

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 30th August, 1921.

Questions : Immigration, arrivals by "Themistocles"	Page
Railways, bonus to officers	450
Bill : Official Trustees, &c.	450
Address-in-reply, seventh day	450

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

QUESTION—IMMIGRATION, ARRIVALS BY "THEMISTOCLES."

Hon. J. DUFFELL asked the Minister for Education: 1, At what rate of wages approximately were the 86 new arrivals who landed at Albany on the 8th August from the s.s. "Themistocles" engaged? 2, Is it a fact that 83 were engaged and remained at the various stations en route to Perth? 3, Is it a fact that the three others were engaged within three days of their arrival?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, There were 64 souls only arrived through the Immigration Department by the "Themistocles" on the 8th August. The remaining 26 were ordinary full-paying third class passengers. The minimum rates of wages for those placed through the representative of the Ugly Men's Association and the Officer in Charge, Immigration, were: single men 30s. per week and keep, married couples £2 10s. per week and keep. 2, The details of the 64 are: 20 to friends and relations, 23 to Fairbridge Farm School, 10 to situations en route, 11 brought through to Immigrants' Home, Fremantle. Of this last 11, one married couple with three children selected land; one widow, son and daughter secured employment; one married couple and one child placed in farm situation. 3, Answered by 2.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, BONUS TO OFFICERS.

Hon. A. H. PANTON asked the Minister for Education: 1, Have any bonuses been paid to railway officers since January 1st of this year other than those awarded by the Suggestions and Economies Board? 2, If so, who were the officers? 3, What was the amount paid to each officer, and the salary of such officer? 4, Was there any special reason for the payment of such bonus? 5, If so, what was the special reason?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, Messrs.—(a) Maxwell, F. (Chairman, Suggestions and Economies Board); (b) Bromfield, W. (member, Suggestions and Economies Board); (c) Backshall, E. G. (member, Suggestions and Economies Board); (d) J. M. Drew; (e)

Gibbons, C. M.; (f) Hickey, L. T.; (g) Hadlow, C.; (h) Davenport, W.; (i) Downing, W. E. 3, (a) Bonus, £75; salary, £537; (b) bonus, £50; salary, £462; (c) bonus, £50; salary, £409; (d) bonus, £10; salary, £294; (e) bonus, £25; salary, £369; (f) bonus, £25; salary, £319; (g) bonus, £50; salary, £434; (h) bonus, £50; salary, £314; (i) bonus, £50; salary, £305. 4, Yes. 5, (a) (b) (c) For special duties as members of the Suggestions and Economies Board; (d) for successfully organising and conducting sale of lost and unclaimed property and effects; (e) (f) for special work carried out in connection with the inauguration of the Railways and Tramways advertising business; (g) (h) (i) for improvements in spark arresting appliances.

BILL—OFFICIAL TRUSTEE.

Introduced by the Minister for Education and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the 25th August.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.40]: There are as you know, Sir, those superior persons who affect to despise the discussions which take place on the Address-in-reply. I am not one of those. Rightly used the opportunity offered to us is of value not only to the country but also to ourselves. The Address-in-reply may be compared to an overture, which indicates what is coming on. Certainly, by listening to the several speakers I have had most valuable indications of what may be expected during the coming session. I may add that we not only have special rights on this Address-in-Reply, rights by which we are allowed to cover a large amount of ground that we are not permitted to do in other debates, but, in addition, we have the privilege sanctioned by usage by which you, Sir, graciously and kindly permit members, especially the youngest, but even the oldest, to diverge slightly even from the very extensive matter which we are discussing on the Address-in-reply. I do not propose to avail myself of all those privileges, and do not think that members will say when I have finished that I have trespassed even on my rights. I propose, briefly, to deal with the question at issue, indicating to members the views I hold on public affairs at this very critical time in our history. Let me first of all get rid of one or two personal matters—I always try, as far as possible, to evade personal references on these occasions. I am sure we all consider that the loss of our esteemed colleague, Mr. E. M. Clarke, is both a public and a private loss. It is a private loss in a special sense to me, because I was privileged to sit next

to him for many years, and he was very kind on many occasions as an older man and member by helping me in my work here. There has also been the regrettable illness of the Leader of the House. I was shocked to hear of his illness and am very glad he is here with us to-day. His health is not a private matter, but a public one in a very special sense. It is a public matter in that he is one of the most important members, so far as we are concerned, because we cannot get on with our business without him. Every member of this Chamber, to say nothing of the public outside, must have a personal regret that in addition to his other great burdens he has suffered even for a short time from ill health. I am going to assume that he is in now good health and condition, and is in first class fighting form. If he is not, I will not only withdraw, but apologise for what I am going to place before the House, for I may have something to say which will possibly make him ill again. I wish to refer also to the ex honorary Minister, Mr. Willmott, whom we rejoice to see here, and the ex honorary Minister, Mr. Baxter, whom we are interested to see in another seat. During the session I shall look forward to some interesting revelations from the latter. Perhaps some hon. members will recollect the references I made to the system of electing honorary Ministers here. Certainly it would be more seemly for a Minister to be turned out of office by a vote of this Chamber, than to be supplanted by some extraordinary and outside agency. Constitutional practice demands that a Minister who has left the Ministry in the way that Mr. Baxter has should make some public statement. It may be, of course, that I have not seen any such statement, as I have been away from Western Australia for a few months. Possibly, we shall be entertained—I say that advisedly—with a statement from the ex-Minister on the floor of this Chamber. That exhausts any personal references I desire to make. My other remarks will be confined wholly and solely to the broad issues of public affairs. There are three subjects to be dealt with and they are all broad issues. I desire to put the position clearly to members. I was amused and a little shocked on arrival in Western Australia from the Old Country to find that the State had been thrown into a discussion on the Agent General's bedroom furniture. It is hardly becoming that the matter should be discussed, for it does not affect the issue, unless it is taken as illustrating a principle. It seems to me it does nothing of the sort. The Government are solely and wholly to blame. The housing question in England is a difficult one. I am not authorised nor am I inclined to enter into any defence of the Agent General.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Why did he ask for a renewal of his term?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Do you refer to his lease or his office?

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Why did he ask for a renewal of his term of office as Agent General?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Let the hon. member give notice of that question and he will get an answer from the Leader of the House to-morrow. I am not here to answer questions.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: He knew the conditions under which he held the appointment.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It seems to me that Ministers are to blame in the matter. Do not let us forget that our Agents General claim almost ambassadorial rank and we must have a representative of Western Australia in London, who is in a position to represent adequately Western Australia—

Hon. J. Cornell: Or not at all.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That is so, or not at all.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Are you proud of him?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I do not desire the hon. member to ask me these questions. I am not yet in the position of Honorary Minister and therefore am not able to answer questions. Western Australia must, or, at any rate, should, be represented properly in London or not at all. Anyone acquainted with the position in London regarding the housing problem will know that it is a difficult one. I should have thought the proper method for the Government to adopt would be for the Government to provide the Agent General with a housing allowance in view of the difficulties which exist in London, and they could let the matter rest at that. Ministers conduct matters in a different way from that which commends itself to me. I have been drawn aside, however, from the references I desired to make. If I am to answer questions put to me on the floor of the House, it will make my task, which is not an easy one, even more difficult. Let me outline what I consider to be the big subjects. The first big one is finance; that almost goes without saying. We are told in the Address-in-reply that the credit of Western Australia is good in London. My answer to that is that it is too good. One of the reasons of the difficulty in which we find ourselves is that our credit has been so uncommonly good in London. To what do we owe that? We do not owe it to the financial administration of the Government during the past five years, but to other causes. I consider we owe it first of all to the fact that we are under the British flag. The second cause is that we are a part of the Australian Commonwealth. I will not elaborate these references in any degree. The third cause is that our stock is a British trustee security. I could elaborate that point; it should be elaborated and will be elaborated but at the proper time. I will not do it now. All these matters affect our financial position and our credit. This latter aspect is of extraordinary importance and I attach more importance to it than to any of the other causes. I will content myself at the present stage with saying that it is one of the main

causes why our credit is so good. Another cause is that up to 1900, under the late Lord Forrest, the British people interested financially in Western Australia had good reason to be satisfied with the way their interests were looked after, and at the way the affairs of the State were handled. After Federation that position continued, despite the difficulties arising out of Federation, practically up to 1911. From 1911 to 1916 we had Mr. Scaddan in command. I do not wish to be harsh, especially during the war period, but I do not think it is owing to him either during the pre-war period or since, that we have good credit in London. Since 1916 when the Wilson Government superseded the Scaddan Government—

