

getting hold of it with their single men as managers and their few niggers to work the stations, we are not going to people that country. It is a most prolific country, and will carry an immense population, if it only gets a chance. If there is one thing above all others that the people of Western Australia have to guard against it is the Mark Reubens and the Vestey Bros. I do not think it is necessary to speak at any further length. I do not appreciate the methods adopted by the Minister for Works in allowing a pressman to have the full run of his office, to pig-root through his files and endeavour to find something which may be discreditable to his predecessors.

The Minister for Works: Can you prove that?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes.

The Minister for Works: I do not think you can.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Certainly I can.

The Minister for Works: I am certain that you cannot prove it.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: Who was it went out of the back door the day I was in?

The Minister for Works: I will tell you about that later.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I think, after all, a pressman could be kept out. If the Minister has not sufficient intelligence to discover the failings of his predecessor without the assistance of a pressman, he should say nothing about them. He should not get a pressman to help him to search for those failings. I am not afraid of any pressman poking his nose into my department. He would not find anything there. No ashes even were found in our departments when we left office; but, when the Scaddan Government came in, the fireplaces were filled up with the ashes of burnt papers. The Minister for Works, with the aid of his Press sycophant, found that there was a powellising agreement. I have a recollection of hearing of that paper previously. I have a recollection, too, that all papers in connection with that powellising agreement were laid on the Table of this House. There was only the miserable subterfuge of the hon. gentleman in pretending that he had found something, that he had made a discovery. He said he had made the discovery that Mr. Short had not been consulted.

The Minister for Works: I said that?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No; the pressman said that. There was a minute on the file showing that Mr. Short had been consulted. However, all that was spread out by the pressman, all he had found on his own—spread out by him like a printer's devil. In regard to powellising, all I wish to say is that on the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway there are powellised sleepers, which have been down for about six years. There has been no renewal whatever of those sleepers. They are to-day in splendid condition. Without the powellising process, that line of railway would have had to be relaid a year or two ago. Powellising has saved the relaying of the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway. I will say that all across this State. There is no telling how good the powellising process is or how long its efficacy will last; but from absolute, positive experience we can speak of those particular powellised sleepers, laid in the worst white-ant country to be found in this State. Those sleepers are still down; there has been no trouble with them, and no attempt to renew them. In conclusion, I desire to congratulate the Government once more, and to express the hope that they will get along from those devious little ways, and come out as men and do their work.

On motion by Mr. Thomson debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.6 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 21st September, 1916,

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Report of the Senate of the University for the year ended 31st December, 1915. 2, Albany Government Cold Stores, Storage charges. 3, Yilgarn road board, By-laws *re* cyanide and other poisonous waters.

QUESTION—STATE STEAMSHIP SERVICE, MANAGEMENT.

Hon. R. J. LYNN asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to change the control and management of the State Steamship Service? 2, If so, will a State department be created or the management handed over to an outside shipping firm?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, As stated by me on Tuesday last, the question of the future control of the State Steamship Service is being closely considered from every point of view. Parliament will be informed directly a decision is arrived at. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST, PERSONNEL.

Hon. R. J. LYNN asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to alter the personnel of the Fremantle Harbour Trust? 2, If so, will representation be given to the Fremantle and Perth Chambers of Commerce?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Consideration will be given to the claims of public bodies for representation on the Trust.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES—CHANGE OF MEMBER.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch) [4.35]: I move—

That, in order to temporarily relieve the President of the duties imposed on him as ex officio member of the Standing Orders Committee, the Library Committee, the Printing Committee, and the House Committee, Sir E. H. Wittenoom be appointed a member of each of these committees to

act as locum tenens for him during the period of the present session.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.36]: I second the motion. Question passed.

The PRESIDENT: I thank hon. members for their kind consideration.

PAPERS—BUNBURY HARBOUR.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [4.37]: I move—

That all plans and reports of Mr. J. F. Ramsbotham's proposals for the Bunbury Harbour be laid upon the Table of the House.

I hope that when the Colonial Secretary supplies this information he will be able to make an explanation as to what is being done at the present time.

Question passed.

PAPERS—RAILWAY GRADE, COLLIE-BUNBURY.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [4.38]: I move—

That all papers, reports, recommendations, etc., in connection with preliminary surveys or inspections, having for their object the securing of a better grade than the existing one, for a railway from Collie to Bunbury, be laid upon the Table of the House.

Although the motion is a very important one, I do not think there will be any opposition to it. The idea is to get a better route from Collie to Bunbury. Certain routes have been surveyed and reports are in the hands of the Government. The people in the districts concerned and I myself are very anxious to know what it is intended to do in regard to the matter.

Question passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth day—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. R. J. LYNN (West) [4.40]: With the Hon. Mr. Drew I desire to offer congratulations to Mr. Colebatch on his elevation to the position of leader of this House. I feel sure that the ability displayed by that gen-

tleman in the past marked him out for this very high position, and that he will fill it with credit. For once I am also inclined to agree with our old friend Mr. Cullen in failing to see that a protracted debate on the Address-in-reply will be of much service at the present juncture. But in order to be able to let off a little steam perhaps it is necessary that we should have the opportunity of saying a few words. Again like Mr. Cullen, I propose to be brief. I sympathise very much with the people of the Esperance district in connection with the stoppage of the construction of their railway. For many years their hopes have been raised, and after a period of struggling the Bill was put through and the people at Esperance felt that the justice they thought they were entitled to was at last going to be meted out to them. As hon. members know, I was always opposed to the measure for the construction of the railway. I can only hope now that the personnel of the Royal Commission will be such that it will give satisfaction. I do not know any of the members of the Commission, but I do hope that its labours will not be long drawn out and that at an early date we shall have a report placed before Parliament. I was rather struck that the construction of the railway should have been stopped on a report by Mr. Mann, a very eminent analyst perhaps, but one whose authority on a subject that perhaps he should have had better knowledge of, namely liquor, was questioned—an eminent analyst who possesses a knowledge on the liquor question which we refused to accept. Now we find that on his report the Government have stopped the construction of the Esperance line. Whether the Government were justified in taking that step or not I cannot say, because I am not an expert. I doubt very much whether I know the difference between a carrot top and a carnation. That is all the experience I possess, and therefore I do not wish to say anything from the land standpoint. In my opinion, however, the Government have been justified in stopping the construction of the line. This railway was being built on a piecemeal system, secondhand rails were being gathered from all parts of the State and railed to Albany and then freighted on to Esperance. Heavy charges

were being incurred, and this in a period when the finances of the State should not be frittered away in such a direction. We should husband our financial resources and at the present time many of the works in progress should be stopped until such time as we can have an opportunity of financing them without such difficulty. These remarks also apply to the Bunbury breakwater, as well as to the breakwater which is being constructed at Geraldton. A few weeks ago when I passed through Geraldton I saw that a jetty was being constructed from the foreshore. I expect it will be a couple of miles in length, and a breakwater will have to be run out to protect it. That may be good engineering, but at the present juncture it is not good policy, because it will be very many years, from a tonnage standpoint, before normal requirements are met in connection with the freightage of all our exports. There will be a dearth of ships for many years to come.

