

stance, have tended to increase the price of timber instead of to reduce it.

Hon. T. Moore: That is because they joined the combine.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: The Minister in charge naturally tries to make the undertaking pay, and joined the combine in order to keep the price up. A number of farmers have been buying their machines from the State Implement Works, and some feared that if the Government sold the works it would not be possible to get duplicate parts. That difficulty could be overcome by the insertion of a clause in the agreement between vendor and purchaser that the purchaser must supply duplicate parts for so many years, say, for the life of the present machines. It is ridiculous to think that a purchaser of the State Implement Works would not manufacture duplicate parts. At all events, the price could be fixed at which the duplicate parts must be sold. I agree with the policy of building workers' homes. It is a State undertaking which has proved successful and of great benefit to the workers. The Government should provide better homes for the farmers. There are farmers who are living in shacks, and whose wives have reared families under dreadful conditions. I have no desire that they should have elaborate homes, which will keep them hard at work for the rest of their lives in paying off the capital, but I do ask that the farmers should be given homes as good as are given to the workers in the city. This will tend to make them more content and lessen the drift to the metropolitan area. I desire to assist the Government in every way to make this immigration scheme a success. I am not opposed to the Government. A few weeks ago the "West Australian" quoted me amongst others as being opposed to the Government. I have never been opposed to them and I have always done my best to assist them. I may have criticised them, but it has never been obstructive criticism or such as to hinder them in their work. I have always endeavoured to make my criticism of a helpful nature. I appeal to all people in the State to assist in making this scheme a success. I admire the good work of the New Settlers League. Had it not been for that practical body of men coming to the assistance of the Government, we would have been in great difficulty to-day. The league does not allow politics to enter into its business. It has done splendid work, and I was so pleased with what had been achieved by the league that I joined it the other day in order to assist in rendering help to the Government. If the people do not join together in helping the Government the immigration scheme will be a deplorable failure. If it is a failure, I can see nothing ahead of Western Australia but failure for many years to come.

On motion by Hon. G. Potter, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 3.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 22nd August, 1922.*

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

### ELECTORAL—SWAN VACANCY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have a letter from the Minister for Justice (Hon. H. P. Colebatch) as follows:—

Electoral Act, 1907, Section 66 (4b)—I have to inform you that Hon. Richard Stanley Sampson, member of the Legislative Assembly for the Swan electoral district, has accepted an office of profit under the Crown, to wit, the office of Colonial Secretary. Will you be good enough, therefore, to issue your warrant for the vacancy thus created.

It is necessary for a motion to be passed declaring vacant the Swan seat.

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

That owing to the acceptance of an office of profit under the Crown, the seat of the member for Swan be declared vacant.

Question put and passed.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Tenth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 17th August.

Mr. DURACK (Kimberley) [4.35]: The conclusion I have drawn from the speeches that have been delivered during the debate is that the subject overshadowing all others is immigration. With other members, I congratulate the Premier on the success which attended his visit to the Old Country. He proved himself a worthy ambassador in our cause. Since his return hope and confidence have radiated throughout the State. It is also noticeable that there has been an improvement in the business affairs of the city and the country. Many of us, if we are not prosperous already, feel that we are becoming prosperous.

Hon. P. Collier: Probably you have good ground for feeling that.

Mr. DURACK: At all events it is something to feel that we are prosperous. I was present at the reception given to the Premier at the Melrose Theatre. He told us in his usual optimistic way that the greatest work had been done in getting the money. I give him every credit for that, but I feel the greatest work is ahead of us, that of placing the immigrants on the land.

Hon. T. Walker: That is so.

Mr. DURACK: It will be no easy matter to place 75,000 immigrants on the land. I hope the greatest care will be exercised in the handling of the proposition. Upon it will, in a great measure, depend the weal or woe of our country. Many excellent Government schemes have in the past failed for want of organisation or through bad management. Seeing that this is a matter that interests all the people of the State, I should like to have seen all parties consulted with respect to it. I should like to see a conference of bankers, commercial men, agriculturists, pastoralists, viticulturists, horticulturists, and the land seekers themselves, so that all the people concerned might express their views. The land seeker must be shown the possibilities of making a success of his calling on the land. We cannot guarantee success for all who take up land. Those, however, who apply themselves vigilantly to their work and scorn the delights of city life for a year or two have every prospect of achieving success. I should have liked to see some of the money spent in the North. It is, however, wise to concentrate our energy, and unwise to spread our activities over too large an area. I, therefore, agree that it is, for the present, better to concentrate upon the development of the South-West. Some attention may be devoted to the North at a later period, when the present scheme has been proved to be a success. In the interests of the settlers I should also like to see the work of preparing the farms carried out by contract labour. No doubt the position of our finances is grave, and somewhat serious. This is a very big State, and possibly we are attempting to do too much. We have here only one-sixteenth of the population of Australia, and we are called upon to develop one-third of the continent. We cannot, however, stand still; we must go on if we can possibly do so. No doubt, as suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, some good might be achieved by having an inquiry into the various Government departments. In the welcome that was tendered to the new Minister yesterday, it was noticeable that it is not the intention of the departments to take too much notice of the advice of Ministers. There may be a good deal of truth in what has been said about the departments at different times and in the suggestion that Ministers are very largely ruled by departmental heads. The heads of departments yesterday made no bones about the position, and suggested that if the new Minister did not pay due regard to them, he would not get on very well. I do not know that this is quite the right attitude for them to take up. Possibly an inquiry into the departments would lead to a tightening up in this respect; and possibly, also, the full abilities of departmental heads are not shown to the best advantage. We cannot hope to get much relief in our financial position until we have our lands properly settled. A certain amount of relief might be afforded if we could sell our trading concerns. Since I have been a member of this Chamber I have always spoken against

trading concerns and deplored the action of Governments in operating them. It is not the function of Government to engage in undertakings of that description.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You did not raise any objection to the Wyndham Meat Works.

Mr. Lutey: What about the North-West steamers?

Mr. DURACK: It was a great mistake for the Government to enter into the shipping business. The Wyndham meat works could be more efficiently run on the co-operative system. One can understand the feeling of people who are engaged in enterprises of various descriptions when there is undue competition on the part of the Government. That is responsible for a lot of capital being kept out of the country. I know the difficulties attendant upon the sale of these trading concerns, but I do not think any serious attempt has yet been made to dispose of them. We are told we must have the consent of Parliament to do this, but we have so far made no attempt to obtain it. I am more firmly convinced than ever that we should dispose of these trading concerns.

Mr. Lutey: Would you go the whole hog?

Mr. DURACK: Yes. The Government should control monopolies, but should not go beyond that. The healthy rivalry of commerce and enterprise in competition for any business that is offering is a sufficient guarantee and protection for the public.

Hon. P. Collier: Competition!

Mr. DURACK: I see from the annual report of the Education Department that our enrolment has increased for 1921 by 2 per cent. over the previous year, but that our expenditure has increased by 22½ per cent. I often wonder if we get true value from our educational system. It has often appeared to me that we are mere copyists, following systems adopted in older countries where they have established more commercial enterprises and where the demand for higher education is equal to the supply. We are essentially a primary producing country and our education should be directed so as to train our young people for the development of our resources, rather than fit them to take positions in offices. Here we have only a limited number of positions and opportunities for our young men, and the result is that we find them drifting in large numbers to the Eastern States. I suppose in no other portion of the world, in comparison with our population, would we find so many who have benefited from the higher education, located in countries outside their own State.

Member: We are losing our best.

Mr. DURACK: That is the position. Something might be done in the direction of altering such a condition of affairs. I would like to see the Federal Government take over the liability or cost of the whole of our educational system, but if that were not possible, an arrangement might be made whereby the Federal Government would take over the liability of the higher branches, leaving us

the responsibility of the primary education of our children.

Hon. P. Collier: They have only to be asked and they will do it.

Mr. Richardson: They will have all the Parliaments and everything else soon.

Mr. DURACK: In these days we hear a good deal of murmuring about separation from the Commonwealth. I do not think we require separation, but rather co-ordination. Separation only means disintegration. When viewing the question of Western Australia and its relationship with the Commonwealth, the position is on all fours with that of the people in the North, in relationship to their treatment by our metropolitan government. I am no more prepared to say that the Commonwealth are wilfully unfair to Western Australia than I am prepared to say that the State Government of Western Australia have treated the people of the North unfairly. The position is somewhat analogous. The people in the North are far removed from the metropolitan Government, and it is difficult for us to place our position before them. It is difficult for the members of the Government to realise our position. The same may be said of the relationship between the Commonwealth and the State. We are removed from the centre of administration in Melbourne and we are fewer in numbers than the other States. I do not care how anxious the Government may be to deal with the North of this State or how honest their endeavours are, I am satisfied that, remotely situated as we are, we cannot hope for much success under the existing conditions.

Mr. Harrison: Do you get a full measure of fair treatment?

Mr. DURACK: I do not say the Government are unfair, but they cannot appreciate our difficulties. Regarding the North-West Department, I do not intend to be hyper-critical, but I believe that there is too much over-lapping and circumlocution in the work as it is arranged to-day. Let me cite the Fisheries Department as an instance. If I desire to refer a matter to that department, I send in my request to the Minister for the North-West. He is not in charge of fisheries matters, however, which are controlled by the Colonial Secretary. It goes from the Minister for the North-West to the Colonial Secretary. From the Colonial Secretary it is sent on to the Secretary of the Fisheries Department in Perth. He sends it on to the local inspector at Broome, Mr. Stewart. He frames his reply and despatches it back to the Fisheries Department in Perth, who send it to the Colonial Secretary and then it is, in turn, sent on to me. In many instances, it is weeks or months before I can get a reply under such a condition of affairs. That cannot be considered a satisfactory way of dealing with these matters. It is too early just yet to say whether the appointment of the Commissioner for the North-West is a satisfactory move or not.

Mr. Teesdale: Hear, hear!

Mr. DURACK: I think, however, it is a step in the right direction. I consider the Commissioner should be a man with broad vision: a man who, in his representations to his Minister, will put the case as it appeals to him from the standpoint of the development of that part of the State. I do not think he should put the position from the point of view that it is his province to oppose every suggestion brought forward by North-West settlers on the ground that the Government have no funds. That, I am afraid, is the position the Commissioner takes up at present. He should be there in an advisory capacity to assist in the development of the North. As to the creation of a new State in the North, I think such a movement at the present time would be premature. That such a movement, however, was contemplated by the Imperial Government was evident when responsible government was granted to this State. We find that provision has actually been made in the Constitution Act against the time when the North would be separated from the southern portions of the State. Sections 61, 62, and 63 are those which contain such provisions. Clause 61 sets out the following:—

Nothing in this Act contained shall prevent Her Majesty from dividing the Colony of Western Australia as she may from time to time think fit, by separating therefrom any portion thereof, and either erecting the same or any part thereof into a separate colony or colonies under such form of Government as she may think fit . . .

In Section 63, which deals with the financial aspects, there is provision made respecting the question of liability in case of separation. Thus it will be abundantly clear that the separation of the North was contemplated even in those days. With our limited population there, I agree that it is rather premature now. There is evidence in the Constitution, however, that the Imperial Government were satisfied that this Government could not control a million square miles of country. They must have regarded the responsibility as being too great for the one Government to shoulder. While I do not think it is possible under present conditions to have a State of our own in the North, I think we could possibly have a State within our own State. The Commissioner might act in conjunction with four delegates representing the respective districts. One of those representatives should be the chairman of the local road board. Another should be the local magistrate, and the other two delegates should be appointed by the Governor in Council. The Commissioner himself would be the chairman. The local requirements of the people would be considered on the spot and the Commissioner, sitting as chairman, would be able to take notes concerning the needs and requirements of the settlers and in turn, could pass on those requirements to the respective members of the district in Parliament. The Commissioner

could send them along with his recommendation. The local member could present those requests to the North-West Minister to be dealt with by him.

Mr. Angelo: Why not trust the local members with their own jobs?

Mr. DURACK: The position of members representing the North appears now to be anomalous. Our constituents do not know whether to consult with their member or with the Commissioner. At least, that is the position to some extent as I find it.

Mr. Teesdale: When you get letters from your local cricket clubs and 40 odd football clubs, you know that you are their member all right.

Mr. DURACK: I know certain difficulties would present themselves, but if we could only get together, we could evolve a better system than that which obtains at the present moment. We should have our public works, harbours and police in this new State within the State, controlled from a central point such as Broome. I think that would be the most central point at the present time.

Hon. P. Collier: You could get Barwell to be Premier, with his headquarters at Broome.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Miles could be Attorney General.

Hon. P. Collier: Miles would be chief officer.

Mr. DURACK: I know that where the Government fail in respect of these areas is that they do not understand the local requirements of the people. If we cannot bring to the doors of the people the main things which so vitally concern their every day life, there is bound to be dissatisfaction. Before touching on affairs affecting my electorate, I wish to refer to a somewhat regrettable incident which occurred in this House and which, in other circumstances, I think would have precipitated a political crisis. The only thing that prevented such a crisis was the fact that we are all anxious to see the immigration scheme launched by our leader, Sir James Mitchell, brought to a successful issue. The incident I refer to, relates to the Como tramway extension. You, Mr. Speaker, will remember the year before last when this question came up for discussion. It was then warmly debated. The item on the Estimates dealing with the extension was only carried on the voice of the chairman. The following year the question came up again for discussion, and it was warmly discussed on the floor of the House. Amongst the many tramway extensions that may have been advocated, it is remarkable that the Como extension was the one particular proposal on which there was a direct pledge given to the House, namely, that the work would not be gone on with before being submitted to Parliament. As to the justification for this tramway extension or for any other tramway extensions, I am not concerned. What I am concerned with is that a distinct and definite pledge was given to this House and it was violated. Is it any wonder that

we as a Parliamentary body are spoken of with a certain amount of discourtesy and contempt, when we find these things taking place? We felt a certain pride in the fact that we are members of Parliament, and we feel that for the time being, at least, it gives us the hall mark of respectability. We do not like to hear Parliament held up to public opprobrium and contempt as it is at the present time. We ourselves are responsible, when we cause a blot to be put upon our own escutcheon. Is the word of this Parliament to be taken for nothing? Is it to be regarded as a mere scrap of paper, to be torn up to meet the exigencies of the moment? We should be very careful. I feel, Mr. Speaker, I should be wanting in my respect for this Parliament if I did not register my opposition to this particular action. I hope it will not occur again. We were told that the emergency which had arisen necessitated the carrying out of this work. But there were ways of meeting the emergency without breaking a pledge. With respect to my own electorate I may point out that it has a coastline extending from this side of Broome to the other side of Wyndham, a distance of over 800 miles, without taking into consideration the many bays and harbours in between. This coastal area abounds in products of great value. There are to be found there the dugong, trepang, turtles, as well as sponges and pearls and pearl shells. Trepang is a very valuable product, and it has been gathered on our coast for the last 300 years. We have the evidence of Commander King who in 1819 visited the coast between Derby and Wyndham, and saw 200 scows gathering trepang. Beyond Darwin also for the last 300 years, trepang has been gathered and taken away to the adjoining islands. We are safe in saying that perhaps millions of pounds worth of this product have been removed from our coast during the past 300 years. It is, however, satisfactory to know that a company of our own people is being formed with a view to raising capital to exploit this industry and that whatever success attends the operations of the company will be reflected in our own country. The hawksbill turtle, which is a turtle of considerable value and is said to be equal to the best of the turtles of the West Indies, is also found on our coast. Hon. members may have seen the exhibition of products made from the shell of this turtle in Perth at the beginning of the year. At this same exhibition there were also on view specimens of crocodile and alligator skins from which it was demonstrated that hand bags and other useful articles could be made. The dugong leather was also to be seen there. Amongst the industries in the far north at the present time one of importance is that of pearling. Our mother-of-pearl is said to be the finest in the world, and attention may be drawn to the fact also that we command something like two-thirds of the

world's supply. Unfortunately, during the past few years this industry has been rather stagnant. The effect of the war was very keenly felt, more so perhaps by those engaged in this industry than by those engaged in other primary industries.

