

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 1st August, 1905.

	Page
Question : Municipal Deputations, how regulated	519
Bill : Electric Lighting Act Amendment, 2a.	519
Motions : Timber Industry, Inquiry by Commission ... ..	520
Prison Warders, eight hours ... ..	529
Engine Drivers' Certificates ... ..	531
Railway Proposal, Goomalling to Mt. Magnet	531
Papers ordered : Police Force Association...	529
Empress of Coolgardie G.M. Lease ... ..	529
Aborigines Commission, officers and censure ...	529
Sunday Football ... ..	529
Commissioners for Affidavits ... ..	532
Pipes Manufacture, cost ... ..	533

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3:30 o'clock p.m.

## PRAYERS.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: By-laws passed by the Municipalities of Albany, Fremantle, and North Fremantle.

By the MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND LABOUR: Rules under "The Local Courts Act, 1904."

## QUESTION—MUNICIPAL DEPUTATIONS, HOW REGULATED.

MR. RASON (for Mr. Hopkins) asked the Minister for Justice: Will he give consideration to the following questions, all of which are of more than ordinary interest to the local governing bodies of the interior:—1, Has a council which is also a local board of health, or acting conjointly with any other municipality as such, a right in the interests of the ratepayers to request the members of their political district to arrange for a deputation to wait on the Minister administering the Act? and if such deputation is granted, can it charge, if the amount be passed by a council, the reasonable expenses incurred to ordinary and general expenditure, as a council does in connection with legal expenses etc.? 2, Was the deputation arranged by the Boulder and Kalgoorlie Councils a fit and proper one to be considered by the Minister, and did their exertions on behalf of the ratepayers farther the passing of the amending Health Act Number 60 of 1904? 3, Are expenses in connection with deputations, after the Minister has agreed to receive same, properly chargeable to the ordinary

expenditure of the municipality and payable out of the general revenue unless disallowed by virtue of Section 402, which states *inter alia*, that if the auditors think there is just cause to disapprove of any part of the said accounts they may disallow same? 4, In the opinion of the Minister, was it reasonable and desirable that this deputation was arranged? 5, Was the magistrate right in refusing to receive the opinion of the Crown Solicitor as evidence in connection with a public body?

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: The questions relate to the interpretation of "The Municipal Institutions Act, 1900," and were the subject of recent proceedings in the Local Court at Boulder. It is understood that the decision of the magistrate is under appeal to the Supreme Court, and the judgment of that Court should determine the questions raised. It is not desirable that any expression of opinion should be given by the Minister while the case is *sub judice*.

## BILL—ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

## SECOND READING.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. P. J. Lynch): In moving the second reading of this Bill I need only remind the House that it is a measure that is intended to widen the scope of usefulness of the Electric Lighting Act of 1892, to enable those areas that are at present administered by roads boards to enter into agreements with corporations on their own behalf, to utilise electricity for all purposes that are now made use of in municipal areas. It is a fortunate circumstance that the expansion of the industries of the State has made these roads boards of such importance that they are to all intents and purposes on the same level as municipal bodies, and it is within our power to extend that power which in the past has been so beneficial as far as the municipal areas are concerned. The wording of the Act very clearly indicates that it is a very useful measure. Up to the present there have been but very little difficulties, if we recall the experiences of the many municipalities where they have carried the Act into operation themselves or have entered into arrangements with local undertakers,

as the Act calls them, for the supply of current. If we take into consideration the experience of the several municipal bodies where the Act has been adopted, we shall see that it is a measure that has given the utmost satisfaction in the past in this regard. The present measure is, as I have already stated, to extend the scope of the Act so as to enable the roads boards of this State to do precisely the same things as the municipal bodies have been doing in the past with so much satisfaction to themselves and so much satisfaction to the residents who have been served by the use of electricity. The first item in the Bill has reference to interpretation. Clause 2 amends Section 2 of the parent Act to the extent of excising the word "council" and substituting the words "local authority," which are to have the definite meaning of a council of a municipality or a board in a roads district. Clause 3 is intended for general application right throughout the measure, and to ensure the excision of the word "council" throughout the parent Act and the substitution of the words "local authority." The last clause refers to the word "municipality" in the parent Act, and it is intended that this word shall also be struck out and the words "municipal district or road district," inserted in lieu. It does not need much talking on my behalf to recommend this measure to the House, so that these roads boards, which have been doing such excellent work in the past in their different spheres, shall also be placed on the same plane in the matter of utilisation of electricity as the municipalities are on at the present day. I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

THE MINISTER farther moved that the Speaker do now leave the Chair for the purpose of considering the Bill in Committee.

MR. RASON: No.

Question put, and negatived on the voices.

THE MINISTER (to the Opposition): If you are frightened like that about little things, what will you be in regard to big things?

On motion by the MINISTER, the Committee stage ordered for next day.