Hon. H. Carson: You are not saying that about Fremantle.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I am not advocating any improvements in any direction which is not going to tend to bring tonnage to our port. At Geraldton, for instance, there is little or no shipping at all just now.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: There is more shipping now here than there was before the war.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: And there is more use for it. The war is not over. If the war was finished to-morrow the shipping would be absorbed for three or four years to come. For the past month there has hardly been a ship berthed at Geraldton. If the Government can find money to spend in this direction, which cannot be reproductive for many years to come, this must also be taken into consideration, that no sooner will this expenditure of one million pounds be incurred than they will want a Harbour Trust formed, and when the Trust is formed it will be impossible only at a heavy rate and big expense to the shipping to find interest and sinking fund upon it. How vastly different that is to Fremantle. Fremantle with its million and a half, or three-quarters of a million, of money spent on it can find its interest on sinking fund, its depreciation, and make a payment to the consolidated

revenue fund of the State of thousands of pounds per annum.

Hon. H. Carson: There is the old trouble in all the States, centralisation.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I consider that the out-ports are entitled to the trade that lies nearest to them.

Hon. H. Carson: They cannot get it.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: And facilities should be provided for them to enjoy such trade, but if they intend to shut their eyes to this heavy expenditure and are called upon in the near future by any Government which happens to be in power to find interest and sinking fund for these heavy charges it will pay to rail the goods from Geraldton to Fremantle and pay the additional cost rather than the dues which will be levied by the out-ports. The Government will be wise if they look into some of the expenditure going on, especially in view of the stringency of the finances of the State. I have some interests at Bunbury, and the same thing is going on there. The extension of the Bunbury breakwater at a very heavy cost is being proceeded with at a time when there is nothing to send away from Bunbury.

Hon. J. Ewing: There will be soon.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Yes, but the Bunbury jetty provided accommodation at a time when the export of timber was at its height, and considering that the great tonnage which was being shipped away from that port seven or eight years ago had provided for it sufficient berthage accommodation, I say it will be many years before normal times are resumed, and when the present berthage accommodation will be again required. I merely suggest this because I do consider that the finances of the State will require very careful handling in the near future. It will be impossible, in my opinion, for the Government to get money at anything like a reasonable rate, and if these developments are to be proceeded with at a very high cost it will react on those people in the future and react very seriously indeed. Coming to the pet aversion of the Port of Fremantle—the chief port in the State and one entitled to every consideration from the financial point of view—

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It has had all the consideration.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: We have a semi public body like the Harbour Trust returning to the consolidated revenue fund thousands a month in excess of the interest and sinking fund and depreciation. This body can afford to provide facilities for my friend, the Hon. Mr. Baxter, and the members of the party to which he belongs to, such as, we hope, the bulk handling of wheat, and give them a port where they can get prompt dispatch for their produce. That being so, that Party should raise no objection to something being done at Fremantle that it is necessary should be done in the interest of the producers of the State. Unfortunately, we have only one port in the Commonwealth capable of providing sufficient water for deep draught vessels.

Hon. H. Carson: It is being made.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Hobart alone is the only port, and we do know that the late Government—be this said to their credit—realised the seriousness of the position. They realised that unless the Fremantle Harbour was provided with a draft of 40 feet in the near future steamers would be passing our port and State, and from what I can glean they had practically arranged very shortly to commence dredging operations in the harbour in order to provide that depth of water. I hope that this Government will also see the necessity for pressing on in that direction, because it is essential that all the tonnage possible should be provided for the Western State. It must be known by hon. members that steamers leaving Hobart, consuming 100 tons of coal per day, will pass our Western State with 700 or 800 tons of space yet unfilled. If they are enabled to get in and load up that difference and if they can top up in Fremantle and carry that much less bunker coal in order to bring them into port, this will bring into competition that tonnage which will assist the producer and come into competition with existing lines. I feel sure that the cost of such dredging will not be very heavy. The Fremantle Harbour Trust is in a position to pay interest and sinking fund on any additional money that may be borrowed or ex-

pended for this purpose, and that being so, it would not become a burden on anyone in the State. I am glad to know, by the reply to the question asked by me to-day, that it is the intention of the Government to alter the personnel of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. Many members will know that a special Act was created in order to bring into existence a Trust removed from the Government control. That Harbour Trust was very successful, but unfortunately the late Government, in their wisdom or otherwise, thought fit practically to make it a Government department. They appointed the Engineer-in-Chief, a gentleman of very high standing in our State, to the leading position on that Trust. I consider that anyone in receipt of £1,500 a year and with such heavy responsibilities as the Engineer-in-Chief must have upon his shoulders, has quite sufficient to do without endeavouring to administer the affairs of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. I am, therefore, glad to know that it is proposed to alter the personnel of that body. In the early days consideration was given to the nominees for this Trust of the Fremantle and Perth Chambers of Commerce, and the reply given to-day indicates to me that the Government propose to give some representation to these semi-public bodies in future. The one controversial point in connection with the Fremantle Harbour Trust is the State Steamship Service. I believe that the present manager of that service is one of the best civil servants we have in the State to-day. He is zealous and capable, and his full abilities are given in the management of his departments. Whether or not he is over-worked, and whether his dual position is such that it is impossible for him to supervise these two departments, I am not in a position to say. I am anxious to know what authority the Government intend to accept as a recommendation for the removal of this gentleman from that dual position. Is it their intention that the personnel of the Harbour Trust shall be altered, and when altered that a report shall be called for from the members of that Trust respecting the position held by the Secretary, or is it their intention to accept hearsay evidence and that anyone may have the ear of the Ministry or one of the Min-

isters in justification for bringing about an alteration in the system? Some of the Ministers may have sufficient shipping experience to be in a position to decide the question for themselves. I doubt that very much. I do not believe they have or could be expected to have the necessary experience. My interest is to see that the State Steamship Service is not put into the hands of any other steamship service trading to-day, which would tend to give it a monopoly on our coast. I know that it can be argued, and it has been argued to me, that perhaps one of the firms will be in a better position to regulate matters in connection with the administration and management of the State service. I do not believe that, for this reason, that if we are going to tie up the only competitor, one of the shipping firms of the State, it will mean that after they have booked up everything and utilised all the space in connection with our own steamers, they will be able to do what they like with what may be left. Whether it is the policy of the Government to continue the State Steamship Service, it is impossible for me to form an opinion on the answer given by the leader of the House to my question. I believe that the Government propose to give the people in the North-West the best possible service at the least possible cost. That is only reasonable, and that is what they are there for. If the policy is to continue the State Steamship service under existing conditions, it will be almost impossible for them to continue and get anything like a decent service. We have the question facing us of the "Bambra," the one boat employed in the passenger service. She was a steamer handed over to the State by the Federal authorities. In the event of the Federal authorities at any time requisitioning this boat there is none to take her place. Again, if the "Moirra" happens to be recalled by the Federal authorities there is no boat to take her place. We are told that the "Kangaroo" is due for another survey. If so, there will be nothing to take her place when she goes. At the same time the "Kangaroo" is to be utilised in connection with overseas freights. There is no doubt that she will prove a very excellent profit-making steamer to the Government. In these ab-