Mr. Mann: And it is in the hands of the Japanese.

Mr. DURACK: At the present time there are 178 boats engaged in pearling operations. There is a limitation on the number of boats registered this year. The average take per boat is five or six tons, but owing to the depressed market, the price has not been above £155 or £160. Many valuable pearls are also gathered in the far North, and only last year one was sold for £4,000—a very satisfactory price remembering the condition of the market.

Mr. Mann: What has to be paid the Japanese before they sign on?

Mr. DURACK: From £50 to £200. The member for Roebourne can tell us more accurately. In the North we also have a great variety of minerals, including gold, silver, copper, tin, lead, asbestos, and mica, and I am justified in saying now, more than probably, oil. Many of the old miners have been prospecting in the far north for the last 25 years. They still have faith in the possibility of rich gold being discovered. Their work, however, has been done only in a desultory kind of way and they have come across fairly good pockets. Many of them live in the hope of some day discovering an El Dorado. I cannot help sharing the belief that something rich will yet be struck in the far north by these gold miners. The late Mr. Woodward, who was a well known geologist, thought highly of Kimberley as a goldfield, and the records of the wardens who have been holding office there are also glowing. Some ten or 12 years ago we exported from Derby 27 tons of wolfram. Coal is also known to exist outside Derby, while not far from that port we have a very rich deposit of iron, a deposit which is known to contain 69 per cent. of metallic ore. In Newfoundland, where England obtains most of its supplies of ore, the percentage is 52, while that of the United States is from 60 down to 45. We in Western Australia therefore are justified in claiming that we have one of the richest deposits in the world, and we can boast also of the fact that the quantity there is enormous. Regarding oil, last year I used the word "perhaps." This year I may speak with a little more confidence and say "It is more than probable." It has been established in the laboratories of Australia that oil at one period of Australia's history did exist in the north. The State's accredited geologist, Mr. Blatchford, and the Victorian geologist who recently visited the far north, tell us that we have the beds and the shales, and the country to carry oil. Of course they cannot tell us that oil is there in commercial quantity, but the conditions are such as to lead us to

hope that it will be found. When we get information of this description from a geologist who was nominated by Professor David as being fully qualified to report on these areas, we are justified in being hopeful. Hon. members no doubt have observed that there has been quite a slump in connection with oil matters. This should not be the case, because reports are more encouraging and more satisfactory than they were 12 months ago.

Hon. P. Collier: In what way has there been a slump?

Mr. DURACK: No interest is being taken in oil prospecting at the present time. It may be due in a measure to the fact of the Government not having interested themselves very much in the matter, and it may also be partly due to the circulation of reports by the "Bulletin" newspaper, through which a bad impression has been left in the minds of the reading public.

Mr. Teesdale: It is only Webb's work; he has got a good billet and a swelled head.

Mr. DURACK: I do not know how far the Government would be justified in helping us, but I think they might do something to restore confidence by showing what the discovery of oil would mean to Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: They should reduce the annual license fee.

Mr. DURACK: Is that what the hon. member would suggest?

Hon. P. Collier: Yes.

Mr. DURACK: The conclusion I draw from recent visits to the Eastern States is that we will have no difficulty in raising money over there for legitimate prospecting companies. There is a keen desire in Australia to hold whatever the Commonwealth has. I feel sure that as a consequence of the boring operations which are taking place at the present time, we shall have no difficulty in getting whatever capital we desire, provided the conditions imposed by the Government are such that investors will feel secure. Nothing has yet been done in the way of fixing a royalty. We know, however, that the Government will not do anything that may be regarded as unfair. But the fact remains that it is not sufficient to tell an investor that we have a sympathetic Government to deal with.

Hon. P. Collier: We are always in the offing.

Mr. DURACK: There is a feeling of insecurity as to what the position may be in the event of oil being discovered. This is a matter that should receive attention at the present time. The Kimberley district, as hon. members know, is essentially a pastoral country. In the West Kimberley both sheep and cattle are run, but during the past ten years sheep operations have not been satisfactory inasmuch as the stations which were carrying between 80,000 and 90,000 sheep—and one station had as many as 100,000 sheep—at the present time only boast 45,000 to 60,000.

Mr. Mann: Why have they reduced their holdings; there are no droughts there?

Mr. DURACK: Largely on account of the dingoes and also because the sheep were depastured too close to the coast. Regarding East Kimberley the position is even worse. There are meat works operating at Wyndham and this year they have so far put through 16,000 carcasses, while it is anticipated that before the close of the season they will have put through between 23,000 and 24,000. Taking our own figures, I may mention that the price paid by the Government, that is, 10s. per 100 lbs., works out at £2 13s. 5d. To this has to be added 8s. 6d., representing a reduction granted by the Commonwealth by way of freight, so that the price we are getting—I am taking the figures at 4,000 head, which is the number I am interested in—amounts to £3 1s. 11d. per head. Seeing that it costs £3 15s. to £4 to put a beast on the market, members will realise how hopeless the position is. Indeed, unless some advance is made by the London market, and at present there is little to indicate much of an advance, the position will be far from encouraging. I do not see much prospect for the beef industry of the North unless there is some restoration of the financial position in Europe, or unless we can get some preference from the British Empire. I think we are entitled to preference. Australian importations from Britain in 1921 amounted to 45 million or, calculated on the basis of five million people, about £8 7s. per head. American figures for the same year represented 44 million for a population of 110 million, or an average of 8s. per head. In other words, one Australian is worth 21 Americans on those figures. I do not wish to speak derogatorily of our cousins, the Americans, but that is the position.

Hon. P. Collier: From a trade point of view?

Mr. DURACK: Yes. Not only would it be good business but it would be good policy for Britain to give preference to Australia. On those figures we are worth more to Great Britain, in addition to being co-partners in the Empire. Surely we are worth more to Great Britain than a South American republic like Argentine.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The people of England will not vote to increase the price of their food.

Mr. DURACK: But they are paying a very good price at the present time. We are told the consumer is paying 1s. to 1s. 6d. per lb.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is for fresh meat.

Mr. DURACK: It seems difficult to arrive at the real position.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: According to the "Pastoralists' Review" frozen meat is about 4½d. a lb.

Mr. Pickering: Is that the wholesale price?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes.

Mr. DURACK: In the East recently I met a number of pastoralists who said the position as regarded the selling of frozen meat in England was hopeless. Many of them had

sold out in desperation, because they could not compete against the chilled meat from Argentine.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is the point.

Mr. DURACK: A move was made by Queensland some time ago to endeavour to establish its own cool stores in the East and it was suggested that the Commonwealth should guarantee the State a million or a million and a half of money to assist in that direction.

Mr. Mann: Did not the Kimberleys have the meat trade with Manila?

Mr. DURACK: Only a limited livestock trade. At that time there was 6,600,000 lbs. of frozen meat going from Queensland to supply army contracts.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That was the time when cattle sold at 30s. a head.

Mr. DURACK: A limited meat trade might be established with the East. Unless we get some subsidy, the position appears to be hopeless.

Mr. Angelo: Why is the local price as high as 1s. 3d. for rump steak and 11d. for roast beef?

Mr. DURACK: Because we cannot get shipping. In the early part of this year the pastoral company with which I am associated made inquiries regarding freight, and the best offers we could get from the Government and from shipping companies was £8 10s. to £9 per head from Wyndham to Fremantle. With such freights it is impossible to ship from the North. It is an anomaly that the consumer here should be paying such a high price while the pastoralist in the North is getting only £3 1s. 11d. per head of stock including the Commonwealth freight subsidy.

Mr. Angelo: Could not we use chilled meat brought down here from Wyndham?

Mr. DURACK: I believe that question has been considered.

Mr. Angelo: If it can be sent from Argentine to England, why not from Wyndham to Perth?

Mr. DURACK: It takes nine to 10 days from Wyndham to Perth, whereas from Argentine to England is a seven days' run. What is badly needed at Wyndham to make a success of the freezing works, if freezing is to constitute the operations of the future, is additional cold storage accommodation.

Mr. Harrison: The Fremantle Freezing Works are nearly completed.

Mr. DURACK: Yes, but I do not know how far they are fitted for chilled meat. The cold storage accommodation at Wyndham is about 1,200 tons, which would represent about 4,000 head of cattle. Therefore, unless boats called regularly and frequently the accommodation would not be sufficient to keep the works going. There was some talk of extending the cold storage accommodation, but nothing has been done. Kimberley possesses great possibilities, but our difficulties are too numerous. Amongst the difficulties we have to contend with is that of high freight which is killing the North. I am reminded that re-

cently we sent up some machinery to the North. The freight from Melbourne for 30 odd tons exceeded £230. It is impossible to carry on when freights are so high.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: During the war you had the lowest freights in the world.

Mr. Mann: Would you be surprised to know that it cost more to bring nine girders from Melbourne to Perth than it would cost from Liverpool to Fremantle?

Mr. DURACK: No. The shipping service on the North-West coast is very infrequent. The "Bambra" is scheduled to call at Wyndham every two months. We cannot hope to carry on while we are handicapped by such high freights and such an irregular service. As regards mails, though that is a Federal matter, we are in a worse position now than we were 20 years ago. Just prior to the war we had a direct service from Wyndham to Hall's Creek. Now the service goes only half way.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

The Minister for Mines: What would be your idea of freights from Wyndham if there were no "Bambra"?

Mr. DURACK: Other companies would be competing.

The Minister for Mines: Would they? You know different from that.

Mr. DURACK: We had an infinitely better service before the "Bambra" came on the coast. Our roads are probably the worst in Australia, and I do not see much possibility of improving them with our present limited population. We cannot raise the money to do it. Consequently, the cost of transit in the North is very high and it is difficult to get about. On the Moola Bulla station there are large numbers of natives and, as the Government have to feed them, I think they could be usefully employed. I know that some members will not agree with me on this matter. The natives, however, could be employed under supervision to effect repairs to the roads. The Government should not have to feed these men without getting some return from them.

The Minister for Mines: We must look after the natives.

Mr. DURACK: Putting them to useful work would not be neglecting them. We want a port established midway between Wyndham and Derby. This was suggested following an inquiry authorised by the Premier two years ago. A report was made on the area west of Cambridge Gulf and Mr. Easton assures us that there is a large area of valuable pastoral country, but the difficulty is there is no port. A port should be provided as soon as possible. This would afford opportunities for developing that area. It would be in fairly close proximity to the Wyndham Meat Works, the farthest distance being not more than 130 to 140 miles. We want cheap freight or free freight for stud stock. It is necessary that the herds of the North be improved. The principle of cheap freights is applied

in different parts of the world. The Castle line of boats are carrying stud stock from Britain to South Africa at particularly low rates. In Canada and America stud stock is carried free, or at reduced rates over the railways, and the other day I noticed that the principle had been applied in New Zealand.

Mr. Money: They carry lime free.

Mr. DURACK: Here, however, the opposite principle is adopted. To send stud beasts to the North, we have to pay more freight. The Government should encourage people to improve their herds by granting either free freight or a considerable reduction on the existing rates. We must endeavour to induce people to settle in the North and remain there. Twenty-five years ago there were more people actually owning properties in the North than there are to-day. For the man permanently living in the North and engaged in primary production, there should be some relief from taxation. We want people to live there, and to grant such relief would be a potent factor in inducing people to live there. I am speaking now of pastoral properties. I have stated year after year that I did not see much prospect of carrying on tropical agriculture in the North and making a commercial success of it, owing to the high cost of labour and the ravages of white ants. Anything can be grown, but at a price. It appears that there are good prospects of cotton growing proving successful. There is evidence throughout Australia that the white ant will not touch cotton. This is born out by experience just outside of Wyndham. We have had a small area under cotton for the last three years and, although this was one of the worst areas known for white ants, they did not touch the cotton. This, on top of evidence from other parts of Australia, would seem to confirm the opinions held that cotton growing can be successfully undertaken in the North. It is quite possible that cotton growing by itself would not pay, but there is a subsidiary to cotton growing, namely, pig raising. In Java, we are told, there is a big demand for pigs; and we have steamers running from our North to Java in five or six days. Maize and millet will also grow in the North, and pigs could be fed very well on maize and millet. As to peanuts I do not know very much, though I am told they will grow up there. The rainfall appears to be particularly favourable for cotton growing. On the other side of Australia where cotton has been grown for some time, in the neighbourhood of Rockhampton, the rainfall is much the same as in the North. I believe the average rainfall for profitable cotton growing is between 22 and 30 inches. The fall at Broome is 23 or 24 inches, that at Derby 25 or 26 inches, and that at Wyndham about 30 inches. At Port Darwin the rainfall is greater still. So it appears that we have the necessary climatic conditions and rainfall. I wish to compliment the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) on having brought the possibilities of cotton growing before the

public of Western Australia. I hope his efforts in this direction will be followed by the commercial success of those who engage in the industry, and that his name will go down to posterity as the apostle of successful cotton growing in Western Australia. Now, I would like to refer to the drift to the cities. According to the last census taken, whereas the whole population of the Commonwealth has increased by about 900,000, that of the rural areas has decreased by 30,000. The only country town which has held its population is that of Lithgow, New South Wales. The population of Sydney during the census period increased by 290,000. All the other metropolitan towns of Australia show increases proportionately. The state of affairs seems to me very serious. Certainly some remedy is necessary. In Canada the position is quite different. The total population of Canada is about eight millions, and the agricultural population about four millions. Australia has five millions of people, with an agricultural population of only 800,000. Evidently something is seriously wrong. Whether it is attributable to the system of government or to the manner in which we have dealt with the matter, I do not know. My view is that something must be done to make country life more attractive to our young people. It has been said that our railway policy is in a measure responsible. We know that the railway policy of Australia has been to bring everything to the centre. Thus centralisation has ensued. The drift to the cities may also be due to the education of our young men in city areas. They are brought from the country because their parents find that in the cities there are better facilities for education. The boys are taken to the city, and what do they see? They see their city cousins enjoying a prosperity and social success denied to their fathers on the land.

Hon. P. Collier: In Victoria and New South Wales that does not apply. There the trouble is that land is not available.

Mr. DURACK: I do not think that can be said to be the case here.

Hon. P. Collier: No, but it is in the East.

Mr. DURACK: Country boys, on being taken to the city, are surrounded with the many pleasures of town life—music halls and other places of entertainment. Is it any wonder that they are loth to leave the cities? They see the city man securely entrenched against the disasters which overtake industry in the country. They reflect on the risk of drought and consequent ruin to be encountered in the country. To me it is difficult to understand why the man in the city should demand a higher price for his labour than the man in the country, whose work is often heavier. In a measure it may be due to the fact that the merchant and manufacturer are not affected so materially by increased wages. They are able to pass the increase on. Again, the Government do not find increased wages out of

their own pocket but pass on the increase to the taxpayer. The employer in the country, however, is not in the position of being able to pass on increased wages, and he cannot stand up to them. Some remedy must be provided. We must give more encouragement to people to settle on the land. There must be a wider extension of education to our people in the country, so that they will not have to leave the rural districts for that purpose. Further, the man on the land needs relief from high railway freights, and unduly high taxation. That applies in inverse ratio to his distance from ports and shipping facilities. It does not seem fair that the man far removed from market facilities should have to pay the same taxation as the man immediately adjacent to market or port. The carrying out of the few suggestions which I have made, together with the extension of wireless telephony as speedily as possible would, I think, tend to induce our young men, and even some of our young women, to leave the cities. I trust that the immigration scheme will be adequately dealt with during the session, and that from it will ensue those prosperous conditions which we all so ardently desire.

Mr. RICHARDSON (Subiaco) [5.40]: So many congratulations have been showered upon the Premier that it is almost superfluous for me to add to them. But I am not unmindful of one or two things which happened a few months ago. It will be within the recollection of hon. members that we all met in the dining-room to say au revoir to the Premier. We wished him every success in the mission which we all had at heart. After a few months we find him back among us with his mission satisfactorily performed. Therefore, I think congratulations are due to the hon. gentleman from every member of this Assembly. Perhaps no session has opened for a great many years with more favourable chances than the present one.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Except for the deficit.