Hon. A. H. Panton: It was in July, 1916.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Since that time we ought to have, and we have in some degree, forfeited our reputation to those people who have sufficient time and opportunity to look into our affairs. The responsibility for that position rests upon the Government and I regard the Government as a continuous one holding office since 1916. It is very difficult, indeed, to be moderate in one's language when one views our magnificent heritage and the opportunities we have mis-used, principally so far as the present Government are concerned. I do not think of the Wilson Government, the Lefroy Government, the Colebatch Government, or the Mitchell Government as separate administrations, but group them together. If anyone objects to that aspect we will have to dissect the matter and say how much blame is to be allocated to each separate Government. I have lumped them together and the Leader of the House has been in continuous occupation of his present position during the five years. I am speaking now with deepest regret and only from a financial point of view, because otherwise there is a good deal to commend itself in the work of the Leader of the House. From the financial standpoint, however, the record of the Governments he has been associated with—I do not wish to use exaggerated language—is poor. Not only that, it has been a bad one and nearly every financial forecast or undertaking the Leader of the House has given to this Chamber, has been falsified by events. I was indicating the reasons for our good credit in London. I have given four or five already, and I wish members to understand that I am not speaking exhaustively on this subject. There are two matters I wish to place before members. One has reference to the sinking fund and the other to the payment of interest in London. Regarding the sinking fund, that is in itself a subject for review which would take a very long time. I cannot forget that I stood here almost alone protesting against the suspension of the sinking fund which was carried through unanimously in another place, and was carried here because one member cannot call for a division. I have heard a great deal about the sinking fund and about the credit due to us in that connection. There is no

credit due whatever to the Government of this country because they did their best to suspend it. It was only through the most extraordinary compulsion exercised by the British Government in cabling to the Governor here instructing him to refuse to give his assent to the Bill, that the sinking fund was allowed to continue. We hear a great deal about what has been done by the Government in connection with the sinking fund and the Treasurer has claimed credit for it. There is another aspect, however; it may be a detail, but to me it is something more than a detail. That is, that not one penny of the sinking fund is payable or is paid except with inscribed stock. Members who are acquainted with the financial position will follow me quite readily when I say that it is only on inscribed stock that sinking fund is paid. There are Treasury Bills and Treasury Bonds, as well as debentures and these do not pay anything in connection with the sinking fund.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: What do they pay?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I will give the proportions. This is a most important matter. I am taking the figures from the papers which have been laid upon the Table. In 1916 our inscribed stock amounted to 34 millions; in 1920 it amounted to £35,360,000. One can put it very roughly but fairly accurately by saying that we have only increased our inscribed stock during the last five years to the extent of 1½ millions. Only on that do we pay sinking fund. When we turn to the Treasury bills, bonds, and debentures members will find that an alarming jump has occurred. In 1916 the debentures represented £359,000, whereas in 1920 they represented £1,763,000. Treasury bills have advanced from 4½ millions to 11 millions and they do not pay one penny worth towards the sinking fund. Directly the Treasury bonds, bills or debentures are turned into inscribed stock they begin to pay sinking fund. When that position is considered, we will get a true measure of the burden which is laid upon us. I did not compile these figures for any special purpose but they are taken from the papers laid upon the Table of the House, and the significance attached to them is that they start at the very year the Leader of the House took office. That justifies me in saying that the hon. member's record—I do not speak personally, for this is not a personal attack upon him—and of the Government with which he is associated, is bad.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: If the sinking fund had been payable on the others, the deficit would have been increased to a very considerable extent.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That is perfectly true; it is almost obvious. It would have increased the difficulty of the position. There is another detail which I regard as an important matter and which interests us very considerably, that is to say, the actual payment of money we owe in London. I cannot give the exact figures, but say we owe 50 million pounds, and take it at four per cent.

'That would be two millions per annum or a million per half-year. That amount of money has to be paid in London on the very day it is due. There are no three days' grace or consideration which a private person will show or that consideration which one will receive from a private bank. That money is trustee money and has to be provided for Western Australia on the very day it is due. That is common knowledge to anyone who follows these financial matters. What is the position? Western Australia has to put in London a million of money every six months. Here is an interesting thing to me, which I have not worked out yet—Who finds that money and who pays that money? Let hon. members go to their bankers and try to get £100 transferred from Perth to London. Let them try to get £10,000, £100,000, £500,000 or a million pounds transferred from Perth to London. They will find the operation not only difficult but expensive. In spite of my attempts, I am not yet clear on the point as to how this money is found, unless it be by our bankers in London, and I do not wish to speak on it until I am positive. Someone certainly has to pay. It is impossible to defer for 24 hours the payment of that trustee money due in London. If hon. members want an illustration of this, they can refer to the Etheridge railway. A Queensland company owed money in London five or six months ago. The money was paid in Melbourne and a dispute arose—I do not know how it was settled; possibly it is not settled yet—between the English lenders of the money and the Australian borrowers as to where that money was to be repaid. The Queensland people said, "There is the money waiting for you in Melbourne," and the London people said, "You undertook to pay that money over to us in London and we want it paid in London." In the old days before the war there may have been some small difficulty and some slight expense, but by choosing the proper time there was no great difficulty in putting the money in London, even if it was all in Melbourne. To-day that operation is a very difficult one, and this difficult operation faces Western Australia every six months.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: We discounted two millions of Treasury bills this year.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I was going to deal with that question, but it would take me into too much detail. It was quite in accordance with what I expected and with what is usually done by an impecunious and improvident person. Such a person does things in a desperate hurry which a sensible man would take time over and make arrangements for. That is where the foresight of the Government and of the Treasurer is supposed to come in. If the Treasurer had the capacity he should have, such a contingency would be foreseen and arrangements would be made accordingly. It should be remembered that there was a difficulty over this question, I think on

account of the British Government refusing to allow any outside issues to go on the money market. That can be mentioned in extenuation of the Government and it must deserve some consideration. But the proper answer to that is that we have had ample opportunity during the last seven years, and certainly during the last two years, of knowing for certain that whatever our arrangements might be, we had better be uncommonly careful because so many unforeseen things crop up at the last moment to prevent us from carrying out our undertakings. In this particular case, if there had been ordinary foresight and if the Treasurer himself had been in closest touch with his financial advisers in London and in Perth, he would have been able to obviate that very discreditable rushing through of public business which was experienced. I am going to make a suggestion with regard to the Treasurer and the Leader of this House, which I hope they will accept with some degree of alacrity, because it involves them both leaving the country for a six months' trip, as I have recently done, but in their case it would be entirely at the public expense. It would be an enormous benefit to Western Australia if the Premier and the Minister for Education went to London for six months.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Do not you think he is out of his office enough already?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: To which Minister is the hon. member referring? I make this proposal quite seriously. Here is the Premier returned for another three years. Here is a most critical time coming on. Here is the Leader of this House in such a condition of health that he would undoubtedly benefit by the change. One can speak; the other cannot. One should see the bankers and the other should attend the banquets and respond to the toasts of Western Australia. It would be a very fine partnership and would prove of enormous advantage to Western Australia. In the case of the Premier himself, the cost to the country would be amply compensated for. I hope the Leader of the House will submit this proposal to the Premier. It seems to me to be of great importance from our financial point of view that these two Ministers should be in close contact with the people to whom the 50 millions of money owed by this country has to be paid. I am going to hurry, rightly or wrongly, away from the financial position to another big issue, and that is the question of Government control or private enterprise. The Governor's Speech, like every Speech we have heard from His Excellency during the last 10 years, is littered with references to the question of private enterprise or Government control. I can only say that there must be great disappointment throughout this country that the Government who came into office five years ago pledged to get rid

of State control, seem to be up to their necks and cannot do so, but, on the contrary, are going on with State control. I have the briefest of references to make to the trading concerns and then I shall have finished with that article. The trading concerns were to have been sold. Mr. Wilson told us that; the Leader of the House said that when the Government had sufficient—

Hon. G. W. Miles: Backbone?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I thank the hon. member for the word—when the Government had sufficient backbone they would get rid of this State control. What have they done? The shadow of the war, I admit, is still on us and I do not wish to be too severe in my criticism of public affairs—there has been a difficulty during this transition period—but we in this Chamber can decide whether we are going to continue this Government control or whether we are going to continue private enterprise. I do not ask the Government to scrap the trading concerns or to do things in a hurry, but I ask them to see that their policy is carried out firmly and as opportunity occurs to get rid of State control. This is what the Government were returned to do. As one illustration specially referred to in the Governor's Speech, I would mention the question of wheat control. The Speech states—

Our wheatgrowers should be assisted to obtain the full value of their product by the continuance for another season of a statutory pool.