normal times when freight spaces are scarce and high rates of freight are ruling she cannot well help being otherwise. Unfortunately, she is so slow. I hope she is not sighted by a submarine, because if she is, she will never get out of the way. The question of the employment of the "Kangaroo" in order to take the place of those other vessels on the coast I do not think, Mr. President, this will hold good, because to utilise all the space in the "Kangaroo" to bring down cattle from the North would flood the market. She would carry, I expect, 1,100 or 1,200 head of stock, and to bring all that quantity at one time, I feel sure, would cause a glut on the market. But there is one thing the Government should do, and that is to decide on the policy as to whether this State Steamship Service is to be utilised in the interests solely of a section of the community or in the interests of the State, and at the same time in justice to the shippers. We have one disability to-day. You find the State steamer coming down with cattle at £3 a head; these are discharged at the same jetty as one of the vessels of the Blue Funnel line, but the cattle on these latter vessels pay a freight of £5. The cattle are discharged and put into yards and submitted to public auction, and they probably realise the same price as the cattle brought down by the State steamer; but the people are not given the benefit of that cheap rate. It is a few shippers who have the good fortune to secure the supplies that reap the bonus from the Government to-day of £3 for every head of cattle they ship. The Government certainly have since purchased other vessels, but what about the producers: the producers are possibly getting an additional £1 to £1 10s. That has been the state of affairs during the recent months, and I think the policy in that direction should be considered by the Government, and where they find the cattle being brought into competition owing to the state of the service that exists on the coast, then the rate should be arranged so that the Government should derive that benefit and not the individual. Further, the "Moirra" has been taken away, the "Bambra" has been taken away, and we will soon be in the same old place as we were in the days gone by, when we will not have any cattle at all. Another thing in

connection with the State Steam Service that is giving a considerable amount of dissatisfaction at the port as this dual control is stated to have resulted in a one-sided arrangement. Arguments have been advanced that immediately the State steamer arrives everything is closed in every other direction, and the total amount of supervision at the port is immediately directed towards the State steamer. I am not saying whether this is correct or otherwise, but I do think it will be necessary for the Government to be very careful before making any change in the administration, and when the change is taken I hope they will have some good reasons to justify that change. Now, in connection with the Fisheries Department if the leader of the House is correct and intends to carry into effect the policy of the Government, he should immediately close down those State Fisheries. We are told that they are losing £100 a week, but before closing down consideration must be given to the assets the Government hold. The entire assets which the Government have in the State Fisheries Department, if scrapped, would not be worth £3,000, or possibly £4,000. However, even if they were worth only a couple of thousand pounds it would be better to scrap them. If the statement of the Hon. Mr. Drew made that the State Fisheries are showing this very handsome profit, then all I can say is we must have in the employment of the State some finished officers indeed. I notice that in one of Mr. Drews' statements he counted as asset "fish in transit £700." Everyone knows the perishable nature of fish. If he is going to take into account an asset of this quality I can quite understand Mr. Drew's misunderstanding in this direction. How one Minister can show a profit of £700 per month and within two or three days a new Minister can arrive at a loss of £700, is something beyond my comprehension.

The Colonial Secretary: Call for a Royal Commission.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I do not know that it calls for a commission, but when a member of one of the political parties of the day makes a statement that the service is showing a profit, and the leader of the other political party asserts that there is a loss, it is something beyond me. I do think this: that

the House should be given sufficient information, and it should be tabled in order that we may know the exact position, and I think the Colonial Secretary might put on the table of the House a trial balance sheet and give us an opportunity of criticising it after having seen it. If one department, or one administration was not prepared to allow a reasonable amount of interest and depreciation and have charges debited up to it, which were entitled to be debited up to it, and another administration comes in, and says that we want those charges debited, then I think the House should have some opportunity of knowing exactly how we stand.

The Colonial Secretary: Nothing of that sort has been done.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: It is extremely difficult, and I think you must confess that a profit of £949, stated to have been made by Mr. Drew—

Hon. J. M. Drew: That was for three months.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Can be transferred into a loss of £100 a week since the present leader of the House took office, then I say they are figures that would baffle the ordinary individual. My opinion, which I wish to stress, is this: If in a small trading concern of a few thousands pounds such discrepancies can be quoted, then what is to happen in connection with these very big trading concerns to-day? I was sorry that the Leader of the House did not say something about these Perth trams. What is the capitalisation of them? He certainly did tell us something in connection with the Freezing Works.

The Colonial Secretary: The estimate was exceeded by £100,000 in Kimberley.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Take the State Steamer Service. We have one Minister showing that here is a profit of £16,000, and the present administration state there is a loss of £200,000 or £300,000. I am inclined to think, and Parliament has full authority over the Auditor General, that all these trading concerns should have their balance sheets submitted to the audit of some outside firm. Let some outside firm come and audit some of these trading concerns balance sheets. It is not a question of any difficulty in getting such an audit taken, because we have more

auditors in this State than we have departmental heads. It was my experience recently to come across four auditors travelling in a ship going north, one going to audit the railways, one the roads boards, all on one boat. It appears to me that there is something wrong when in the far distant north when one audit is required that we have to send auditors for all these different departments, and if that is the method adopted by the Auditor General, and it is under his administrative capacity, then the quicker we have another Auditor General to put things in order the better. I think that Parliament of recent years have permitted many of these departments to have been built up, costly experimental sort of businesses, and it is no wonder that a small State of 300,000 people cannot stand up against it. I am very surprised that we have been able to live under it, let alone to stand up against it, but in future so far as the trading concerns are concerned, I do think that if these discrepancies between two Leaders, the ex-Leader and the Leader of the House, having been pointed out, the House is justified in asking for a proper audit. I do not doubt Mr. Colebatch at all. I believe the figures he has given are correct, and I believe the same of Mr. Drew. I think it is purely a question of departmental officers, and in that direction I think something should be done. But as I have said, if the Fisheries are losing £100 a week, it is no use perpetuating that loss in order that a few privileged people around Fremantle and Perth should have the benefit of that loss, and the State called upon to pay it. So far as preserving the assets of the concerns, it is much better to sink the assets than lose £100 a week. The same thing applies to the Freezing Works. We have been told that they cost £452,000; well, the ten per cent. spending charge means £45,000 for interest, sinking fund and depreciation alone, to say nothing about the treatment of the cattle. I am assured that a reasonable quantity to send down would be something like 15,000 head per annum, no more. So that you are going to have a cost for the sinking fund alone of over £3 a head of cattle. I hope the amount will not be exceeded, because if it is I do not think it will be any use to ask anyone to send

cattle for treatment at all. I was under the impression that the people of the metropolitan area would derive some benefit from these works as well as the people who were in the position to have the cattle treated. I am now informed by one of the largest men up there that if the Freezing Works are established the frozen meat will not be sent down to the metropolitan area, but will be exported, and that we will have to have cattle brought down on hoof from Derby to supply the local market. I dare say we will have a number of additional steamers and another big trading department created and conducted in a similar manner. I do not know that I have anything farther to add, except that I note with a certain amount of pleasure the legislation forecasted. Some of it I favour, some of it I object to; and, of course, this being a non-party House, we are entitled to vote as we think fit on such questions.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES (North) [5.16]: Being a new member, I wish to thank you, Sir, and hon. members for the cordial welcome extended to me. I wish also to express my deep regret at the death of the late Hon. F. Connor. My sincerest sympathy goes out to his wife and family in their sad bereavement. I only hope that I shall be able to fill my position in this Chamber as well as Mr. Connor did in his representation of the North. I must congratulate Mr. Colebatch on his elevation to the office that he now occupies. This being a non-party House, I hope I shall be able to impartially consider any measures brought forward. It will be my endeavour to encourage a better feeling between members in this House than exists in another place. In respect to the Esperance railway, I can only say that I am strongly in favour of decentralisation. I am not sufficiently well informed at present to express an opinion on the merits or demerits of that railway, but it seems to me the State, and practically the whole of Australia, has adopted a wrong method in respect to the settlement of the land. In Canada the lands are plotted out and analysed, and when a settler comes along he can go into an office and learn exactly what the land is capable of growing, before taking it up. In Australia a settler has to experiment with his land for 50 years,

