

# Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 21st August, 1929.

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written copies made, one for each House. There are many plans but they have to be copied. They will be submitted to the Government Printer without delay, and not only will the report be printed and distributed amongst members, but the plans will be treated in the same way.

The Chief Secretary laid the report on the Table.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### Twelfth Day.—Conclusion.

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

## QUESTION—CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

Hon. J. R. BROWN asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Have the Government allocated any sum of money for the celebration of the Centenary of the State, or placed at the disposal of the State Centenary Committee any sum for distribution among various districts? 2, If so, what is the amount? 3, How much of the amount has been allotted to the Kalgoorlie Municipal City?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The Government have allocated the sum of £20,000 to be spent in the suitable celebration of the Centenary of the State. Arrangements are in the hands of an executive committee appointed by the Government. No allocation to districts has been made. 2 and 3, Answered by 1.

## ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1) £1,900,000.

## FREMANTLE HARBOUR WORKS.

*Report of Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners.*

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have here the report of Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners on the Fremantle Harbour Works. I have been asked by the Minister for Works to inform the House that the report was received yesterday afternoon, but there was only one copy. He has had type-

Hon. C. F. Baxter interjected.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I have already got that knowledge, but have applied it in a much more useful way than do some members who appear to me to be always carping. They get from the State better treatment for the industry they represent than is secured for any other industry, and yet they are never satisfied. One of the little troubles I have got into occurred when Mr. Stewart was referring to something the Government had done at Wagin. They had built a hospital and provided a water supply, but just because the Government had not previously got authority from Parliament he was not satisfied that his Wagin constituents had got something from the Government. That is what I was referring to when I interjected at the hon. member. Probably the interjection was not very pertinent, and probably it did not show much sense, but what I said was that the law was always an ass. Then the

hon. member, addressing himself to me, asked did I believe in obeying the law? He remarked that perhaps I did not believe in observing the law. I then said, "Only when it suits me—the same as you." The newspaper that is the official organ of the Country Party could not be fair enough to print the words as they were uttered. No much for the Country Party's cause. If their cause is misconstrued as much as their newspaper misconstrued those few remarks, then it is time the party changed the editor of the paper, or the staff, or perhaps some of their members in Parliament. The newspaper said that Mr. Stewart was speaking of strikes when I interjected. He was speaking of nothing of the sort; he was speaking of certain acts of the Government, and questioning whether they were lawful. I do not know whether Mr. Stewart was instrumental in securing that advertisement in the newspaper to help along his cause, but I take this opportunity to say that "Hansard" shows that when I interjected I was referring, not to strikes, but to another matter altogether. Now I wish to allude to the conditions of the working man and to some of the remarks made about the high cost of living, and the allegedly high wages paid to the workers. I was working in an industry until lucky enough to get away from it. It was a primary industry, gold mining, and I am sorry to say that, judging by their remarks, some members of the House evidently do not know the conditions under which work in this State is carried on. References have been made to piece work. Mr. Miles said it was a question whether work should not be piece work. Evidently he did not take time to look around and see what operations in this State are carried on by piece work. He referred to the coal miners, and by interjection I corrected him, telling him that coal miners were on piece work. About 80 per cent. of the operations in a gold mine are carried out by piece work. Wages paid in gold mining affect only the surface workers and those on the plant. The underground workings and the handling of firewood are both done by piece work. I mention that to draw attention to the fact that members of Parliament are regarded as important citizens, and when they make incorrect statements about industrial conditions

people outside do not think too highly of the calibre of those members who do not know the conditions under which work in this State is carried on. One can go into any mining industry, whether it be coal or gold, and he will find that 80 per cent. of the operations are carried on by piece work. Then roads and bridges work, too, is in some measure piece work. So, too, with the clearing of railway tracks, where the work is done by contract. I am speaking as a one-time organiser of a union and in consequence, I know a little about that work. When a member gets up here and says that in this State piece work is not carried on to any extent, he is not stating what is strictly true.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is not the policy of the Labour Party day labour?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, that is correct. But the Labour Party are no different from other people. In some circumstances they find that perhaps the supervision of certain work would be too costly. Probably the isolation of the district does not warrant a staff of supervisors, and so the system adopted in that isolated district is piece work. That is done even now. I wished to refer briefly to that phase of the question, because I think when everything is said and done our State is one of the most prosperous in the Commonwealth. Most of our troubles do not originate with the working man; in fact most of them originate with the city landlords and the high cost of properties in Perth. That is the greatest factor in forcing up the cost of production and the cost of living; it is a greater factor than anything that can be laid to the door of the working man. Our trade has to go through so many hands, through so many commercial travellers, that in consequence the people represented by Mr. Baxter, Mr. Stewart and others, the primary producers, have to pay a high price for all their requisites. During the 12 months I have been here I have come to the conclusion that in the view of some members there is only one set of primary producers in this State, namely farmers. Some members have got into that way of thinking and they can think nothing beyond it. I can only say I thank the Lord that in this State, at all events, the farmers' party will never have the reins of government. If the legislation of the Commonwealth Government, of which the Country

Party has for some time been a part, is a sample of the kind of thing we are to expect, and the financial position of the Commonwealth is also a type of the thing we are to expect from these people, let us hope that the electors of Western Australia will retain the present Government in office for the rest of their lives. I have read most of the speeches of hon. members. It appears from these that the State has progressed fairly well. Very little by way of honest criticism has been put forward by opponents of the present Government. All they can find to talk about is the 44-hour week in the railway service and the granting of long service leave.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: And the deficit.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am sure the deficit does not worry the hon. member any more than it does me. I do not know whether it worries one per cent. of the taxpayers of the State because they do not know anything about it. All they want to know is that they are able to live in fairly decent circumstances, can get fair interest on their money if they have any, and are able to get a fair living.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: There are many people who do not pay any taxes.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not bother about the deficit. I should like to see the Government go another two millions behind so long as they provided work, and allowed posterity to pay for the benefits that this money would confer upon the State.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I do not know where you would finish up; probably in the bankruptcy court.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I have yet to learn that the Commonwealth Government are really out of the bankruptcy court.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Let us drink and be merry for to-morrow we die.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Exactly. The pioneers of Western Australia did not worry much about how those who came after them were to repay the loans that were raised for the early development of the State. They did not concern themselves about who was to pay for the goldfields water supply, or the unproductive railway to the goldfields in the early days. They were prepared at that time to gamble on the future.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is all paid for now.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: It has been paid for because of the fore-sight of the man who built the railway.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: The goldfields water scheme was paid for out of a sinking fund.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: It was paid for because the goldfields went ahead, as well as the farming areas which drew water from the scheme, and assisted in finding the money to repay the capital expenditure. I admit that the Government have spent a lot of money in the Esperance district in providing water supplies, dams, etc. Unfortunately, for the last two years the dams have not filled up properly owing to the lack of sufficient rain. I trust that the Government will also provide enough money for the clearing of a greater amount of catchment around those areas, so that even with a slight shower there will be a chance of some water running into them. More land should be cleared around those places.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What do you mean by more clearing?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I mean to burn off the timber and make a greater area available for catchment purposes?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is fatal to remove timber from catchment areas.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Under present conditions, a slight shower will not cause water to run into the dams because of the trees and scrub. Money should be made available to provide more catchment areas so that with every little shower some water can be conserved. I do not think the dams will catch much rain under present conditions. The settlers have had a hard time for three years, but this season promises to be a good one. The Agricultural Bank has gone to their assistance in a reasonable way in cases where the settlers have been worthy of help. The storekeepers, however, have suffered a good deal of hardship. I do not know whether the Government intend to assist the settlers to get food, otherwise some of the storekeepers are liable to go bankrupt. At all events, they will have to stop supplies unless payment is guaranteed. Probably by the end of this season they will be able to get out of the mire. Reference has been made to the Workers' Compensation Act. Some 12 months ago Mr. Seddon procured an amendment to that Act. At the time he wondered whether it would have a detrimental effect in connection with the mining industry. We hear a lot about

workers' compensation, and the premiums charged by the insurance companies in the metropolitan area and in the timber districts. On the goldfields the worker pays 72s. a year for medical treatment whether he likes it or not. Should he get hurt he is covered by the State Insurance Office and receives half wages, or whatever it is, until he has recovered. The State Insurance Office has to pay nothing for medical or hospital expenses, for these are already provided for. Whatever may be said about the ramifications of insurance in Perth, and the charge for medical and hospital expenses, similar statements cannot apply to Kalgoorlie, Gwalia, or I think the Murchison Goldfields. The men there pay for their own medical and hospital expenses, and the insurance people have not to contribute one penny towards them. The amendment to which I have referred, and which must have been accepted by the Government, has had a detrimental effect upon miners who have been stricken down with lung disease. Before that amendment was made, some hardship existed, but it was overcome. I know of two men who were turned down, suffering from 50 per cent. silicosis and 50 per cent. from some other complication. For some time the insurance people would not pay those men, but eventually they were paid the amount provided by the Act, viz., £750.

Hon. H. Seddon: Has Davies received his money yet?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I cannot say. If the hon. member says not I am prepared to believe him.

Hon. H. Seddon: He has not received it.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Davies had 10 per cent. of silicosis and should have received something. Under the Act as amended by the hon. member, the insurance people are paying as low as 5 per cent. A man named George Shelly was said by the medical board to be unfit for work, and only 5 per cent. of his disability was said to be due to mining. In actual fact he had worked in the mining industry for over 40 years. Despite that he was paid only £37 10s.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That was £37 10s. more than some others were able to get.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: If the Act had remained as it was, probably he would have received £750.

Hon. H. Seddon: Davies got nothing.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The people behind him had not enough go about them to summon the insurance people in order to make a test case of it. If the test case had been successful justice would have been done in other instances.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is the way the State Insurance Office treats its clients.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I hold no brief for that office. I think they are just as big thieves as the other people. I am not going to camouflage that office in any way.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: They are worse.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not say they are worse. I do not think they can be worse. I have had ample experience in dealing with compensation cases as organiser for my union, and know a good deal about both the State and private offices. The State office has advantages over the private companies with regard to the examination of men engaged in mining. It has a Government laboratory behind it, and statistics that the private companies are unable to secure.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Those are not all the advantages by a long way.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: It is the main advantage. I join issue with the State Accident Insurance Office. I claim that the State office, so far as sufferers under the third schedule are concerned, men suffering from lung disease, is just as avaricious and as thieving as the other people. I can prove that statement.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: I hope the Chief Secretary will reply to that.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I cannot help what my Leader says. If he tells the truth he will not disagree with what I am going to say. The State office endeavours to take 7 per cent. from a man, who is seeking a lump sum settlement under the third schedule, as discount for cash. The magistrate who heard a case recently in Kalgoorlie said: "The value of this money to you people is 4 per cent," and he would allow only 4 per cent. The State Insurance Office was not satisfied. A further case was brought before the magistrate, and his reply was "You are only wasting my time and the applicant's time. I have just given a decision that 4 per cent. is the value of the money and I will not give any more." The representative of the insurance office asked me across the table—I was representing the man in question—if I would compromise

with 5 per cent., and I told him not to be foolish. I said I took the view that no percentage ought to be deducted.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Why did you take up that attitude?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Because the policy of the Labour Party has always been that there should be no deductions for a cash settlement when a man's health is at stake. The law as disclosed in the second schedule of the Act says that when a man loses a toe or a finger he shall receive a certain specified sum. When, however, it is a question of a man who has 12 or 18 months to live the law says he can only get £750 less the cash value of the money. I disagree with that and take this opportunity publicly of voicing my opinion. I know of men who have settled on that basis. The State Insurance Office has tried to get 7 per cent. off and the magistrate has awarded 4 per cent. I would say again that the State Insurance Office has the advantage of avoiding any expenditure for medical fees. It is not likely ever to be obliged to find such fees. Not satisfied with having escaped from that liability, the State office wishes to take a percentage from the claimant because he is being paid in cash. The man who loses the joint of a toe or a finger receives a certain amount in cash settlement, but the man who has 18 months to live, and wishes to get the cash in order to set up his family in some kind of business, has to settle on the basis of a cash discount. That is against the policy of the Labour Government and the sooner it is abolished the better. Regarding settlements outside that, I have no arguments against the State insurance people. I have heard it said that the State Insurance Department is carried on illegally. That may be so.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You would not dispute that.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am not going to quarrel about it, if it is correct. I have been led to believe that the reason for the existence of the State Insurance Department was the high quotations of the private companies for the insurance of miners, and that if the State had not gone to the assistance of the industry by creating the State Department, it would have meant the difference between profit and loss so far as many of the mines were concerned, and they would have closed down.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: You are wrong; the State wanted to close down the private companies.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Probably the hon. member is right; I will not argue with him. All I know is that it would not have been possible for the mining industry to carry the burden that would have been imposed by the private companies. The companies would have had to cut down their grade of ore and the mines would have been salvaged probably much quicker. I trust the Government will amend that part of the Statute so that when a man seeks a lump sum settlement he will get it without any deductions. I trust also there will be an amendment of that part of the Act that allows the Medical Board to say that if a man, after having been in the mining industry for 40 years, is suffering from only five per cent. of dust, he gets only £37 10s.