That is a most obnoxious and objectionable procedure. I trust that when the opportunity occurs in this Chamber we shall have something to say on this matter and will endeavour to get rid of this statutory pool.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Monger will have something to say on that.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Wool is another story which we need not continue. As regards shipping—

Hon. J. W. Hickey interjected.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I would be prepared to speak for hours if I thought I could influence the hon. member's opinion. When we consider what has been done by the State ship "Kangaroo" we must conclude that the performance of the "Kangaroo" is very nearly equal to the jumping performance of the animal itself. This session I propose to trace that "Kangaroo" from the start and I think the story will be as entertaining as the jam factory record which I put before members three years ago. I come now to the industrial position. This is a big issue and we are fairly entitled to understand what the position is. Everyone who listened to Mr. Panton's speech on this point must admit that it seemed to be most significant. He referred to the financial position and said he did not wish to embarrass the Government because they had been returned with a mandate from the people. I do not believe

that at all. The people have got rid of Minister after Minister during the last five years. At the recent elections they got rid of ex-Premier Lefroy. They got rid of the Attorney General in the person of His Honour Mr. Justice Draper. They got rid of the Honorary Minister, Mr. Willmott, and if they had had a fair opportunity I think they would have got rid of the lot. Therefore I am not going to tie myself down to the consideration, as the hon. member does, that the Government have come fresh from the people with a mandate to carry on their antics of the last four years. That is not my attitude or my conception of my public duty so long as I am here to speak on behalf of the metropolitan-suburban area. In connection with the industrial position, Mr. Panton made a much more significant comment. It was with regard to wages, arbitration and the general outlook in the industrial world. I believe with him that a conference round a table, with himself ably representing the workers and with some man equally well representing the employers, without any judge or anyone whatever sitting between them, could reach a decision which would be satisfactory to both parties. We have two members in this Chamber both of whom could ably represent the different parties. I believe that three-fourths of these problems could be overcome if the parties met privately in a room and arranged matters between themselves. But what did the hon. member tell us? He mentioned this and then referred to the arbitration business. He knows perfectly well that during the last 25 years I have always opposed industrial arbitration and always will do so unless I see more light on the subject.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It is still the law of the land, you know.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: There is no law when men wish to flout it. Let not the hon. member tell us that it is the law of the land. Pick up the paper any day and one can find reports of strikes all over Australia. I am just emphasising lightly the important issues. The hon. member said the people he represents are not going to tolerate any interference with their wages. Now what is the true and real position in regard to that?

Hon. A. H. Panton: I said something else besides that.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The last thing I wish to do is to misinterpret the hon. member.

Hon. G. W. Miles: They see the error of their ways.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We are in a difficult position to-day with regard to the question of wages, and I certainly would never willingly see the standard of living, which is the main thing, lowered in this State. But I do say that our experience of the economic world since the war should have taught us a good deal about the purchasing power of the sovereign. There is the essence of the contract. This is the real question which members of the hon. member's party must

consider. I am most anxious to see the purchasing power of the sovereign increased, and this involves, of course, a reduction of wages. What we want to see here is a happy and contented and industrious class earning good wages.

Hon. J. Cornell: What percentage does wages contribute to the cost of producing an article?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I should require two days' notice to answer that question. I would like to go into it, but to do so would destroy any symmetry my remarks might have. I regret to have to go on talking while the hon. member is interjecting. I hope he will take it as no discourtesy to himself that I have outlined symmetrical notes, and I wish to present them in their best form. That is the only reason why I do not wish to be drawn aside to answer most valuable and interesting interjections. Even as it is, I am taken off my line of thought for a moment. The essence of the industrial position to me is, "What do you get for your money?" The idea of benefiting either the employer or the employee or the consuming public by issuing another million of paper money has been, I think, entirely destroyed. I had thought of entering on my list education as one of the big questions on which one might say something, but I am going to deny myself the pleasure of referring to that subject, chiefly because we have here a very long report, which I have as yet merely glanced at. It is a most valuable production, which at any rate will assist us in dealing with the question of education when it comes before us. But there are two other questions to which I wish briefly to refer. One is the extraordinary announcement in the Governor's Speech that we are to have a Redistribution of Seats Bill this session.

The Minister for Education: It does not say "this session," does it?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am rather nonplussed by that comment. I should have thought the Minister himself would have known whether he is going to have such a Bill this session or not; and if it is not going to be this session, when is it to be brought down? I am speaking without the book, but I think that if one searched the records of Australian political history, to say nothing of the political history of other countries, one would not find in any first session of a new Parliament a proposal to bring down a Redistribution of Seats Bill.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The Speech says, "during the life of this Parliament."

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Why waste our time, and the time of the printer, by including that Bill in the Speech if it is not to be brought down this session? I tell the Government that if they think that because they have come back with a majority they have any mandate from the people, so far as I am concerned, they are entirely mistaken. I think that the Government have come back with a minority, as my colleague so clearly

showed here the other night. My colleague clearly exposed the fallacy of the suggestion that the Government have come back with an overwhelming majority of public opinion. It is nothing of the sort. One of the greatest dangers in Australia at the present time is that people are not prepared to put up with the difficulties of the situation unless they feel that they are being treated justly. I do not consider that the great mass of the people, whether living in Perth or Meekatharra or Melbourne, feel that. If the Government think that because of their majority in Parliament they can trample on the rights of the people they are greatly mistaken. There can be no better illustration of that than this business of wheat control. There should be justice to all sections of the community, whether consumers of wheat at the breakfast table, or in the fowl yard, or in the pig sty. There should be an attempt to do justice, or else these matters should be allowed to settle themselves. Then people would be content to put up with the position as best they could. But when one finds one section of the community, and that a small section, using its Parliamentary influence and control to get an unfair advantage of the rest of the community, there is a certainty of trouble.

Hon. J. Cornell: I think that cuts all round.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I think so too. There was an interjection during Mr. Cunningham's speech which caused him to flounder, an interjection referring to the tariff. The hon. member saw it was vital. Half the financial trouble in Western Australia is due, and half the troubles of Australia are due, to what is going on in Melbourne now. I have finished with one point, and have another yet left untouched which I am compelled to deal with. That is the Federal trouble. I shall not elaborate on it, but it becomes more and more insistent; and what reference is there to it in this Governor's Speech? Not a word, so far as I can see. We had the statement of the Premier the other day at the civic reception, and a very important statement, to my mind. But in the Speech we have not one single reference to the subject.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Except the amalgamation of departments.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have all my notes ready for that, but shall not deal with it at present. I have now touched on the large problems which face us, and have indicated, I hope, the attitude I shall take. A passing reference might be made to mining legislation. I can group all I have to say on that in two or three minutes by asking the Leader of the House, and also hon. members, who have some responsibility in the matter, to see that we have some proportion in the way we do our work this session. Last year we crowded practically the whole of our work into three weeks. The Standing Orders were suspended, and we met at 3 o'clock, and on the average we sat till midnight, galloping

through legislation and doing a great deal of discreditable work. On the Mining Act Amendment Bill Sir Edward Wittenoom and myself called for a division to say that a measure of such importance should not be dealt with at the eleventh hour, as this course would certainly result in trouble. What happened? Sir Edward Wittenoom and I were the only two members who voted against the measure. That Bill ought never to have been brought on. What was the direct result of our performance on that occasion? Sir Edward Wittenoom moved that the Bill should be read a second time that day six months, and the result of the division, as given on page 2,754 of last session's "Hansard," was ayes 2, noes 19. Well, we put that Bill through, and what do we find in this Governor's Speech? That we have a Royal Commission dealing with the tributing question. What is the Royal Commission wanted for? I speak from some little knowledge, as the result of inquiries on this measure. If the Government had got three men familiar with the subject of tributing, those three men could have met for, say, three or four days and could have agreed to this point and that point and the other point, and then there would probably have been three or four points of importance on which they could not agree. Thereupon the Government would have drafted a Bill with the disputed clauses printed in italics and brought that Bill before Parliament at an early stage of the session, and ascertained the opinion of Parliament on it. I suggest to the Leader of the House for his own protection, and for our protection, that he should this session proceed in a different manner, so that we shall not again attempt the impossible and bring discredit on ourselves by producing such an abortion of an Act as that Mining Act Amendment Act.

Hon. A. H. Panton: To whom did it prove to be an abortion?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The hon. member told us the other day that the mine owners had not given the measure a fair deal.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They gave it no trial.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The audacity of the hon. member amazes me. He was warned here by myself. The following is what I said to him at probably 2 a.m.:—

If the Bill goes through without the suggested amendments—

And I was responsible for about a dozen—there will be no more tributing.