and even then he does not know what it is best capable of producing. I am wholly in favour of the classification of pastoral lands. In the composition of a classification board for this purpose, it is absolutely necessary that a local man from each district should be appointed. It is of no use having a man from the Gascoyne to classify the lands in Pilbara, because they are entirely different, and it will require local representatives to classify each portion of the State. Of course the value of the land will be taken into consideration, together with the means of communication, and when that has been done the State will get a good deal more revenue from pastoral lands than it has secured in the past. I hope to see the development of the South-West of the State, from Bunbury to Albany. There we have an area that will carry a million people. There is not one in a thousand in this State who realise what an asset we have in that corner. I am pleased to see that the Government are out to assist the primary producer, and more particularly those engaged in the mining industry. In reference to primary producers, in the past we have, I think, considered only the man farming the land. The tin miner and the gold miner have done a great deal for the State. For those men we should all have the greatest respect, and we should do our utmost to assist them. Included among primary producers are miners, farmers, pearlers, timber getters, and wool-growers. If the Government will do their best for these people they will be doing their best for the whole of the State. It seems to me that the farther a man goes out back the higher he is taxed. Again, when a man comes in from the out-back country he is treated by the City dweller with contempt. Rather should the City men take off their hats to the man from out-back, realising that he is keeping them all alive, that he is the builder of the City, of the State and of the Empire. In our own districts we have been twitted with the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway. That railway was built to develop the country. It was never intended that the few thousand people there, including the coloured races, should make that railway pay. That railway has put sheep 200 miles further back in that country, and has demonstrated what

can be done by the building of railways ahead of settlement. Another thing in regard to that line: we pay 6d. per ton per mile for goods carried. I do not know who is to blame for this, but from Geraldton to Meekatharra, a distance of 340 miles, the railway carries flour, bran, pollard, timber, iron, and fencing wire, commodities which the outback pioneer requires, for a pound per ton, whereas on our line we pay £2 18s. or nine times as much per ton per mile. I quite agree with Mr. Cullen in his remarks with reference to the Railways. Something should be done to alter the system; if we are going to develop the back country it is absolutely necessary that some consideration should be given to the men who go out-back and build up the State and Empire. My idea is that the Railways should be run on lines similar to those followed in the Post and Telegraph Department, in which distances are largely ignored. Some system should be evolved by which the settler out-back would be able to get his produce carried to market at a reasonable rate. Another thing, which perhaps has not been brought under the notice of the Government: I refer to the charges made by the insurance companies as against the man in the outback country. For instance, in the City 3s. 6d. per cent. is paid, but in the back country the rate is anything from 50s. to 90s., and this, of course, the consumer has to pay. If the insurance companies were brought to reason they could well put up the rates in the City by a few shillings, and reduce the back country rates by a pound.

Hon. A. Sanderson: State insurance.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: If this cannot be brought about I would be in favour of State insurance. We cannot be treated by these companies as we have been in the past, for if we are to develop the State we must consider the man in the back country. Another injustice, applying to practically the whole of Australia, is to be found in the system of medical treatment in the back country, where the doctors are paid a miserable salary of £200 per annum and allowed to make what charges they like. Judging by correspondence which has passed between a medical man lately in our district and the

late Honorary Minister, it costs £34 to bring a child into the world. This system cannot go on. We must have a different method.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: The doctors have too big a union.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: Yes, they are worse than the Sydney Trades Hall people who are trying to dominate Mr. Hughes at the present time. My idea is that a doctor should be paid a reasonable salary, whether £500 or £1,000 a year, and the Government should insist on his charging the same fees as in the City.

Hon. A. Sanderson: State doctors.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: In our district we had two doctors, but one has now gone to Carnarvon to relieve the local doctor, who has gone to the front. We have now one doctor residing at Port Hedland. Recently a man had the misfortune to have his hand torn off, and when the Government were approached for a train to convey the doctor out it was found necessary to put up a guarantee of £70 before the train would leave Port Hedland. This is the kind of treatment we receive in the back country. I do not know who is to blame for this system, but it requires to be brought under the notice of the Government, and I am pleased indeed to find myself in this House, where I shall be able to voice the opinions of my friends in the North. We have asked repeatedly for a motor-car for that track. It could be run at half the present rate, would save money to the State and would relieve the position. Another thing in regard to that railway: If they had a motor to take out the workmen instead of having the men occupying half the day pumping themselves back and forth to their work the cost of maintenance would be considerably reduced and probably one gang in 120 miles would be saved. I am not altogether in favour of State trading concerns. Of course, if we are to be coerced and wronged in certain respects, as for instance by the insurance companies, I think the State should come to our assistance. In regard to the ships on the coast, if the Government are to continue to run these ships it is absolutely necessary that they should get up-to-date vessels. We require a 14-knot boat on that coast, a boat that would be able to get from port to port and catch the tides. For ordin-

ary purposes 10 or 11 knots might be ample, but the faster vessel would have more power to enable her to steam out against the willy willies which frequently occur. I have recently been informed of another charge in connection with our railway. Certain repairs were carried out to the Port Hedland jetty at a cost of £3,000, and these have been debited against the railway. It is bad enough for us to have to pay working expenses and maintenance, and I think the repairs I speak of should have been made a separate charge against the jetty. Here, too, the Government trading concerns came in. For the repairs to that jetty certain lengths of timber were ordered, but, merely to bolster up the State Saw Mills, shorter lengths were sent, and these had to be butted together with waling pieces and extra long muntz metal bolts at an additional cost amounting to over £100. That is another unjust charge to our end of the State. It had been stated that the Wyndham Freezing Works will cost £452,000. I am of opinion that this amount is far too much to expend at one port. Had the late Government adopted a smaller scheme, costing about £150,000, for Wyndham, framing their plans so as to allow extension as the district developed, it would have been a much better proposition for the State. With the money which is now to be spent at Wyndham, canning works could have been established at Derby, and freezing works at Geraldton. Geraldton needs a harbour, and I disagree with Mr. Lynn's view that the Geraldton harbour scheme should not be proceeded with. Of course, it is for engineers to decide whether the scheme proposed is the right one; but I firmly believe in each port of the State getting the trade of its back country. If a freezing works were erected at Geraldton, cattle could be brought by boat to a good harbour there, and sheep could also be brought there from all parts of the State. Sheep could be drafted to Geraldton from the North-West, from the Murchison, and from the Eastern districts as well.

Member: Why not bring them to Perth?