Hon. H. Seddon: Will you support an amendment to introduce the South African scheme?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I will support anything that will improve the legislation. I am satisfied the Chief Secretary will reply to that phase of the question. I hope the Government will do something to help along those men who have given their lives to the mining industry and who, on finishing, find they can get no compensation. The State is bearing the burden by taking men out of the mines in the way they are doing. If I go to the laboratory, having made up my mind that it is time I got out of the industry, I secure a dust certificate and go along to the doctor who says, "You have only five per cent. or ten per cent. of dust." How on earth he arrives at the quantity of dust I do not know.

Hon. J. R. Brown: He weighs it.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Then if I can only get five or ten per cent. of compensation, what happens to me? Naturally, I try to carry on; my mates perhaps will help me to carry on. Still, the time will come when I develop tuberculosis and I am turned down. The State then withdraws me from the mine and I become a pensioner on the State. I get a very reasonable pension, I admit, and that is just as it should be.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Unfortunately the pensioner does not live long enough to enjoy it.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That is the hard part of it. When dusted, a man is given

the opportunity to get out with ordinary miners' complaint or silicosis and then he may live 10 or 12 years or longer, but if he has no chance of getting compensation, so as to enter upon a different kind of employment, he has no alternative but to continue work as a miner, and in most cases his mates carry him on. Perhaps they work a bit harder to keep him going until, as I have already said, he develops tuberculosis. Then instead of being a charge on the State insurance fund, he becomes a charge on the State. I was always given to understand that when examinations were made of men periodically it was with a view to withdrawing dusted men from the mines.

Hon. H. Seddon: The Miners' Phthisis Act does not provide for that.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That is the unfortunate part of it, and the State has to bear the burden. The Government did start on correct lines and spent a large sum of money. They actually placed on the land a number of men with dust certificates, about 100 altogether, and those men who are in the Southern Cross district received financial assistance to the extent of about £1,500.

Hon. H. Seddon: That is not provided for in the Act.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: No. The men did not receive compensation, but the Government went to their assistance in the way I have stated. I have nothing more to say except that I support the motion.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.8]: It will no doubt be gratifying to you, Mr. President, to know that your activities in the Old Country were noted with a considerable amount of pleasure by members of this Chamber, and that all were glad to know that you had the best interests of the State at heart, and that you took every possible opportunity to bring Western Australia and the Commonwealth under the notice of the world in general. We are pleased to see you back and I hope that on your return you found everything as satisfactory as you expected. As usual, the debate on the Address-in-reply has touched upon a large number of subjects, and it will be my duty to endeavour to reply to some of the questions that have been raised. The subjects most frequently dealt with can be reduced to three, firstly the finances of the State, secondly the question of unemployment, and

thirdly the finances of the railways. Many of the other matters touched upon particularly affect National politics, such matters as the Tariff and so on. I do not propose to deal with any of those subjects except to say that what has been said by members in respect of those matters has, without doubt, some bearing on the position in which we find ourselves, financially and in other ways. Mr. Mann made reference to the tourist resorts and alluded particularly to Cave House. That establishment happens to come within my jurisdiction and I have to say that the hon. member's criticism was in the main correct. While we are desirous of providing the best possible accommodation at Cave House at all times of the year, we are not in a position to spend a large sum of money at the present juncture in making extensions, either to that or any other similar establishment, mainly because there are more deserving demands for the expenditure of money, and in directions of a developmental character. Mr. Mann also stated that the Government were not doing sufficient to protect the tourist resorts for the angler in the way of preventing net fishing. I believe the Fisheries Department have been particularly active during the last year or two in the best interests of the fisheries of the State. In most of the tourist resorts we have closed the waters to net fishing and it will be admitted it is hardly possible to do more. There is another phase we must consider and it is the fish supply for the people generally. I am afraid that if we were to fall into line with the requests of many people and close the whole of the waters against net fishing in the vicinity of our tourist resorts, the supply of fish to the people of the State would be considerably diminished. For many years the fishery resources of the Commonwealth have been neglected, but now it appears that much more interest is being taken in and much more importance is being attached to the industry. At last efforts are being made by which it is hoped fish supplies will be made available to the people in much larger quantities than in the past, and certainly at a much lower price. Recently I attended a Commonwealth fisheries conference in the East, and I was interested to find that New South Wales has no fewer than 18 trawlers operating off its coast. As a result of their operations the fish supplies in that State have been largely increased while the price

of certain varieties of fish has been much reduced. I was gratified to observe that there is every probability of the industry being extended. It is a most valuable industry, employing quite a large number of people. I am hopeful that in the near future it will be extended even to Western Australia.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Is it paying its way in New South Wales.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Undoubtedly it is.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: For a long time it was not paying.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member is referring to a period when investigations were being carried out. The people now controlling the industry in New South Wales are reaping the benefit of the investigations and experiments carried out when the industry was under the control of the Government. Those investigations have made it possible for private individuals to enter the industry with the success they have achieved. The first trawler to operate on our coast was expected to arrive here to-day. In the near future a local company will be operating off our coast by means of the trawler brought out from the Old Country. There have been developments also in other branches of the industry in this State. A company is operating on the North-West coast fishing for sharks. I understand that it is doing very well and that the promoters are quite satisfied with the progress made. Another company proposes to start operations in the near future to deal with other marine products including sharks and turtles. I believe the necessary capital has already been raised and that within a few months a start will be made. A large company—an all-Australian company—is being formed with a capital of £750,000 to carry on the whaling industry at Point Cloates in conjunction with operations off the coast of the Eastern States and in the Antarctic Ocean. Broadly speaking, therefore, there has been quite a considerable development of the fishery resources of this State. Mr. Mann drew a comparison between the position in Western Australia and that in Victoria. I referred his remarks to the Chief Inspector of Fisheries in order that I might confirm what I considered were the real facts, and I found that all I had said previously was correct. We in Western Australia, unfortunately, have very

few streams such as there are in Victoria, suitable for the class of fish the hon. member saw being caught over there. At the same time the local position could be improved somewhat provided we had a hatchery where trout, either of the rainbow or brown variety, might be hatched, and used to stock one or two of our streams. I suppose £500 would be sufficient to provide a hatchery, but the money is not available for the purpose, and it will be some time before anything can be done in the way of stocking streams suitable for such fish as trout. The hon. member also criticised the amount of money spent by the Government each year in endeavouring to attract tourist traffic to the State. Apparently he was not quite seized of the whole of the facts. He suggested that the amount of money spent by the department was very small, running into about £150 only. In the year the Labour Party took office the estimates of expenditure for the Tourist Bureau were £1,526. For the current financial year the estimates are £2,121. In addition a publicity office has been established and the salaries for the staff approximate £500 a year. In accordance with the general principle of Government accounting, the cost of printing and photography is charged not against the Tourist Bureau, but against the Printing Office. During the last financial year £2,178 was spent in that direction. Much special centenary matter has been published during the year and a history of the State, compiled for publicity purposes, has been issued at cost of upwards of £3,000. Publications are issued by the State and made available at the tourist bureaux of the Eastern States. We also have quantities of suitable literature placed on steamers calling at Colombo, and we are endeavouring to arrange for a similar service at South African ports. These services are performed without expenditure. When Mr. Mann knows the full extent of the expenditure incurred and the results it is producing, he will be quite satisfied that, taking all the facts into consideration, we are doing as much as we can reasonably be expected to do. Mr. Nicholson touched on quite a number of matters and I propose to refer to one or two of them. First of all he criticised the statement appearing in the Speech that the Government considered the finances of the State were in a satisfactory condition. Mr. Nicholson gave us to understand that from his point of view they were anything but

satisfactory. He also stated what he deemed to be the reasons why they were unsatisfactory, and he said he thought he could indicate ways and means by which the position could be materially improved. Mr. Nicholson was not alone in his contentions to that effect. Several other members made similar statements, but in very few instances did they offer any criticism that would indicate to the Treasurer just how the financial position might be improved. It is admitted that, if we do not take into consideration the amount of £350,000 in the suspense account, there was a deficit for the last financial year. I listened with considerable interest to the speech of Mr. Seddon. He showed that he had given considerable study to the financial aspect and his deductions were particularly interesting. Very often things may appear on the surface to be quite satisfactory, but there are other considerations that have to be taken into account. We can at least claim that the finances of Western Australia are in a condition quite as good as, if not better than those of any of the other States of the Commonwealth.

Hon. H. Seddon: That is not saying much.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I think it is saying a good deal for Western Australia, because there is not a State of the Commonwealth that is faced with the problems that confront us. All the other States have reached a stage when one can fairly claim that their country is developed.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you include South Australia?

The HONORARY MINISTER: South Australia is developed to a much greater extent than is Western Australia. I would apply my remarks to all the other States of the Commonwealth. Bearing in mind the rapid progress being made by this State and the comparatively small population it has to deal with the many problems of development, I think we have done remarkably well. We are feeling some of the effects of the bad seasons experienced in the other States. Bad seasons there have affected the unemployment problem and the amount of money available from private sources for development work in this State. In other ways, also, we are feeling the effects of the bad times through which the other States have passed. It should be borne in mind that while we did not have what might be termed a bad

season, our harvest fell a long way short of expectations. Perhaps as a result of that and of the falling prices for wheat and wool, there has not been in circulation the amount of money that we were reasonably justified in expecting to be available 12 months ago. All these things, of course, have a cumulative effect, and we are to-day feeling the results of them. I was much interested in Mr. Nicholson's remarks on the Railway Department. The hon. member seemed to think that all that was necessary was for our department to take a leaf out of the book of the London and North-Western railway and to follow that undertaking's example and the methods it had adopted in the endeavour to raise new revenue, whereupon all would be well with our railway service. I fear it would be most difficult for us to apply to our service the remedies that were applied to the London and North-Western railway and other railways at Home. The sets of conditions operating are utterly different. While I do not hold that there is no room for improvement anywhere in our service, I certainly think there is much of which we have reason to be proud in that service. The fact that our deficit on railway working last year was only £179,000 is to the credit of the railway service. Other Australian railway services have shown considerably larger deficits. The year previous, I believe, ours was the only service in the Commonwealth to make ends meet. Remembering the huge mileage we have, and the large mileage running into country quite recently opened up, it speaks extraordinarily well for the management of the railways that they could, in the circumstances existing last year, produce the results they did. Mr. Nicholson has taken the Premier to task for a statement made in regard to the reason for the falling off in the railway revenue. Other hon. members also have tried to make capital out of the fact that His Excellency's Speech refers to the circumstance that the in some respects disappointing harvest was responsible for a reduction in the revenue of the Railway Department. Personally I see nothing wrong with that statement. On the contrary, I regard it as absolutely correct. Hon. members who have criticised it have not closely examined it, and do not know what it really means. Certainly the statement was not that the loss on the

railways was caused altogether by the fact of the reduced harvest. The statement merely was that a reduction in railway revenue was thus brought about. That is quite correct. There can be no argument to the contrary, and I do not think any hon. member really wishes to contradict the statement. Undoubtedly, had the harvest come up to expectations, the revenue from carriage of wheat on our railways would have been considerably larger than it was. In many other ways, too, would the railway revenue have been increased, inasmuch as there would have been more money spent in other directions; and the more money there is spent by the people, the more additional freight is there on goods sent into the country as the result of the increased spending power. I was so much interested in the criticism offered regarding the Railway Department that I went to the trouble of having certain figures produced, figures which to my way of thinking are highly illuminating. Mr. Hammersley, for instance, said he could not understand why there was a deficit on our railway working. The hon. member said that wheat was the best freight the railways had, and that the railways should have shown big profits—I think those were his actual words. The figures as disclosed by a return which I called for are illuminating in that regard. They show that wheat is certainly one of the biggest factors so far as railway revenue is concerned, in that the total quantity of wheat carried and the distance it is hauled mean a very fair proportion of the total freights earned by the system. I find that while wheat may be a very good freight from the point of view that the railways handle it in trainloads rather than in truckloads or in small quantities, nevertheless it is carried at such a rate that if it were charged the ordinary average rate per ton-mile—and that is the only way one can arrive at a fair comparison—it would mean that the railways would receive in revenue for the transport of wheat a sum of money equal to over £750,000. I venture to say that if one makes a comparison on that basis—the only basis on which a comparison can be made fairly—one obtains figures which are somewhat astounding. It would be just as well, perhaps, if I gave the House the benefit of the figures which have been compiled on that basis. I merely give them for the information of hon. members, but I think they show

that our Western Australian railways are giving to our farmers and our primary producers generally a concession which is not equalled in any other part of the world. I believe there is no section of any community receiving a concession of the same value as the farming community of Western Australia receives because of the freight rates charged to them for the carriage of their wheat and their fertiliser.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What is the difference between rates here and the rates in the Eastern States?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I can give that information too. It also is most illuminating. The receipts per ton-mile for all goods for the past financial year were 1.71d., and at this rate the loss on the working of the railways was £179,000. The average receipts per ton-mile for wheat and superphosphate were 1.04d. and .54d. respectively. Had these two commodities been carried at the average rate, namely 1.71d. per ton-mile, the earnings, compared with those actually received, would have been as follows:—Wheat, ton-miles hauled 122,744,031, earnings actually received £531,317, earnings at 1.71d. per ton-mile £874,552; fertiliser, ton-miles hauled 41,034,249, earnings actually received £92,509, earnings at 1.71d. per ton-mile £292,369; giving totals of earnings actually received £623,826 as against £1,166,921 which would have been received at the average rate per ton-mile.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is not a fair comparison. If you took the whole of the rates, the average would be down, taking wheat and super.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I say this is the only fair comparison that can be made.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is the most unfair comparison you can put up.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It will be seen from what I have just stated that had the average rate—I am speaking of the average rate—

Hon. G. W. Miles: But if you added the other goods at higher rates, the average would be down. The comparison is most unfair.