I am not accustomed to make rash and off-hand statements. I had taken a great deal of trouble over that mining Bill, and I warned the hon. member that if the measure went through without the suggested amendments there would be no more tributing, and there has been no more tributing.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: Who is running the country—the mine owners, or the Ministers?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I cannot understand an hon. member of this House saying, apparently, that he would compel the mine owners—

Hon. A. H. Panton: To obey the law of the land.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If they are not obeying the law of the land, then prosecute them in the proper courts. But they are obeying it perfectly. The hon. member cannot deny that the mine owners are now obeying the law of the land as far as tributing is concerned. But they are not yet compelled to obey a law which certain hon. members want to put into operation, compelling everybody to employ miners at the standard rate fixed by the Arbitration Court. One of the reasons why I remain in this beautiful country is that we have not yet reached the stage when we will compel everybody to employ men at the rates fixed by the Arbitration Court. The Minister for Mines dealt with this measure in another place, and he must bear the major part of the blame as the responsible Minister. Hon. members have had an opportunity of hearing my opinion on the subject of the Minister's administrative ability. Now I have been enabled to touch lightly, and I believe shortly, on the various points I have noted. I do ask hon. members—I try to do it myself—to see the position as a whole. I think that is most important. There is no necessity for any panic or any excitement. It is really a question of seeing the position as a whole, and of doing a lot of hard spade work to put us back in a sound and satisfactory position. Every time I come back to these shores I am filled with more enthusiasm for this great State. If we think that we are going to be allowed to make this place a derelict on the shores of the Indian Ocean, we are making a mistake. I think there are too many people interested both inside and outside, people who will prevent us, who will take up our work. I myself am most anxious to see the citizens of this country exercise the fullest voice of responsibility; and I am anxious, as indeed we all are in this House, "to have everything ordered" as you, Mr. President, repeated in the familiar words, "on the best and surest foundations," and I at any rate will do all that I can to assist even this Government—and that is conceding a great deal—to see to it that the structure we are raising is placed on the best and soundest foundations. I will support the motion.

Hon. G. W. MILES (Central) [5.31]: With other members I wish to express regret at the death of the late Mr. E. M. Clarke. Also I wish to congratulate the new member elected in his stead. I was not inclined to take part in the debate, but I fear that if I were to refrain from making a few remarks I should be endorsing the actions of the Government. The Premier, in explaining the position of the trading concerns, was misleading the people of the country. I do not think he was doing it wilfully, but when he says the trading concerns show a profit of £7,000, and that they are not responsible for any portion of the deficit, I do not agree with him. I agree that there has been a lot

of misunderstanding in regard to trading concerns and business undertakings, and I admit that the business undertakings have been responsible for a great deal of our deficit. The Premier put that responsibility at £686,000. I agree with all that, but I disagree with the statement in which he tried to justify the trading concerns. I endorse the words of Mr. Sanderson, who said that the Governments returned since 1916 have been opposed to the trading concerns. I say those Governments have not had the backbone to get rid of the trading concerns. It is not the function of a Government to continue those trading concerns, yet they are permitted to go on. The Premier said the trading concerns showed a profit of £7,000. That may be so in respect of one concern, but he does not tell the public the loss from the others. What is the loss on the Wyndham Meat Works? What is the loss on the State steamers? I do not altogether blame the Government. I think members are responsible for allowing the Government to go on expanding the trading concerns. Last year, when the Estimates were before us I moved that we delete the sum of £251,000, as a protest against the neglect of the Government to carry out their election pledges, since this sum was intended to be used in expanding the trading concerns. Had the House supported me on that motion, we should have saved the country a great deal of money. I hope that if any question of the trading concerns comes before the Chamber this session we shall play the game and carry out our own policy. It seems that when a man becomes a Premier or a Minister he alters his principles altogether. I referred to the sum of £251,000 on the Loan Estimates, a considerable portion of which was spent in re-conditioning the steamer "Kangaroo" at a cost of £120,000. That ship, I am told, could not be sold to-day for £60,000. Some time ago the Government were offered a quarter of a million for her. Had they sold the ship then they could have saved the country some £400,000.

Hon. J. Ewing: Why didn't they?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I declared last year that the Government were carrying out the policy of the Labour Party. My remarks were vindicated at the last general elections, when a Labour member urged electors to vote for the Minister for Works in preference to a Country Party candidate, the reason given being that the Government were carrying out the policy of the Labour Party.

Hon. T. Moore: Is that true?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I understand it is.

Hon. T. Moore: A mere statement!

Hon. G. W. MILES: It may be that. I am convinced that members of another party are slyly grinning at the Government's carrying out of their policy. Believe me, if the Labour Party get back to power they will nationalise everything we have, and we shall have none but the Mitchell Government to

blame. The Government should attend to public utilities, and allow private enterprise to carry on trading concerns. If they did this, Ministers would not be so overworked as they are to-day, and would have more time to administer the departments which they have to govern.

Hon. J. Cornell: They have dispensed with two Ministers, so they cannot be overworked.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The trading concerns are run at a loss to-day, despite the Premier's statement that they show a profit of £7,000. How do they show a profit? What happens to the State Sawmills? They are running in with Millars' combine and putting up the price of timber to the consumer. Was it for this that the Labour Party established those sawmills? If those trading concerns were sold, the money now invested in them could be employed to find work for the unemployed. We read in the Press of the Premier talking determinedly to the unemployed. Why the Premier has no determination whatever! Ministers are there to retain office at any cost, and they will not move unless the people force them to move. They should have been forced out years ago. Instead of leading the country, they want people to force them into doing things to save our capital for us. Mr. Cunningham remarked that mining was being taxed out of existence. I regret as much as anyone the way in which that industry, together with other primary industries, is being taxed out of existence. If the members of the Labour Party here had only busied themselves to influence the Labour members of the Federal Parliament when the tariff was under consideration, they would have been doing something to assist the workers and keep the mining industry going.

Hon. T. Moore: Are there any Labour members over there?

Hon. G. W. MILES: There are Labour members in the Federal House. It is Commonwealth legislation that is taxing the mining industry out of existence. Why do not our members representing the workers approach Labour members in the Federal Parliament with a view to keeping the mining industry afloat? Labour members here want wages kept up. So do I, but I do not want to see the industry go out of existence. If the policy of the Federal Government is to continue, it will ruin Western Australia; and the Labour members of the Federal Parliament are assisting the fanatics over there in increasing the tariff. Mr. Gregory is the only man in the Federal Parliament who has fought for us. With the exception of the late Lord Forrest, Mr. Gregory has done more for Western Australia than any other three members of the Federal Parliament. It is all very well for Labour members to say the mining industry is taxed out of existence; but what did they do when the tariff debate was on? They kept silent, instead of using their influence with Federal Labour members to modify the tariff so that the primary industries could develop. They

aim at Australia being self-contained, with all the people living in the cities! The people want to live in the cities where they can have pictures, football, and other relaxations and entertainments. We are very pleased to see people living in the metropolitan area, but there are too many of them here at the expense of the primary producer, who cannot carry them all. Some of the residents of the metropolitan area are essential, but there are too many of them. If any hon. member refers to them as parasites, he is not far wrong. Then take insurance companies: there are 49 of them in this State, with 49 sets of premises, 49 staffs, and 49 managers in motor cars. They charge the people what they will, and the charge is passed on to the consumer and the primary producer. In the back country we are charged from 50s. to 90s. per cent. for insurance. The insurance companies are paying about £2,000 weekly in wages, and of course it is all passed on to the primary producer and to the consumer. And when there is a fire, the companies take full opportunity of it, photograph the cheque they pay over, and circulate the photographs, with a line, "£60,000 paid in a week." Who pays it? None but the primary producers and the workers. Insurance companies are allowed to tax the people just as they like. I am in a trading concern in the North, and because of that I am often referred to as a profiteer. I am also collector up there for the insurance companies, and recently they have made me a director, with a view to keeping me quiet on this question.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: I shall have to ask for your resignation to-morrow.

Hon. G. W. MILES: If there is one trading concern which the State could take on it is that of insurance. I do not advocate it, but certainly some pressure should be brought to bear to limit the number of companies operating in the State.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: The same with the State ships.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Mr. Gardiner got at them a bit.

