to have to knock off work, particularly when the weather is fine, because trucks are not available. I was pleased to hear the Minister for Railways state that a large number of trucks will be available this year in addition to those in use last year. I agree with the statements made by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) regarding the damaged wheat that was exported recently. Whether that was due to a shortage of tarpaulins or not, I am not in a position to state. I know, however, that an inadequate supply of tarpaulins has been at the disposal of the Railway Department but I believe the Government are making a big effort to overcome that difficulty.

The Minister for Railways: We have done so.

Mr. ROWE: I am glad to hear that. The hour is late and there are several other questions that I wish to deal with, but I can do so at greater length when suitable occasions arise. For instance, we will have an opportunity to discuss a Hospitals Bill during the session, and I will have something further to say on that question. My 15 years experience in connection with the working of hospitals enables me to deal with the problems involved. We are also promised a Bill to amend the Workers' Compensation Act, and I will have something to say when that measure is before us. My experience, extending over 25 years while secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation at Fremantle, has afforded me some idea of the advantages and disadvantages of the existing Workers' Compensation Act. During that period I was actively associated with the control of industry along the water front, and hon. members may be

surprised to hear that the average number of men injured while working there is 30 per month.

The Minister for Railways: Practically one every day!

Mr. ROWE: That is so. I can also state that that is a low estimate. In these circumstances I can assure the House that I shall be pleased to have the parent Act amended. I have not much more to say at the present juncture, but I hope in due course to be able to speak at greater length when dealing with matters of interest to the workers and to the State in general. I hope to be able to impress hon. members with a realisation of the fact that I intend to do my best for the electors of North-East Fremantle, and for the State as a whole. I realise that the country of which we are the occupants is indeed a most valuable State and it appears to me that there are a great many people in Western Australia who do not realise the value of the country we own. A little while ago I was in Melbourne and I was astonished at the ignorance of the people regarding Western Australia. I favour the suggestion made this evening that a publicity officer should be appointed and placed in control of work in the Eastern States so that he might place before the people there some idea of the possibilities of Western Australia. I will reserve further comment on matters of interest for a future occasion and will content myself with supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 18th August, 1927.

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

QUESTIONS (2)—WHEAT PRODUCTION.

Branding of Bags.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agriculture: Does he intend to bring before Parliament a Bill to provide that wheat bags shall be branded?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: The advisability of introducing legislation this session is under consideration.

Railways and Bulk Handling.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agriculture: Seeing that we are rapidly approaching the 50,000,000 bushel mark for wheat production, is the building of railway wagons being carried on with a view to their future utilisation when bulk handling is forced upon this State?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: The Railway Department advises that 255 all steel trucks of 14 tons capacity are being built at Midland Junction workshops, and that these will be suitable for the handling of bulk wheat.

QUESTION—SWAN VALLEY, ABANDONED BLOCKS.

Mr. FERGUSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, How many blocks, previously held by soldiers in the Swan Valley, have been