The HONORARY MINISTER: From the figures I have quoted it will be seen that had the average rate of freight been applied to wheat and superphosphate, the increase in earnings would have been about £543,000.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is ridiculous.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member can say it is ridiculous.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I do say it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I put this forward as being a statement of fact.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is not a statement of fact. It is a mis-statement.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am putting these figures forward as representing facts, and I maintain that there is no other basis on which one can make the comparison. The figures disclose that owing to the low rates charged on wheat and fertiliser—of which I do not complain—the railway service of Western Australia is suffering a handicap which takes the form of a concession.

Hon. J. Ewing: What do the other States charge?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I shall come to that in a moment.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is not the freight on wheat low because of the large turnover in comparison with other goods?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Of course. And not only that, but it is low because we are endeavouring to afford the primary producers of this State every facility for getting their product to market at the cheapest possible rate. I put forward these figures as showing that because of that policy the railways are charging freight rates for wheat and superphosphate which have indeed a great influence on the financial position of the department at the close of any year.

Hon. J. Ewing: It is a good policy.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Certainly. However, these facts cannot be denied. As to the rate on fertiliser, ours is the cheapest in Australia. The average distance the commodity was hauled during the 12 months ended on the 30th June last was 159 miles. The rates applicable to the various wheat-producing States for that distance are as follows:—Western Australia 5s. 4d., South Australia 11s. 8d., Victoria 7s. 4d., New South Wales 8s. There again I say that the policy which the present Government, and other Governments, and also our railway service have adopted is one of assisting the primary producers; and mainly because of that fact we find that after a season such as that of last year our railway service is unable to make ends meet.

Hon. J. Ewing: It was a good season.

Hon. V. Hamersley: The department made ends meet a few years ago.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, when conditions were totally different from those of last year. Let me give some more figures dealing with wheat. Our average haul of wheat is 142 miles, and the rates operating in the various States for that distance are—Western Australia 12s. 4d., South Australia 14s. 11d., Victoria 11s. 10d., New South Wales 14s. The Victorian charge is 11s. 10d. as against ours of 12s. 4d.

Hon. J. Cornell: Will the Minister quote the haulage distance in each case?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have not the table here, but in each case the same effect is apparent.

Hon. J. Cornell: Victoria has the shortest average haul.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Here in Western Australia the average haul is 142 miles. For the same distance the charge in Victoria is 11s. 10d., as against Western Australia's 12s. 4d.; in other words, the Victorian charge is 6d. per ton cheaper. It has to be remembered, however, that in Victoria the Government subsidise the railway system to the extent of approximately 10 per cent. on agricultural rates. Therefore the comparable figure would be 13s., in lieu of 11s. 10d. I submit those figures in all sincerity.

Hon. H. Seldon: They are good figures.

The HONORARY MINISTER: They are. As a matter of fact, I could have added considerably to those figures because I have taken much interest in this question during recent months. I find that we in Western Australia are entitled to a certain amount of consideration because of the fact that we are endeavouring to do so much to foster those primary industries upon which, hon. members declare, the prosperity of the State depends. When hon. members criticise the Government because the railways showed a loss of £179,000 last year, they should look for the reasons. When they declare that the cause of the deficit was to be found in the fact that the railway men work 44 hours a week, enjoy long service leave and carry out their duties under day work conditions, and that if those benefits were done away with the railways would show a profit, I reply that they must look deeper for the explanation. No one has argued that the

introduction of long service leave would not cost the railways anything. I do not think there is one hon. member in this Chamber who opposed the granting of long service leave to the railway men. Every one of us at one time or another has expressed his support of the proposal to grant that privilege to the railway employees.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Surely that is not so!

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am perfectly correct in making that statement.

Members: No.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Then why was long service leave granted as an administrative act instead of by way of an Act of Parliament?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not concerned as to why it was done in that particular way.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Why don't you tell us the reason for it being granted that way?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Because I was not responsible for it being done that way. The fact that long service leave has been granted to railway employees—

Hon. H. Seddon: And to all other Government employees—

The HONORARY MINISTER:—or that they have a 44 hour week and day work conditions, has practically nothing whatever to do with the deficit.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Those considerations have a tremendous amount to do with it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I think I have shown conclusively that if a few thousand pounds are involved in those considerations, there is a much larger amount involved in other matters.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You do not mean to say that it is merely a question of a few thousands?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is what I said.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is not over £150,000 per annum involved?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No. The hon. member does not appear to know what he is talking about.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Are you arguing that the only way to meet the deficit is to increase the rates.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is not my argument at all. I claim that the figures I have given are illuminating and demonstrate that a great proportion of our primary products are carried at a lower rate than the average cost per ton mile. That furnishes one reason for the deficit shown by the railways during the last financial year.

Hon. J. Nicholson: And you say that the other considerations complained of were not contributory causes at all?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have not said that. I have suggested that those members who have referred to them as explaining away the deficit should look a little deeper into the subject. If they did so they would find that whatever extra cost is involved under those headings is a mere bagatelle compared with other phases of the financial problem.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But do they not represent expenditure amounting to between £200,000 and £300,000?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No. We have every reason to be proud of the results achieved by the management of our railways during the past year or two.

Hon. J. Ewing: The management should reduce rates and so increase the traffic.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If that were done it would work out as the hon. member suggests in some directions, but not in others. Mr. Nicholson quoted what had been done in England by the London and North Western Railway Co. and he was not present when I dealt with that portion of his remarks. I claim that the conditions in the Old Country are quite different from those that obtain in Western Australia and that it is hard to make any reasonably fair comparison under that heading.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I pointed out clearly when I spoke that I did not offer those particulars as a comparison, but merely as a suggestion for the consideration of the railway officials.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member said he would furnish some suggestions that would enable the Government to exploit other avenues of revenue and so improve the finances of the railways. He suggested economies in the railway workshops and quoted what the London and North Western Railway Co. had done regarding wagon-building operations and with reference to road transport.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Cannot we compete with road transport?

The HONORARY MINISTER: We can in some directions, but in some ways we cannot possibly do so. If the Government were to follow up Mr. Nicholson's suggestions and apply what has been done by the London and North Western Co. to our own railways, we would have to listen to some severe criticism from members in this Chamber.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Cannot the railways compete with motor transport between Perth and Fremantle by reducing fares, installing petrol engines, and running a quarter-hour service?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not in a position to say whether that could be done.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I made that suggestion and you have not replied to it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I will reply to it by saying that the railway authorities are giving every consideration to questions of that description but so far they have not thought it feasible to adopt the hon. member's suggestion.

Hon. J. Cornell: I suggest one class on our suburban railways.

The HONORARY MINISTER: And I have no objection to that. Members may put forward suggestions to improve the condition of the railway service in the metropolitan area, but are we in a position to-day to put changes into operation that will affect the system as a whole and so affect the revenue to a much greater extent than if we merely dealt with the metropolitan service alone? As to the railway deficit, we have reason to be satisfied with the position in view of all the circumstances, more particularly when we consider the position in the other States of Australia where the deficits are much larger than ours. Those States are more developed and have a greater population to work on. In those States one would expect the task of squaring the ledger to be much easier than in Western Australia. When Mr. Nicholson was speaking, he drew a comparison between taxation imposed per head of the population in Western Australia and that levied in the Old Country. I do not think any such comparison fair because the conditions vary so much. Taxation in Britain is much heavier than it is in Western Australia to-day. When we compare taxation in this State with that imposed in

various Continental countries, it must be remembered that there are other factors to be taken into consideration, but Mr. Nicholson did not mention that phase.

Hon. V. Hamersley: If their taxation is heavier than ours, God help them!

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is considerably heavier. I was particularly interested in the remarks of Mr. Seddon when dealing with our finances and loan expenditure. The suggestion he made that taxation, if spread over a wider field, would be of advantage to the State will no doubt be considered by the Treasurer, for there is something to be said in favour of the proposal. It would apply more aptly in the Old Country than in Western Australia. But when the hon. member gave the House figures regarding loan expenditure during the last few years and went on to deal with imports and exports, he quoted statistics that should make us think. We are importing considerably more goods from the Eastern States than is necessary, and there is room for considerable improvement in that direction. On the other hand, the Western Australian trade balance in connection with oversea operations, is on the right side. We cut a rather sorry figure when we consider the imports from and exports to the Eastern States. We can blame quite a number of people for the latter position. Many articles are imported from the Eastern States that could be manufactured here. As it is we are finding employment for thousands of people in the Eastern States who could well be engaged in this State in manufacturing the goods we require. For instance, I was informed that the management of one of the most popular theatres in Perth have their programmes printed in the Eastern States.

Hon. J. Ewing: I suppose it is cheaper.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We have printing establishments in Western Australia capable of turning out as good a job, and I have no doubt they could give a quote that would be a fair one for the work.

Hon. J. Ewing: People always buy in the cheapest market.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is a small item, but I could quote many such instances in which the amount of money involved is great and small. So long as people are content to carry on in that way, so long will present conditions continue and our imports from the Eastern States will always be greater than they should be.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Who prevented McKay from manufacturing harvesters here?

The HONORARY MINISTER: So far as I know he prevented himself.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Your unions would not allow the workers here to accept the same conditions as those under which the men in Victoria are operating.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know that that prevented McKay from coming here; he has every right to please himself.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Your unions prevented him from coming.

The HONORARY MINISTER: McKay has the Arbitration Court to appeal to should he so desire. So far as I know the unions did not cause him to stay away.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But the men were not allowed to accept the same conditions as operated in Victoria.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know whether that was so, but the unions were in no way responsible, and McKay could have commenced operations here had he so desired. There are many articles that could be manufactured locally but people continue to import them from the Eastern States. The question of unemployment has received a great deal of attention from members. I do not desire to go into the subject at any great length, although it is the biggest problem facing Australia to-day. Criticism levelled at the Government on account of unemployment here has certainly not been very strong, because I think it is generally appreciated that unemployment is a subject that cannot be dealt with purely from a State point of view. For instance, we cannot solve unemployment in Western Australia without co-operation by all the other States of the Commonwealth. And at present unemployment is rife throughout the Commonwealth. In the Eastern States it is far worse than it is here. During my recent visit to the East I was astounded at the number of unemployed in the various capital cities. Previously I thought the position was fairly bad in Western Australia, but I can now assure members it is considerably worse in the Eastern States. They have had bad seasons and, principally as the result of that, they have large numbers of unemployed, while very many men looking for work have migrated from the Eastern States to Western Australia.

Hon. J. Ewing: Looking for land.

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, for work. I would not say that those who come

over here looking for land are unemployed. We have had many from the Eastern States with certain capital. They have come over intending to go on the land, and a large number of them have succeeded in securing land. But we have many others who have come over from the East frankly seeking work. To some extent it is owing to those men that we have so much unemployment in Western Australia at present. But it is no use seeking to explain our unemployment by one cause. It is a far bigger subject than many people think. The more one inquires into it, the more does one realise that the ramifications bringing about unemployment are much deeper than we in Western Australia can deal with. In almost every country in the world unemployment is rife at present. Notwithstanding Mr. Nicholson's statement that it is not so bad in America as in Australia, I venture to say it is many times worse in America than in the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I took it proportionately with the population.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If one cares to delve into the subject he will find that the very prosperity of a country is one reason for unemployment. That may seem a strange statement; nevertheless up to a point it is perfectly correct. The very efficiency we are all demanding in our industries is creating a certain amount of unemployment. The more one looks into the subject, the more clearly does he realise that we require for unemployment a remedy, shall I say more widespread than can possibly be applied in any one State alone.

Hon. H. Seddon: Have the Government taken into consideration the recommendation of the Development and Migration Committee—the appointment of a permanent committee?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That matter is receiving attention and I shall not be surprised if something is done in collaboration with the other States.