Hon. G. W. MILES: A bit, yes; but it was all passed on to the primary producers and the workers. In my own electorate, in the Pilbara district, we have paid over £30,000 in fire insurance premiums, and have received £3,000 for a fire. If I had had money with which to create an insurance fund of my own since I have been in business, I would have had £7,000 to play with to-day, instead of that amount going to insurance johnnies running about in motor cars and living in the lap of luxury. As for the State steamers, it is the duty of the Government to call for tenders for the sale or alternatively the lease of these ships and all our trading concerns.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Or scrap them.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, or scrap them. I am glad that Sir Edward Wittenoom has changed his mind again, this time in respect of the State steamers. The Leader of the

House, last session, said that when the members for the North came to some conclusion in regard to the shipping service they should be able to help the Government with suggestions. At one stage my friend Sir Edward was opposed to the State steamers; now he is in favour of them. At one stage, Mr. Holmes was in favour of the steamers, now he is against them, and he declared, "Mr. Miles has been against them all the time." I have always been against the State steamers, and my friend Sir Edward is against them now. He has taken my advice—I claim some credit for this—and he advocates the Government getting rid of the steamers and subsidising a private line.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: On a point of explanation. I have always been opposed to the State steamers. I believe that a line of four steamers could do the whole of the work of our coast thoroughly.

The PRESIDENT: Does the hon. gentleman merely desire to correct a statement that has been made?

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I just wish to add that if we are losing by having merely one vessel on that coast, it would be far better if the Government called for tenders from shipping companies who would be capable of doing with their own steamers what the Government have failed to do with the State steamers.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am pleased to hear that Sir Edward is in favour of the Government getting rid of the ships. I know that he was against them last year, and I know that the Leader of the House made reference to the fact in words similar to those which I have used to-day. Now we are unanimous on the subject; we want the Government to get rid of the steamers. The North-West never asked for State steamers, although one Assembly member representing the North still advocates the retention of these steamers. In that particular electorate, however, the electors who put that member in are signing a petition to the Government asking that the State steamers shall be sold, and that private enterprise shall be permitted to conduct a complete service as before. The Government could then subsidise a line of steamers and we would know what it was costing the country. In the old days the Adelaide Steamship Company received a subsidy and the mails were run to a time table. This has not been the case since the State steamers have been running on the coast. They receive a subsidy of £5,000 to carry out a contract which they never fulfil. If they were fined for all the times they defaulted in connection with the mail contract, they would not only not receive the £5,000 subsidy, but it would cost £10,000 to pay the penalties.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What would you do with the Wyndham Meat Works?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I would call tenders for the purchase of these works, or for a lease of them. I think it would be better to lease them. I would act similarly in con-

nection with the sawmills and the implement works. In connection with the implement works, the members of the Country Party—

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do not look at me.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I understand that some time ago the Country Party were under the impression that those works were of some benefit to the farmers because it was thought cheap implements were being supplied. I believe that the Country Party to-day realise the fallacy of supporting the trading concerns. So far as the implement works are concerned, the country does not know what they are costing. I have had it from one who is in charge of another department that it is possible to get work done by private enterprise at a rate which is 20 to 25 per cent. lower than that charged by the implement works. Therefore, I repeat, we do not know how much the other departments are being debited with the cost of these works so as to bolster them up. I regret too that our worthy Premier and Minister for Works and also the Leader of this House, who were all opposed to the trading concerns, have sunk their principles and are now carrying on all the undertakings. No effort whatever has been made during the five years they have been in office to get rid of them. What do our friends, the members of the Labour Party, think of the action of the Government? They would not give any member of the present Government a job if they had it at their disposal even as boot polishers in their institution. Mr. Panton referred to the fact that the Government claimed that the railway strike was the cause of their deficit. I endorse a good deal of what Mr. Panton said in regard to the cause of that strike. It was due to the attitude adopted by the Government; the Labour Party cannot be blamed. If the Government had done on the day the strike commenced what they did when the strike ended, the railway employees would never have gone out. It was the Government's own fault that the strike took place, and therefore they are as much to blame as the Trades Hall for disorganising everything. For the strike of civil servants, members of Parliament must take the responsibility. Members of both Houses voted themselves increases in their salaries, and that I contend was responsible for what happened afterwards. Mention has been made of the freights on wheat and fertiliser. I contend, too, that there should be a revision of those freights. Why, too, should other industries be compelled to pay exorbitant rates? My desire is to see the primary producer get a fair deal. If that is done, the community generally will benefit, and instead of having 160,000 people in the metropolitan area, we will have a million here and a correspondingly big increase in the population of the country. In connection with freights, it has been brought under my notice that there has been a falling off in the traffic lately. Is it to be wondered when we find what has been taking place? Let me quote

one instance only in connection with the conveyance of stock. The charge for removing stock from Nannine to Midland Junction was £20 for a bogie truck, and there was a rebate of 20 per cent. if there was a train load. That was the original charge, and it meant that the rate came to £16 per truck. The department abolished the rebate and the charge thus stood at £20. Then, not satisfied with that £20, they added 50 per cent. to it, which brought the charge up to £30 for a truck of stock from Nannine to Midland. The result is that the stock owners are droving their cattle along the railway line, and the trains are coming back from the Murchison empty. That is what they call administration. The Government should get rid of the trading concerns and give closer attention to the administration of the railways, and do justice to the producers. They have no chance of making the railways pay while they adopt the attitude that I have just quoted.

Hon. J. Ewing: They are driving trade away.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I will put the position in a nutshell. To-day the Commonwealth are carrying stock from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie for 30s. per head. Compare this with the charge imposed by the State from Nannine to Midland Junction—

Hon. T. Moore: The taxpayers pay for it.

Hon. G. W. MILES: But it is in the taxpayers' pocket according to the hon. member's own party.

Hon. T. Moore: Not according to me.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The distance from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie is 1,100 miles, or about double the distance from Nannine to Midland Junction. Where is the business acumen of our Ministers about which we have heard so much when they charge £2 5s. per head for bringing stock over that distance against a charge by the Commonwealth of 30s. over double the distance? The outcome of all this is that we are losing the sale of our own stock in our markets, and our Government are losing freights, and our Prices Regulation Commission—and in connection with this body I hope the Government will bring in a Bill to terminate their existence and not wait for Parliament to push them out of the price fixing business—on account of the discrepancy in the prices of meat in this State and in the other States, a discrepancy which was brought under notice by a member in another place, have fixed not only the retail but the wholesale price. The object of an hon. member in another place was to show that the grower was not getting a fair thing, and that the consumer should not pay so high a price. The Prices Regulation Commission, as I have stated, then set to work and fixed the price. That, however, did not in itself become law. It had to go before our board of directors, the Mitchell Government, who, when they became Ministers, also became supermen. They did not want advice from anyone else; they

were the know-alls. They could not confer with the growers or the representatives of the growers. No. They confirmed what the Prices Regulation Commission did, and gazetted the wholesale price of meat at 4d. Practically the whole of the meat supply comes from Kimberley or from Derby to Fremantle, and it costs £8 odd per head to bring stock down. If the stock were brought down in private steamers instead of the State steamers, the cost would be £1 per head less, and notwithstanding the fact that the private steamers pay their officers 50 per cent. more than do the Government pay their State Steamships manager.

The Minister for Education: Coloured crews.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The boats owned by the private companies were bringing stock down the coast last year at a reasonable price. I proved that last year and the Minister had to eat his words after having said that I was not quoting facts. They were bringing cattle down at rates which were lower than those charged by the State steamers, and let me tell the Minister who interjected about coloured crews, that if it had not been for those coloured crews there would have been starvation in the North. The Government secured a boat from private owners in the East while the "Kangaroo" was profiteering around the world. The "Kangaroo" was making huge profits at that time. That vessel was purchased for the North-West trade but she was entirely unsuitable for it and should have been handed to the Controller of Shipping, who would have supplied two suitable boats for the North-West and we could have got our stock down at a cheaper rate, but the Government preferred to employ her in other channels. The Government now propose to put the "Kangaroo" on the North-West traffic, but it will cost £50,000 or £100,000 to make her fit for the trade. The Minister told us that inquiries would be made about a vessel for the North-West trade, and then proceeded to appoint a fitter to go Home to supervise the re-conditioning of the "Kangaroo." This was done too against the advice of members representing the North. Mr. Scaddan sends a fitter to England, one who was accustomed to run a launch on the Swan River and whose qualifications did not exceed that.

Member: What was his name?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Bennett, I think his name was.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: He was never a fitter.

Hon. G. W. MILES: If the "Kangaroo" is allowed to go on the coast, once she lies on the bottom at Broome, she will break her back. She is a longer ship than those which are manned by coloured crews, and is not adapted to the coast.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: The "Kangaroo" was never built for the North-West coast.