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: There are sufficient in Perth already. If the back country is opened up, Perth will go ahead and take care of itself. I am informed that

rust in wheat has again made its appearance around Geraldton this year. In New South Wales, I understand, rust appeared close to the coast, and eventually wheat-growing became impossible in those districts. If that should prove to be the case in the Geraldton district, then I hope that eventually freezing works will be erected there, with the result that the magnificent lands at the back of Geraldton will be used for grazing purposes. Then, so far as the Geraldton people are concerned, the rust will prove a blessing in disguise. As regards the country further north, I hope to see within a very few years a railway connecting Marble Bar with Meekatharra, and lines running out from each port to tap those lands. People here do not realise the asset which Western Australia has in its North-West. Soil it to be found there from 40 feet to 100 feet deep; and there is abundance of rain, if only the water could be conserved. I hope that a conservation scheme will be carried out in the near future. Another part of the State which would justify development is the Kimberley table land. I am informed—and I have the information from a reliable source—that on that table land there is country which will carry twenty million sheep, or practically as many sheep as New South Wales has at the present time. If the North is developed as it should be developed, then, instead of settling farmers in country without a rainfall, we can settle them on country which will pay splendidly to develop if it is handled properly. But, as I have said, the trouble is that the people of the Capital do not realise the asset they have in the North-West. In the Onslow district, I understand—though, of course, the question would have to be studied by an engineer—water could be conserved and the whole countryside irrigated. As regards the Kimberleys, it is well known that a railway will eventually have to be constructed around the back of the Leopold Ranges into Broome. I hope to see that project realised before many years elapse. At a later date I shall move for a report to be made on this project by the Government engineers and submitted to this House. A small but not unimportant item in connection with the North-West is the disgraceful manner in which the assets of the

State have been allowed to go to rack and ruin. Public buildings there have not had a coat of paint for years; white ants are in the buildings; fences are falling down. If any private individual looked after his property in that fashion, he would be considered mad. I trust that in future the Government will give to the North that consideration which it has never received in the past. Another point: we have an engineer for the North-West, a personal friend of mine, and a very competent man in his profession; but he has his office in St. George's terrace. His place is in the North-West. If the means of developing the North-West cannot be obtained from the Government, if we of the North cannot secure better treatment than has been meted out to us in the past, then—though I do not advocate it now—I shall be out for separation. In conclusion, I wish to congratulate Mr. Hughes, the strong man of the hour, and I hope all members of this House, and every member of the community, will be with Mr. Hughes, to a man and to a woman, in seeing that the referendum is carried on the 28th October.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.34]: I desire to join with other members in congratulating Mr. Colbatch on his elevation to the office of Colonial Secretary. I am sure Mr. Colbatch will in that office do credit both to himself and to this Chamber. Like other members, I feel that in speaking to the amendment on the Address-in-reply it would be unwise to traverse much ground, or to deal with matters which would raise a great deal of discussion. I refer to the many matters mentioned in the lengthy Governor's Speech. But I cannot allow the opportunity to pass of replying to various contentions of previous speakers. The Country party have been charged with selling themselves to the Liberals.

Hon. J. Cornell: You were not sold; you were taken in.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Our contention is that we gave the late Government ample opportunity to make good, but that they did not avail themselves of that opportunity. As regards any selling by ourselves or any buying by the Liberal party, we simply required that that party on receiving our support should put into operation the policy enunciated by them from time to time. Be-

yond that, we asked for a definite statement regarding certain railways which had been laid aside both by the late Government and by the previous Liberal Government. I must congratulate the present Ministry on the steps they have already taken to relieve the pressure on the farming industry. A great deal has been done towards carrying out the promises made by the Liberals to the Country party, and this augurs well for the future. I trust the new Government will follow up its good work for the benefit of the State in general. The Colonial Secretary, referring in his speech to the pastoral industry, said that consideration was being given to continuation of pastoral leases after 1926. I would warn the Government to be careful in handling that question, and not to be too lenient. We have the opinions of experienced men regarding the lands of the North-West. Mr. Miles, who has just spoken, declares that in the North there is country not only equal to, but better than, any country to be found in the rest of Western Australia. Certainly, we have no depth of soil extending to 30 feet in this portion of Western Australia. I have no doubt whatever that the statements of Mr. Miles are quite correct. Again, if in the North there is land which will comfortably carry 20 millions of sheep, then there is something wrong, in view of the fact that it is not carrying a great many more sheep than it does at present. I do not for a moment doubt the hon. member's words. It is evident that the Government will need to be cautious and must not allow huge tracts of the North-West to be monopolised by a few men. One matter which closely concerns the farming industry is the services of the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt. It is a matter which the Government should bear well in mind. As a representative of the farming industry I ask them to see that in future Mr. Sutton's services, which are so valuable to the farming community of this State, shall be rendered in the capacity in which he was engaged. Mr. Sutton should not be employed merely in breeding new varieties of wheat, as some people seem to think, but especially in advising the farmers. What has been the position so far? In Mr. Sutton we have one of the foremost experts in wheat growing, and possibly the best

man we could secure for the position of Wheat Commissioner—the best man in the whole Commonwealth. But the farmers have not been able to avail themselves of Mr. Sutton's services. Mr. Sutton has been placed on various commissions, and on boards such as the Industries Assistance Board, and he has been assisting with the wheat pooling scheme. Other men could have been obtained to fill those positions just as efficiently as Mr. Sutton has filled them. It was not necessary, for those matters, to have a man of Mr. Sutton's special experience; and if ever the farming community needed the services of Mr. Sutton it has been during the past two years. Yet those services have been denied, notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Sutton was specially engaged to assist the wheat growers. A very large percentage of the farmers of Western Australia need Mr. Sutton's advice. I personally do not mind admitting here that, in spite of my experience in business and my 12 years' experience in farming, I have learnt a great deal from Mr. Sutton, and saved much money thanks to the advice tendered by that gentleman. If that is so in my case, it must hold good in other cases. In fact, I know it does hold good in other cases. Many of the failures among our settlers have been due to the want of necessary knowledge, knowledge which could be imparted by the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt. Therefore I trust the Government will see that Mr. Sutton is retained in his proper position; that he is permitted to devote his attention to his special work, not only for the benefit of our farming community, but for the benefit of the whole of the State. I am pleased to see the Government have stepped out in the right direction as regards finding employment in the farming districts for goldfields boys. In my opinion, the scheme is a splendid one, both from the point of view of the boys on the goldfields, and from that of the farming community. I have had experience of the goldfields, and I know that when boys leave the schools there they can find very little indeed to do until they reach the age of 18 or 19 years. The intervening time they are apt to spend in idleness, which does not tend to make them good men. Idleness at the age of leaving school proves fatal in many cases. Let

the boys be brought down to the farming areas. There they will gain an insight into farming, and will probably, as a result, become useful citizens and assist in production. Even if they return to gold-mining, their experience of farming life will do them lasting good. When the Colonial Secretary was speaking on this subject Mr. Kirwan interjected the question whether the Government would pay the boys' fares back to the goldfields. In my opinion, that would be rather a tall order. It would mean that numbers of boys would avail themselves of the opportunity just to obtain an excursion trip. If it were laid down that a boy must put in a certain length of time in employment on a farm before becoming entitled to free return to the goldfields, something might be done in the direction suggested by Mr. Kirwan. But, in my opinion, it would be ridiculous to grant free passes from the goldfields to the farming areas and back to the goldfields, quite indiscriminately. When the farmers ask for the labour of the boys on the goldfields, the same old story is heard. The cry is raised that the farmers wish to interfere with the labour market. I say right here that any farmer needing a man will get a man in preference to a lad every time. But there are positions on a farm which do not require the services of a man, and in which a lad would be valuable. Moreover, the position is valuable to the lad as well. I can well remember the hostile spirit in which the Trades Hall section of this community received my scheme for the employment of boys from the high schools on the farms during vacation time. What was the reason for that hostility? What damage were the boys going to do? Were they going to prevent the farmers from employing men? Not a bit of it. However, in spite of all the opposition—opposition not only from the Trades Hall, but from other quarters as well—a large number of boys did go out on the farms and proved a thorough success. In other States the boys have even been allowed to take their vacation earlier in order that they might assist on the farms; and they did go out on the farms and assist, much to their own benefit, as well as to the benefit of the State generally. Now we have Royal Commissions appointed. Those that concern us mostly are