Hon. H. Seddon: Attention was drawn to it 12 months ago.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Not quite so long ago as that. However, the matter is receiving attention by all the State Governments. There again there is room for collaboration between the States and the Commonwealth, for if one State has had a bad season it is immediately reflected in other States in several ways, including the migration of men from

the stricken State to another more prosperous. So we have been getting large numbers of men from the Eastern States. They are of the best class of men, men who go looking for work, men who do not wait till work comes to them. When they know, as they do in this instance, that Western Australia just now is the one bright spot in the Commonwealth, they say, "If only we could get to Western Australia probably we should be all right." They do not require assistance to get here; they come here on their own resources.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Sometimes as slow-aways.

The HONORARY MINISTER: You cannot blame them. I would not blame any man for trying to get from a place where he has no prospects to another where he thinks he will have prospects.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And where there is a Government that will do anything for a man without money—not this Government alone, but previous Governments also.

The HONORARY MINISTER: At present we have in Western Australia a large number of men unemployed notwithstanding that we have had a series of prosperous years. And the unemployment is now all the year round instead of, as in the past, merely seasonal.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Could the Minister give us the figures of the arrivals and departures from the Eastern States during the last 12 months?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have not them here, but they have been prepared and they show that what I say is correct, namely that we have been receiving from the Eastern States a large number of men who have come here with the object of getting work. Also I know from the records of the State Labour Bureau that a large proportion of the men registered there are men from the Eastern States who have arrived here during the last few months. In America considerable time has been given to an investigation of the causes of unemployment. Quite a lot of literature has been made available, and the International Labour Office has published a number of informative books and pamphlets. In one of those pamphlets there is a table of index numbers which I think worth quoting. It bears out the statement I made a little while ago that the very efficiency of industry to-day is to an extent the cause

of some of the existing unemployment. A comparison between 1914 and the present year proves that in almost every industry a smaller number of men are now required to produce a given article or quantity of articles than were required in 1914. Not only that, but the smaller number of men are producing a long way more than is indicated by the ratio between the differences in the number of the men employed and in the quantity produced. The table I refer to, which is published in the "International Labour Review" issued by the International Labour Office, Volume 17, No. 6, June, 1928, is as follows:—

INDEX NUMBERS OF OUTPUT AND WAGES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1919-1927.

Year.	(1) Manu- factured Pro- ducts.	(2) Workers employed in fac- tories.	(3) Output per worker.	(4) Total wages paid.	(5) Wages paid per worker.
1919	100	100	100	100	100
1920	104	103	101	124	120
1921	80	82	98	84	102
1922	104	90	116	89	99
1923	120	104	115	113	109
1924	112	96	118	104	109
1925	125	96	132	107	113
1926	129	96	134	109	114
1927	126	92	137	105	114

For a proper appreciation of these figures it should first be remembered that between 1919 and 1925 the total population of the United States increased by 10 per cent. Next, it will be seen from Column 1 that in 1925 the increase in manufactured products as compared with 1919 was 25 per cent., that the proportion rose to 29 per cent. in 1926 and then fell slightly to 26 per cent. in 1927. The significance of that table of course is that those who were working were receiving higher wages, but were producing considerably more. The smaller number of workers, 92, were producing 126 units as against 100 units produced by 100 workers in 1919. I quote that as an instance of what is taking place, not only in America, but throughout the civilised world. As a result of that, I say we are going to be faced in the near future with the problem of how to deal with what I might call permanent unemployment, that there is likely to be an army of workers for whom there will be no work. For men who have reached middle age and who may no longer be required because of that and for various other

reasons, it will be extremely difficult to secure work in industry. I do not want to go into this matter at any great length, but I do say there are many causes for unemployment in this State and that those causes do not come under our control. Members know that as the result of the attitude of the banks last year there was not anything like the money available for development work in country districts that otherwise would have been available. Bad seasons in the East caused the banks—and the banks here are only branches of the Eastern States banks—to restrict the amount of money available for that purpose. That had the effect of throwing on the labour market a number of men who otherwise would have been employed. In addition the fact that our work here, or a great proportion of it, is seasonal, also had its effect on the situation. Then there were the falling prices of wheat and wool, the two staple primary products of this State. Because of that, too, the amount of money available was less than we had reason to expect. It is the cumulative effect of the whole of the causes that we have to consider. Consequently it cannot be expected that we in Western Australia should solve the problem while it exists to even a greater extent in other States and in other parts of the world. The State Government have provided all the work they can. They cannot undertake to employ every man who may come into the State looking for work, but we have done as well, if not better than, previous Administrations in that regard.

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

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** Before tea I was dealing with the question of unemployment. The problem is world-wide, and is not peculiar to Western Australia. We are feeling the effects of bad seasons in the other States, and, in several other ways which are beyond the control of the Government, the position is such that we are unable to do more than we have done. I have referred certain remarks of Mr. Cornell to the departments concerned. With regard to pine plantations at Esperance, I am advised that the Government are aware that the company met with some difficulty in their primary object of planting pines, and are now considering certain proposals put up by the concern for the utilisation of the land on more economical lines. Mr. Cornell also re-

ferred to the payments by the Agricultural Bank for fallowing. The general manager of the bank says—

Referring to the Hon. J. Cornell's remarks about payment for fallowing, the policy of the bank has previous to the present year been opposed to payment, it being considered reasonable to require clients to do their own fallowing. Consequent on crop failures in some of the outer eastern areas, it became necessary to provide special assistance to enable settlers to carry on. To this end the bank decided to make special advances for fallowing. The object of this policy was designed to serve two purposes. (1) to enable distressed settlers to earn sustenance pending harvest return, and to assist settlers to get on to a proper farming basis. It is not the intention of the trustees to continue fallowing advances after the present season unless circumstances necessitate it. Provided the season finishes satisfactorily, there is every reason to believe that clients should be in a position to finance their own fallowing next year. The demands upon the bank for ordinary developmental purposes are very heavy, and the Treasurer may experience some difficulty in finding additional funds to finance fallowing on a large scale. We consider that clients may reasonably be expected to do this work without assistance from the bank.

Mr. Cornell also referred to water supplies at Bullfinch, Wheatley and Turkey Hill. I understand the position is rather serious. This is recognised by the Government, and consideration is being given to the whole question.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is serious from the point of view of productivity.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** It is very very serious from all points of view. I understand the settlers are carting water at present from the goldfields water supply stand pipes free of charge. There has been a proposal to reticulate from the goldfields water supply, but it is estimated that such a scheme would cost £88,000. In any event, the whole subject is receiving the earnest consideration of the Government, and probably some announcement will be made in the near future. The hon. member also referred to the water supply at Dulyalbin. I am advised that this place is understood to be in the Migration Commission area. The locality can be reticulated from a proposed district water supply with headworks at Mt. Hampton. Meanwhile the settlers can obtain water from two wells provided last summer by the department at Dulyalbin Rock.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is it not a fact that the Migration Commission have cut out that area?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I cannot say. Mr. Cornell also referred to McPherson's Rock reservoir. I am advised that this work is completed, the cost being £21,700. It was established primarily for the railway water supply, and for a few farms near the reservoir should settlement be attempted in that locality. It was never intended to convey water to Dowak or Salmon Gums from McPherson's Rock. Mr. Seddon raised a question with regard to probate on properties. That matter has been referred to the department concerned, and I have here a long report which he is at liberty to peruse. A consideration of the practicable results of Mr. Seddon's proposal shows that if carried out they would give preference to persons residing elsewhere over persons residing in the State. "A" may die leaving much property elsewhere, but little in Western Australia. The administrator of the estate would take out probate where the bulk of the property is situated, and would have to re-seal the probate here, at a small fee. To allow the re-sealing without the payment of fees or duty, as suggested, would be to relieve the estate of all local taxation. "B" dies and leaves no property elsewhere, but a small property in Western Australia. In this case the administrator must take out probate here and pay the fees and duty. To allow "A" to re-seal at a nominal fee as proposed would be to give him preference over the local individual. Reference was made by Mr. Seddon, as well as by Mr. Harris, to the lack of statistics dealing with Arbitration Court work. I believe one member wanted to know what the Government had done, and why certain action had not been taken as suggested by the president of the Court and Mr. Somerville, the workers' representative. The remarks were noted by the Government and certain conferences have taken place. The position has been thoroughly considered, but it is not possible to deal with it in a proper way only in Western Australia. It requires the co-operation of the Statistical Departments of the other States. The State Government Statistician, Mr. Bennett, is now dealing with the matter. Very shortly a statistical conference will be held at Canberra, when possibly this question will be considered with a view to the position as disclosed by the Arbitration Court being

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remedied. I have here a long document from the Government Statistician which is available to members interested. Mr. Harris also referred to the redistribution of seats. He made what he described as a remarkable disclosure, and stated that some of the new districts would be found to contain a smaller number than the minimum provided, whereas others would contain a larger number of electors than was provided.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And some above the maximum.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The matter was left in the hands of the commissioners. They had an onerous duty to perform. All possible information was supplied to them, but, until the Electoral Department have completed their work, it is not possible to arrive at the actual position. What the hon. member has said is correct. Immediately the authorities have completed their work, the matter will be considered. I regret that the hon. member should have spent so much time in research work on the rolls in the belief that he was the first person to make this discovery.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I am glad someone knew about it before I did.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The commission are to be commended for the way in which they did their work. If there should be any anomalies, as apparently there are, we can only say that the commission did their best. I believe they carried out their duty so far as they could in accordance with the Act. If anomalies are found to exist, we shall probably have to deal with them when the work of the department is completed.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Someone had the perspicacity to pick a pocket borough out of a big one.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is not a fair inference to draw that any particular candidate was in possession of information of that kind.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Anyone could work that out as well as I could.

The HONORARY MINISTER: One or two members have referred to the position of the State owing to the decision of the Loan Council in Sydney that borrowing must be reduced by 20 per cent. I regret that Western Australia should be faced with that position at the present time.

There was no alternative. It was apparent that it was not possible to raise all the money that all the States required. It was, therefore, necessary to arrive at a unanimous decision as to what should be done in all the circumstances. It was decided to make a 20 per cent. reduction in the loan programmes of all the States in the belief that this was the best solution of the difficulty. I regret that the criticism in financial circles in the Old Country levelled against the methods of Australian Governments should be one of the causes for the unfavourable position of Australia generally on the London money market. I certainly consider that the criticism to a great extent is unfair: it has not taken all the circumstances into consideration, and I noticed with pleasure that the Prime Minister this week saw fit to make a statement to the effect that the full facts of the case were not fully understood in the Old Country. I believe he is quite correct. However, we must make the best of the position. We in this State can claim that our loan moneys have been expended in the best possible way, and certainly we can claim that the larger proportion of our loans has been expended on reproductive works. When one examines the actual figures in regard to loan expenditure during the last five years, it is found that the greater part of the money was spent in the country areas in developmental work which must yield good results in the years to come, if the State is to progress as we expect it will. While I do not wish to quote all the figures I have before me, I may point out that approximately about three-fourths of the loan expenditure for which the present Government were responsible was spent outside the metropolitan area and is calculated in the truest sense to have been spent in developmental work such as railways, harbours and rivers, country water supplies, the development of agriculture, assistance to settlers, group settlements, land settlement, the College of Agriculture, the Agricultural Bank working capital, the purchase of wire netting for settlers, the construction of roads and bridges, and loans to local authorities for the erection of hospitals, etc. The total spent was £3,120,000, showing that the greater proportion of our loan expenditure was devoted to reproductive works. I appreciate the fact that members have lis-

tened attentively to my remarks and I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [7.50]: I wish to join other members in welcoming you, Sir, back to the State, and in expressing my sincere appreciation of the good work you did for Western Australia during your stay in the Mother Country. Your reputation in public and private life, the high office which you fill as President of the Legislative Council, and the distinction you have gained in the Press, qualified you to exercise an influence which few could wield; and with the sole idea of benefiting the State, you availed yourself of opportunities to make known our resources and direct attention to Western Australia as a profitable field for investment and enterprise. You were able to meet the leading British statesmen, and financial advisers, and give them the fullest information concerning our present position and future prospects. You were able to do even more than that. By articles in influential magazines and in the Press, generally, including the great London "Times," you extended the sphere of your activity, and addressed a mighty audience which could not have been reached by any other means. All this must have its results—results which, in ways it is difficult to estimate, and impossible to foresee, should conduce to the material advantage of Western Australia. There are two other hon. members to whom congratulations are due—to Mr. Mann, on his having been selected by the Federated Provincial Press Association of Australia to represent them at the Empire Press Union in London next year. It is a splendid tribute to Mr. Mann that he should have been chosen for this mission from among the country pressmen of the Commonwealth. I have also to congratulate Mr. Franklin on his improved status as Lord Mayor of Perth. It is an honour conferred on the City and a distinction conferred on himself. Coming to the Address-in-reply Mr. Baxter is under a misconception in regard to the petrol tax. I can assure him that it was definitely decided by the Government, some time ago, not to introduce any legislation which would impose such a tax. Mr. Baxter will remember that when the Government did collect a petrol tax the Act then in operation provided that rebates could be claimed on account of petrol purchased but not used for the purpose of propelling vehicles on roads, and it also granted exemption to petrol sold

in the North-West portion of the State. In the course of his remarks Mr. Baxter made reference to the braxy-like disease and the red mite. Let me say that so far as the former is concerned, the present Government, in May, 1925, decided to appoint a veterinary pathologist and one of the main objects of the appointment was to investigate the braxy-like disease. During the first three years a great proportion of this officer's attention was devoted to the investigation, but as it was found that the whole of his time was required for this purpose, an agreement was entered into with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research under which it was arranged for Mr. Bennetts to be taken off all other veterinary problems and concentrate on the braxy-like disease investigation. In order to assist Mr. Bennetts in the field work the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, in March of this year, provided an assistant, Mr. R. Harley, M.R.C.V.S. A tremendous amount of work has been undertaken by Mr. Bennetts and his assistant in the endeavour to discover the cause of this disease, and a report has just been received from him in which he states that the immediate cause of death has been discovered. This is a micro-organism, *bacillus welchii*, but there are various factors contributing to the production of the disease which are not yet fully understood and are being further investigated. Preventive measures are being considered, but at this stage no further facts can be made available. It will be seen from what I have said that the Commonwealth Government through the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research are assisting the State very materially. They are paying the salaries of both Mr. Bennetts and Mr. Harley and the investigation is being carried out by these officers who are working in conjunction with our Department of Agriculture. Regarding the Red Mite, Mr. Baxter evidently means the Red Legged Earth Mite. He is mistaken in saying that it is confined to the Kojonup district, as it has been found from Geraldton to Denmark and also in portion of the wheat belt. Further, it is not singular to this State as reports have been received that it is known in each of the other States and has caused serious damage to the pastures there. Our Entomologist has given a great deal of time to this problem and many experiments have been conducted. A pamphlet has been issued and recently a report has been published in the newspapers

throughout the south-western portion of the State. The Director of Agriculture writes:—

Although the pest can be controlled in small areas by the use of sprays, the only possibility of coping with it over large areas, unless some biological means can be discovered, is by fallowing the ground on which the pasture is growing every third or fourth year.