Mr. RICHARDSON: True, the deficit has been growing. However, we have the assurance from the country districts that there is every indication of a bountiful harvest. That being so, we can enter on our legislative considerations with somewhat of a light heart, except as regards the deficit, to the growth of which the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has referred. Various members have said that there is not much beyond the immigration scheme in the Governor's Speech. I feel disposed to reply that if during this session we consider nothing but the immigration scheme, and consider that satisfactorily, we shall have done our duty by the country. No doubt, as time goes on, a certain amount of domestic legislation will be brought forward. Some criticism has been aimed at the Premier in regard to the immigration scheme and the financing thereof.



But, notwithstanding the criticisms levelled at the methods he proposes to adopt, there is no getting away from the fact that, after he is stripped of all the fine things which have been said of him at receptions, it can still be honestly said that in obtaining a loan of six millions at 2 per cent. for five years our Premier has done more for this State than any other Premier has done for his State.

Hon. P. Collier: Except that the same conditions are available to all the other Premiers now.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I agree with the Leader of the Opposition as to that. However, we must realise that the Premier of Western Australia was the first to seize the opportunity. He was one of the first to give thought to the scheme, and one of the first to make the scheme appear so absolutely essential that the Commonwealth Government and the British Government were moved to interest themselves in settling immigrants in Western Australia and in the overseas dominions. There is no denying the fact that the Premier was the first to bring it into operation. For that reason, if for no other, we should give him due praise. But in dealing with any immigration scheme, there are many features to be considered. This scheme is the largest ever attempted in Western Australia, and because of that we have to proceed very carefully. I believe the scheme can be successfully carried through. But there are grave possibilities that it may become an abject failure unless every member of the House, every man in Western Australia, concentrates on the making of it a success. Unless the Premier devotes attention to certain phases of the scheme, we may have to admit in a few years time that it has proved a failure. We are borrowing six millions, and we are told by the Premier that he proposes to place 6,000 settlers on the land, or approximately 25,000 souls. Probably we shall be able to settle them in the South-West, and with a little help from the Government those settlers will eventually be successful. But I am somewhat dubious in regard to what is going to happen the other 50,000 persons who are to be brought into the State. Among them probably will be 12,000 able-bodied men, fathers of families. While the scheme is proceeding, we may be able to absorb them all in clearing and other work. But the young people among them will be gradually growing up. What are they going to do? It brings us back to the problem of secondary industries. There are grave doubts as to whether this country is big enough and sufficiently far advanced to absorb those other 50,000 persons, including the children. And in course of time other children will be coming along. We cannot absorb them all as rural workers. What, then, are we going to do with them? It has been pointed out by the member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) that we require higher education in country districts. But if we are to give boys and girls in rural districts higher education, and if we

have nothing to keep them in the rural districts, they are bound to turn to the city.

Mr. Boyland: Why not build up the country towns?

Mr. RICHARDSON: Exactly! I want to see some movement for the establishment of secondary industries in country districts. I am not prepared to propound a scheme, but I think the Premier should give some attention to this phase of the question, for it appeals to me as being the only feasible solution of a difficult problem. It is all very fine to say, "Let us place the people on the land," but it is not every boy who is able to go on the land. We cry out about unemployment. Every metropolitan member knows that it is acute. We do not want it to become more intense. It is not the difficulty of borrowing the money for such a scheme as that of the Premier; that has been fixed up. To my thinking that is the easiest part of the scheme. We had the assets here and we had the right man to send to the Old Country, and immediately he convinced the authorities there that it was right we secured this money. The hardest part of the scheme will be to see that that money is wisely spent. That being so, we are faced with the question whether we have the right sort of man in Western Australia to administer the scheme. Almost every speaker refers to the lack of administration by members of the Cabinet. Are not hon. members in some degree responsible for that lack? I admit the administration does not appear to be too sound.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The new Minister was warned yesterday.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Are not hon. members somewhat to blame in this respect? We have six members of Cabinet. Consider the numberless departments they have to attend to! Is it not possible for the State to pay two more Ministers to assist in the administration of the country?

The Minister for Works: It ought to be.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I certainly think we ought to have two more Ministers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There are 50 of us here. Why not have 50 more Ministers?

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am watching the administration, and I believe no man can satisfactorily do the work our six Ministers are trying to do. In consequence, when a new Minister is appointed, hon. members expect him to be a super man.

Mr. Underwood: The Minister for Works is a super man.

Mr. RICHARDSON: That may be the hon. member's opinion, but it is not mine. The State would be quite justified in appointing two more Ministers, and I hope that before the session closes the Premier will bring down a Bill with that end in view: because, if we are to have a successful immigration policy, no member of the present Ministry has time to attend to it. Take, for instance, the Premier. He acts as Leader of the House. He is Colonial Treasurer—and, God only knows! in my opinion we require a super man to attend to the Treasury at the present

time. On top of that, the Premier has to administer the Lands Department and, in addition, Repatriation. How is he going to do it?

Hon. P. Collier: There are all those responsible Government officials ready to put a Minister in his place if he does not do as he is told.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Then take the Minister for Railways, and Tramways, and Forests, and Industries, and Mines, and State Shipping Service, and who in addition controls the Police. We know, and Ministers have to admit it, that they have not the time in which to properly administer their departments. Take the Minister for Works. Under his control there are the State Sawmills, the brickworks and the implement works. No man in Western Australia could properly control those three enterprises, in addition to which that Minister has to attend to a number of other departments. So, to a certain extent, those remarks made at the official function at the Colonial Secretary's office yesterday have some sting. We should not allow that sting to remain. If departmental officials are going to say to a new Minister, "You have to do as we tell you, otherwise you will be a failure"—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They gave him good advice when they told him to keep a stiff upper lip.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am disappointed in the new Colonial Secretary, in that he did not retort, "I have come here to be boss, and I am going to be boss."

Hon. P. Collier: They warned him.

Mr. Underwood: You must remember they have been used to Colebatch.

Mr. RICHARDSON: In view of our own experience, we know there is a certain amount of sting in the remarks made by those officials.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Appointing two extra Ministers would not get over that, for the new ones might be the same.

Mr. Underwood: If you got 50 Colebatches it would be just the same.

Mr. RICHARDSON: There are one or two matters connected with the immigration scheme that I am surprised the Premier has not brought out in the House. He evidently has some fear in his heart concerning them, and has therefore omitted them. We are going to borrow £6,000,000 for five years at 2 per cent. During that period we ought to be on a pretty good wicket. Immediately the Government lend out that money they will probably charge interest at the rate of 6 per cent. We are told that some portion of this money will be set aside for railway and road construction. Let us assume that this amount will be £2,000,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In the Premier's detailed statement £3,000,000 was mentioned.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Portion of the money will be used for clearing land in the agricultural areas.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And for railways.

Mr. RICHARDSON: We will allow £2,000,000 for roads, railways and other work.

We shall still have £4,000,000 to lend at 6 per cent., which we shall be borrowing at 2 per cent. We might also allow 1 per cent. for overhead charges and losses, of which there are bound to be some. This will give us a profit of £600,000 on our interest bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Wait until you get it.

Mr. RICHARDSON: We will get it. I think I am justified in saying that at the end of five years we shall show this profit on the interest bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But £3,000,000 of it will be used in other directions.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The Premier's policy is to spend £3,000,000 on settling 6,000 persons in the South-West. The rest of the money is to go in clearing land for settlers, and other directions.

The Minister for Mines: Upon established holdings.

Mr. RICHARDSON: And in constructing roads and building railways.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Two million acres at 30s. an acre makes £3,000,000.

Mr. RICHARDSON: That improves the position, for we shall be getting 6 per cent. on £6,000,000. Evidently the Premier is going to borrow £2,000,000 for railway and road construction. We will assume that £3,000,000 will be spent on clearing and on holdings now occupied, and that £3,000,000 will be spent in settling 6,000 settlers in the South-West. If that is so we shall show a profit of £150,000 per annum on the £6,000,000, which means a profit of £900,000 on the interest bill during the five years. I do not, however, think that is correct.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is here in the Premier's scheme.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I understood that a certain amount was to be expended in clearing land and a certain amount on roads and railways.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is in the January scheme.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Whatever way it goes we must show a profit of at least £600,000 on our interest bill. We might, therefore, be a little more optimistic than the Premier suggested we should be, when speaking on the subject. During the recess the Minister for Agriculture toured practically the whole of the wheat-growing areas, and gave good sound advice to the farmers to go on producing. Although he did a great deal by his tour, and the results of it are already making themselves manifest—I felt at the time that something more might have been done in the metropolitan area. The Premier has stated that the wheat-growing lands of Western Australia are to be retained for young Australians. Every metropolitan member in this Chamber has, I think, had the same experience as I have. Good men are continually coming to me looking for work. During the last three or four months I have been enabled to place six or seven unemployed men upon the land. I found in every instance that, when I urged them to go in for farming and told them that the Government would give them every opportunity for so doing,

they asked me what it was the Government would do. They knew nothing whatever about the assistance that was rendered by the Government to settlers, and it had never occurred to them to take up the pursuit of farming. I believe that metropolitan members would be quite ready to join with the Minister for Agriculture in forming a propaganda committee, and touring the metropolitan area telling men what the Government will do for them. The best settlers we can get are Australians, for they are acclimatised to our conditions, and have initiative such as is not always shown by men from overseas. Of course, I am not saying anything derogatory to those men who have come from the old country. There are generally more men in the metropolitan area than we can find employment for, and if such a committee as I suggest were formed it should be the means of making a number of new settlers and producers. It appears from the Governor's Speech that between 1909 and 1921, we brought into the State 45,409 people, that our departures were 35,941, and that the State benefited approximately by only 9,500 people in 13 years. Due regard must be had for these figures seeing that we anticipate new arrivals to the extent of 75,000 in the near future. The goldfields have been going back for some time past. Men who have made or saved money on the goldfields have come to Perth to find some profitable investment for their money, but when they have set about looking for an outlet they have found it impossible to spend their money to advantage.

The Minister for Works: They spend it all the same.

Mr. RICHARDSON: They cannot find any industry in which to invest it, and they naturally drift away to the Eastern States. We are now talking of bringing the men here who have no money, whilst we are allowing others with money to leave our shores. That is bad business.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They could not get away without money.

Mr. RICHARDSON: There are many ways by which a man can get a passage from one State to another without money. Are we going to allow 75,000 new arrivals to come here and permit our own people to drift away from the State?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We cannot stop them if they want to go.

Mr. RICHARDSON: We must do something to keep them here, and make it advantageous for them to remain in the State. There are many good reasons why they should stay here, if we had more industries in which money could be invested. Secondary industries must always go hand in hand with any new immigration scheme. The Government have done a certain amount in the way of assisting secondary industries, but they could well do more. Every member would be ready to support the Government in that direction. There are several industries in this State that are dying a natural death for lack of financial help from the Government.

The Minister for Mines: Some have died a natural death and left us lamenting.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am aware of that.

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

Mr. RICHARDSON: Before the tea adjournment, I had practically dealt with the question of secondary industries in this State. I pointed out the necessity for the promotion of secondary industries and indicated that I was very pleased that the Government intended to continue their work of assisting in the promotion of these activities. There are two methods by which we can remedy the unemployed difficulty. The first is by way of propaganda work and getting the young men to become settlers in the country districts, while the second is by means of promoting secondary industries. I know perfectly well that it is hard to make them successful. That will be the difficult proposition. I fully realise that immediately manufacturing industries are established to meet local requirements and can cope with the market in Western Australia itself, we find goods are dumped from the Eastern States and sold under cost price. Another move adopted by the Eastern States people is to jump in whenever a company has been formed and buy up all the shares, on the accomplishment of which the whole thing is closed down. I do not know that we are in a position to contend against that sort of thing because we cannot prohibit trade, nor can we prohibit people buying shares. That is the whole thing in a nutshell. A good deal of it is due to our connection with Federation. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) put the position correctly when he said that we do not want separation, but co-ordination. If we can find means of creating that co-ordination which is so essential as between the Federation and the several State Governments, we shall have accomplished something. In the meantime we are always faced with that grave danger, no matter what we attempt to start here, from the people in the Eastern States who, in years past, have been bolstered up by bonuses and tariffs. Thus it is that to-day we are confronted with the question: "What are we to do with our boys." I am told by the Premier that to-day he has 1,290 holdings ready to be selected.

Mr. Piesse: He told us 1,240 holdings.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse) was present when the Premier mentioned the number of holdings to me, and I understand half of them are connected with the group settlement scheme, and the others are in the wheat areas. If that be so, let me again impress upon the Minister for Agriculture the advisability of taking up propaganda work with a view to inducing men to go from the metropolitan area to these holdings. I believe that if the whole of the facts, indicating what the Government are prepared to do, and the assistance intending settlers can get from Government institutions, were placed before those men who to-day

are working on quarter or half-time pay, they would be only too willing to take up the land and try their hands as settlers. I commend that suggestion as worthy of consideration by the House. Quite recently we had a considerable amount of fuss in the papers, and also in this Chamber, regarding the actions of the members of the Country Party. I am pleased to know to-day that the Country Party members almost unanimously have stood for constitutional government, and have retained their rights, claiming to be responsible only to their own constituents. We noted that for weeks, practically the entire metropolitan Press cried down the members of the Country Party, and I take this opportunity to congratulate members of that section of this Chamber on the stand they took. It will not only help them, but other parties which may claim the same right over members as Mr. Monger and his executive endeavoured to exercise.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They gained one convert on the strength of it.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Is that so?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Members of Parliament must be ruled by the executive, if they have not the brains to be ruled by themselves.

The Minister for Works: How did they get that convert?

Mr. RICHARDSON: Notwithstanding the fact that the metropolitan Press railed against the Country Party, those gentlemen have indicated that in no circumstances would they allow the executive to dictate to this Parliament.

Mr. Pickering: Are we discussing a no-confidence motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is speaking on the Address-in-reply.

Mr. Pickering: I thought he was dealing with members of the Country Party.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Do I understand the hon. member for Subiaco is not dealing with the Forests Commission?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. RICHARDSON: The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) is evidently quite unused to flattery!

Mr. Pickering: You are quite right.

Mr. RICHARDSON: He does not realise that I am congratulating members of his party on the stand they took! I was going on to point out that while the whole of the metropolitan Press were insistent in condemning the attitude taken up by Mr. Monger and his executive, immediately there was mention of the fact that Mr. Brown intended to resign his position as Colonial Secretary, the Press threw out certain feelers regarding various members they desired to be taken into the Government. There was no consistency in that. One paper went so far as to try to prove that the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) was a metropolitan member. So far as I am concerned, it will take more than the newspapers to prove that to my satisfaction. It is quite evident, however, that the Premier swallowed the dope! There the position stands. I wish to point

out the inconsistency on the part of the newspapers who, having claimed that Mr. Mogner and his executive had no right to dictate as to what should be done in this Chamber, immediately turn around behind the Premier and throw out the suggestions I have indicated. One paper perhaps got ahead of the others, with the result that the Premier took it in.

Hon. P. Collier: The newspapers claim that dictation is their special province. They only resent the intrusion of others.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I come to another question that has received some attention on several occasions. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) interjected when this was being referred to, that the subject had whiskers on it, it was so old. Probably that is due to the haste with which the Como tramway was built.

The Minister for Mines: I think the Public Works Department should be handed over to me.

Mr. RICHARDSON: This particular line has created a lot of discussion and I do not desire to dwell upon it. There are peculiar features, however, which should be brought before the House. This has been described as a desert tramway. I disagree entirely with that contention. Our ordinary conception of a desert is a plain, arid stretch of sand where nothing will grow. I assure hon. members that there is a beautiful banksia forest in this particular area.

The Minister for Mines: The Forests Commission will look into that matter.