the one for the Agricultural Industry, and one on the Esperance Railway. The one on the Agricultural Industry, the Hon. Mr. Drew tells us, is not needed; and he went on to say that the whole thing could be put right by supplying stock. It seems curious that Mr. Drew, as a representative of the late Government, held these views, and did not try and induce Cabinet to carry his views out. I agree to a certain extent that want of stock does hamper the farming community, but that is only one of the small matters which we are suffering under, and if the late Government knew that, why did they not aim to supply stock to the farmers that could not buy it? Stock could be bought at a profit during the last three or four years, with the exception of the last six months, and even then a profit could be made. We are not likely to have stock at a low price for a number of years, possibly three or four years, but even so profits still exist. But the fault in that direction lies with the attitude of the Agricultural Bank. That institution has always been worked from the trustees' point of view as a development institution, and as a development institution it must fail. What is the use of carrying farmers on to a certain point just to develop their farms and leave them in that position? They are forced to secure further assistance elsewhere. When a man has a certain area cleared it is the rule to supply him with enough cash to buy one good horse and four brumbies, but not enough to buy a decent team. That is where the Agricultural Bank has failed and will fail unless they carry on on different lines. They have only got to carry the men a little further and it will spell success. Unless we give them this assistance they will be left in the position that they cannot possibly carry on, and will only become a drag on the State. The farmer is certainly a drag on the State now, but the blame does not rest with himself but mainly owing to bad seasons. We find that any time when we have a small harvest the whole of the State suffers. This is shown in the rest of the State, and there can be no doubt that the future prosperity of this State depends on the agricultural industry.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: No, wool too.

Hon. J. Cornell: You will have to shape a little better than you are doing.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Is not wool included in the agricultural industry? As regards the Royal Commission question, I would like to have seen a strong commission appointed on the Agricultural Royal Commission, but I am not going to quarrel in that direction. I cannot, however, pass over the personnel of the Esperance Royal Commission. I do say that it does not reflect credit on the Minister who recommended the members of that commission, and further than that, I am afraid we are not going to get all we could get—all the proofs we require. In the first place I do not see how the appointment of a commission on the Esperance Railway is going to improve the position. Are they going to prove that we cannot grow wheat? If they cannot do that, what is the good of it? The better way would have been to have had a good trial with the land independent of Government officials. As regards the position of the railway, the late Government had gone so far with the railway, and it only means the labour to finish it; I think the wisest plan would have been to have finished the line. The time must come when we must lay this railway down. That the land has not shown as regards the results of the crop good returns during the last few years I am ready to admit. But what we want to find out is what system has that land been farmed on. Is there a farmer in that district with a knowledge of wheat growing in Western Australia? I may say that from my experience of Western Australia that the Eastern States farmer has a lot to learn when he comes to Western Australia before he becomes a successful wheat grower. If you have not your land properly fallowed, if you have not the proper kinds of wheat, if you have not the proper amount of superphosphate, all these things have to be taken into consideration, and what will suit one part will not suit another, and what will suit one land will not suit another. As regards the members of the commission I have no fault to find with them. Mr. Padbury is a good representative of the farming industry, but Mr. Dempster is a gentleman who I do not think has had the experience and

shown the ability to take on the position as a commissioner. I may be wrong, but I am afraid that Mr. Dempster is lacking in the experience necessary for a commissioner on a Royal Commission. Now, as regards Mr. MacDonald, he is unsuitable for the position, and I do not know what the Minister who recommended Mr. MacDonald was working for. It was pointed out yesterday, he was a clerk in the Taxation Department, and I do not think he is suitable for the position. Mr. Drew said yesterday that the reason why the Government did not supply stock to the farmers was through the Irrigation Bill being rejected. What did the rejection of the Irrigation Bill have to do with the Government supplying stock to the farmers? How many farmers were there growing stock in the areas which the Irrigation Bill affected? Where the stock is needed is in the drier areas, so that the rejection of the Irrigation Bill has nothing whatever to do with it. The Colonial Secretary made reference to the trading concerns. I am not going to deal with them. I think enough has been said already in that direction. I would have liked to have heard something as to their views in regard to the Yandanooka and Avondale farms. I consider that the time has arrived when these two places should be disposed of. No good can come of the Government attempting to run them. They could not do so in the past and they cannot do so in the future. Avondale is a splendid place for growing noxious weeds. There is not a worse farm in Western Australia. It is simply covered with noxious weeds. It is of no benefit to the State at the present time, and even if sacrificed should be split up and sold in small holdings. The same thing applies to Yandanooka where we have one of the best estates in the country, but I do not see how the Government can attempt to run it successfully.

Hon. J. Ewing: Have they not tried to sell it?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They tried to sell it, but they picked out the poorest parts and placed the highest prices on them. It is better to make a first loss than to keep it back. It is a splendid property, but as it is now we cannot benefit from it. I would like to know the Government's attitude with

regard to the handling of next season's crop. It is a matter of vast importance to the State. It is getting well on in the season, and as far as we can see, we will have some of the last year's wheat with us next June. As producers we certainly would like to know whether anything has been done, and, if possible, what has been done in the direction of assisting us to handle that crop. The Government might, it seems to me, take into consideration the question of how they intend to transport the wheat. Whether they intend to remove the old wheat or the new. Personally I think that while the season is on they should not interfere with the old wheat stacks. I am not referring to the wheat at Fremantle but to the country stacks. The worst of the stacks have been removed, and I do not think that any good will come of building new stacks now. It is far better to leave the old stacks, providing the stacks are all right. These stacks can be left at a profit if there is no double handling of the new wheat, and a considerable amount saved on the bags by less re-bagging, which would follow stacking. Send the new wheat away while we have ships to load. Further, it would be interesting to have some idea of the agents' position under the present scheme. We hear all sorts of reports about it that the whole responsibility rests on the farmers' shoulders, and that the agents can clear out without any responsibility. From my knowledge of the agreement I do not think that is so. However, I would like to know something in that direction. Now I have purposely held back some matters in reference to Mr. Drew's speech yesterday afternoon. I am sorry he is not here now. However, I may hear something before the adjournment. Mr. Drew referred to the defeat of the Country Party candidate, Mr. McCabe, at the recent election, and said that it was due to a large number of farmers voting against Mr. McCabe because the Country Party had formed an alliance with the Liberal Party. If Mr. Drew had said that the Labour Party as a body voted against Mr. McCabe, and not the farmers, he would have been nearer the mark. That is just exactly what did occur, and it is not the first time that it has occurred. It savours of the feeling of Germany towards Eng-