In reply to the questions raised by Mr. Baxter in his criticisms of the Railway Department, I can assure him that that department is fully alive to the existence of competition in respect to carriage of stock. But the small number of stock which comes from the Bruce Rock line does not warrant special trains. The department, however, are quite prepared to make special arrangements whenever the stock owners are prepared to send 10 single trucks of stock on any one day. At present it is necessary to load before dark on the Monday the stock which arrives at York at 2.10 p.m. on Tuesday. It is picked up from York at 6.45 p.m. on Tuesday and arrives at the markets at 2.10 a.m. on Wednesday. It is not possible to place the Bruce Rock stock on the train leaving Pantapin. The traffic from Bruce Rock is so small that it does not warrant a special trip from Pantapin, which is the terminal point from a locomotive standpoint. If senders will co-operate with the department to the extent I have previously mentioned, special arrangements will be made for the connection even though it may involve a loss. Dealing with stock from Brunswick, it may be mentioned that the train this is lifted by is one that deals with perishables for the Perth market, and it would be impossible for it to shunt at intermediate stations and run to time. Furthermore, the train has a full load from Brunswick. Hence the necessity for dealing with stock from other stations by different trains. With regard to Mr. Baxter's statements regarding the Forests Department, I would point out that when land is dedicated as a State forest it is removed from the operations of the Land Act, and only the provisions of the Forests Act, 1918, can be applied to such land. Section 29 of the Act gives the holders of pastoral leases the right to continue for the unexpired term of their pastoral leases at the same rental as is paid under the Land Act. The Forests Act provides—

All pastoral leases of land situated within the boundaries of a State forest shall, at the expiration of six months from such dedication,

and by force of this Act alone, be surrendered to the Crown but every lessee shall during such period of six months have the option to acquire under this Act a forest lease of the land demised by the surrendered lease for the remainder of the term thereof, at the rent thereby reserved.

The Forests Department are therefore compelled to grant forest leases for the unexpired term of the pastoral leases held over country which has been dedicated as State forest since the original pastoral leases were issued. They have no option but to do so. Section 40 of the Forests Act reads as follows:—

The Conservator may, with the approval of the Minister, grant on such conditions as he thinks fit, and for any term not exceeding twenty years, leases of land within a State forest, for grazing, agriculture, and other purposes not opposed to the interests of forestry. Such leases are, in this Act, referred to as "forest leases."

Those two sections of the Act answer Mr. Baxter's contention that "such a thing was never intended by Parliament. From my quotations it will be seen that that was just what Parliament intended.

Hon. J. Ewing: You cannot get any settlement of the land in that way.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Except where compelled to do so under Section 29 of the Act, the Forests Department grant forest grazing leases only over country on which reforestation operations cannot be carried out within a period of years. It does not necessarily follow that that country will not be required for the support of sawmills and their employees (that is for trade cutting) within that period. Consequently it is let for such a term as the Conservator considers advisable in view of all the circumstances. The proposal to ringbark the karri forest one of the most valuable hardwoods in the world—the envy of all other countries and a species which many other countries are trying to grow—is an astonishing one. Karri forest, I am told carries up to the remarkable volume of 400 loads in the round of milling timber per acre, representing a wealth to the State of up to £700 per acre. At present karri is being cut by only two mills employing 380 men, with 1,900 people dependent on the mills. If, as Mr. Baxter suggests, the small area of karri forest should be ringbarked and destroyed, those mills would be closed down, the men would

be thrown out of employment and the existence of a lucrative industry would be terminated. Mr. Baxter complained of the present procedure in regard to the revaluation of land and the existing system of appeal. The present scheme of revaluation was recommended by the State Commissioner of Taxation and approved by the Mitchell Government, in 1921. It was introduced primarily with the object of placing all taxpayers on a fair and equitable basis of taxation, and of removing many of the anomalies existing in the different road board and municipal districts throughout the State. The work was commenced shortly after the amalgamation of the two Taxation Departments (Federal and State) in July 1921, and has continued ever since, and the fact that not one single appeal has been made to the Court of Review or the Supreme Court in eight years is ample evidence, I think, that taxpayers are satisfied with the values fixed by the department for State land tax purposes. Road boards and other taxing authorities are under no obligation to adopt the Taxation Department's values for rating purposes. But where they do so without any reduction in the departmental values, the department, when requested, have not only assisted such road boards to defend the values in a Court of Appeal, but have helped the boards by placing before them all the facts adopted by the Department in arriving at the values determined on, and assisting in every way possible both parties to arrive at a settlement and at no cost to the appellants. Forty-eight road districts have been revalued: 34 of them have been supplied with the departmental values for rating purposes and 504 road board appeals have been dealt with by the district valuers and settled amicably with little or no cost to the appellants. Mr. Baxter stated—

In addition, someone may come along from, say, South Australia where, in many instances, the values are double and treble the values in Western Australia. That person may pay £7 or £8 an acre for a property. Does that put up the value of the land to that amount? That is the basis adopted by the Department.

That is an erroneous statement, and I am assured that such a loose and unscientific method of valuing has never been adopted by the department. In order to show the departmental procedure in reference to the points raised by Mr. Baxter, I submit for his information and that of other members a few facts from the Chief Valuer

on the methods adopted by the department in revaluing State lands. He says—

In regard to the creation of a Land Appeal Board, I wish to state that under the State Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, a taxpayer has the right to lodge an objection, and if disallowed by the department, the right to appeal to the Court of Review on all questions of fact, and to the Supreme Court on points of law, when he is dissatisfied with the departmental values. An appeal to the Court of Review does not necessarily mean to a court constituted in Perth. The State Commissioner of Taxation may recommend the Government to appoint a Court of Review for any district within the State where appellants may lodge their appeals at a minimum cost to themselves. Under the Federal Land Tax Act, a Board of Appeal has been constituted to deal with appeals of taxpayers whose land has an unimproved value in excess of £5,000, and any decision arrived at by this board may be applied to State land tax assessments as well. So far, there has been no necessity for the Federal Land Tax Appeal Board to visit this State to hear appeals, and no appeals have been made to the State Court of Review during the last eight years.

It would appear from the statement of the Chief Valuer that there is no necessity for the creation of another Land Appeal Board as suggested by Mr. Baxter. It is true that the deletion from the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act of the £250 deduction of unimproved value from the land tax assessments of taxpayers who derive their income from cultivation or use of agricultural land, has not benefited the small owner. The small owner, nevertheless, gets a benefit by having half the amount of the land tax allowed as a rebate where he is assessable for income tax on the income derived from his land. That point is never made by members when criticising the Government for having deleted the £250 deduction. Mr. Stewart is not correct in his statements that "Instead of that rebate being allowed it was removed" and "the former rebate that was in operation that either the land tax or the income tax, whichever was the smaller, should be exempted." The Commissioner of Taxation explains the matter:—

The rebate referred to operated originally in this way: If a taxpayer derived his income from the land, and his land was subject to land tax, he received an abatement of so much of the land tax as equalled the income tax. That is to say that the land tax being a charge on the land had to be paid in full. Supposing that the amount to £5, and the amount of tax on the income of the taxpayer was £7 10s.,

he paid the £5 land tax in full, and when assessed for income tax, was allowed an abatement of £5 (the amount of land tax) and paid as a balance £2 10s. income tax. Under the law as it exists to-day, he gets a rebate of one-half the amount of the land tax; that is to say taking the example above-mentioned, he would get a rebate of £2 10s., but seeing that the rate of land tax has been increased by 74 per cent., and to a smaller extent by the removal of the £250 deduction from the total unimproved value, the taxpayer gets the benefit of one-half the amount of the increase in the rate and one-half the amount of the land tax calculated on the £250 deduction. Take the case of a small land owner who was exempt previously from land tax on account of the exemption of £250 unimproved value. This taxpayer now pays tax on the £250, say at 1d. (the improved rate) equals £1 0s. 10d. tax, and if he derives a taxable income from the land, he is allowed a rebate of one-half the amount of the land tax, namely, 10s. 5d., and therefore he is only taxed for land tax to the extent of one-half the present rate.

I do not understand Mr. Stewart's statement, namely—

Another is that, through following the political party he represents, the Premier, when he taxed on unimproved land values without exemption, introduced the vicious principle of putting the man who did not improve his land in a more favourable position than he was before the Government brought that legislation into operation.

The man who does not improve his land is taxed at the unimproved rate, namely 2d. in the pound. Whereas the man who improves his land and works it, and derives an income, is taxed at the lower rate, namely, 1d. in the pound, and in addition obtains a rebate of one-half the amount of the land tax, and a reduction from the amount of his income tax. This principle operated before any amendment was made by the present Government in the rate of tax, or in the deletion of the £250 exemption referred to by Mr. Stewart. I therefore do not understand how the man who did not improve his land is in a more favourable position than the man who did. Mr. Stewart's statement will not bear examination for one moment. Finally, as I have repeatedly pointed out, the Government derive no direct benefit from the increase of the rate of the land tax. Railway freights on goods used by the agricultural and mining communities have been so reduced as to mop up the whole of the tax. This refers to mining machinery, agricultural machinery, kerosene, drapery and

groceries—goods that are usually consumed or utilised in a farming, a pastoral, or a mining area. The first year's loss to the Railway Department was £45,000, and the amount is increasing as years go by. In respect to Mr. Stewart's remarks re demurrage at Fremantle, at the commencement of the season wheat acquiring agents met the Commissioner of Railways to ascertain what was the best he could do in the way of transportation of the then season's crop. He promised that 300,000 bags per week would be hauled. Trucks were loaded up in the country, and when the strike came many thousands of bags of wheat were either loaded or in transit. The Government were not responsible for the strike, nor were the acquiring agents. Trucks were being held under load, and railway earnings were seriously retarded in consequence. The penalty charge in no way covered the Railway Department for the losses incurred: extra staff were sent out to deal with a record harvest, and the temporary stoppage cost the railways several thousands, but they were magnanimous enough to reduce the demurrage by 50 per cent. The amount mentioned by the hon. member, namely £3,000, is incorrect, as the final sum paid by all firms was £1,241 10s. The matter of wheat haulage is evidently not quite understood by Mr. Stewart. To organise a staff and the necessary train service to transport a harvest of 40,000,000 bushels, and then at the very end to be required to transport only 35,000,000 bushels means that arrangements would be made to deal with the extra traffic by increasing the facilities. When it was found that the increase of wheat would not eventuate, readjustments would become necessary, but in the meantime considerable additional expenditure had been incurred. Wheat is not a paying proposition on its own. When there is a bumper harvest, it of necessity entails rail haulage of higher-rated goods, which enables the wheat to be carried at such a low rate. On the figures now before the House the loss on the railways was £178,699, and on this loss the goods and livestock receipts averaged 1.71d. per ton per mile. When it is remembered that wheat returned 1.04d. per ton per mile, it can hardly be termed paying traffic. The only other commodity carried at a lower return than this was superphosphate. But, as I said before, when there is a bumper har-

vest, there is more prosperity; and consequently more work for the railways to do. Mr. Stewart stated that the Government urged the Wagin Road Board to sign a contract with a contractor for about £5,000 for erecting a hospital building on Government land. He says this was done in 1927, a fortnight before the Government had amended the law enabling the local authorities to use up to 10 per cent. of their rates by way of interest and sinking fund in respect of certain loan or capital expenditure. He declares it was an illegal act, and he asks, "Why should the Government urge the local authorities to do such a thing, to do an 'illegal act'?" Permit me to say that Mr. Stewart is very much at sea on this subject. In the first place, the Government did no urging whatever in this connection. The Government do not urge local authorities to enter into contracts for the building of hospitals. The attitude adopted is that if the people of a district desire a hospital, or improvements to an existing hospital, they must find half the money and the Government find the other half. Secondly, no amendment of existing legislation was necessary in 1927 to enable a road board to subsidise a hospital scheme, even beyond 10 per cent. Legislation passed in 1919 gave them full powers in this respect, and they were not subject in any way to the 10 per cent. restriction. If Mr. Stewart will read Section 160, Subsection 20, of the Act of 1919, he will be satisfied on that point. Where the illegality comes in, as suggested by Mr. Stewart, I certainly do not understand. He says the hospital was erected on Crown land. That is a fact. It is also a fact that all hospitals supported by the Government are erected on Class A Reserves, specifically set aside for hospital purposes. For years it has been the practice that the local people, often with financial aid from their respective local authorities, find half the cost of new buildings, so that a considerable amount of money received through these channels is sunk in hospitals erected on such reserves. Where the illegality comes in, it would be interesting to discover. Mr. Stewart asked what action could the local authorities or those connected with the hospital take against the contractor if he failed to carry out the erection of the building. It is not a concern of the contractor whether the person had a right to build on a particular block or not. However, the fact remains that

every hospital, throughout the State, supported by the Government is erected on Government land.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The contractor would simply be guilty of a breach if he failed to put up the building.