Mr. RICHARDSON: On the occasion of my first visit to inspect the route of the Como tramway extension, I was reminded of an extract from that famous speech delivered by the Minister for Education while we were touring the South-West.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Cut that out; there is no comparison!

Mr. RICHARDSON: I refer to the passage where the Minister said that the settlers went out into the "pathless forest and carved out homes for themselves." That is a fair description of what I saw in the district I refer to. On the left one could see mile after mile of beautiful banksia forest.

The Minister for Mines: Not too many miles.

Mr. RICHARDSON: There was that forest as far as the eye could reach—I may be short-sighted. Everywhere I looked on that side, there was this beautiful forest of banksia. On the right, the forest extended down to South Perth, and so it seemed interminable. It is certainly relieved by a few settlers, settlers who probably never dreamt that anyone would pass by to interfere with them.

Hon. P. Collier: They were the hardy pioneers.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Pioneers who had carved a home for themselves and never dreamt that they would be disturbed.

Mr. Teesdale: They blazed the track to Como!

Mr. J. H. Smith: At any rate, they are within 10 miles of a railway.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The Minister for Railways has been credited on many occasions with being inconsistent. He is consistent in this respect. It is one of the planks of the Country Party's platform that they shall have railways before selection. In the Como area, there is the tramway before selection! Then again the Minister is consistent in that he is determined to enable this district to have an elephant and he has given them a work which is a white elephant.

The Minister for Mines: I think you must have read that somewhere.

Mr. RICHARDSON: If, knowing the unemployed difficulty was so bad, it had been a question of assisting starving men, women and children, and there was no reproductive work in the metropolitan area to be dealt with, I would not have raised any objection to the scheme, notwithstanding that a pledge was being broken.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They could have built a railway on the south side of the river.

Mr. RICHARDSON: There were several works in the metropolitan area that would have been reproductive. There was no reason why this work should have been pushed on, more especially as a definite promise had been made in this House that it would not be gone on with until such time as the Tramway Commission submitted their report.

The Minister for Mines: I do not think that was said.

Mr. RICHARDSON: That was the principle, in any case. This matter was debated because members of the House felt it was not going to be a paying proposition and that it would not be warranted. A select committee was appointed by the House and afterwards that select committee was made an honorary Royal Commission. The Leader of the Opposition stated a little while back by way of interjection that the reason why the Commission did not meet earlier in the recess was that the "Hansard" staff were not available to report the proceedings. I know differently.

Hon. P. Collier: That was the only explanation that occurred to me at the moment.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I can understand the Leader of the Opposition's position, as a valued member of the party represents that particular district.

Hon. P. Collier: Oh no.

Mr. RICHARDSON: There was no reason for not calling that Commission together much earlier. Other Royal Commissions met shortly after Parliament closed down. Suppose that Commission was not able to meet earlier, would it not have left a better impression on the minds of the people supporting the Como tramway extension if the Commission had never been called together at all?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They got in their report early enough.

Mr. RICHARDSON: We have seen how easy it was to get that Commission together, and to deal with all the subjects they were

asked to investigate. They sat for only a fortnight and the whole thing was then finished up and cleared away.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are aware that on the first day we met we were asked not to go on with the inquiry because your Commission wanted the reporting staff.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am not blaming the members of the Commission; I am only blaming the chairman.

Mr. Lambert: He is not to be blamed.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The Commission took the evidence of the general manager of the tramways system, who declared that there would be a loss of £1,000 annually on the Como extension.

Mr. Lambert: An estimated loss of £1,000.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Here is the most peculiar feature. He likewise went on to say that it would be necessary to lay down a further line from the Mends-street jetty to the golf links as a feeder to the main Como line which was then being constructed. Why was that never mentioned before?

Mr. Lambert: He had not the material to do that portion.

Mr. RICHARDSON: He has not the material now. It was not a recommendation so far as the Como extension was concerned. I know that the Minister for Railways will endeavour to bluff this House by declaring that up to date the extension has been a paying proposition. I declare it is not such and that it will not be. Anyone who has been over that route must realise that the line will not serve the South Perth people. In the first place, it was known as the South Perth-Como tramway, but now it is called the Como tramway, because the South Perth people deny that it is going to serve them.

Mr. Pickering: It is a Zoo tramway.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The whole thing does not savour of being really pure. I know perfectly well that on every occasion when reference will be made to it in the next two or three months, we shall be told the line is a paying proposition. Methinks those in authority protesteth too much. I have no desire to deal at further length with this matter beyond making a protest, because I know there are other works which are urgently needed. Since 1914 the metropolitan area has been practically starved for reproductive works.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What do you call the sewerage system?

Mr. RICHARDSON: That was put down shortly after 1914. The metropolitan area is starved to-day, and I draw the attention of members of the Country Party to this fact. There are some of them who believe that the metropolitan area should be dealt with fairly and justly, but there are others who, notwithstanding that we vote for some of their projects and assist them in every way that we can, will not lend us that assistance which we expect from them, because they declare that no money whatever should be spent in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Lambert: You are responsible for the position they occupy.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The hon. member is just as responsible as I am. Unfortunately the Premier is not here, because I would like him to hear me declare that no statesman would ever dream of starving the country for the sake of the metropolitan area, and likewise no statesman would agree to starve the metropolitan area for the sake of the country. The two communities are absolutely essential, and therefore, considering we have been starved in the metropolitan area during the last seven or eight years, it is up to the Government now to do something for us. I am quite prepared to admit that the Minister for Works would carry out some of the important undertakings in the metropolitan area if the Treasurer would find the money. Unfortunately, for some reason or other, the money cannot be secured.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You will have to form a new party.

Mr. RICHARDSON: We shall have to form a metropolitan party.

Mr. Carter: Will the member for North-East Fremantle join us?

Mr. RICHARDSON: I believe the hon. member would make an excellent Treasurer so far as the metropolitan area is concerned. I draw attention to the urgent necessity for a better water supply and to the need of sewerage and drainage. We are aware that recently the Government were mulet in damages.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Which they have not paid.

Mr. RICHARDSON: But which, of course, they will pay. I have more faith in the Government than has the hon. member. This was because of the absence of drainage, and in all probability they will be similarly mulet in other directions. It is quite evident, therefore, that the Premier will have to seriously consider the position. Take my own electorate, which is one of the most congested in the metropolitan area. There we have that rotten antiquated system instead of the modern sewerage system. We are bordering right on West Perth, and there is, even, a portion of West Perth which has not yet been sewered. I am informed by the member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) that the Government will not connect up that part of West Perth with the system until Subiaco has been sewered. I know that quite recently the Minister for Works advocated that the system should be extended. Yet because it is a metropolitan matter the money cannot be made available. Why will not the Country Party insist on this necessary work being proceeded with? Why will they not assist us to bring it about?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We do not want assistance; we pay for sewerage; we only want the money with which to carry on the work.

Mr. RICHARDSON: There is another matter on which I desire to touch briefly. A question was asked in the House recently by the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) as to whether the Government were prepared

to bring down a Bill to establish a fair rents court. I was absolutely surprised at the Premier's direct negative reply. Those who live in the metropolitan area know well that landlordism to-day is rampant.

The Minister for Mines: You know the remedy.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Give us more trams.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I have asked the Minister for Railways for a considerable time for tramway extensions and cannot get them. But reverting to the question of rents, I admit we have some excellent landlords in the metropolitan area, but we have to provide against those who are not honest.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Parliament passed a resolution last session in favour of fair rents legislation.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I was bluffed last year on this question because I was a new member. In my district I know of many instances where, during the past few years, rents have been increased by 150 per cent. Can there be any reason for that?

The Minister for Mines: Because building is so costly and provision is not being made for housing the people.

Mr. RICHARDSON: That shows the necessity for preventing landlords adopting profiteering methods. In many instances the rents have been increased in the case of premises which were built before the war began. I know of instances where the increases have amounted to 250 per cent. Immediately the rates are raised 1s. the landlords add 2s. 6d. to the rent. Until such time as the Government determine that they are going to prevent this kind of profiteering, so will the unfortunate tenants continue to suffer. The action of the landlords has almost invariably been directed at the poorer people, and that makes the position worse. I hope that sufficient pressure can be brought to bear on the Premier during the present session to induce him to reconsider his decision in respect to fair rents legislation, because the question is a burning one, affecting as it does those whom we are appointed to look after.

Mr. Lambert: Bring down a Bill.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I cannot do so.

The Minister for Mines: What was the experience in New South Wales?

Mr. RICHARDSON: We always hear the same cry in regard to matters of this sort.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The late Attorney General told us it worked quite well in New South Wales.

The Minister for Mines: It stopped building operations there.

Mr. RICHARDSON: It does not matter to me what happens elsewhere. Moreover, I take it that Western Australia is ahead of the other States in regard to its legislation, and I am convinced that we can pass a measure which will be equitable to both landlord and tenant. Arbitration is mentioned in the Speech and I sincerely hope that whatever amendments are proposed will tend to industrial peace. If there is one thing more than another which will tend to industrial peace, it is to facilitate a union, when a dis-

pute occurs, approaching the court without delay. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), in referring to Royal Commissions, described the Licensing Commission as a "foolish" Commission. I attended the meetings of the Licensing Commission for some four months—we were appointed first of all as a select committee—and I think it wrong for any member to describe what we did as being foolish. He said we travelled east, south, north and west. We did so in order to be able to bring before the House amendments which would accomplish some good. Anyone who goes through the suggested amendments will agree that it was not a foolish Commission. If the amendments are adopted, we shall have accomplished some good for this State. Each and every member sitting on that Commission did his duty with the idea that he was doing some good for the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He thought you were foolish because you blocked the Tramways Commission.

Mr. Underwood: I thought it was foolish of the other Commission.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) referred to what was being done for the indigent old women of the State. The Government have provided a home at Fremantle.

Mrs. Cowan: Quite unsuitable.

Mr. RICHARDSON: That is correct. The Government should provide a better place for them. We ought to look at this matter from a humane point of view. There are many old women who, after working honourably throughout their lives, have to go to this refuge on account of adversity. They have helped to build up the State and in many instances have reared families, and probably because of deaths in the family and adverse circumstances have been forced to become inmates of the home. Every member recalls his mother with thoughts of respect, pride, honor, and love. Yet adversity might easily have resulted in one's own mother ending her days in this home. Would we like to think she was in such a position? It may be said that some of the inmates are human derelicts. Perhaps some are.

Hon. T. Walker: Even so, society is responsible.

Mr. RICHARDSON: All said and done, they are God's creatures.

Mrs. Cowan: They are no more derelicts than the old men, anyhow.

Mr. RICHARDSON: We have no right to judge or misjudge them. If we could read their hearts, we might discover why they became down and out. We do not know the human heart-breaks they have suffered.

Mr. Teesdale: But are they being treated unkindly?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, they are not.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Although we are doing something for them, we are not doing enough. Let us give them a good home; let us give them sunshine, light and brightness. We must do this if we are going to do our

duty towards them. I appeal to members of Cabinet to consider this matter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That place would not be so bad if the big wall were down.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I agree with the hon. member. The old men and the old women should be housed in good quarters and properly fed and looked after so long as life remains.

Mr. Boyland: What about the men suffering from miners' phthisis?

Mr. RICHARDSON: The same applies to them.

Mr. Boyland: More so.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I agree that they should be properly looked after. Western Australia to-day has its back to the wall. We have a tremendous deficit and we have to endeavour to pull it down. It will be many years before we are able to do that, but we must pay attention to economy. Whoever we have as Ministers or administrators must be men with British bulldog pluck; men who realise that their backs are to the wall and who will be prepared to fight and go through with the matter. The immigration scheme is a big one and it can only be carried out by men of big understanding. For this reason I hope members will stand behind the Premier, notwithstanding that there may be criticism in other directions. In this big scheme which will mean so much to Western Australia, let us stand behind the Premier and assist him and by doing so, make a success of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [8.7.]: The member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) referred to the necessity for considering the changed circumstances in the government of the country and the large amount of administration and detail work cast upon Ministers, and urged that Cabinet should be reinforced by the addition of two more Ministers. I shall have something more to say about that later on, but I make the point now that I quite agree with him.

Hon. P. Collier: If I were on the other side of the House, I might have a chance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I, too, agree that everything that can be done should be done by the Government in supporting the establishment of secondary industries. I have said on many occasions that we must find other avocations which our boys can follow. We cannot make them all into ploughmen or timber haulers, axemen or even gold miners. Our boys have a right to expect in this sunny land of ours an equal opportunity with the youths on the eastern side of Australia, and we cannot do that unless secondary industries are fairly established in this State. It is true there will have to be exercised in future even more care than in the past regarding the financial assistance given to those who bring forward these ideas, because quite a number of so-called secondary industries have cost the Government a considerable amount of money

without much value being returned to the State. The hon. member also referred to the fact of Eastern States manufacturers being prepared to dump their goods into this State and smother industries which might be established here. It is rather a coincidence that to-day I had one of the proprietors of a large secondary industry to see me. He pointed out there was a danger that even State trading concerns might import from the Eastern States instead of buying their material in Western Australia. When the affair came to be investigated it proved to be only a very small matter, but as I pointed out to him, this was the position: If the State trading concerns had to deal with various articles which might be manufactured in this State and they confined themselves to the manufacturers of this State—which would be the right thing to do—was there any guarantee that the importers, who were their competitors, would also support the native industries?

Mr. Lambert: You were cruel to him.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think I talked common sense to him. The member for Subiaco also said the metropolitan area had for years been starved of works and he made an appeal to country members not to cavil at work in the metropolitan area, as the metropolitan members had assisted the country members. I think there are attempts to raise too much of a barrier—perhaps it is artificial—between the city and the country. There would be no use for the cities unless there were people in the country. Without farmers, timber workers, miners and prospectors in the country, there would be no reason to have a city of distributors. The unfortunate part is that to-day we have too big a proportion of our population in the cities. I was in New Zealand some years ago when the same question was raised there. Then it was found that there were 1.5 men in the country supporting one man in the city. That was considered by the Parliamentarians and statesmen of the day to be too big a proportion. To-day I assume we have practically one man in the city to every man in the country. However, there should be no artificial barrier raised by one or the other. Each is essential. The people in the country help the folks to remain in the town and the town folk, by acting as agents, supply and assist the people in the country. Regarding the metropolitan water supply, the investigations in connection with Mr. Ritchie's report have been completed and the drawings and figures are being carefully gone into by the engineers. These will be laid before the Government in due course—I hope before very long. As to the drainage and sewerage of West Perth and Subiaco, the hon. gentleman was quite right. The only lion in the path is that of funds. To instal the scheme and provide the money for the house connections—I expect the people of Subiaco would require the same as the people of Perth—would cost between £400,000 and £500,000. The Treasury is not in a position to-day to find that money. One hon.

member complained bitterly about the prices being charged for timber. Apparently the hon. member did not know, or if he knew he overlooked the fact, that the increases which have occurred in the prices of timber are simply the effect of higher cost of production due to rise of wages and alteration of working conditions.

Mr. Lambert: Are you in a combine with Millars to regulate prices?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The prices charged in the metropolitan area are practically the same right through.

Mr. Lambert: It is an absolute scandal that you should be in a combine with Millars.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Underwood: How does your price list—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister may proceed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When I was so rudely interrupted I was remarking that the prices charged for timber must necessarily follow the cost of production, which is governed by the rate of wages paid, which has increased, and by the conditions which have been altered.

Mr. Underwood: But how does your department get 50 per cent. above the railway department?

Hon. P. Collier: It is the difference in management. There are two different Ministers, you see.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The State Sawmills deal with the Railway Department's timber. They take practically the whole production of the Railway Department, who do not sell timber apart from the State Sawmills. Another question raised by an hon. member was the utilisation of prison labour for the making of roads, the prisoners to be paid for doing the work. That question was debated in this House many years ago, and I do not think that any Parliament with which I have been acquainted would have agreed to such a proposal. Apart from the fact that that labour might be turned to some account, we have to remember that it would be competing with people who have not been unfortunate enough to get in between four walls. The Leader of the Opposition made merry as to the appointment of Royal Commissions and select committees, stating that the Government were evading their responsibilities. In that remark I think the hon. member was a little premature. The Government will not be evading their responsibilities until they have the reports of the Royal Commissions and select committees before them and ignore those reports. The reports will be of great help to Ministers, and should and will receive respectful consideration.