Hon. G. W. MILES: One hon. member representing a metropolitan province referred to the Premier as being out of his office too much. It is the duty of the Premier and

other Ministers to see the country for themselves. They do not know the country, and will not take any advice from those who are acquainted with it. Until the Premier went north on the occasion of his recent trip he had never been further north than Geraldton. We took the Premier through the s.s. "Minderoo" and showed him how she was buckled through lying on the bottom and how she was affected in the holds. The "Kangaroo" will probably break her back if she has to lie on the bottom, as she will inevitably do when the tide runs out, and will therefore be ruined. I congratulated the Premier on the views he had expressed with regard to the North. I also pointed out that he had only seen the rough edge of it, that is a portion of the Pilbara district. He has never seen the best part of the country, or the Onslow or Roebourne or Gascoyne districts. When he sees the Kimberleys—as he promised to do later on—he will see territory twice as good as the rest of the State put together. It is the duty of Ministers to see the country for themselves, especially when they refuse to take any notice of those who do know it. If we are to develop the North it will require more than the £2,000,000 suggested by one hon. member to bring about this development. I hope that the Government will place an amount on the Estimates for the special development of the North. Those who do not believe in the North do not know it. I regret that Sir Edward Wittenoom said he did not agree with the Premier's optimism with regard to the North. That hon. member does not know the North as well as others who have travelled through the back country. I have said I regret that Sir Edward Wittenoom was not here, as I wanted to say that I disagree with his statements in regard to the views expressed by the Premier and his optimism. I said it reminded me of a Premier we once had. He was a native of this State, just as Sir Edward Wittenoom and I are natives. We had at that time just over 150,000 people in the State, and the Premier said we could not grow sufficient wheat for the then population. We all know what we are growing to-day in the way of wheat and what we have to export. We can imagine what it was then to have a man at the head of affairs who possessed no confidence in the country and in those who were developing it.

Hon. H. Stewart: What about the wholesale price of meat?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I was drawn off the track by the interjections of hon. members. It costs £8 per beast to-day to bring meat to the metropolitan market. The Prices Regulation Commission in fixing the wholesale price at 4d. renders it necessary for the grower to get from 3d. to 3½d. per lb. for his beasts, which represents about £8 per head. This leaves nothing for the grower. Had the Government asked representatives of the growers the true position of affairs before gazetting this price they

would not have placed the growers in the position in which they now find themselves. The whole question must be looked into without delay and the wholesale price of meat altered. If the Commission requires to fix the retail price of meat it can be done on the market price from week to week.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Or as it is manipulated by the big fellow.

Hon. G. W. MILES: By no means. Cattle are sold at public auction and all the grower wants is a fair price for the meat he markets. The Government would not allow the Prices Regulation Commission to interfere with the price of wheat for local consumption. This is fixed by the pool or the Australian Wheat Board. All we ask is that the grower should be put on the same level as the farmer, who, after all, has the better deal. We also ask that this price-fixing business should be abolished.

Hon. H. Stewart: Mutton has been selling at Midland Junction at 3d. per lb.

Hon. G. W. MILES: That is no argument in favour of the wholesale price of 4d. At all events, it must represent a loss to the grower of beef. The Commission take it upon themselves to fix the wholesale price at 4d., and tell the wholesale buyer that he must not pay more than 3d. or 3½d. per lb. in order to sell at a profit to the retailers, who in turn retail the meat to the public. The grower gets nothing for his labours. I hope to see a bold policy of immigration carried out and this country developed as it should be. In regard to the tariff, we have thousands of millions of people within a few days sail of Western Australia, that is in the East, and there is a splendid market there for our products. The Commonwealth Government, however, are putting up barriers against our trading with these people. They have sent a Commissioner up there to see if the meat trade can be opened up with Java and Singapore. He is met with the statement that there is no reciprocity between Australia and that part of the world. Australians, it was said, would find that, with a five million population, their market point of view as consumers is very limited when the population of the world is taken into consideration. Within a few days' sail there are one hundred million people who constitute in themselves a very big market for our products.

The Minister for Education: A thousand million people.

Hon. G. W. MILES: They are Asiatics. Is not that correct?

Hon. A. Sanderson: It is not far off.

Hon. G. W. MILES: That population is increasing at the rate of five millions per annum, and represents a constantly extending market for Australia. The Commonwealth Government say that Australia should be self-contained, but the country will stagnate if it is going to be made self-contained in the way proposed. Shipping

companies will not send their vessels empty to Australia in order to take our produce to other parts of the world, without charging two or three times the freight that is being asked to-day. We have not sufficient sugar for ourselves because of this white Australia policy. We are paying 2d. per lb. for every pound of sugar more than we should be paying, in order that we may keep this artificial industry going. It is economically unsound to allow the industry to continue under such conditions. There should be either free trade, or indentured labour should be permitted in order to bring the price of sugar down. If we cannot have indentured labour then we should have free trade. When the Commonwealth requires extra sugar, instead of its being obtained from Java, which would take our own commodities in exchange, the Commonwealth Government go to Cuba in order to provide freight for the Commonwealth line of steamers. Our policy is all upside down. We will never develop this country whilst we continue along these lines both in the matter of the Commonwealth control and State control.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That will bring the Labour Party back, I can see.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am glad the Government intend to amend the taxation laws with regard to mining. I trust the Federal Government will take the same course. Whilst this taxation exists there is nothing to induce a man to do any mining work or prospecting for the opening up of our mineral resources. Members will recollect the transaction with the Federal Government wherein a man spent a considerable sum of money, some thousands, in obtaining a concession in connection with iron deposits. He received in payment £30,000 worth of bonds from the Queensland Government. The Commonwealth and the State Governments, however, are asking for £19,000 of this amount by way of taxation. This is an instance of the way in which the Act is being misinterpreted. A great deal of this misinterpretation of Acts is caused by bad legislation, which in turn is due to the bad advice legislators get from those who are advising the Government. On many occasions we have asked the Minister certain questions in regard to Bills that are passing through our hands, and he has assured us that the interpretation we have placed upon them is correct. When, however, the Bill becomes law, another interpretation altogether is put upon it.

Hon. J. Ewing: Quite true!

Hon. G. W. MILES: This £30,000 worth of bonds given to the gentleman I speak of as payment for the Yampi Sound iron lease is only worth £25,000. He spends practically £20,000 in taxation, which leaves him with only £5,000. If the taxation officers had their way they would take the remaining £5,000. He draws his interest from the bonds each year and on top of the first

taxation will be charged an income tax on the amount he receives each year. The whole thing is a farce. In actual fact it was a realisation of capital. The money was re-invested, and the profit the man makes out of the £30,000 worth of bonds represents his income. That is the position: measures are being rushed through Parliament and wrongful advice is given to members by the legal advisers of the Government. I congratulate Mr. Stewart on the figures he put before the Chamber, showing the production of wealth by the different sections of the community. I do not want metropolitan members to think I am putting this up in any offensive way. There is a certain number of people necessary in the metropolitan area but it must be realised, and I think it is, that too many persons are settling in and around the city. The remarks of Dr. Saw were somewhat in the nature of window dressing or an electioneering dodge, when he spoke of the metropolitan area as being such an important part of the community of Western Australia. The education question has been referred to. The manner in which the country is now being run drives everyone into the city. The poor man has no opportunity of educating his children in the back country, but has to bring them into the city for that purpose. When I was speaking in Perth recently I referred to the education question. One of my boys was in the audience. I said I had to bring my children into the city in order to educate them. There are countless numbers of children who live in the country, and once they leave and come to the city it will be just as difficult to get them back to the country when they reach the age of 18 or 20, as it was to bring them to the city when they were young. I will be even harder to get them to go back into the country. When they have lived in the city for eight or ten years they will have become influenced by their surroundings and environment and will desire to remain in the city. There should be a better education system in the country and a higher standard reached. The poor man cannot afford to take his children higher than the seventh standard because he is not in a position to send them to the city where they can get more advanced training. If the money now spent on State secondary schools were spent in providing an improved standard of education in the country towns very much good would result. Instead of people having to send their children to the city—

The Minister for Education: There is one State secondary school in the city; the others are in the country.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Is it necessary to have any secondary schools when they are being established at the expense of the children in the country?

The Minister for Education: You are asking for them in the country.