Hon. G. Fraser: Mr. Stewart will be highly popular in Wagin.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Stewart stated that not only had the Government a vermin tax, but in addition they wanted the agriculturists and pastoralists to find the money for the destruction of vermin, and they also sought to charge the Vermin Board with the administrative costs. This is not correct. The whole of the administrative work is carried out free of charge by officers of the Department of Agriculture. There was a motion last year for the disallowance of a regulation under which the pastoral and agricultural representatives on the Vermin Advisory Board could draw their expenses from the fund. But the motion was defeated in this House without a division. That ought to be a sufficient reply to the hon. member. Although the Government do not contribute to the Central Vermin Fund, they do provide other services in connection with the control of vermin. The cost of these for the year ended 30th June, 1929, exclusive of the amounts paid to salaried officers, was £22,357. The sum provides for the upkeep of the vermin fences, the supply of poison to vermin boards at less than half the actual cost, and also for a number of men employed throughout the year poisoning and fumigating on lands supposed to be breeding grounds for vermin. It might be mentioned that in no other State of the Commonwealth do the Government accept any responsibility for destroying the vermin on reserves. Mr. Stewart quotes some words used by the Minister for Justice with regard to sandalwood royalties, and in dealing with them he says—

The statement that the Conservator could not use the money for which it was set apart was false, because there is nothing which says that sandalwood royalties shall be used for the re-establishment of sandalwood.

It is a strong accusation to make to allege that a Minister made a false statement. But it is not the Minister who made a false statement; it is Mr. Stewart who made a rash statement—a statement he should have verified before launching it. Mr. Willcock was quite right in what he said, as to the use

to which money is restricted. If Mr. Stewart, when he reads my remarks, will look up the proviso to Section 2, Subsection (1) of the Forests Act Amendment Act of 1924, he will find that it reads—

Provided that ten per centum of the net revenue from sandalwood, or the sum of five thousand pounds, whichever sum shall be the greater, shall be credited to the said special account at the Treasury and applied to the regrowth of sandalwood.

Hon. J. Cornell: I think Mr. Stewart was referring to the parent Act.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Stewart was alluding to what Mr. Willcock was referring—the £5,000. If the law says, as it does say, that the money shall be credited to a special account at the Treasury and applied to the regrowth of sandalwood, surely it cannot be applied to the regrowth of anything else. So Mr. Willcock was right, and Mr. Stewart is wrong.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Is Mr. Stewart ever right?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Again, Mr. Stewart alleged that the Government had done various illegal acts and had been getting the local governing authorities to do illegal acts also. In proof of this he read a letter from the secretary of the Wagin Water Board to the effect that the board had been advised to strike a supplemental rate of 2s. 6d. in the £, and claimed that this could not legally be done. The facts are these: The Wagin Water Board agreed to levy a rate of 3s. in the pound when the new scheme was completed and handed over. On the 1st February last the Minister visited Wagin and handed over the scheme to the board. On that occasion the board renewed the undertaking they had previously given. It is true there is no provision in the Water Boards Act for the levying of a supplemental rate. A low rate of 6d. in the pound had been struck for the year commencing the 1st November last. This was sufficient to meet the board's obligations in regard to the old scheme, but 2s. 6d. in the pound less than was necessary to finance the new scheme. Notwithstanding the fact that there was no specific provision in the Water Boards Act for the levying of a supplemental rate, the department, on the advice of the Solicitor General, wrote to the board and asked them to levy a supplemental rate to bring the total up to 3s. in the pound. It was the opinion of the Solicitor General that that could be done.

It is understood that the board obtained other legal advice, and the Solicitor General then advised that in the circumstances a short Bill should be introduced to enable the Wagin Water Board to do what they thought was proper.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The Bill is here, and you should look at it!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I looked through it to-day. The Bill will be introduced at the earliest possible moment, and this will have the effect of validating the action taken by the Water Board on the 27th July, when, at a special meeting, the Board instructed the secretary to levy a supplemental rate. By letter, dated 7th August, the board asked that legislation be introduced to legalise their action, and they have received an assurance that this is about to be done. When I saw the attitude that Mr. Stewart was adopting, I was amazed. A suspicion ran through my mind that the Wagin Water Board might be trying to evade their responsibilities to the Government. But they have set themselves right on that point. Last night I was handed a copy of a telegram that had been received from the Mayor of Wagin with regard to Mr. Stewart's criticism. The telegram read as follows:—

The following resolution was unanimously carried at last night's meeting of the Wagin Municipal Council: The members of the Council and Water Board very much regret that material and correspondence supplied by Mr. C. C. Keyser, Town Clerk, to Mr. Hector Stewart, in connection with his speech in Upper House on 6th August, was given without the slightest knowledge or consent of the members of Council and Water Board, and further, the Council and citizens of Wagin appreciate what the Government have done for them. Edgar Hill, Mayor.

Having read the telegram, it is not necessary for me to say any more on the subject.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is only necessary for you to look at the Bill and ascertain if it meets the position.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think it fills the bill.

Hon. V. Hamersley: I think the Bill justifies what Mr. Stewart said.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In referring to legislation brought down last session, Mr. Stewart said the Government proposed to tax every water supply, small or large, that was established in the country and had been in operation for some time. "That," he added, "was blocked by this House." That was a very unfair statement to make. It is true

some members of the House feared that the Government would take advantage of the wording of the Bill to tax the settlers for wells and small tanks, which had been put down many years ago. To show how ridiculous any Government would make themselves—how bereft of all commonsense they would be to do such a thing—I may say that the Government could only rate for sinking fund and interest, approximately 8 per cent. on the outlay, and the suggestion that the Government would create a water area and raise, say, £8 to meet interest and sinking fund on a well that had cost £100, or 12 on a tank that had cost £150 in the days long since gone by—that is something which one could not expect would impress itself on the mind of any one who had given the matter much thought. Mr. Stewart says the House blocked the Government in this respect. As a matter of fact, it was I who did the blocking at the request of the Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies when I found that a few hon. members had fears that the Government would lose their head and tax settlers on every twopenny ha'penny water hole. I moved a further proviso be added to Section 2 as follows:—

That land shall not be rateable in respect of the cost of works constructed prior to the 1st of January, 1925.

This amendment was in keeping with the intentions of the Government, and it was accepted by the House. Mr. Wittenoom dealt with a number of railway matters. I have to inform him that the erection of a new station at Pingelly will be commenced in about three weeks time. As regards shipment of wheat and wool at Albany, I may mention that over 1½ million bags of wheat were shipped at Geraldton without the use of a crane. The ship's gear is considered far and away the best method of loading wheat and wool and fruit. It is admitted that the present crane at Albany will not plumb the hatch of large ships, but even if a crane were supplied which would do this, it is very doubtful if it would be used. A charge is made for the use of a crane and only in very isolated cases is it ordered. That is the experience of the Department. Touching the erection of sheds on the jetty for the storage of fruit, it would be impossible, I am told, to do this on the present structure. Furthermore, the revenue received from the jetty at Albany does not warrant an expenditure of many

thousands of pounds sterling in meeting the cost of the works. Mr. Miles passed some strictures on the administration of the water supply at Port Hedland. He complains about the high charge made to pearling luggers. I may say for the information of Mr. Miles that the Port Hedland Water Supply is under the control of the Port Hedland Road Board, which exercises the functions of a water board, and if Mr. Miles has any quarrel in this regard, it should be with that body. No doubt the charge for water supplied to shipping is higher than the charge made to ordinary consumers. But this is the practice at all ports not only here, but in the Eastern States. The reason is that the supply of water to shipping usually necessitates the attendance of a special man to turn it on and measure it, apart from the fact that a special main has to be laid on to jetties, and properly maintained. The matter, however, is one within the jurisdiction of the Port Hedland Water Board, who should know their business, and should not act contrary to the best interests of the people there.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But that water is brought in by the railways and sold by them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The whole business is controlled by the Port Hedland Road Board as a water board.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I think the information is wrong.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I received my information from the Under Secretary for Works.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Still, I think it is wrong.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Miles says the "Kangaroo" was chartered by the Shell Oil Company to bring petrol from the Far East, and the Government charged an extra 2s. a case to go to Port Hedland to land it. He contends that no extra charge should have been made, and that the Port Hedland residents should not be asked to pay more for their petrol than the people of Beadon. Mr. Miles is very much out in his deduction that the Port Hedland people are unduly penalised by the "Kangaroo" calling in at the port on her way from Singapore to deliver petrol. As a matter of fact the petrol is landed there at approximately 2s. per case cheaper than could be done if it were shipped through

Fremantle to that port. In justification of the charge per case made for deviating to Port Hedland, the facts speak for themselves. On the run down from Singapore to Fremantle, via Port Hedland and Onslow, the mileage is 2,648 miles. If the vessel runs from Singapore via Onslow only to Fremantle, the mileage is 2,372. Therefore the deviation necessitates an increased travelling of 276 miles, or 39 hours. Port Hedland is a tidal port, and hence it is possible that a delay of anything up to eleven hours may be occasioned waiting for the tide to make. As the tide makes every twelve hours, once the vessel is in Port Hedland, she must wait twelve hours to get out again, even though her work may take only six hours. Petrol is classed as a dangerous cargo. It can only be worked according to regulations between sunrise and sunset. This means that if the vessel arrived on a night tide the unloading could not start until the next morning, and the vessel would be held in the port for twenty-hours before she could get out. The extra freight charged on petrol landed at Onslow on a similar run shows a difference against Port Hedland in this connection of 1s. 3d. per case, and this is more than justified on the facts. If you throw a vessel 30 hours out of her course, someone has to pay for it.

Hon. V. Hamersley: But she would call at Hedland every time she passed there.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, she does not. It is not an anomaly—as stated by Mr. Miles—for Port Hedland residents to pay more than Onslow residents, as the whole basis of any railway or ship freight charges to places on any run is distance, and all commodities shipped from Fremantle pay a higher freight to Port Hedland than to Onslow. Mr. Miles makes an unfair attack on the officers of the State ships. He alleges that they dictate to the Government as to when they will and will not go into a port. No such thing has ever occurred in my experience. There has never been any attempt at dictation.

Mr. Miles: Why did not the "Koolinda" call there on the 30th May last, when there was plenty of water?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will go into that.

Mr. Miles: And why has not the "Kangaroo" ever called at Port Hedland until this year?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Masters are expected to, and do, consider the safety of their vessels and the lives of those on board. Those officers I have found to be thoroughly loyal to the service and anxious to promote its interests in every legitimate way.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And they run ahead of time and leave passengers on the coast.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Then it is the hon. member's duty to notify me of that as soon as he is aware of it. Masters of the State vessels are as amenable to discipline as the masters employed by any private shipping service, and to suggest otherwise is grossly unjust. Mr. Miles says the "Kangaroo" has gone into Port Hedland only during the last year or so. The argument advanced has been that there is not sufficient room at Port Hedland, that she is too long. "But," added Mr. Miles, "privately owned ships, longer than the 'Kangaroo,' have been trading there." Mr. Gray interjected: "Which are the ships longer than the 'Kangaroo'?" and Mr. Miles replied—"The Gascoyne is about the same length."