Mr. Underwood: My word they will.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Leader of the Opposition also spoke about the goldfields water supply, and made a perfectly reasonable plea that the rates should be revised as the sinking fund question had been dealt with by the Premier while in London.



I am in a position to inform the hon. member that the question of revising rates in respect of low grade mines is under consideration at the present time and that probably in the course of a week or two a determination will be arrived at.

Mr. Lambert: Not before it is time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) said that the Australian born must not suffer through immigration. I have the assurance of the Premier that that is impossible, that there is land available not only for the Australian born, but also for the people who are coming to Western Australia. The member for Pilbara referred to what, in his usual offensive manner, he termed the Lake Clifton job, making mention also of Herdsman's Lake drainage. I have only one or two words to say in this connection, because no doubt I shall have an opportunity a little later in the session of dealing fully with the matter. The words I wish to say are that the route of the Lake Clifton railway was settled by Parliament long before the question came under the notice of Cabinet at the time referred to by the hon. member. There could not have been any alteration of route at that stage, because the matter would first have had to be brought before Parliament again. Had it been brought before Parliament again, the concession would assuredly have been thrown out.

Mr. Underwood: Now go on with Herdsman's Lake.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have said all I have to say in reply to the hon. member. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) referred to Beadon Jetty, and I was glad to inform him, by way of interjection, that the work has been let by contract, that a considerable portion from the shore outwards will be of reinforced concrete, and that the remainder of the piles, jarrah piles which have to be driven, will be eased with concrete sleeves. It is believed by the engineers that these measures will preserve the jetty from the attacks of the teredo for a considerable time. The contract has been let, and although it has been the fashion for years, and is now the fashion, chiefly with new members of Parliament, to belittle the Public Works Department, we have the significant fact that the man who is going to construct that jetty for the contractors is a Public Works Department man. From the department he was receiving about £350 a year, and the salary and emoluments to be paid by the contractors are in the neighbourhood of £1,000 per annum. That is how the Public Works Department lose their best men.

Mr. Underwood: It is no wonder you lose them when you have such a Minister.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member desires to be facetious, but only succeeds in being impudent.

Mr. Underwood: There is nothing funny about that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is almost a pity that we cannot get "Pussyfoot"

Johnson to close the Parliamentary bar; then perhaps we would have better conduct in this Chamber. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) referred to Mr. Tindale's estimate of the cost of constructing the Carnarvon-Killili railway. The hon. member sought to make capital out of the fact that an estimate having a certain range had been given by Mr. Dalton and Mr. Tindale for the construction of meat works. If the hon. member had referred to the file, he would have found that the width of the range, £70,000 to £130,000, was due entirely to variations in the number of sheep that the works were expected to treat. The estimate of £70,000 was for a certain number of sheep, and the estimate of £130,000 was for a much larger number of sheep.

Mr. Angelo: Are you sure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am certain.

Mr. Underwood: No sheep will ever come there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Occasionally a goat comes there. The member for Gascoyne is not quite fair to Mr. Tindale, who has the respect of nearly every member of Parliament, and of people who are not members of Parliament.

Mr. Teesdale: He is one of the most capable men in the service.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not fair for an honourable member, because an estimate or a design does not fit in with his views, to attack an officer who has done his best for the State.

Mr. Angelo: His estimate is inflated, as you know.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know it.

Mr. Angelo: I can prove it to you tomorrow by two independent firms.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway, which was built in 1910, cost £2,668 per mile. The difference in the cost of rails and sleepers alone to-day is about £700 per mile, making a cost of £3,370. The difference in the cost of labour is £600 per mile, making a total cost at this date of £4,000 per mile. The hon. member stated that he knew of one or two firms of contractors who were prepared to find everything and build the line for £300,000, as against the Public Works Department's estimate of £400,000.

Mr. Angelo: They are prepared to put up a deposit.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no doubt about that. If the hon. member can find those firms, all I can say is that should the Government decide to build that railway while I am still Minister for Works, I shall be prepared to ask those contractors to give me that price, and if they stick to it I shall accept their tender.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Parliament will decide that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the line is passed by the House and the money is voted by the House, then the Minister for Works has to call tenders, and it is the Minister for Works who decides what tender shall

be accepted. Let me repeat that the rails and sleepers alone, delivered at Carnarvon, will at present day prices, cost £2,000 per mile. The member for Gascoyne wishes us to understand that all the muck work and bridges, if any bridges are required, and all the stations and sidings and everything else, will be done for £1,000 per mile. He is very sanguine. I trust that if the railway is authorised his anticipations will be fulfilled. As regards the Carnarvon water supply I may refer the member for Gascoyne to the member for Pilbara, whose authority we have for the statement that when he was at Carnarvon the quality and supply were doubtful. Yet the member for Gascoyne himself advised me to-day that the water in the well there was plentiful in quantity and excellent in quality but for two crows in the reservoir.

Mr. Angelo: We only want a top on the tower, which you promised six months ago.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) remarked about the Fremantle water supply. I wish to inform the hon. member that I have to-day received the proposals of the engineers in connection with that water supply, dealing with the question placed before the Government the other day by the mayor of Fremantle and gentlemen accompanying him. The proposals will be laid before Cabinet next week, and when I know what is Cabinet's decision I shall be very pleased to carry it out. The member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) last week seemed to have had something that irritated him very much. He told us that the whole country was taken up with boodling. I do not think the hon. member believes that, or that any other man in the House believes it.

Hon. M. F. Troy: How can one think anything else?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There are men given to boodling, but it is wrong to say that the whole country is given up to boodling. The hon. member also spoke about the water supply in his district, and referred to the case of Mr. W. N. Cock. The matter was referred to the Lands Department, whose view is contained in the file I hold in my hand. Mr. Cock has a pastoral lease somewhere in the country, and the Lands Department report—

This road has never been declared, or shown on our plans.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Just so. It is new country.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The report continues—

As a stock route it would serve very little, if any, pastoral country not already served, other than Mr. Cock's leases. I know of no returned soldiers put on country that would be benefited by this route, and there is no country carrying stock within easy reach other than Mr. Cock's, not otherwise provided for. If the road is used to any extent, it certainly requires water; and, in my opinion, if it is decided to put down a well in the position suggested, it should not be done without Mr. Cock carries out his

promise to put a well down further east, which he might easily do, as it would be mainly for his own use, and, I presume, on his own country—the country east of Cock's being served by the Wiluna-Leonora stock route.

I refused to spend £150 in putting down a well for one individual, and, of course, occasion is taken to bring the matter before the House.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You are always right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for York (Mr. Latham) mentioned the Narembeen-Merredin railway and indicated that he desired it to be carried on to Merredin. The reason why it is not being dealt with as he desires, is that three-quarters of the land between Narembeen and Merredin is declared to be wodgil country, which is stated to be of no use for wheat. The line has been stopped until such time as the route is decided upon to show whether it can be profitably carried on to join the goldfields line towards the east.

Mr. Harrison: Is that statement on the report, or was it made by the settlers?

Mr. Underwood: Give us something about Herdsman's Lake.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Something about the Lake Clifton railway first.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson) said—

Mr. Underwood: What about Herdsman's Lake?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would tell the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), if he were sufficiently sober to understand it—

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister must not be offensive.

Mr. Underwood: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER: Do you rise to a point of order?

Mr. Underwood: On a point of order, is the Minister in order in saying such a thing?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister is not in order. I ask him to withdraw the statement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Certainly I withdraw it.

Mr. Harrison: Was your statement regarding wodgil country based on something in the report?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister is making his own speech.

Mr. Harrison: I would like an answer to that question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Question time has passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What was the question?

Mr. Harrison: Was your statement about wodgil country based on the departmental report, or what?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can inform the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison)—and he can see it for himself in the file—that it has been reported that three-quarters of the land between Narembeen and Merredin, along the route followed by the railway, is wodgil country which is useless for wheat.

Mr. Harrison: If it is on the file, that is sufficient for me.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We shall find out about that when the question of deviating the railway comes along.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson) dealt with a drain being constructed at Claremont.

Mr. J. Thomson: Deal with Lake Clifton first.

Mr. Underwood: And then with Herdsman's Lake.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I understand the member for Claremont is an educated gentleman and an engineer. That hon. member, however, referred to a drain which is being constructed at Claremont. He advocated that work himself during the last two years. He thanked me for what was being done within the last few weeks. The mayor and councillors of Claremont themselves advocated the work and asked the Public Works Department to continue their operations and to extend the drain at the council's expense. I have drawn their attention to the fact that the member for Claremont considers that the Water Supply Department could not properly or economically do the work. I have asked them to be relieved of the task. I leave the hon. member to answer for himself to his own constituents. The hon. member made a great song about the necessity for doing this work. He may be—I do not know anything about him—an engineer and a carrier-out of works. When, however, he talks about tunnelling through sand, I think he must have forgotten what he may have learnt in his younger days.

Mr. Underwood: I have tunnelled through sand.

Mr. Chesson: You can tunnel through water, too.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Unless the excavation is very deep and heavy, it is carried out by means of an open cut and lathes, the latter being driven down as the excavation takes place. When it has reached the proper level, the pipes are laid down and jointed. Had this particular job been carried out by driving a tunnel—of course it would not be impossible—the cost would have been about £2 15s. instead of what it is at present, about £1 6s. 4d. The work would have to be timbered up in the tunnel, because sand will not stand by itself. When this is done, the pipes would then have been laid and jointed. The engineer, Mr. Lawson, tells me that the work done up to the present time is within the estimate, and the most awkward parts of the work have been carried out. The member for Claremont knows perfectly well that it is not the question of this drain that is the trouble. It is the fact that he and Mr. Lawson have crossed swords on other than engineering fields in this State. He knows that Mr. Lawson, who had the rank of Major, was placed in charge of the field engineers, when the hon. member was simply placed there as a lieutenant.

Mr. Corboy: Yes, and he was relieved immediately afterwards. This is a dangerous subject to talk about.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If personal feeling is imported into the consideration of a question, one's sense of propriety may be influenced.

Mr. Underwood: It is quite apparent that you have not got a case.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mention was made by several members of complaints regarding the Government stopping the pensions of maimed soldiers. That is to say, if a soldier was doing work worth £1 a week and he was drawing a pension of £1, he only received £3 from the Government. I interjected when the member for Leederville (Mr. Carter) was speaking that the case brought under my notice had been adjusted. The position was that one man was driving a motor boat from East Perth to where the septic tanks are situated. He had only one hand and someone else had to lift the stuff into and out of the boat. Mr. Lawson, in fixing the salary for that man, assured me that he took no notice of the man's pension when he decided upon the payment represented by what he considered was the value of the work done. I am sorry that the pension question cropped up at all, but if maimed soldiers have to be employed to do work, they should be paid for the value of the work done and any difference should be made up by the Government, State or Federal. I do not think the men themselves expect to get the full wage when they do not do the work.

Mr. Corboy: There are more suitable jobs for which they could receive full money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In view of the question being raised, I have had a list prepared in which the names, duties and pay of every maimed soldier is set out before me. That list only reached me to-day and I shall look into the question to-morrow. If there are any cases which I think have been unfairly treated, they will be put right. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) is very much perturbed regarding a proposed townsite for Pemberton. The principal reason why opposition has been raised to that by the management of the State Sawmills is that there is at present no hotel in Pemberton and we intend to keep liquor out of the place as long as we can.

Member: What about sly grog selling?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There may be a certain amount of sly grog selling, but we can keep that within bounds better than we could if an hotel were established there. If we declared a townsite at Pemberton, we would lose control over that position, and we do not want liquor at the sawmills.

Mr. Mann: Might you not have opposition with the Government Stores?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government do not care very much about that. I would be quite happy, should I continue to manage the State trading concerns, to do away with the stores at the sawmills.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The stores do not charge excessive prices.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At the risk of raising the ire of people who have

made me out to be 110 years of age, I would point out that whilst I was manager at the Jarrahdale mills, I took every step possible to get rid of the stores there. I could not get anyone else to take them on and we had to continue them. I am satisfied it would be better for the management of the sawmills, and everyone concerned, if we could do without the stores, for the loss of the profit made would be more than recouped by the relieving of our officers of the responsibility of carrying them on.

Mr. Mann: Storekeepers cannot go there until a townsite is declared.

Mr. Heron: Still looking after the profiteers, are you?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Regarding the Jarrahdale to Pemberton line, this is the famous siding extending for 18 miles which was constructed when the present Minister for Mines was Premier.

Hon. P. Collier: Everything was done on a big scale in those days.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Nothing has been done since.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The reason why that railway has not been taken over is that I have brought the matter before the railway authorities on several occasions to see if we could make suitable arrangements. We have to bring our logs to our mills and we must run the trains to suit the cutting at the mills. For this reason it is difficult to run to a railway time table.

Mr. Mann: You cannot get people to go there unless you give them railway facilities.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There has been some complaint that we have not picked up sleepers and goods for settlers who have been cutting timber for other firms. We cannot do that, except at established sidings, and carry on our work. If the railway were taken away from us and we could run our logs to suit our requirements, I would not offer any objection.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Other companies do not do that.

Mr. Mann: But the Government are encouraging settlement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No one complains about the other companies but still the Government are expected to carry everything, and help their competitors to their own damage! I was sorry to hear the member for Nelson express his opposition to the main roads Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is a danger about that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can assure the member for Nelson that he need not be nervous regarding the contents of that measure. If anything, they will be found to err on the side of simplicity, rather than anything else. He made reference to the Greenbushes Road Board and said I would not give that body a grant for a road. I would not do so because the road is practically in the town itself and it is one that they should be able to look after for themselves. As to the State trading concerns, it may interest members to know that the State Sawmills have, since

their establishment, had transactions representing just over £3,000,000, they have paid away in wages close upon £1,000,000, they have paid interest amounting to £120,000, and in depreciation and sinking fund about £160,000, while the profit made has been £84,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is after paying dividends.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: After paying all those other things. The trade of the State Implement Works has been a million pounds, wages £465,000, salaries £46,000, interest £90,000, and depreciation £28,000. Their profits have been very little. In fact, the balance sheet is on the other side. Although I have not the accounts for the last year, they are not as good as I should like them to be, and I am afraid they will show a serious loss. The brickworks have done a trade of £86,000. When first I took them in hand they were in debt £7,000. We have paid that off, and do not owe anybody anything. In addition, we have £2,500 in the bank and we have paid £37,000 in wages. The State quarry has done a trade of £75,000 and has paid £58,000 in wages. We have never tried to render this a profit-making concern, but have reduced our price according to the profits. I mention these things because it seems to me the question of trading concerns has come to a point where it will have to be focussed and finally dealt with. Individuals and private firms in similar trades have been complaining year after year that their trade has been seriously interfered with and their capital depleted because they cannot get the business which the trading concerns are doing. I have given these results in order that the House may see for itself that there is in that contention of the outside traders a considerable amount of reason. If the three million pounds worth of work which the sawmills have done had been distributed amongst other sawmills they would have had a much busier time. On the other hand, notwithstanding what may have been said as to the prices at which the State Sawmills are selling timber, it may properly be asked whether the State sawmills have not kept down the prices. In respect of sleepers for export, only a few months ago prices were being obtained equivalent to £11 10s. per load f.o.b. Bunbury. To-day those sleepers can be purchased at from £5 10s. to £6. If the same phenomenal rise had taken place in regard to supplies required for domestic purposes, the price would have soared far above what is now being paid. I speak of the trade of the State Implement Works because the engineers of Perth and Fremantle have declared unhesitatingly that their businesses have been ruined by the operation of those works. By the same token, brickmakers say that one or more big brickworks have been closed down because of the operation of the State brickworks. I am making these bald statements without any attempt at padding, so that hon. members may get these things into their heads and be able to deal with the

subject when it comes up, as it must come up before very long. There has been a strong agitation for the abolition of the trading concerns. That agitation is still going on. I should have had considerably more respect for those behind it if, instead of resorting to abuse and misrepresentation of those carrying on the trading concerns, they had addressed themselves to solid argument and let the people judge. At the instance of the Chamber of Manufactures, which I established 25 years ago, there have been disseminated through the country statements palpably untrue, and which have been a disgrace to their anonymous authors. I told the Chamber of Manufactures that their case is sufficiently strong, if only they would put it temperately before the people. If those gentlemen want to know what they ought to do, I will tell them: They have plenty of friends in the House. Let them get some member to move a motion that the House directs the Government to get rid of the State Trading Concerns, and then let the question be fought out clearly on the floor of the House.