Hon. G. W. MILES: That is what is happening to-day. Our school at Marble Bar is now closed. If a higher standard were provided many of the children could remain

there to be educated. They could be kept on at the school which would thus remain open. The same thing applies to many other parts of the back country. If the Government have only a limited amount of money to spend on education the first children to be considered are those in the back country. Insufficient consideration at present is given to that question just as is the ease with everything else that the Government do. We have men governing the country who do not know the country they have got to govern.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Before tea I was referring to the education of country children and I was pointing out the need for better facilities in the country areas so that the children, and particularly those whose parents were unable to send them to the city, could secure a higher standard of education. By such means, the children would be encouraged to stay in the country and they would then become producers, and that is the class of race we want in Australia, and in Western Australia particularly. With reference to the North-West and the appointment of a Commissioner for the North-West, I congratulate the Government upon having taken this step. I congratulate the Premier upon the appointment of a Minister for the North-West and the Government upon the appointment of a Commissioner. I understand that the Commissioner will reside in the North-West in the summer as well as in the winter, so that he will know the conditions under which the people have to live in that part of the State throughout the whole year. If the Government are satisfied that they have appointed the right man, I am out to give him every assistance possible. He is a young man of 35 years of age, I understand, and he has his life before him. He has some experience in engineering and I shall give him every assistance. I do not know whether the Government have clearly defined the duties of the Minister for the North-West, but I want to see the North-West Department controlling all departments operating in the North-West. If that suggestion is given effect to, the Commissioner will be able to carry out many economies. We want a policy for the development of the country straight away. It is late for that policy now; but there is still time. The Commissioner can effect economies at the present time. I hope to see him reside in the centre of the North-Western area and not select a spot where he will get the best social life. If he wishes to do that he will select Broome; if he wishes to select a place to reside where he will have other attractions, he will select Carnarvon; if he desires to live in the richest portion of that part of the State, he will reside in the Kimberleys, but if he wants to administer his department in the way in which I think it should be administered, he will select the Pilbara area for his centre and will live at Port Hedland. That part is

practically in the centre of the North-Western area and he can go from there to all portions of the country inland. I am not advocating Port Hedland because I am interested in that town, nor yet because my home happens to be inland from that centre. I am not a parochialist; I never was and never wish to be. By living at Port Hedland, I think the Commissioner will probably be able to do away with a railway engineer and save his salary, which will represent about £700 per year, or more than half his own salary saved straight away. If, in addition, the Government carry out the suggestion made by different members and procure motor tractors for the gangs working on the railways, they will be able to do away with half the men employed at present on maintenance work. This shows that economics can be carried out straight away. Further than that there is the question of the Harbour and Lights Department which can be amalgamated with the Railway Department. These are economies that can be effected in one town alone and, if that is the case there, I feel certain that such economies can be effected in other towns throughout the northern centres. Another amalgamation I suggest is that of the Fisheries and Wharfrage Departments at Broome. The salary of one official can be saved straight away. In addition to the saving in the salaries, there will also be the saving in the tropical allowances and the saving in travelling expenses generally. It has been suggested that a loan should be floated for two million pounds for the development of the North-West. If I had my way, instead of a loan for two millions the proposed loan would be nearer 20 millions. The latter sum would be required to do justice throughout the North-West and the north of this State. I want to see a real policy of development adopted for the North-West. Unless the Government have a policy of immediate development, I do not want to see a big staff created in the North-West Department. I will not be a party to that. I notice that there is another position to be filled, namely, that of technical assistant to the Commissioner for the North-West. In my opinion the Government are proceeding too fast in filling such a position. I hope they will not fill it for some time to come and certainly not until the Commissioner has an opportunity of going through the country. He should travel throughout the North-West for the best part of a year and become acquainted with the country he has to administer. I understand that he has never been in the North and it will take him a considerable time to familiarise himself with the work he has to carry on. I am given to understand that the Engineer for the North-West is prepared to give the Commissioner the benefit of his knowledge and advice in connection with matters in that part of the State. I regret that the Engineer for the North-West was not available for the position of Commissioner because his years of

experience in the North-West would have been of great value to that Department. I am glad, however, that the Engineer has offered his assistance to the Commissioner. An assistant to the Commissioner is not wanted at the present juncture. If an assistant is appointed, it will mean that instead of one official, two will have to be travelling for six or eight months and it will not only be a matter of their salaries but the tropical allowances and travelling allowances as well. If the Commissioner decides to reside in Port Hedland, the local governing authorities are prepared to place their office at his disposal and, as to any clerical assistance that might be required, if some slight remuneration were given to the local governing officer, he would be able to carry out the work. That is all that would be required for the present. The appointment of an expert in tropical agriculture has also been referred to. The same argument against the appointment of that official applies. I see no necessity for the immediate appointment of any such officer. I do not want to see an expert in tropical agriculture appointed. I do not want the Government to go to the expense of experimental farms and so on in the North-West, only to see money squandered as was done in the Northern Territory. Unless the Government are prepared with a policy of development, that is to say a policy of railway construction, and closer settlement, it is no use appointing an agricultural expert immediately. Such an appointment, until such times as means are provided to take produce to the ports and from the ports to the markets of the world, will be practically useless. It has been suggested that if an expert in tropical agriculture were appointed, he could advise settlers. It is not the duty of the Government to provide a further £1,000 a year simply to appoint an officer who would advise one or two men who are experimenting in tropical agriculture. I understand that some people are prepared to carry out experiments with a view to seeing whether bananas can be successfully grown in the North-West if the Government are prepared to give them 50 or 100 acres and are prepared to subsidise them. I think that is the better method to adopt rather than to proceed as the Government have suggested. It is better to have the possibilities of banana production demonstrated by those men who are prepared to spend their own time and money in such a venture. If the Government are prepared with a policy—and I have not heard of it yet, although they must evolve a policy—it must be formulated immediately, if we are to retain that rich heritage in the northern part of this State. I do not wish to say anything more about the appointments of these officials. As a member from the North, I am prepared to give every assistance to the Department, but I am not going to endorse the action of the Government if they create a big staff. What we want in the North-West is population.

Hon. H. Stewart: And not officials.

Hon. G. W. MILES: No. I am afraid that what has happened with many public departments, may happen again. We often see that when an Under Secretary or a Secretary is appointed in Perth, the ambition of that officer is to create a big department under him on the assumption that the more men he has under him the better it will be for himself, seeing that he will be entitled to further increases in salary and so on. As one of those who have advocated the possibilities of the North and have brought those possibilities under the notice of the Governments of Australia, I do not want to see any big department created nor do I wish to see a stage reached when we may have practically as many officials as we have residents in that part of the State. The view I take of the North-West of Australia and of Australia as a whole, is that, before the war, if anybody asked for a loan of 50 millions to develop this great country, the financiers of the world would have suggested that we could not stand the financial strain. During the war we lost 60,000 of our best men and spent 400 million pounds to hold this country; to-day, the national debt, Federal and State, runs into something like 800 million pounds. That is, roughly, about £160 per head of the population. If we are to hold Australia for the British Empire and the white races—this is more than an Australian question, for it is an Imperial question under the circumstances—the policy of Australia should be to raise another 100 to 200 million pounds, to standardise our railways, to put the iron road right round Australia linking up with our ports, to open up harbours and to create water supplies and to allow private enterprise to do the trade. By those means we could double our population in ten years. If such a policy were taken in hand by the Federal and State Governments and we developed our population, we would decrease the debt per head to £100, the taxation would be decreased to a very considerable extent and we would have the country ready to carry another 10 or 12 millions of people. We cannot stand still; we must go forward or go back. This is one of the richest countries on God's earth. If we only realise how the country has been misgoverned during a number of years past we can appreciate what the country really is. I do not blame any particular Government. Both Federal and State Governments have misgoverned Australia for years past. We have too many Houses of Parliament and Governments and legislation which in my opinion has been misdirected. It has resulted in population being driven towards towns and we have to realise that the possibilities of Australian cities are limited. We should secure legislation which will make the conditions of the people in the back country better than they are to-day. If we do that the people in the country will create wealth and then the cities will naturally go ahead by leaps and bounds. Instead of 160,000 people living in the metropolitan area we could double or treble that population in 10 years if the back

country were developed as it should be. I understand that the Federal Government are calling a conference shortly to discuss the question of alterations to the Commonwealth Constitution. It has been suggested in another place that the State Government should appoint a select committee to go into the question of the relationship existing between Federal and State departments, so that when the conference is called and delegates are appointed to represent the State, they will have some idea as to the views of the people of the country. I should think it would be necessary for the States themselves to hold a preliminary conference prior to the Federal Convention. I wish now to refer to the way in which the Government departments, evidently under advice, get in revenue at any cost. Sufficient consideration is not given to the fixing of charges imposed for railway freights and wharfage rates. When in the North recently it was brought under my notice that a new regulation had been framed by the Railway Department and gazetted on the 1st July. I wired to my colleagues asking them to object to its adoption. I would like to illustrate the way in which some of the charges are being imposed. I am not blaming the Government, and yet in a way the Government are to blame. If they would only get rid of the trading concerns, Ministers would be able to administer their departments and see that these anomalies did not creep in and that people were not imposed upon as they are to-day. Under the wharfage regulations there is a handling charge for wool and an extra charge if, in the opinion of the pier-master, it is necessary to stack the wool more than one tier high. For the first tier 4d. is charged, for the second tier 8d., and for the third tier 1s. I have a copy of an account rendered to a client in the North and it certainly seems ridiculous that the Government should tax people in this way. They already make a charge for handling and this is an additional charge. To stack the second tier is really easier than the first tier because the bale rolls off the truck practically into its place.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It should be 2d.