Hon. G. W. Miles: What is the difference between them?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have here a comparison of the dimensions of the two vessels as follows:—

M.v. "Kangaroo" — Length, 365.2ft. breadth, 50.1ft.; depth, 26.5ft.; draft, 23.3ft.; tonnage, 4,393. S.s. "Gascoyne"—Length, 361ft.; breadth, 46.2ft.; depth, 22.2ft.; draft, 20.6ft.; tonnage, 3,669.

This discloses quite a considerable difference in the two vessels. Masters of the 'Kangaroo' have not at any time suggested the vessel could not be taken to Port Hedland, providing the tides served, and the vessel has been to the port on several occasions when business was to be done and the call was justified. The principal work for the "Kangaroo" on the coast has been during the cattle shipping season, when her schedule of voyages has been arranged to allow the greatest possible number of cattle to be brought south, and without any regard as to tides. Port Hedland is a tidal port, which can only be entered by this vessel on five days out of each fourteen days, and it is well served by the regular calling of all other vessels trading on the coast. With reference to the remarks made by Mr. Miles regarding the pleuro line in the Kimberleys, the pleuro line was originally a tick

line dividing the East Kimberleys, which were affected with tick, from the West Kimberleys, which were then free from it. At that time it was a straight line and bisected various stations. A recent proclamation, however, has altered the location of the line so that the whole of those stations which were previously bisected are now in the quarantine area. Its present object is to assist in the control of pleuro pneumonia in those areas. The whole question of the pleuro line is receiving consideration. Deputations with diverse opinions have interviewed the Minister, and he has replied stating that the line would be retained for the present, but he asked them not to take that statement as implying that the line was to be retained for all time. Some people want the line; others do not, and the Minister is investigating the contending views. It is a question that has engaged public attention for the last quarter of a century or more. In reference to Mr. Miles' criticism of the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway time-table, the time-table is arranged to fit in with the arrival of the boat, in accordance with the wishes of the people concerned. In the winter the train leaves Port Hedland on Wednesday and returns from Marble Bar on Friday. As regards the summer time-table, this question will be gone into to see if satisfactory alteration is practicable. The Commissioner of Railways is communicating with the officer-in-charge at Port Hedland by aerial mail, with a view to coming to a decision on the question. Mr. Miles thinks there are too many engineers in the North-West. He says there are now three, whereas formerly there was only one. We have in the North a resident engineer and two assistant engineers. One of the assistant engineers is almost exclusively engaged on main roads work, that is to say road work under the Federal Aid Scheme. The expenditure on this work in the North was approximately £60,000 for the three years 1926-29. The resident engineer and his general assistant also must necessarily give considerable attention to this work, owing to the large area and long distances to be travelled to lay out and complete the different undertakings. Our departmental works include maintenance of jetties, tramways, other harbour facilities, buildings, water supplies, stock routes, etc., and new works in the same connection. So one engineer and two assistants are not too many for the work.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Yet when the population was up there the work was carried out by one man. Have you any information about the concrete roadways?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, I have. Mr. Miles condemns the method of road construction in the Marble Bar district. If he is alluding to the Marble Bar-Nullagine road, I would point out that it is one of the Federal Aid Road works in the North. These road works are carried out after consultation and agreement with the local authority, and must conform to the Federal Government's specifications. The method of construction of the Port Hedland road does not give satisfaction to Mr. Miles. This is also one of the works which are under the Federal Aid Roads Scheme—developmental roads. Any work under such scheme must be of a permanent character. Concrete wheelways were considered the most economical and the best solution of an old problem on this piece of road, the natural surface of the road having been worn down unevenly by the traffic for many years. Work in the Port Hedland district has been carried out departmentally as the local authority was not disposed to act as the department's agent. The proposed road bridge over the Fortescue River near Roy Hill, which Mr. Miles considers unnecessary, is a Federal Aid Road project. Tenders are now being called for the work. It is one of the key works on improvements to communication with the North-West. This bridge will be on the main north road from Meekatharra to Marble Bar and beyond. It has been laid down that expenditure on Federal Aid Road works must be of a permanent character. Therefore, any temporary improvement to this river crossing could not be undertaken.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But you would not be able to get up to this bridge in wet weather.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Of course, personally, I know nothing of this work.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have you any information about the Canning stock route?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, but it has only just come to hand. I have not had time to deal with it. I may say that the proposed work at that river crossing was endorsed by the Nullagine Road Board, in whose area the work lies. Mr. Hall referred to Murchison wool being sent to Geraldton past Mullewa and past the Wongan line,

and then re-consigned over the Midland railway at port to port rates. These port to port rates were approved by the previous Government at the request of the business people of Geraldton, who have since been able to get most of their goods at the flat rate of £2 10s. a ton instead of £8 in some instances. Do I understand Mr. Hall to say that he wishes the Government to take action in the direction of undoing what was done by the previous Government in what was considered to be the interests of business men of the Geraldton district? Mr. Hall probably thinks the Government should bring down their rates on wool to £2 10s. a ton over a distance of 277 miles. It is easy to make such suggestions. My experience of political life has been that there are never-ending appeals for reduction of railway freights and the granting of all sorts of concessions, and bitter hostility to anything in the form of increased taxation. Mr. Hall says he would like the Government to take into consideration the granting of a bonus to assist in the destruction of emus. That is precisely what the Government have done. Two or three months ago the Minister for Agriculture offered a bonus of £ for £ to three road boards which have to bear the brunt of the emu invasion. It is understood that the offer is acceptable to the boards, but according to my information nothing has yet been done by them. It is advisable that the matter should not be delayed much longer, otherwise we shall have the harvest upon us and no adequate system will be in force to bring about the destruction of these pests. Mr. Hall wonders why we cannot get more of the produce of the Wyndham Meatworks in the southern parts—why we cannot get Wyndham tinned meat and Wyndham meat extract. It may be that the reason these products are not in more use is the same reason which actuates people who do not buy Albany tweed, and to whom Mr. Hall alluded. But as a fact Wyndham tinned meat and tinned meat extract are on sale in various parts of the State. They are on sale in Perth, and in my recent travels on the Murchison I found Wyndham tinned meat was very popular there. Even a storekeeper at Wararga, a comparatively small place, not far from Mullewa, stocked it, and found a ready sale for it on the adjacent pastoral stations.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I understand the whole of the tinned meat products from the works are consumed in Western Australia.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Some of it is exported.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Anyone who orders it can get it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Meat extract is on sale in Perth, and is in use at different Government hospitals. It is put up in tins of not less than 12 ounces in weight, because it would not be economical to put it up in small jars at Wyndham, and hon. members might object if we started another trading concern. However, if merchants require these particular products, they should order before the Wyndham meat season commences, so that the General Manager may know what quantity is required for local consumption and what he may safely export. Mr. Hall appeared to condemn the Land Board for granting a block of land to young Mr. Cunningham. The history of that block—Location 5732—is a history of what up to last year were successful attempts to defeat the Land Act, and keep a grip on the block. The land was first taken up in 1920 in the name of John Westonia Finnerty, whose address was care of the Misses Finnerty and Whitmore, of Carcarra, who were working the adjoining property. He held it for three years and did nothing with it. It was then forfeited, by a previous administration, and the Misses Finnerty and Whitmore took it up. They held it for four years without putting an axe into a tree. They were required, not only to improve it, but to reside upon it either themselves or through an agent, but they did neither; and in August, 1928, it was forfeited for non-compliance with the conditions under which it was secured. The Misses Finnerty and Whitmore had improvements on an adjoining block. Those improvements were in excess of what were necessary to comply with the Act; but the excess of improvements was not sufficient to cover block 5732. Apart from that, they had not carried out the residence conditions either by themselves or through an agent. Hence the land was legally forfeitable, and it was forfeited, after the two ladies had been given some weeks' notice of the Department's intention. It was then thrown open for selection, and among the applicants were Miss Whitmore (Miss Finnerty had died) and a

man named Sykes. Sykes, after keeping silent for some months, said for the first time, in giving evidence before the Land Board, that he had leased the block in question and the two adjoining ones from the Misses Finnerty and Whitmore with the right of purchase. This was in November and the block had been forfeited in August; and during the intervening time the Department had no intimation from Sykes that he had an interest in the land. It was like some of the alibis we hear of in the Criminal Court—it was a twelfth hour development. It was immaterial whether Sykes had an interest in the land or not. If a person could prevent the forfeiture of the land for failure to perform the conditions under which it was taken up, by simply pleading that he had lately acquired an interest in the land, it would be an easy matter for anyone to drive a coach and four through the Land Act. Fortunately, however, the Land Act is not so loosely drawn as that. It was necessary to get the Minister's approval to any such lease, and even if the Minister had granted his approval, residence by Sykes could not be accepted as compliance with the law, as Sykes was a proposed purchaser, and, as such, his residence would not meet the requirements of the Act. In his evidence before the Land Board the enterprising Mr. Sykes showed that he was playing a double part. He stated that he had entered into a contract to purchase Location 5732 from the Misses Finnerty and Whitmore, but that if he got it from the Board he would not honour his obligation to them. So much for Mr. Sykes' consideration for the two ladies whose land had been forfeited. The Board, after considering all the applications on their merits, recommended that the land be granted to John Cunningham. Mr. Hall says—"John Cunningham is a Minister's son, that a migrant was refused the land, and that it is not to the credit of the State that such things should be done." I have yet to learn on what grounds a Minister's son should be disqualified from getting a block so long as he gets it by honest means. And so far, Mr. Hall has not imputed corruption to the Land Board. Nor can I conceive why the mere fact that a man is a migrant gives him a better claim to a block of land than a young man who was born in Western Australia. But Mr. Hall also considers that an injustice was done to the two ladies in forfeiting their

land. Yet, in the earlier part of his speech he denounced the Government for not forfeiting land which was held without compliance with the provisions of the Land Act, and he said it was against the interests of the State that this should be permitted.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Are there residential qualifications for the successful applicant.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There must be. It is hard to divine how a gentleman like Mr. Hall, who is such a stickler for the observance of the Land Act—who tells us he has been called all sorts of names because he reported men who were evading their responsibilities under that Act—it is hard, I say, to divine how he could countenance the transparent juggling which has been going on with the block in question over a period of eight years—juggling, the real responsibility for which, there is reason to believe, did not rest primarily with the two estimable ladies whose names have been mentioned in the discussion, but others behind the scenes. Mr. Mann stated in the course of his speech that “the Premier had been asked on many occasions to spend some money on making the Busselton jetty wider. Previously he had evaded the question, but during the last election he definitely promised the people in the public hall at Busselton that if the Government were returned to power that work would be undertaken.” In connection with this statement, Mr. A. E. Morgan, J.P., of Busselton, has written to the Premier, and I have here an extract from his letter:—

I am the man who asked the question which was something like as follows:—“Having put the money on the estimates for the jetty, are you going to spend it?” Your reply as far as I remember was, “When I put that money there I intended it should be spent.” And then went on to make a few remarks as to Colonel Pope’s recent statement that if he had his way he would close the Busselton jetty altogether. You made it pretty clear that Colonel Pope had nothing to do with closing it. You certainly never gave any direct promise to do any work on the jetty.

Mr. Collier says Mr. Morgan’s statement is correct, that he made no definite promise as alleged, although a small amount was placed on the estimates. The loss on the railways has been referred to by different hon. members and various causes have been assigned for it. I have all along been under the impression that the number of new railways

which the Commissioner of Railways has been obliged to take over during the past few years has contributed to the deficit on the system. This was the experience during the administration of the Scaddan Government when a lengthy programme of agricultural railways was carried out. I am not saying this is an argument against the continuance of a vigorous policy of railway building to provide facilities for wheat-growers to market their produce. For although those railways may not pay even working expenses, let alone interest and sinking fund in the early stages, the time is not distant when they will do so, and show a surplus besides. But I am saying it in order that those members who are advocating more railways may have some appreciation of the temporary effects on the financial position following the carrying out of the policy they advise, and should moderate their criticism accordingly. I have also been under the impression that the competition of motor traffic has been seriously affecting the railway revenue. With the object of getting the views of the Commissioner of Railways on this point. I wrote to him a few days ago, and I received from him this morning a statement which I will read to the House:—

In reply to your memo. of the 15th instant, the following information is supplied and will probably meet the case:—

Miles open in March, 1924 ..	3,608
Miles open in August, 1929 ..	4,129
	<hr/> 521

The following lines have been added to the system since the present Government took office:—

	Miles.
Lakeside-White Hope (not used since 12th December, 1927) ..	21
12th December, 1927) ..	21
Busselton-Flinders Bay ..	67
Narembege-Merredin ..	53
Piawaning Extension ..	27
Lake Grace-Newdegate ..	38
Esperance-Salmon Gums ..	66
Salmon Gums-Norseman ..	59
Dwarda-Narrogin ..	37
Jardee-Pemberton ..	17
Denmark-Frankland River ..	35
Amery-Northwards ..	69
Lake Brown-Bullfinch ..	50
	<hr/> 539
Less Waroona-Lake Clifton, 17 miles; Coolgardie - Racecourse Siding, 1 mile ..	18
	<hr/> 521

The majority of the above lines have been built for the purpose of opening up new areas for agriculture, and as the traffic on such lines is necessarily light for a number of years after construction, while the class of traffic hauled is mainly low-freighted traffic, such as wheat and superphosphate, it naturally follows that the cost of working is considerably in excess of the earnings for some considerable time after they are opened for traffic, and such has been the case with the lines in question. The Lakeside-White Hope line was used solely for the haulage of supplies to the Hampton Plains goldmining area and the cartage of ore therefrom did not in any years of its use earn sufficient to pay working expenses.