Mr. Angelo: You promised to do it as soon as you got a chance.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But you Northern members do not want the State steamers sold!

Mr. Angelo: That is not a trading concern; it is a public utility.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Let those opposed to the State Trading Concerns have the courage of their convictions, and move a motion so that the question can be debated on the floor of the House, instead of supporting this continued campaign of misrepresentation reflecting upon my officers, who are doing their work honestly and well, and for a miserable pittance as compared with what they could obtain in a private concern.

Mr. Durack: What do you think about it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not surprised at the interjection of the hon. member, for he belongs to the Primary Producers' Association, late the Country Party, whose new title has been adopted to provide a drag net and bring in everybody. Since the change of name there has been in the Country Party a marked change of spirit towards the State Trading Concerns. For over two years I have sought to be relieved of my position as Minister for State Trading Concerns. When the late Hon. Frank Wilson became Premier, I undertook the task of thoroughly investigating the State Trading Concerns and putting them on a proper footing so as to prepare them for sale. I still have those sale documents which I prepared, and I still have the trading concerns. I felt then as I feel now, that those concerns should never have been started; but since they were given to me as Minister and trustee, I would have been a mean creature and a traitor if, with the co-operation of my officers, I had not done the best I could to make of them a success, if only for one reason, namely, that when we came to sell them we would get for them a better price.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They do not want that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am convinced that it is not a job for a Minister. It is a position which should be filled by a Commissioner entirely free from political influence, and able to give the whole of his time and ability to the study of what is necessary to run those concerns. It is because I have held that view that I sought to be relieved of my position. I still hope to be relieved before very long.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, there is going to be a change of Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I certainly hope there will be a change of Minister for State Trading Concerns. No business can succeed unless there is a continuity of policy. Those trading concerns cannot succeed unless those who are the final authority in connection with them are able to keep on with one thread running right through the business. You cannot get in a Minister of the Crown all that is necessary to make the trading concerns as prosperous as they ought to be. They must be taken away from Ministerial control and placed under a Commissioner, just as are the railways. Again, there is the question of the State Sawmills at Carlisle. When we bought out the timber hewers, their trade was £2,000 monthly. Last year we did there nearly £80,000 worth of trade, and about £20,000 worth that went direct from the mills to their customers. That trade could not have been done unless the yard was filling a want. We have to sell galvanised iron, and we manufacture doors and sashes. Because of that we have every merchant and manufacturer in the place up against us. Now I want to say a word about the Primary Producers' Association. Before they held their meeting, we had a road boards' conference. In addressing that conference I told those present that I considered the rights and privileges of the people were being insidiously attacked and white-anted. I told them they did not fully value those rights and privileges, because they had not had to fight for them. I made it clear that an insidious attempt was being made to bring members of Parliament to heel, to order them about and tell them what they had to do, to fetch them up to the mark to explain their conduct.

Hon. P. Collier: To put them in the dock, so to speak.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. It is only a few weeks since a friend of mine was invited to toe the mark because he supported on the platform a personal friend who was standing for election. He took a proper stand, as did some of the gentlemen who were at the conference the other day. I believe there were some members at that party who were not in accord. If the report of some of the speeches, which has fallen into my hands, is to be believed—I cannot guarantee it—some of the members on the cross benches should not continue to support the Government for one minute longer. They could not sit among the Labour Party

because the Labour Party would not have them. They still sit on these benches as if they were the friends and supporters of the Government, when they know perfectly well that they exposed to the conference their views as to how bad the present Government are. Other members, including the Leader of the Country Party, stood up for the Government. Let me shake hands with them and congratulate them. The Leader of the Country Party took the stand which I would expect him to take.

Mr. Harrison: You are making such sweeping statements.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He practically told the conference to mind their own business, and to let members of Parliament remember that their duty belonged to the State and to their constituents.

Mr. Pickering: I thought that meeting was in camera.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I could show the hon. gentleman the report of his speech. If he likes, I will read it.

Mr. Pickering: I would be delighted. Read it if you can.

The Minister for Mines: He could read it; he has a copy of it.

Mr. Pickering: I defy him to read it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He defies you to read it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have only a few words more to say.

Hon. P. Collier: Lay the hon. member's speech on the Table.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: All I wish to add now relates to the mission of the Premier. The Premier has been my friend for many years. I believe in his optimism. When I think he tries to go a bit too far, I endeavour to draw the reins of reason and check the exuberance of his enthusiasm, as he in turn does with me. If there is one man in this State who can carry out this immigration scheme, it is the Premier, and I hope and pray that I may be allowed to exist—whether in his Ministry or not—to see it carried out and to see all the ridicule which some people would heap upon him cast on one side. I remember when he was ridiculed about his wheat-scheme settlement. He was called “Moo-cow Mitchell” and God knows what else, but he proved to be right. He will go on with this immigration scheme and prove to be right here also. As the member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) said in very good words, it requires the co-operation of everyone. No matter on which side we might sit, no matter what our political opinions might be, we should all do our little bit to help the scheme along. Western Australia is our country, the country in which we live and hope to live for years to come, and are we to be so poor in spirit or so lacking in loyalty to the country which has given us such a good time for years past that we should now pimp and pine and carpingly criticise? I have more faith in members than to believe this will

occur. We have been up against things for eight years owing to the war. We are up against things now owing to the aftermath of war, but we can pull through. There has never been a dark situation in the life of any man, who if he stood straight up, fore front to the winds and faced it, has not come through. West Australians, whether born here or whether they have come here, must be true to their country and to themselves, and if they are we shall see the fruition of this glorious scheme—the Premier does not mind who gets the credit for it—and our State envied throughout the world.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9.5]: I regret that it has remained for the Minister for Works to cast discredit on the group settlement scheme as enunciated by the Premier. I have sat during the debate and purposely deferred my speech that I might hear the views of other members, and there has not been expressed one view which would cast any discredit on the scheme enunciated by the Premier. I would go further and say I have yet to learn that any member of this House or of another place has done so. It is true some doubt has been expressed regarding the amount of money necessary to carry out the scheme and, further, regarding the manner in which such money is to be expended. The sum which we are informed by the Premier is involved in the scheme of settlement is six millions. We have been told by the Premier of the way in which the interest is to be paid on that sum. One of the great features, the Premier explained, is that the per capita return of 25s. per head from the Commonwealth will relieve this State of practically all interest or the first five years. It is quite fresh in memory that the question of the States continuing to get this 25s. per head grant is receiving serious consideration from the Federal Government, and it may happen that this amount will be considerably reduced at any time. Several questions were put by the Leader of the Opposition and other members regarding this six millions of money and the way in which it is to be expended. The Speech states—

The money so raised will be employed in the following directions:—(1) To strengthen the funds of the Agricultural Bank in order that improvements—chiefly in the direction of clearing, fencing and dam sinking—may be put in hand by existing holders to enable them to double the present production of wheat and to largely increase the stock-carrying capacity of their farms; (2) To provide for the housing of people in country towns and districts; (3) To settle 6,000 additional people on the land chiefly in the South-West portion of the State, to bring their holdings to a productive stage by clearing, drainage, fencing and housing, and to provide railways, roads, and other facilities to enable them to market their products.

I venture to say that six millions will not fill the bill as set forth in that statement. We have had given to us evidence regarding the cost of developing individual holdings, and I think a statement was made by a responsible Minister that the sum required for stocking and providing the necessary sheds, implements, etc., will alone mean something in the neighbourhood of £700. This does not take into consideration the expense of fencing, clearing, water supply and drainage. I have had considerable experience of settlement work in the South-West; I, myself, have been through the mill, and I am quite satisfied that when the Premier said the cost was not to exceed in any case £1,000, he approximated the amount that every one of those holdings will cost before it can be brought to a state of fruition. Now we are told that 6,000 settlers are to be placed in the South-West. The 6,000 settlers on that basis will involve the expenditure of the whole of the £6,000,000. If we take 6,000 settlers as being the number to be placed on the land and allow an average of five in a family, that will account for 30,000 people. The number for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) was not quite so generous in that he estimated the number at 25,000. It is set forth in the Speech that 25,000 immigrants are to be brought into the State each year. I take it the Premier intended the House to believe that these 25,000 immigrants are to go on the land. If this is not so, I think I am right in saying that this is what the House understands and desires.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Hon. P. Collier: Either as settlers or farm workers.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes. I understand that this sum of six millions is dependent upon the number of people we absorb in this State. Therefore, if we do not absorb the 75,000, we shall not get the six millions or the assistance we expect in the way of reduction of interest. If we place 6,000 families during the period over which the loan operates, namely, five years, we shall do very well indeed, but it must be borne in mind that there is a further difficulty in that the settlers must have 12 months' experience before they go on the land. How does the Premier propose to give the 6,000 settlers 12 months' experience before they go on the land? How is he going to deal with the extra 45,000 people who have to be absorbed under this scheme? I wish it to be clearly understood at the outset that I am quite in favour of this immigration policy, and as certain remarks have been made regarding me, I wish to go back and read a short passage from the report of the Farmers and Settlers' Association of 1915 as evidence that I am entirely in accord with the policy enunciated by the Premier. I said:—

There has been a great effort to settle the South-West district, and it has not suc-

ceeded. It is quite impossible to dairy on unimproved lands in the South-West. The only policy is closer settlement. I will read you Section 90b of the Land Act of 1898. Our branch had the following motion on the agenda paper: "That this conference affirms the principle of improved farms before settlement in group areas in the South-West division, and that it declares its policy to be the giving practical effect to the conditions contained within clause 90a or 90b of the Land Act, and any other clauses appertaining thereto, by providing sufficient loan funds on a long dated principle." We want closer settlement in that district. I hope you will not view this matter from a narrow standpoint, but when you turn to the South-West you will see that every possible assistance be extended by this party, which should have the boldest policy possible.

Those are the facts. I claim that the nucleus of this group settlement is to be found in the Land Act of 1898. The credit of giving effect to it lies with the Mitchell Government, but this scheme has been considered and advocated by other members of the community. The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) the other day laid claim to having given an impetus in this direction.

Mr. Teesdale: The Premier does not care who gets the credit. Why repeat it?

Mr. PICKERING: The Minister for Agriculture was associated with two other gentlemen and myself on a committee to frame a land policy for the Country Party. The result of that consultation was the adoption of group settlement on improved farms for the South-West. I have said this because I want it to be understood I am at one with the Premier in desiring to give effect to this immigration policy, and that I have no desire, as suggested by the member for Roebourne, to take any credit from the Premier.

Hon. P. Collier: The pages of "Hansard" for the past eight or ten years have been filled with proposals for group settlement on similar lines.

Mr. PICKERING: Since I have been in this House the question has been frequently discussed, and it has been pointed out this is the only way to settle the South-West. What concerns me is that members should have a clear understanding as to the lines upon which this settlement is to take place. Up to this moment we have had no definite scheme placed before us. My experience of these group settlements is that the settlers upon them do not know to what they are committed.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You people assisted to frame the scheme.

Mr. PICKERING: We have the broad outlines of the policy, but we want to know the details. It is essential for the success of this huge movement that we should know them.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Why are you criticising your own side?

Mr. PICKERING: The hon. member should be on this side of the House, not on the side on which he is sitting. His criticism

has been levelled more at the side upon which he is sitting than upon this side of the House.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You should be on this side. You are always criticising your own people.

Mr. PICKERING: My criticism is directed towards finding a satisfactory solution of the difficulties which may arise in connection with this scheme.

Hon. P. Collier: I am sure it is very helpful.

Mr. PICKERING: And it should be acceptable. When I have to criticise the Government on certain lines I do not hesitate to do so. My criticism is of a friendly nature, and I hope constructive, and is not made with a view to putting difficulties in the way of the Government. So far as I know the temper of the Country Party, it is at one with the Government in supporting this settlement scheme. It is evident from the attitude of the member for Nelson that one should hesitate to criticise the Government, even though the intention of that criticism is to help them along. We should be furnished with details of this scheme. If it is shown that the money which has been set aside is inadequate, and that more is required, it is only right that the Government should take a sympathetic House into its confidence and show how much money is involved. In addition to a charge of something like £1,000 for the establishment of each of these farms, and placing them upon a payable basis, a sum of £2,000,000 is to be allocated from the £6,000,000 for agricultural development, clearing, etc. There is also set aside a separate sum for country homes, each of which will, I understand, cost at least £250. It is contemplated that 1,000 homes of this nature will be built, and this will involve a sum of £250,000. There is also the important question of road construction. Knowing the South-West as I do I say that one of the greatest difficulties which confronts settlement there is that of road construction. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) has fought this question on many occasions in this Chamber, and shown to the Government the necessity for good roads.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: You cannot make good roads without money.

Mr. PICKERING: A considerable sum will be required to provide the necessary road conveniences for new settlers. These people are scattered all over the country. Knowing the South-West as well as I do, members may take my assurance that the sum involved in placing the roads in such a condition that successful development may go on, is considerable. Some of these settlers are already in dire distress in consequence of the bad state of the roads over which they have to be supplied. Consequent upon a breakdown of the motor traffic connected with the Department for group settlement, considerably enhanced prices have had to be paid for the conveyance of supplies to the different groups by means of private motor transport. Those groups which have their motor transport intact are being charged prices, which I understand re-

present a loss to the Government, but we cannot expect private individuals to work at a loss. The problem of settlement in the South West bristles with difficulties, and calls for the exercise of the greatest amount of administrative capacity. The most careful bookkeeping and the best system of accounts must be adopted so that all the charges against the different groups can be carefully audited and stated. Under the system that is being worked to-day, that of inexperienced labour under experienced foremen, a great deal of expense will be incurred which will not be incurred when all the men concerned are experienced. It is also important that a careful note should be taken of all the work that is done upon these groups, otherwise when the time comes to debit up the costs against various groups trouble will ensue. The number of people involved in this scheme is large, and the development works required are tremendous. Many subsidiary works are also embraced in the undertaking, such as railway extensions and the like. I do not know whether railway extensions to serve these group areas are taken into account in the £6,000,000, or whether a separate loan will be raised to cover the cost. I understand from the Speech that the cost of railways in order to supply these groups with conveniences will be debited against the £6,000,000. After going carefully into the question of the extent to which the country is committed in the direction of new railways, I find that the sum involved is about £1,000,000. When we consider the further commitments consequent upon the contemplated development of the karri country, which would necessitate the building of a line from Pemberton to Denmark, and another from Lake Grace to Newdegate, we find that another half million pounds will be required. Then there is the question of drainage to be taken into consideration. Without effective drainage any attempt at settling the South-West will be disastrous. The question has so often been stressed in this Chamber, that it would be invidious on my part to go into details. If the draining of the South-West is not placed upon a national basis, and is not made effective, it were better to have none at all. Other subsidiary services must be given to the areas that are to be served by the drainage scheme. We shall have to see that the people are given postal, telegraph, money order, and other conveniences of the kind.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: That is a question for the Federal Government.

Mr. PICKERING: They are some of the conveniences which we shall have to see are provided for the settlers. Some increased expenditure will be required in the way of medical attention. Extra allowances and greater provision will have to be found by the medical department. Country doctors who have been getting small allowances to attend to a small section of the community, cannot be expected to go on working for a population three times as great, and scattered over a wide area, for the same money. The question of bush nursing will also have to be gone into so that proper conveniences may be given for



safeguarding the health of the people. Then there is the question of education.