land. We were all right as long as the Country Party were supporting the Labour Party, but the moment we made up our minds that we could not expect any sympathy from the Labour Administration and we decided to support the other side and give them a trial, then of course, we were dropped altogether. The Labour party did the same thing at Wagin and Narrogin and at my election the same thing was done. It is nothing new. In connection with the defeat of Mr. McCabe there was more than that in it; the postal votes had a lot to do with it. Those who supported Mr. McCabe in the first election turned round afterwards and said they could not support the party which was sitting on a rail. Mr. Cullen said yesterday that the Assistance to Industries Act had been put through hastily. I cannot understand Mr. Cullen making that remark and I cannot allow it to go unchallenged, because it must still be fresh in the minds of hon. members that the Industries Assistance Bill, although first brought under notice by the Premier in July, was not presented to this Chamber until the latter part of December. It should have been in operation like the South Australian Act, in October, to do any good. We had to start a new organisation and it meant chaos because the farmers could not be supplied with the necessary commodities to enable them to get their crop in in time. How Mr. Cullen could say it was put through hastily I fail to see. There is nothing wrong with the Act. It is the administration that is to blame; this has been very bad indeed in the past, in fact I do not think it could have been very much worse. After the commencement, a few months were allowed to elapse, and Mr. Camm was appointed a member of the board. That gentleman began by putting matters on a sound footing and he made good. He has given satisfaction right through, and where the feeling of resentment comes in on the part of the late Minister for Lands (Mr. Johnson) towards Mr. Camm I cannot understand. I have handled hundreds of cases on that board and I have been in the office almost daily, and I can say that from the standpoint of the farmers and the State, it would be hard to find a better official than Mr. Camm has proved himself to be. I have

known him to be in his office frequently until very late at night to cope with the work he had in hand. Things were going along nicely when the late Government in their wisdom decided to appoint two new members to the board, Mr. Morris and Mr. Oliphant. As Mr. Johnson, the late Minister, has remarked, Mr. Morris is one of the best officials we have in the State. I am quite ready to agree that that is the case so far as Mr. Morris' own position in the Lands Department is concerned, but it was unfair to Mr. Morris to take him from the Lands Department and put him on the Industries Assistance Board in connection with which he had not had any experience. It is not a fair thing to any man to carry out such a procedure, and in this particular case the change did Mr. Morris more harm than even he himself realised. It is impossible to take charge of an important concern like the Industries Assistance Board, where so much knowledge is required, and make a success of it without some practical experience. We know that the board did not make a success of their work. Matters were hung up for two or three months until the new board got into their grooves. What was the result? When they did start, things were in a state of chaos, and they afterwards drifted from bad to worse. Whilst Mr. Camm did such good work, it was not strange to me to find that he had been appointed manager of the board, but it was strange a few weeks later to find that gentleman moved off the board altogether and transferred back to the Lands Department. That was a serious matter for the clients of the Industries Assistance Board. I did hope that he would receive just treatment by being allowed to remain there until matters were brought to a successful conclusion. Before the alteration was made by appointing Messrs. Morris and Oliphant an application was sent in to the Government for two ledger-keepers. At that time there was a staff of twenty. The ledger-keepers were never sent and the board had to get on in the best way they could. After forming the new Board the staff soon increased in number from twenty to eighty, and it got into the state it is in at the present time, and it will take a good while to straighten matters out. I can give the experience of

one settler, and he is one of many, to show how they were treated in the past. I have a letter here signed by one of the members of the board, which was sent out to a gentleman who has been working not only his own farm but that of a brother who is away at the front serving his country. I can vouch that the gentleman in question is an honest and straightforward man. This is the letter he received from one of the members of the board—

Perth, 17th May, 1916. Sir, I am in receipt of your telegram of the 25th ult. asking for a reply to your letter of the 10th idem. Before agreeing to the release I would like to be given some information in regard to the position of the two crops, yours and that of your brother. From information on the file . . . cropped 300 acres, from which the board received a return of 1,402 bags = 2,795 bushels. You cropped 200 acres, from which a return of 1,216 bags or 3,644 bushels was received. In the one case the average is equal to nine bushels, and in the other 18 bushels per acre. The difference to my mind is altogether too great and calls for an explanation. Further, in the one case the bags averaged two bushels per bag and in the other three bushels per bag, the usual contents of an Australian corn-sack. Can you explain the discrepancy? Upon receipt of this information, the board will then consider the question of granting you the release applied for, and at the same time will have to consider as to whether assistance can be continued to the estate of . . . It was reported to the board some time ago that hay was being carted to the premises of . . . the storekeeper, from one of your paddocks, and you may be able to explain what this refers to, as, up to date, I have received no account from you or . . . regarding this delivery.

Hon. members will see that that letter practically accuses the man of theft. Fancy a supposed experienced member of the board writing to a farmer and telling him that his bags of wheat only contained two bushels!

The Colonial Secretary: What is the date of that letter?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The 17th May. As a practical man I would like to know

how the member of the board expected that a bag of wheat with only two bushels could be handled. It was grossly unfair to make the suggestion he did in the letter, and to show how careless and how lax their methods have been, I will read the reply which was sent by the farmer to whom they wrote. It will explain matters pretty clearly—

21st May, 1916. I am in receipt of your letter of 17th instant (1576/16); and, from my unfortunate experience with your board, I was not astonished at its contents. I must say, however, that I am surprised at a member of the board affixing his signature to a letter which, from beginning to end, is nothing but a mass of thinly veiled insulting insinuations. I was at first inclined to consign your letter to its proper place, the rubbish heap, but the statements contained therein are so comical that I cannot resist the opportunity of proving to you the evidently slipshod manner in which the business of the board is conducted. Before proceeding to answer your questions, however, I would like you to clearly understand that I demand and insist upon a complete apology. You have evidently overlooked the fact that for the past 18 months I have been looking after and working my brother's farm in addition to my own, and that, as a result of such work, you have now in hand on my brother's account a large sum of money, which is nearly sufficient to clear his farm of all debts. I do not desire from you any special consideration for thus doing my duty, just as my brother is doing his at the front, but it should at least leave me free from your insults. Regarding your threat that you will probably cease granting assistance on my brother's block, when the time arrives that you can no longer quibble on the question of granting me a release, I can only say that when that time arrives I will be ready to place my brother's case before a higher tribunal than your board. My brother is doing his bit towards the defence of his country, and I somehow think that, were all particulars to be made public, your proposed action would be considered as hardly within the bounds of decency, leaving

alone justice. Now to get back to figures, I would be glad to be informed as to where you managed to get hold of your figures. I have before me receipts issued by your board, showing that you have drawn on my brother's account the sum of £440 4s. 9d. on 1,175 bags of wheat = 3,327 bushels 47 lbs. I will further on give you the numbers and full particulars, so that you may be in a position to correct your evident errors. The figures in my case are practically correct, but where did you manage to get hold of the figures you stated in my brother's case? Surely it does not need extensive farming experience to know that two bushels per bag is, to say the least, ridiculous. However, I attach a statement showing the correct particulars in my brother's case. You have already had these on a sworn declaration, but they will bear repeating. After perusing them, I hope you will have the manliness to apologise for the wicked and unfounded insinuations which you have so freely thrown at me. As for my release, I regret having to again inform you that I absolutely demand it, and trust that you will be able to expedite matters, otherwise I will have to adopt other steps to bring matters to finality.