As regards motor competition, in common with the railways of the other Australian States and, in fact, railway systems throughout the world, motor competition is making serious inroads in our business, particularly as regards passenger traffic, although the goods business is also suffering to a certain extent, especially in short haul traffic.

It is recognised generally that the motor bus and lorry competitor is given an unfair advantage over the railways in that whereas the railways have to provide and maintain the whole of their permanent way, the public roads upon which the motor competitors run are provided and maintained at the expense of the general taxpayer, the small license fees charged them being wholly incommensurate with the damage which they do to the roads.

Unless the railway asset, in which 22 million pounds of the public money is expended, is to be seriously depreciated and the taxpayers are to be called upon continuously to meet losses in working, due to this unfair competition, it is imperative that action be taken to safeguard the country's interest, and in this connection a decision was arrived at by the Commissioners of the various Australian Railways at the 1929 Interstate Commissioners' Conference, copy of which is attached.

When the Supply Bill was recently before the House, Mr. Hamersley gave the Government some advice. He said they must resort to a severe curtailment of their expenditure and public bodies will have to do the same. In his speech last night he justified motor competition with the Railways on the grounds of saving to the settlers and more direct transit—something that is draining the Treasury chest of revenue. In the past he has been a prominent advocate of agricultural railways, but he did not touch the subject last night, probably because it had already been dealt with exhaustively by other speakers.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He asked for the Brookton-Armadale line.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, I overlooked that. But he had other proposals

to submit—damming of the Swan River at the Causeway to provide a monster irrigation scheme; the abolition of the filter beds and the creation of a sewage farm—presumably a State sewage farm—well up towards the Moore river. Not only that, the introduction of bulk handling of wheat. I do not know what it would cost to dam the Swan River and bring this irrigation scheme into being, but it seems to me the dam itself would involve about treble the expenditure which was involved in the construction of the Mundaring weir. With regard to the sewage farm, it is beyond my ability to form even an approximate estimate of the cost. But, as an old time enthusiastic advocate of bulk handling of wheat, I took a particular interest in the proposal which was submitted to the Scaddan Government many years ago. I had a lengthy interview with the gentleman who formulated the scheme, and, as a result of probing investigation, I came to the conclusion that the installation of bulk handling in Western Australia would run into millions of money.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We have proved that in this House.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If this is a time—as Mr. Hamersley says it is a time—when the Government must resort to a severe curtailment of their expenditure, I do not think it would be wise to consider seriously just now any of the three propositions submitted by Mr. Hamersley for the consideration of Cabinet. Mr. Yelland's financial criticisms are such as will not bear examination. He compares the revenue received by the Mitchell Government with that received by the Collier Government, and says that last year we handled two millions more than did our predecessor in his last year of office. That statement may be correct, but it proves nothing. Every railway opened and every public work in operation means increased revenue, but at the same time corresponding expenditure, or even expenditure in excess of revenue. And no fewer than twelve railways have been opened since the present Government have been in power. The Metropolitan water supply and sewerage rates have been increased since 1924, the population of the metropolitan area has increased by over 20,000, and the revenue from that source has consequently grown enormously, but the expenditure has necessarily grown also.

Then there have been the Disability grants which could not be used for ordinary purposes, but had to be spent in a special way. The addition to the population of Western Australia of 52,000 in that period means increased revenue which has to be disbursed to meet the needs of the larger number of people. If the revenue did not increase, how would the Government meet the interest on the loan expenditure during that period, and the sinking fund contribution as well? As a matter of fact, every extension of Government activities, every public work carried out, every utility supplied, every facility provided—with a few exceptions—spells increase of revenue, with, as I have said before, unavoidable expenditure to earn that revenue. It is fallacious to argue that the amount of revenue handled by a Government is any guide in determining whether the finances are wisely administered or not. A good deal of ground has been covered in the debate. We have had discussions not only on State questions, but on matters of Commonwealth responsibility, though it must be admitted these subjects have an important bearing on the interests of the State. The effects of the operation of a high Tariff have been emphasised; unemployment has received attention, not with the object of censuring the Government, but with a view to ascertaining its causes, and of seeking a remedy for the position which has arisen. Some of these speeches showed that the speakers had devoted earnest study to their subjects, and that the opinions expressed were the outcome of careful thought. In my reply I have endeavoured to deal with some statements which it seemed to me should be answered, and to supply information which was readily at hand. There are other matters which could not be treated except after a decision by Cabinet, and of course I have had to omit them from my reply. On the whole the addresses have been conceived in a fair spirit, and the bulk of the criticisms has been such as might be expected as a result of a diversity of opinion, only to be expected where free expression is given to each individual view.

**THE PRESIDENT:** Before putting the motion, I feel that I would be lacking in graciousness if I did not thank hon. members for their all too flattering remarks concerning what I tried to do whilst in Great Britain. I would like to say that in my

opinion Western Australia has a most excellent representative in London in the person of Mr. Angwin. He has a very difficult task to perform, but notwithstanding that he is rendering valuable service of which probably the people in Western Australia know little or nothing. He is indefatigable in the discharge of his duties; he is tireless in furthering the interests of the State; he is also tactful in his dealings with the many business and financial men with whom he is brought into daily contact, and he is universally well liked. It was but in accordance with my simple duties as a citizen, and also as a public man, to avail myself of any opportunity that arose to assist in keeping Western Australia before the public as a progressive and prosperous part of the Empire, a part of the Empire that I may say I sincerely believe offers better scope for persons with energy, and capital to expend, than any other part of the world. I was pleased to have opportunities to do what I did. I am grateful that my efforts have been appreciated by hon. members, and thank them for expressing their appreciation of them.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-reply adopted.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** I move—

That the Address-in-reply be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the President and such members as may desire to accompany him.

Question put and passed.

#### **BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.**

- 1, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- 2, Transfer of Land Act Amendment.
- 3, Water Boards Act Amendment.
- 4, Stamp Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

#### **MOTION—COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS.**

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [9.36]: I move—

That the appointment by His Excellency the Governor of Mr. Ernest Alfred Evans as Commissioner of Railways, at a salary of £2,000 a year, in the terms of Executive Council minute laid on the Table of the Legislative Council on the 6th August, 1929, be approved.

There should be no need for me to speak at any length in justification of this appointment. Mr. Evans is known to most members as well as, if not better than, he is to me. He has been connected with the Railway Department of this State for 32 years, and his official career is an open book to the people of Western Australia. It is hardly necessary to say that his record is one of strenuous devotion to duty—duty faithfully and efficiently performed. His career has been one of uniform excellence, and meritorious advancement. He served his time as an apprentice to Messrs. McKenzie and Holland, mechanical engineers, of Worcester, after which he remained in the employment of the firm for five years before resigning to join the New South Wales railways. He quitted that service to represent Messrs. McKenzie & Holland in Western Australia, and after about two years with his old firm, he accepted an appointment with the Western Australian Government Railways in 1897. In succession he occupied the posts of Interlocking Engineer, Loco. Manager, Manager of the Government Railway Workshops, and Chief Mechanical engineer. For some years, in addition to his other duties, he had charge of all railway cases in the Arbitration Court. On various occasions, during the time Colonel Pope was Commissioner, Mr. Evans relieved him of his duties, and, for some months before the Colonel resigned, the whole responsibility for managing the railways was on the new Commissioner's shoulders. I am informed that he proved equal to the responsibility in every way. When Colonel Pope sent in his resignation, applications for the vacancy were called throughout the Commonwealth. Sixty-five persons applied, among them the Acting Commissioner. The Government selected Mr. Evans for the post, because they regarded him as the best applicant offering. They were pleased that they could do so—pleased that a man in the service had proved himself the best in the running. During his 32 years' service he has shown himself a strong and capable administrator and, in his new position, he will have an advantage over many of his predecessors, in fact I can say over all his predecessors, owing to the professional knowledge he has of an important section of his department. This will be realised when I say that the engineering branches are responsible for nearly two-

thirds of the railway expenditure, and an intelligent control over that expenditure should do much to produce satisfactory financial results.

**HON. J. NICHOLSON** (Metropolitan) [9.42]: I desire to add a few words to what the Leader of the House has said on the motion before us. I do so because on the Address-in-reply I offered some suggestions—probably they may be termed criticisms—with regard to the management of the railways, but I did not direct them in any way against Mr. Evans or the management. Indeed I have the highest opinion of Mr. Evans and I believe the Government have reason to rejoice at having had the good fortune to secure his services. He enters the new position equipped with a very wide experience that I am sure will be of the greatest benefit to the service. The responsibility he has undertaken is undoubtedly a great one. While I offered some suggestions, I did so with the desire of assisting the management believing that the experience of other concerns could be applied to the railways with benefit. No one in charge of a great organisation such as our Railway Department can feel comfortable so long as the system is being conducted at a loss. The natural desire would be to see the service operating successfully and at a profit. If the new Commissioner can achieve that object, he will have done something that will bring the greatest gratification and pride to him and the greatest satisfaction to all sections of the community. I feel sure that Mr. Evans will enter upon his new duties with the best wishes of all, and I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

**HON. V. HAMERSLEY** (East) [9.45]: I have pleasure in supporting the motion. In Mr. Evans we have a courteous gentleman, who knows the railways and will prove a most capable Commissioner. I do not know that I can say much about his ability to make a success of the concern he will manage, but will not control. My sympathy goes out to him, for whilst doing his utmost it will be impossible for him to make a success of the railways because of the control from behind, or those methods of control under which he has to work the railways. Railways in other parts of the world are not subjected to such methods. I refer not so much to the control as to the interference that has been mentioned

during the Address-in-reply whereby certain conditions are imposed upon the Commissioner in the execution of his duty. I feel that Mr. Evans will do his best in the circumstances, and that no one is better fitted for the job than he.

**HON. A. LOVEKIN** (Metropolitan) [9.47]: I have known Mr. Evans since he came to the State and have closely watched his career. The Government have made a goodly choice in selecting him for the post of Commissioner. I hope they will give him every opportunity to justify the position he has accepted, the opportunity to reduce his working costs even at the expenditure of a little extra capital. On the Kalgoorlie Express two engines are often running, whereas in South Australia and in England super-heated engines are used, one of which will do the work of two of the others.

Hon. J. Ewing: They have them here, too.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: In that way expenditure can be reduced, for these engines will haul twice the goods traffic that any other engine will haul. I hope Mr. Evans will be allowed to reduce expenditure so that the railways may be made to pay. In England and on the Continent people can transfer goods to a Railway Department which will deliver them at the other end, whether the goods have to pass through a ship, another railway, or a canal. Whenever they go railways take possession of the goods and deliver them. The State steamers could be made use of in the same way. It ought to be possible to consign goods from Perth, York or any other centre to Port Hedland or Marble Bar on the one bill of lading or ticket, and the expense of four or five handlings and four or five agents saved to the person despatching them. We already have evidence of what can be done if the Government will loosen their purse strings.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And reduce the grades.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: We now have better carriages on the Kalgoorlie line. The others were a disgrace to the service. The new ones afford some evidence of what has been done by the present Commissioner. I hope the Government will carry their choice to its logical conclusion by giving Mr. Evans the opportunity to justify the

appointment he has accepted. I support the motion.

**HON. H. SEDDON** (North-East) [9.50]: I have known Mr. Evans for many years, and have the greatest pleasure in supporting his appointment from the fact that I am an old railway man. When I was in the service I saw a good deal of the work Mr. Evans was doing, especially in the direction of managing the Midland Railway workshops. Considerable improvement has taken place in the hauling power of our locomotives during the last few years, not only as a result of the introduction of super heating, but as a result of keeping the boilers up to a high state of efficiency. We now have a very much higher working efficiency in the railways. Mr. Evans brings to the position of Commissioner the great advantage of having been an engineering man. Those who have studied the history of railway workings in other parts of the world must realise that the most successful presidents or managers of railway companies have been those who have graduated on the engineering side. Regrading has been part of the policy of the Government for the past four or five years. Considerable economies have been effected, especially in the conveyance of trainloads between Northam and Perth over that particularly heavy section. This has been brought about by the policy of regrading which was recently carried out. I feel sure that the scientific experiments in which Mr. Evans has been engaged, and is still engaged, particularly with regard to obtaining the highest efficiency from the fuel that is used, will be effective in future economies in the service. The policy of the Government in promoting an officer who has grown up in the service will, I am sure, meet with the approbation of the rank and file. They will feel, as a result of this recognition of native ability within the service, that an incentive is offered to every man to make an effort to qualify for a higher position. I am indeed glad to endorse the remarks of the previous speakers.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.*