Mr. Teesdale: The Premier will get the wind up if you go on in this way.

Mr. PICKERING: If the hon. member gives the same consideration and attention to the development of this immigration scheme as he has done to the Como tramway, his services will not be of much value. It would be interesting for members to have the details of the expenditure proposed up to date, and of what it is intended to do in the future. As chairman of the Forestry Commission I desired to know what it would cost to clear this karri country. I wished to know whether the land was worth the money required to be spent in clearing.

Mr. Willecock: Many extraordinary statements have been made about that.

The Minister for Agriculture: They will all be cleared up by the Forestry Commission.

Mr. PICKERING: It is not part of the duty of the Forestry Commission to clear land.

The Minister for Works: It is to clear the cash, not the land.

Mr. PICKERING: The policy of the Commission is to see that the forests of this country are made an enduring asset. We wanted to know what area was to be cleared. I had a copy taken of the agreement which one of the group settlers had signed. This agreement stated that five acres were to be thoroughly cleared and 20 partially cleared. In the course of my visits to the group areas I saw groups Nos. 3 and 4. Those groups had had 25 acres thoroughly cleared, and I took a photograph in which may be discerned a recently sown crop. There is no doubt that on these groups the full area has been thoroughly cleared. The member for Perth and the member for Forrest were with me and asked me to take this photo. We then visited groups Nos. 6 and 7. Upon No. 6 five acres were being thoroughly cleared, but on the adjoining group, which was separated only by the road, five acres were being partially cleared. The position is very peculiar, and calls for some explanation.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: How do you account for it?

Mr. PICKERING: In this way, that no accounts are being kept of the cost of clearing, and that as those engaged in the clearing have proceeded with the work they have begun to wake up to the fact that it was costing a great deal more than estimated. I have done a good deal of clearing myself. Some of it has cost me as much as £25 per acre.

Mr. Willecock: What do you say is the average cost?

Mr. PICKERING: I do not believe in complete clearing in the South-West. In my opinion, the policy there should be to clear partly. The few big trees left can make very little difference. The policy being pursued is to treat different groups on different lines, and hence much discontent has been created. It would be far better if the Government laid down a set line of policy, so that the group settlers would know exactly where they stood.

Another aspect which appeals to me is that of housing. At the first groups which I visited, Nos. 15 and 16, a great deal of discontent existed by reason of the type of house being put up as temporary accommodation. The houses are really just framework and sheets of iron. They would be probably 8ft. or 9ft. high, down to 6ft. at the back. They are not by any means large. There was no flooring in the houses I saw; just a sheet of iron between the inhabitants and the weather. I admit that they were temporary houses.

The Minister for Agriculture: They are tents.

Mr. PICKERING: The Minister may call them what he likes, but they have to be used as habitations for probably 12 months. There was no definite plan for the formative work upon them. The settlers put up anything they liked as they liked and where they liked. The consequence was that the sanitary convenience of one house was at the front door of another.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is absolutely wrong.

Mr. PICKERING: I can bring evidence to prove that what I say is right. It is quite possible, in laying out these temporary encampments, to make due provision for a proper sanitary system.

The Minister for Agriculture: Skilled architects would have to be employed.

Mr. PICKERING: It does not require a skilled architect to draw up a plan for a temporary house according to the size of the family to occupy the house. But certainly some system is needed to obviate the sanitary convenience of one house being at the front door of the next.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is a wrong statement.

Mr. PICKERING: I hope the Minister will disprove it. As to the permanent housing, I had an opportunity of seeing at No. 4 group the type of house being put up as a lasting domicile. The house is constructed of green timber fresh from the mill, and the consequence is that there will be spaces between each couple of boards. Green jarrah shrinks excessively. Unless some provision is made for a supply of extra timber with each house so that the gaps can be closed, there will be trouble in that direction.

The Minister for Works: But green flooring boards have not been used, surely?

Mr. PICKERING: Yes. The timber has been cut on the site, and put into the houses. That was at No. 4 group. I wish to suggest for the favourable consideration of the Minister that the form of building which has been adopted at the Fairbridge Farm School could with advantage be adopted on some of these settlements. At the Fairbridge Farm School the building has been done on a simple and inexpensive system, and I believe that system is adapted to group settlements. It is a system which enables permanent homes, cool in the summer and warm in the winter, to be provided at a minimum cost.

The Minister for Agriculture: It would run away with a lot of money.

Mr. PICKERING: According to the figures given me by Mr. Fairbridge, and bearing in mind the size of the buildings put up, I thought the system was remarkably cheap; and I have had some experience of the cost of building. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) drew attention to a very important feature of the movement, namely the question of stocking. A debt of gratitude is due from this House to the hon. member for pointing out the immediate urgency of obtaining stock for these settlers. It is evident that dairying is one of the factors by which the settlers may hope to make good. At a later stage I propose to deal with the question of the various industries which they should be encouraged to take up, but undoubtedly there is urgent need for immediate steps by the Government to supply cattle for dairying purposes. No better scheme, in my opinion, could be evolved than that of starting to breed up for the purpose in this State.

Mr. Harrison: That is not a new suggestion.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not claim originality for these suggestions; but they are urgent and pressing, and should be borne in on the Government. Next I wish to draw attention to the statement in the Governor's Speech regarding the cost of settling repatriated soldiers—

The commitments to the end of June in connection with soldier settlement amounted to £5,181,629, including £4,425,153 Agricultural Bank approvals for improvements, and £756,476 for purchase of estates, drainage, clearing, etc. The latter amount covers the cost of preparation for large numbers of men not yet settled, e.g. Peel Estate, Herdsman's Lake, etc. The average commitment per soldier is £1,126.

It is well that members should bear in mind those figures when I assure them that I believe the amount required for individual settlers will be in the neighbourhood of £1,000.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Settlers used to go on the land with one thousand pence.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes; but we could not to-day induce people to settle on the land with one thousand pence; people have got so imbued with the idea of obtaining help that they would never take on the old proposition.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some men started with sixpence.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes; but the idea is that these people in the course of two or three years will be getting money from their holdings. Very few men who started on the land with sixpence, or with one thousand pence, were able to get any money off their holdings in a few years. Some of the settlers in my district took 20 years to get around the corner. Men who started in the South-West without capital had a Herculean task, the accomplishment of which is a great credit to them.

Mr. Simons: How are the Spaniards getting on?

Mr. PICKERING: The Spanish settlers are of a very different type from any other settlers I know in Western Australia.

Mr. Simons: Are they desirable?

Mr. PICKERING: Very desirable. Let it not be thought that I cast any reflection whatever on them. I have nothing to say about them but what is to their credit. However, they work day and night, in a way we Australians are not disposed to do. One matter to be constantly borne in mind by the Minister for group settlement is the desirability of close attention to the lay-out of the different farms. Most of these settlers being without practical experience, they cannot appreciate the importance and necessity of a good lay-out for future management. I would not advocate that any work should be done at present on these group settlements which is likely to lead to over-capitalisation of the holdings. As little fencing as possible should be done just now, because I have great hopes, as I think most people have, that the cost of fencing material will decrease considerably in the course of the next year or so. A point of great interest is the allocation of blocks. I understand that there is a system of drawing for blocks. What I want to know is whether the services of settlers who are successful in drawing for blocks as they become available will be discontinued then for the general benefit of the group. Every care should be taken to ensure that all contribute to the one end before the blocks are divided up. Otherwise the settlers who are left to the end will have but a small chance of getting their blocks within a reasonable time or at a reasonable price. Time is such a big factor in the South-West that delay in the latter stage makes it very difficult for the settler concerned to keep up to the others. The Premier stated the average cost of settling 8,000 men under the Agricultural Bank was £350. But that cannot be taken as an indication of the cost of settlement to-day. When the Agricultural Bank first started, the advances were made on a very different scale from that now obtaining. Advances were then limited to 50 per cent. of the value placed upon improvements by the Agricultural Bank. To-day the advance is the full value of the improvement effected. Therefore we may be sure that the cost of £350 mentioned in the Governor's Speech gives no real idea of what must be the present cost.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Those were mostly cases of settlement in the wheat areas.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes. Very little assistance indeed has been given in the South-West. I am very much concerned as to what is Cabinet's idea of giving the group settlers 12 months' experience. It is a vital thing calling for decision. Do the Government intend to let the settlers gain that experience in developing their own holdings? Or is the intention to let them gain their experience at the hands of other farmers? The question is a very pertinent one for Parliament and for the Government in respect of the 6,000 settlers and the remaining

persons whom it will take to make up the 75,000 people to be settled in that direction. The wages paid to the new immigrants must be taken into consideration. Is it expected that the farming community of Western Australia are to accept the sole responsibility of educating the immigrants in the farming business, at a wage to be fixed by the Trades Hall?

Mr. MacCallum Smith: That is what they want to-day.

Mr. PICKERING: That position has to be faced. If we are to throw upon the farming community the onus of receiving and educating the immigrants we must finance the farmers or else provide that the immigrants shall receive a wage the farmers can afford to pay. It must be remembered that it is impossible to fix any definite sum as the cost of clearing in the South-West. In the wheat areas we have got to that stage where we can say that the clearing costs are from £1 to 30s. per acre. In the South-West, the cost varies and differs on every holding. It cannot be said that any one block is indicative of what another block will cost to clear. Another serious question that crops up is the allocation of the costs throughout these areas. Some farms will cost less than others to clear. Are we going to take the one cost and divide it over the whole of the farms within the area affected or are we to debit each farmer with the cost of the clearing on his own farm? Before leaving the question of group settlement, there is another phase of importance I wish to deal with. I refer to the sustenance allowance given to the settlers. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) said that he had been struck by the contentment displayed by the settlers with whom he had come in contact. When I started farming in the South-West, I did not receive any sustenance allowance. I had to find everything myself and I can quite understand that while these people get 10s. a day, which payment will probably have to be increased, they should feel more content than the man who is up against it all the time. How long do the Government contemplate continuing the payment of the sustenance allowance of 10s. per day.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: As long as the money lasts.

Mr. PICKERING: Not as long as it is needed. I consider the Government will have to continue it until such time as the settlers' holdings are improved sufficiently to enable them to make a livelihood and to produce enough to keep their families.

The Minister for Agriculture: We are applying the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act to the South-West and yet you seem to complain as soon as we do it.

Mr. PICKERING: I am not protesting. I want them to be extended to the South-West, but I want the Government to realise that they cannot give sustenance allowance for 12 months only, and say that is the end of it.

The Minister for Agriculture: Can you possibly imagine it is intended to be so?

Mr. PICKERING: No. It should be obvious that no farmer will seek to get sustenance allowances from the Government for any longer than is absolutely necessary, because the receipt of such payments merely piles up debits against his holding. I do not think any farmer wishes the payments to be continued for any longer period than he can help. As to secondary industries, we had a very interesting address from the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) on that question. I was impressed by the earnestness he displayed on that occasion, but I have a different point of view which I venture to thrust upon this Chamber. In 1919-1920, primary production was responsible for 223 millions out of the 298 millions of the revenue of the Commonwealth. The member for Coolgardie lost sight of the fact that we have a highly prohibitive tariff in Australia.

Mr. Davies: A protective tariff.

Mr. PICKERING: I regard it as a prohibitive tariff. That tariff should be sufficient to foster any secondary industry. What assistance under any tariff have primary industries received? Nothing! What is the position of those industries to-day? The primary industries can hold their own against any other industry and they hold their own in spite of the highly protective tariff which has been a serious handicap to those industries.

Mr. Carter: Don't you think the war has been a factor, too?

Mr. PICKERING: I am not dealing with the war aspect; I am dealing with things as they are. There are some things that benefited owing to the conditions during the war. Wheat and wool benefited. The hon. member should know that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And butter, too.

Mr. Carter: And the war left other countries in a crippled condition.

Mr. PICKERING: Some primary industries have been crippled by the protective tariff, and, in almost every instance, the tariff hits the primary industries to leg. A great deal of the lack of development in connection with our goldfields would be removed if the iniquitous tariff pressing on that industry could be shifted.

The Minister for Agriculture: We cannot deal with that matter.

Mr. PICKERING: The primary producers, in addition to having to contend with that iniquitous tariff, are asked to carry a further burden in connection with the development of secondary industries, because if further money has to be found for the development of those industries, the primary industrial section will have to find it.

Mr. Willcock: That is not so.

Mr. PICKERING: I contend it is so.

Mr. Willcock: Why, your people will not pay their railway freights!

Mr. PICKERING: Hon. members have not studied the tariff and, therefore, they do not know how it hits them. I will deal with the tariff later on. What secondary industries

have been established in Western Australia without assistance from the Government?

Hon. M. F. Troy: What about a Royal Commission to deal with the tariff?

Mr. PICKERING: The secondary industries established without Government assistance include the cement works—

Mr. Willcock: How can you say that when there was that item of £70,000 for the railway?

Mr. PICKERING: They include the porcelain works, the Hume Pipe Works, Millars' Timber and Trading Company, Whittaker's and some others.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The Mineral Sponge Company?

Mr. PICKERING: In addition there are Wunderlich's with their excellent tiles, the Paint Works, and so on. All these industries have been established without Government assistance, and I contend that the State should not exercise itself to get secondary industries established while the primary industries are of such advantage to the State.

Mr. Simons: Cannot we have both?

Mr. PICKERING: The tendency of secondary industries is to draw people into centres of population.

Mr. Carter: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. PICKERING: It is a crying evil to-day that a large proportion of the population of every State is drawn to the capital cities.

Mr. Simons: What do you propose to do with our boys and girls?

Mr. PICKERING: For these reasons, I contend that we should not foster secondary industries at the expense of our primary industries. The secondary industries I have mentioned have been established on a sound footing without any such assistance from the Government. If the Government were content to establish and develop primary industries, all the secondary industries required will follow in the trail of success.

Mr. Carter: You talk as if we could compete with other countries!

Mr. PICKERING: Then, what is the use of developing secondary industries which in a very short time will overcome the demands of the State?

Mr. Carter: Is it not better to send our wheat away in the form of foodstuffs—

Mr. PICKERING: That is a primary industry, not a secondary industry. The Leader of the Country Party ventured to make a few remarks in this connection but the Speaker called him to order.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Hear, hear! Quite right.

Mr. PICKERING: Why? It is a Federal matter which has particular reference to this State.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You are only flying kites.

Mr. PICKERING: I am not doing any such thing. I intend to say a few words on the subject. In a previous speech I made in this Chamber I put the position in such a way that no hon. member was game to reply

to me. I can prove that by quoting "Hansard."

Mr. Carter: You must have spoken late in the evening.

Mr. PICKERING: Nothing of the sort. The hon. member was not in the House at the time and he does not know anything about it. I spoke when introducing a motion. I desired to buy a pair of boots the other day. I went to different shops trying to get the best I could. I was astounded at the fearful price I was asked to pay for Australian boots. I found they were charging £2 for them.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You are too particular.

Mr. PICKERING: I like the best. Seeing that the price was so high I asked if they had not a cheaper line such as Bostock's or White's. I was told that they could not import those boots nowadays.

Hon. M. F. Troy: They saw you coming.

Mr. PICKERING: That is the position which has arisen. Under existing conditions, we cannot import boots and we are not going to encourage the sale of locally manufactured boots if the price is such that it is unfair to the consumer. If that applies to boots, will it not apply to other industries as well?

Mr. Simons: Where should we get our boots from?

Mr. PICKERING: From Australia, but at a fair price. The consumer is not getting any benefit from the tariff, but, on the other hand, the manufacturers are receiving the benefit and the people in turn are exploited by them. The outcome of this will be that the prohibitive tariff will accentuate the position so that we will not receive revenue from the tariff. That will be a serious thing for Australia, and it will mean that revenue will only be obtained by direct taxation. The people will be in the position of paying a prohibitive price for articles and will be taxed beyond their means. That is not sound finance, and anyone who knows the rudiments of political economy is aware that we cannot support two taxes of that description. This hits the primary producer again because if we have no goods coming into Australia, he will have to pay double freights when he sends his goods away. Ships will have to come here in ballast and the freight carried away will have to bear double charges. The position will be such that we shall not be able to export wheat, nor will it be possible to trade overseas the primary products of this country.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I hope you are not putting up an excuse for a voluntary wheat pool.