Hon. G. W. MILES: No, there should be no additional charge as a handling charge is already imposed. Then there is a transhipment charge. If a man is not fortunate enough to be able to cart his wool to the wharf, but has to have it put on a lighter in some creek he has to pay a transhipment charge. The Government do not handle this wool; the lightermen handle it. Yet the Government impose a transhipment charge of 1s. 6d. a bale. This has been pointed out to the Government year after year. Where wool is railed to the wharf 9d. is charged for wharfage and 7d. for handling or 1s. 4d. a bale. In that case some work is done, but when they do not touch it at all, they charge 1s. 6d. a bale. Although this matter has been pointed out to the heads of departments and to the Government, no alteration has been

made, but the present Commissioner of Railways has informed us that this charge should be 1s. 6d. a ton and not 1s. 6d. a bale. The Government, however, have been making this extortionate charge year after year. This is the way the business of the country is conducted.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: Do you still say you do not blame the Government?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do blame the Government for not getting rid of the trading concerns so that Ministers would have sufficient time to administer their departments and guard against such anomalies.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: You said you did not blame the Government.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Is that 1s. 6d. imposed if the ship is not alongside the wharf?

Hon. G. W. MILES: It does not apply if the ship is in the stream. In the North we have sufficient asbestos to supply the whole of Australia's requirements. The man who can erect a plant on his mine and treat the asbestos is charged 1s. 8d. per ton by a wise Commissioner who is out to get all the revenue he can, but the poor miner to whom we should take off our hats, for it is he who keeps the butter on our bread, is charged 6s. a ton because he cannot afford a plant to treat his ore. Did anyone ever hear of such a ridiculous regulation?

Hon. H. Stewart: Is that the Commissioner of Railways?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes: If the Government wish to assist the industry the charges should be reversed: the crude material should be charged 1s. 8d. and the treated material 6s. I know that the Minister will put up the argument that he wants to see the work done in the country so that employment will be provided here. We certainly wish to encourage that. I would point out, however, that this material is treated in Perth and that the present rates are a tax on the poor man. We are boosting our wheat areas and rightly so, because we want to get markets for our produce, but under the regulations, in order to catch all possible revenue and make the deficit as light as possible, double rates are being charged on chaff sent to the North. A man up North some times has to buy chaff in order to carry his stock over a drought. The charge for wharfage at Fremantle is 6s. a ton and the handling charge at Fremantle 4s. a ton, but when the chaff gets to one of the out-ports an additional 6s. inwards wharfage and 4s. handling charge is imposed. These trading utilities, as the Premier now terms them, should charge only the actual cost of wharfage and handling. Under the present rates the consumer of the produce grown by the farmer down south has to bear a direct tax of 10s. a ton.

Hon. J. Nicholson: One pound a ton.

Hon. G. W. MILES: No, some service is rendered in handling the stuff at Fremantle and again at the out-port which is worth about 10s. a ton. This direct tax on the consumers of farm produce in the North is

retarding that part of the country. It appears to me that the Government are not out to assist the Collie coal industry as they should. The demurrage charges in respect of coal shipped from Fremantle are not calculated to encourage the industry as it should be encouraged. An anomaly exists in regard to the rates charged for the accommodation hulks in Fremantle harbour. The hulks containing imported coal go alongside the steamers and tranship their coal into bunkers, and the rate charged is lower than coal owners have to pay when the coal goes over the wharf. I was pleased to note the tone of the debate not only in this House, but in another place on the part of those representing the Labour Party. I hope the same spirit will continue to be manifested and that it will be recognised that one section of the community cannot get on without the other. We want the worker to get a fair deal, but I think it should be recognised that the worker cannot get along without the capitalist; both must work hand in hand. While the wage-earner gets a fair deal, the capitalist also is entitled to a fair deal, for without the capitalist there would be no work.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They say capitalism must be abolished.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Various speakers have advocated round table conferences to bring the employers and employees together. I understand that the Arbitration Court has not given satisfaction either to the workers or to the employers.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Owing to its congestion.

Hon. G. W. MILES: If that is the only trouble, why not appoint additional judges to deal with the cases? I gather, however, that a better method has been suggested, namely, that of settling differences at round table conferences and wages boards. If this were done a lot of the fighting and bitterness between these two sections of the community would be obviated. I can see that a better feeling is being exhibited, and I hope the representatives of capital will meet the workers on an equal footing and bring about that co-operation and conciliation so necessary for the development of the country.

Hon. T. Moore: Why not have a word with Mr. Lee Steere on that question?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do not know anything about him; I am speaking only in a general way.

Hon. T. Moore: He will not agree to a round table conference or anything else.

Hon. G. W. MILES: It is of no use going into that question now. I understand that at one stage he was prepared to agree to a round table conference, but that the other side were not. However, I do not know the details and I do not wish to debate the question. I hope that when any dispute occurs in an industry in future it will be settled without recourse to law. This is one of the curses of our country. There is too much

law and the lawyers are kept at the expense of the producer and the worker. If the laws of the land contained more stops so that they would not bear the double interpretation which our lawyer friends are able to discover and on which they advise clients to fight to a finish, it would be better for the State. I was delighted to read in the Press the references made in another place by the member for East Perth (Mr. Simons) to the late Lord Forrest. I endorse every word he said in that regard. It is a standing disgrace to this city and to the whole of Western Australia that no monument has yet been erected to the memory of that great statesman. I hope the Government will see that there is inserted in the State reader or the Swan Reader as it is called, some biography or outline of Lord Forrest's life so that the rising generation in this State at any rate may be able to read of the great work which that statesman did for us and emulate him if they can. I hope that the people of the State will back up the suggestion made by the member of East Perth and see that a memorial is erected without further delay. I regret that Ministers and members of Parliament generally have not taken an opportunity to see more of Western Australia. That is one of the reasons for our bad legislation. The people governing this country and making laws for it do not know the country they are governing or the conditions under which many of the people have to live. As it was put to me recently, the difference between a politician and a statesman is that the politician looks forward to the next general election and the statesman to the next generation. I hope members of Parliament and in particular Ministers will take a broader view in future and look forward to the next generation instead of to the next general election.

On motion by Hon. J. W. Hickey debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.2 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 30th August, 1921.

	Page
Questions: Lunacy Department, proposed Royal Commission	466
Magistracy, Broome, appointment	466
Soldier Settlement, Railway facilities	466
Courtesies to Federal Visitors	467
Road Board Subsidies	467
Address-in-reply, twelfth day	467

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

QUESTION—LUNACY DEPARTMENT.

Proposed Royal Commission.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, With reference to his announcement that a Royal Commission is to be appointed to inquire into the care of the insane, their treatment, and the accommodation provided for them by the State, will the Government extend the scope of the proposed Royal Commission to cover the proposals set forth in the resolution carried by the annual conference of the Primary Producers' Association, namely—(a) The Royal Commission to consist of three independent persons appointed to conduct a searching inquiry into the whole administration of the Lunacy Department; (b) To obtain reforms in the present obsolete lunacy legislation for the purpose of—(i.) adequately protecting the liberty of the subject and guarding against abuses; (ii.) ensuring to all patients the right to an examination by an independent legal tribunal; (iii.) appointing a non-medical board of control in substitution for the Inspector General, and generally giving effect to the recommendations of the select committee? 2, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: The question of the appointment of a Royal Commission is now being considered by Cabinet.

QUESTION—MAGISTRACY, BROOME, APPOINTMENT.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Premier: 1, Has the vacant magisterial position at Broome been considered? 2, Has any appointment been made? 3, If not, when is the appointment likely to be made?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The matter is now being dealt with. 3, Answered by No. 2.

QUESTION—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT, RAILWAY FACILITIES.

Mr. HICKMOTT asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to carry out the Railway Advisory Board's