The writer states definitely, and it is a fact, that he had before him the receipts issued by the Board, and yet we find the insulting letter written. Instances such as the one I have quoted proved that the members of the Board were not competent to deal with the position. I am referring, of course, to the old members of the Board. The manner in which the Board was staffed did not give the individuals concerned any opportunity whatever. One of them, Mr. Simpson, was transferred within a period of 48 hours from the Lands Department. The Agricultural Bank Accountant, Mr. Grogan, who was in charge of securities, had also 48 hours' notice. There were other changes of a similar nature, and it looked as if these all round charges were being made to serve no useful purpose. No purpose can be served when there is interference with a man holding an important position such as the handling of securities.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: When the sitting was suspended I was dealing with the position of the removal of the securities clerk from the Agricultural Bank. When a securities clerk is removed, a man who has been in the position for years, it at once undermines the whole of the institution. The success of the Agricultural Bank depends practically upon the personal security of its clients. If these are not sound the other securities are of very little value. The Agricultural Bank depends practically upon the presence of a security clerk. If that position is valueless then the securities offered to the bank will not receive that scrutiny which is their due. In the removal of Mr. Grogan from the position which he filled justice was not meted out to him. He was given no opportunity of putting his office in order, but was simply given 48 hours' notice in which to clear out. I do not know what the reason for this was. Touching upon the agricultural and industries board, the position is one which will need a bold scheme. It will mean a tremendous lot to the present Government if this scheme is carried to a successful issue. What is needed in the present position of affairs is a special man at the head of both branches. That man would need to have had experience both financially and otherwise of some of our Eastern States where they have suffered from a drought. Any other class of man would be useless. He must be a man who has made good in a similar position. Such a man is badly needed here. Further than that, under the system by which both these institutions are worked, that of centralisation in Perth, the methods employed must spell failure. It means that a lot of money has been thrown away which the Government have no hope of ever having returned to them. They must have inspectors appointed. I would like to see good men appointed in different centres who have had some experience of the work in all its branches. Such men would stand in much the same position as the branch managers of ordinary banking institutions. These men would be in touch with their clients and would know to what extent they could be assisted and were deserving of assistance.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

They could weed out those whom it was no use assisting. This would be better for the man on the land who wants assisting and better too for the Government. I think that would be a better way out of the difficulty in which we are placed at the present time. There is no doubt that the present Government have made a very good commencement, and I think they will do their utmost to satisfy the just claims of the agricultural industry. Their attitude towards the Kondinin-Merredin railway is much appreciated, and I hope they will be in a position to carry it out. I feel that they are going to do their best for that area of country, and to construct a line which will serve these long-suffering people. Something must be done to lift the wheat which is lying at the depôts. Then there is the Ucarty-Yorkrakine line. Many of the members of the Government already know that district well and I impress upon them that as soon as money is available they should run a railway through it. It is a splendid tract of country and will repay any expenditure upon it, which will result in an increased acreage under crop. Another line which will mean a tremendous saving in haulage to the Government and to the farming community is the Armadale-Brookton line. I need not dilate upon that to-night. There are many advantages to be gained by such a line. I notice that a deputation waited on the Premier some time back, and that he expressed his willingness to make arrangements for an inspection to be made. I feel sure that when an inspection is made and money is available the Government will see their way clear to carry out the construction of the line. There is the much-needed extension of the Bolgart railway, which is as important as the Kondinin-Merredin line. That could go on at the same time. The settlers there have been living on the promises of a railway for many years. The late Government went out a certain distance and there they stopped, and subsequently took away the men and the plant to other parts of the State where railways were being built. A great hardship has been inflicted upon these settlers. Mention has been made to-night by Mr. Lynn and Mr. Miles regarding the har-

bours of the State. These harbours will have to be developed not alone at Fremantle, but at Geraldton, Bunbury and Albany. If the bulk handling system is brought in, as I hope it will be shortly, and as I think the Government sympathies are leaning towards, it cannot be brought in by establishing an elevator at Fremantle only. That would only suit one section of the farming community, and one portion of the State which is under wheat crops. It must follow that elevators will be erected at the other ports. As regards the work of the Geraldton harbour, I do not think it is a waste of money. I think the expenditure of money there is very much needed. I trust that the Government will continue with all the out-ports which are part of a scheme to assist wheat-growing in the country. Last year the benefit of expenditure which had been made at the Bunbury harbour was shown by the increase in wheat traffic, notwithstanding the fact that wheat has been grown within a short distance of Bunbury for some time past. Bunbury and Albany are now getting a small share of the wheat trade, but up to this last year or so the wheat producer has been sending all his produce to Fremantle. The farmers who have to pay for the carriage of their wheat the long distance to Fremantle will find it impossible to get justice out of the position. I hope that the Government will continue the good work in connection with the experimental farms. Without a doubt these farms, although in some cases there is a small loss, are of considerable benefit to the State, not in demonstrating what wheat can be grown at a profit, but in supplying breeding stock to the farming community. I do not think that, with the exception of one or two of these farms, they are proving an expense to the State. One or two of them are showing a shortage of revenue over expenditure. They are useful institutions, and such as wheat growers need. I am pleased to see that there is a marked improvement in the running of these farms during the past few years, and no doubt this has had a lot to do with their success. Another vital question is that of the water scheme. Water means so much to our farmers in the areas which are being served by the goldfields water supply. I do not intend to

dwelt at any great length to-night upon this subject, but from what I have said before it must be fresh in the minds of hon. members that the position is impossible. The settlers cannot pay the rates to-day, and have not been able to do so in the past. We find that they are rated, not on the quality of the land but on the acreage, and from this it will be seen that it is impossible, not only that the good land can bear the rates, but utterly impossible for the poor lands to carry them. We have no land in Western Australia that can bear the imposition of these water rates. I trust the Government will deal with the matter at an early date and relieve these persons. It is not much use placing a load upon their shoulders which they cannot bear or be expected to bear. There is a question which affects the City to a certain extent on account of its being a nuisance, and also affects the country. I refer to the sewerage system. This system, as it is worked at present, means a direct loss to the country. The whole of the valuable bye-products of that system is wasted and being thrown into the river becomes a nuisance. There is a tremendous quantity of phosphates of lime and ammonia wasted in this way. No doubt there are many other ingredients which are also lost, and which would prove of great value to our soils which are deficient in such chemicals. If the Government wish to make any alteration at all and at the same time do away with a nuisance they should take steps in the direction of providing facilities to handle these waste products so that they might prove of value to the State through giving to the soil something which it needs. In conclusion, I trust that the Government will give consideration to the primary industries which will so unmistakably respond to such consideration and will follow on the good work they have commenced. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.45 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 21st September, 1916.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Honorary Minister: Report of the Senate of the University of Western Australia for the year ending 31st December, 1915.

By the Minister for Works: 1, Boya Quarry—Trading account and profit and loss account and balance sheet for year ended 30th June, 1916. 2, State Implement Works—Balance sheet, profit and loss account, and manufacturing account for year ended 30th June, 1916. 3, Beenup Brickworks—Balance sheet, profit and loss account, and trading account for year ended 30th June, 1916. 4, By-laws of Yilgarn Road Board *re* Cyanide and other Poisonous Waters.

QUESTION—WHEAT MARKETING SCHEME.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Are the Government aware that a dividend of an extra 6d. per bushel is being paid during this week under the Australian Wheat Marketing Scheme to the wheat growers in South Australia, New South Wales, and Victoria, and that in the latter State the producers had previously been paid a flat rate of 2s. 6d. per bushel on their wheat? 2, Do the Government intend to pay a further sixpence per bushel to the wheat growers in this State? 3, If so, when will it be available?