Mr. PICKERING: I am not doing so. When that question crops up, I will be prepared to put up a fight for it just as I am prepared to-day to fight in order to put down this iniquitous tariff.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You should stand for the Federal Parliament.

Mr. PICKERING: If I did so and I was elected, it would probably be better for this country than to be represented by some

of the men we have in Federal politics to-day. At any rate, my constituents would be represented by a real Western Australian member. The member for Mt. Magnet suggested we should have a Royal Commission on the tariff. If there is to be such a commission, they could not have a better chairman than I, but I would require payment for it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I cannot allow the hon. member to continue any further with a question that does not affect us. There is nothing in the Address-in-reply bearing on the Commonwealth tariff. I must rule the hon. member out of order.

Mr. PICKERING: Then I shall move that your ruling be disagreed with.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I rule that the question of the tariff is not relevant to the Address-in-reply. The debate must be confined to matters for which the State Government are responsible.

Mr. PICKERING: I disagree with the ruling on the grounds that the Customs tariff has a distinct bearing on our primary industries, and the possibility of producing agricultural products at a profit. If that is not a matter of vital importance to the State, I am at a loss to know what is.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I rule that the debate must be confined to matters for which the Government are responsible. The tariff has nothing to do with the State Government.

Mr. Johnston: Cannot this Government make representations to the Federal Government that our industries are being oppressed and our country districts de-populated by the Federal tariff?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the hon. member for Sussex desire to proceed?

Mr. PICKERING: I have no desire to formally move that your ruling be disagreed with now that I have got in all that I wish to say.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is an offensive remark.

Mr. PICKERING: I regret very much the attitude of some members towards Royal Commissions. It must be remembered that the majority of the Royal Commissions we have had were originally select committees, and were converted into Royal Commissions because they were unable to complete their duties prior to the close of last session. The Royal Commission on Forestry, which the Press have attempted to ridicule, was appointed by this House. In my opinion that Commission has done very good service for the State. It must be borne in mind that I was serving on two Commissions, namely Licensing and Forestry. So, too, were the other members of the Forestry Commission. The report of the Licensing Commission has been presented to the House and, judging from the criticism in the Press, the labours of that Commission have been of considerable service to the State. Owing to the desire of the Acting Premier that the Licensing Commission should present its report in time to allow of the introduction of a Bill in the early part of the session, the

Forestry Commission had to postpone its sittings and, consequently, is not yet in a position to present its report. Practically it has finished taking evidence, and its report will issue within the next few weeks. Owing to the wide interpretation given to the Commission by the Solicitor-General, a considerable amount of work has entailed on that Commission, since the whole ramifications of the Forests Department had to be investigated. The member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) has asked several questions in the House about the Forestry Commission. She could have got her information from the Commissioners without asking questions in the House.

Mrs. Cowan: But the public wanted the information.

Mr. PICKERING: The public also could have got it by asking the Commission for it. The hon. member asked what had the Commission to do with the Kurrawang Firewood Company? The chief object of the Forestry Commission of 1904 was to investigate the firewood and mining timber supplies to the goldfields. Anybody who knows anything at all about mining is aware that one of the most important factors is an adequate provision of firewood and mining timber. I am astounded that one who has spent so much time in Kalgoorlie as has the member for West Perth, should not have known that.

Mrs. Cowan: When I was there, all the forests had been cut out.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. PICKERING: And in consequence it is the business of the Commission to consider the provision of future supplies. Another question asked by the hon. member was what the Cheney spark nullifier had to do with the Commission. The Commission has had communications from the Forests Department of New Zealand asking for their views on the spark nullifier. So important to the State is an effective spark arrester, that the Railway Department has offered a reward for one. The agriculturists would give much for immunity from fires caused by locomotives, and when I tell you that 50 per cent. of the fires in the forests are the result of sparks from locomotives, it will be seen how important to forestry is the obtaining of an effective spark nullifier or arrester. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) remarked that it was good enough for me if I had to pay my own expenses when I went to the Eastern States. I have not protested against that necessity, but I should like to read a few words from the official report of my speech at the forestry conference in order to give an idea of the feelings which impelled me to undertake that trip:—

I am glad to assure Your Excellency that there is a spirit growing throughout the State of Western Australia and also amongst the people throughout Australia, a spirit of belief in the urgency and efficacy of good forest administration. As you

have already said, the step in this direction has been much delayed, but it is better that we should take measures late than not take such measures at all. I feel sure that the spirit that is now permeating the people of Australia is going to do much good. We have heard repeatedly about the proposal to adopt substitutes in regard to timber, but as an architect I do not desire substitutes to take the place of our timber. I had an opportunity this morning of going through your museum, and I am glad to see that the people are interested in and have an admiration for the timbers which this State produces. I cannot altogether join with Mr. Ritchie in the great tribute which he has paid to the State of Queensland to the detriment of my own State. I consider that Western Australia is the finest State in a fine Commonwealth. (Applause.) I am going to say that Western Australia is destined to be the premier State of the Commonwealth and I am proud that it has been my privilege to represent so wonderful a State and so wonderful a people at this conference.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Simons: You are a good booster.

Mr. PICKERING: The report continues—When you think of the marvellous things which a small population like that of Western Australia have accomplished in such a limited time of its existence, I think you will concede that we have done much, but they are only finite compared with what we have in view and what we contemplate doing. To-day we have the Premier of Western Australia in England. He is a man with a large heart, and he is determined to push the interests of Western Australia to the utmost limits. We as a people have every confidence in his ability to carry out successfully all that he has undertaken in his visit to England, because we believe that the possibilities of the State are very great indeed. We contend that the timbers we produce in Western Australia are some of the finest in the world. I regret that great difficulties have arisen in connection with our forestry Act—difficulties which should not have formed part of it. It was the inclusion of a certain section in that Act that caused the appointment of the Royal Commission of which I have the honour of being chairman. I hope that something will be evolved from the deliberations of the Commission which will enable us to overcome this difficulty, because if not I fear that the development of forestry in Western Australia will be set back for something like ten years. I hope that some compromise will be arrived at between the Commission and those interested in this measure because, until the people generally recognise that it is essential for active steps to be taken to conserve our forestry interests, we will not make the progress we should do. As chairman of the Royal Commission I have come to this conference with the desire that I might

learn much from the foresters that I see around me. I trust that everyone will do his best to place before the conference the information which will be of benefit to the forest interests of Western Australia and to the forest interests of Australasia. I want to do my duty properly and conscientiously to my State, and I feel in coming to this conference that I will go a long way towards accomplishing that. I trust that while I am here, though it is only a short period, the Minister for Lands will extend every facility to me to acquire all that information which is essential to my business, and I hope the same facilities will be extended to me in the other States as we go back.

Mr. Simons: You spoke better there than you do here.

Mr. Willcock: What about moving that his account for expenses be paid?

Mr. Corboy: That speech ought to be worth the expense of the trip.

Mr. PICKERING: On the question of expenses, the whole of the time I was in the Eastern States was devoted to inquiries into forestry matters. I had the pleasure of meeting the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) in Brisbane and he noticed the attention I was giving to the conference. I had facilities while in New South Wales to inquire into forestry matters, and I availed myself of them. I had facilities similarly while in Victoria and South Australia and I availed myself of them. Whether the State thinks I am worthy of my expenses is a matter of indifference to me. I was in a position to gain information which would be of service to me on the Forests Commission and I took the opportunity to gain it.

Mr. Simons: You did excellent work.

The Minister for Works: When will the report be ready?

Mr. Mann: In due course.

Mr. PICKERING: The Leader of the Opposition said the Leader of the Country Party had not made a statement of the party's policy with regard to economy. The members of the Country Party have been as great a tax on the Treasurer as any other members. It is a difficult matter for a party to stand for rigid economy when they are constantly supplicating for assistance for the development of their districts.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: I have not asked for a penny.

Mr. PICKERING: The hon. member asked for penny sections on the tram cars. Economy does not always mean the saving of money directly. It means more particularly effective administration. I am quite satisfied that if we obtain effective administration and proper control of our works and other matters, a lot of economy can be effected. I have advocated a considerable reduction in the civil service and I certainly think an attempt should be made to economise in this direction. The Government should introduce a Bill to amend the Public Service Act, and enable Ministers to deal with their depart-

ments on the lines they have indicated they would do if they had such an Act.

The Minister for Works: Then we would have another strike.

Mr. PICKERING: I cannot help that. If there was another strike, I daresay the Minister for Works could deal with it as effectively as he dealt with the railway strike when he was Commissioner of Railways. The Licensing Bill will shortly be submitted to the House. As one of the members of the Royal Commission, I intend to stand for the principles set forth in our recommendations that, if we are to have a State wide poll for wet or dry, there must be a percentage of 85 per cent. of the votes recorded. It would be manifestly unfair to give so big a concession and agree to it being carried by anything like a bare majority. There must be a substantial vote.

The Minister for Mines: You propose compulsory voting?

Mr. PICKERING: Yes. It has been said that the Closer Settlement Bill will be reintroduced this session. I wish to make my position quite clear. I am not going to support any increase of land taxation. I shall never support increased land taxation while we are suffering under a prohibitive protective tariff. The policy of the Country Party is a revenue tariff and we recognise the obligation of paying direct taxation, but as one who stands for the Country Party's platform, I am not going to support any increase of land taxation for any purpose. During the time I was on the Licensing and Forests Commissions, I had an opportunity to visit the goldfields and make myself familiar with what was taking place there. I do not feel that pessimism that has been expressed by many members regarding the mining industry. I believe there is still a future for mining if only conditions can be brought about to make our low grade ores operative. This might be accomplished by amending the tariff, by providing cheaper freights on the railways and cheaper water supplies. What emboldens me to hope for better things is that new lodes are being found in various parts of the fields. Might I instance the lode recently found on the Lloyd George Mine at Gibraltar, which we were assured is 20 feet wide and carrying a value of 15 dwts. This should give promise of permanence to that field. I am of opinion that much of the mining done at Coolgardie was not of that thorough nature which has been characteristic of the Golden Mile. I believe that if Coolgardie was given anything like the attention which has been given to the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Mines, developments warranting the expenditure of a considerable sum of money would occur. From the evidence submitted to the Forests Commission by mining experts, whom we were obliged to question on the outlook for mining in relation to the timber supplies, I can only infer that the future is not anything like so dismal as has been portrayed by members in this Chamber. Regarding departmental control I read in the "West Australian" the other day an article reflecting on members

of Parliament in relation to inquiries at Government departments. I do not know at whom it was aimed, but I know quite well that it does not apply to me. When I have much work to do with a department I generally approach the Minister. I think this article has probably emanated from some of the civil servants. I cannot imagine any other source from which exception could be taken. Very few members, I venture to say, make such a nuisance of themselves as was indicated by the article.

The Minister for Works: Three or four years ago it was a regular nuisance in the Works Department.

Mr. Carter: It is said that it was aimed particularly at Country Party members.

Mr. PICKERING: Judging from the number of deputations bearing on city matters, I should say that city members rather than country members were responsible. I regret exceedingly the speeches of certain civil servants at a recent function celebrating the advent of one of our members to Ministerial office.

The Minister for Works: Give us the text of them.

Mr. Corboy: Most impudent statements.

Mr. PICKERING: Practically a dictation to the Minister. He was told that he must be guided by the officers of his department, that that department had been cut to the bone of economical working.

Mrs. Cowan: So it is.

Mr. PICKERING: So it might be. According to the report a case was instanced in which a Minister had ventured to disagree with the departmental officers and had subsequently regretted his action. I do not think it lies within the province of the members of the civil service to make such suggestions to Ministers, and I deeply regret that it was done on this occasion.

Mr. Munsie: If the ingoing Minister had had any backbone, he would have told them to mind their own business.

Mr. PICKERING: That is what I would have done if I had been in his place. In conclusion I wish to deal with the Como tramway. I am glad the Minister is in his seat. What has struck me particularly during the course of the debate is the diffidence with which members have dealt with this subject. One would think from the attitude of members that it was a sacred matter. Some members have adopted an apologetic attitude; some have referred to it sorrowfully; some with hilarity, and some with indifference, one having gone so far as to say it had got whiskers on it. When we compare the attitude of this Chamber with the attitude of the Victorian House where a motion of no-confidence in the Government was moved because of the acceptance of a contract at a higher price than that for which it could have been let, and when we consider that the Government have been guilty of a direct breach of faith with the House, it is utterly astounding. I was greatly impressed with the speech

made by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith). He said he came to the House believing that any promises given in the House would be duly honoured, and it had come as a great shock to him that a breach of faith of this nature had been committed by the Government. I am not singling out any one Minister, but I am speaking of the Government generally. I say a definite promise was given and is recorded in "Hansard" that the Como tramway should not be constructed without the approval of Parliament having first been obtained. That was a sacred promise to this House, and through this House to the people, and no argument has been brought forward which could condone the breach of faith committed. We have heard the considered views of several members on this question. Some have been irreproachable; some have said that the tramway would pay and some that the tramway was wanted, and so on, but these points do not enter into the question at all. If members require an expression of opinion on the construction of this tramway, I refer them to the evidence of the Royal Commission. The position becomes even more confusing when one reads Mr. Taylor's evidence dealing with the Como tramway. I cannot understand why the Royal Commission did not, in its report, make some reference to this House; but it is silent on the point. Prior to its construction, no estimates were prepared, showing what the cost or the revenue would be. The point that appeals to me is that there has been a breach of faith against Parliament and the people of the State. By the action of the Government every member of this House has been dishonoured. The people of Great Britain believe that the Britisher's word is his bond. How do we account for the success of Great Britain in her control of alien countries, except by the fact that the people of those countries have implicit faith in the word of England? That is what has distinguished Great Britain from other countries in the control of alien races. Sometime ago I was attached to the firm of Guthrie & Co., in Fremantle, for a period of 3½ years. Most of our business was conducted on verbal contracts, many of which involved thousands of pounds. These contracts were never broken, no matter whether we lost or gained. When we dealt with merchants in the East we preferred to do our business with China, rather than with Japan. The word of a Chinaman is as good as his bond, and we could count upon it. It was, however, different with Japan, and we did as little business as possible with that country. It is a serious thing that the honour and integrity of this House has been besmirched by a deliberate breach of a promise made to it, no matter what the ground may be. I regret that such an incident should have occurred. A dishonour has been done to me and other members of this Chamber. In conclusion, I regret that such a grievous breach of faith has been committed, as I

honestly believe that that dishonour will live for some considerable time in the memory of the State.

On motion by Mr. Teesdale, debate adjourned.

**BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £1,763,950.**

Returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 10.34 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 23rd August, 1922.*

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

### PAPERS PRESENTED—SWAN BY-ELECTION.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.33]: I desire to lay on the Table of the House papers connected with the Swan by-election, because it may not be possible to give publicity to the matter through the Press in the usual way.

The Minister laid the papers on the Table.

### QUESTION—RAILWAY GRADES, PINJARRA-NARROGIN.

Hon. J. A. GREIG asked the Minister for Education: 1, (a) What is the steepest grade on the railway line from Pinjarra to Narrogin going east, via Dwarda; (b) what is the steepest grade on the same line from Narrogin to Pinjarra going west? 2, (a) What is the steepest grade on the line from Perth to Narrogin, via Spencer's Brook; (b) what is the steepest grade on the same line from Narrogin to Perth? 3, (a) What is the difference in tonnage that an engine would take to Narrogin, via Spencer's Brook, versus via Pinjarra and Dwarda; (b) what is the difference in tonnage that the same engine would take from Narrogin to Perth, via Spencer's Brook, versus Pinjarra? 4, Do the Commissioner and the heads of branches of the Railway Depart-