# MOTION—TIMBER INDUSTRY, INQUIRY BY COMMISSION.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest) moved:

That in the opinion of this House a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into the present condition of the timber industry of this State.

He said: I need scarcely say that I move this motion with some little diffidence, in view of the fact that I have already, at the request of my constituents—I may say at the almost unanimous wish of my constituents—taken action with regard to this matter; but for some reason or other, which I do not think was definitely or clearly given to me, the Government could not see their way to grant the request. I therefore, in deference to a promise made to my constituents, have brought the matter before this House for the purpose of having the position of affairs ventilated. For some time there has been some little dissatisfaction in connection with the timber industry in this State, and, as I remarked when speaking on the Address-in-Reply the other evening, it is rather significant that no mention whatever was made in the Governor's Speech of this particular industry. The assertion that this is an industry of some little importance, some little magnitude, is one which requires no argument on my part. It will be readily conceded that an industry extending over so large an area of territory, giving employment to such a large number of workers in this State, and being responsible as it is for the disbursement of so large a sum of money in wages, is an industry which this State or any other State cannot reasonably and justifiably afford to ignore. At the present time it is said by those who are in a responsible position in regard to this industry, that for some time there has been a rather unfavourable circumstance connected with the industry; the industry has not been in such a flourishing condition as it ought to be in, and in order to place the industry upon a proper basis the employers found it incumbent upon them, having no other means of relief, to have recourse to the Arbitration Court for the purpose of getting some measure of relief in the shape of a reduction in the wages of the workers and an extension of the hours of labour in that industry. I say unhesitatingly that the wages paid in that

industry at the present time are already too low. Any member in this Chamber will recognise, in view of the high cost of living in this State, that any worker who has to eke out an existence on less than 8s. per day and maintain in anything like decency and comfort those who are dependent on him will have an exceedingly difficult task. There is in this industry a considerable number of workers earning, when they have an opportunity of working full time, a wage aggregating not more than 45s. per week or 7s. 6d. per day; and for this wage they have to work most laboriously at a dangerous employment for 50½ hours per week. True, some of the workers are in receipt of a higher wage than this; but a considerable number of them, engaged in what may be called the labouring work of the industry, are working on a basis of 7s. 6d. a day. Others receive 8s., and others in the more skilled departments receive 10s., 11s. 6d., and so on as the case may be; but the latter are of course exceptions, and by no means the general rule. I therefore say that, viewing the question at all events from the workers' standpoint, we ought if necessary, in view of the present circumstances, to exhaust every other possible means of giving relief to the industry, before we seek to do anything that will make the industrial and social condition of those workers worse than it is at the present time. I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am afraid that in connection with this question I have so far been somewhat misunderstood, and there has been a growing impression in the minds of some that I have been prepared to admit, absolutely and beyond all question, that there is an actual necessity for some modification or some reduction in order to put this industry on a paying basis. I wish it to be distinctly understood that personally I am not committed one way or other. I take the position that there are conflicting opinions. On the one hand is the evidence of the employer, that he has been for a long time carrying on the industry without getting any return. On the other hand is the evidence of the worker, that at all events some employers in the industry, who are not working on so large a scale as the principal company engaged in it, still find it practicable to carry on

apparently with success, notwithstanding that they are in the habit of paying even higher wages than are paid by the principal company. We have those two contradictory statements. But while we have some employers who are apparently doing well or fairly well, and who say they have no desire to interfere with the industrial condition of their workers, we find those employers in perfect agreement with the principal company in advocating the need for some reduction in the cost of production. I may refer, for instance, to the West Australian Jarrah Sawmills Ltd., a Melbourne Company, I understand, which some 18 months or two years ago bought out the plant, concessions, and leases held by Mr. George Baxter, and at the same time bought out a very extensive contract which I believe kept the company going for a considerable time. On the 10th May of this year the local secretary and manager of that company wrote me the following letter regarding this difficulty:—

Your memo. of the 3rd inst., addressed to Kirupp, reached me this morning. I shall use my utmost endeavours to attend conference at Bunbury next Sunday; but I am sorry to say other very pressing business may prevent me. The present condition of the timber industry is most regrettable indeed. I can personally endorse Mr. Teesdale Smith's remarks when he says we are constantly losing business on account of prices being high; and since my company have been in the business we have always tendered on the basis of an exceedingly small margin of profit. If the industry is to be kept alive, and I submit it would be a serious thing to the workers of the State should it succumb, the f.o.b. cost must be reduced. In my opinion the State should reduce the railway freight on export timber 50 per cent., also wharfage 50 per cent. Our present freight stands: Kirrup to Bunbury, 6s. 1d. per ton for 37 miles, equalling 2d. per ton per mile, gradually increasing in rate for stations nearer Bunbury until Dardanup is reached, from which siding it figures out at 3½d. per ton per mile. All our business is from intermediate distances between Kirupp and Collie on the one hand and Bunbury on the other; and the actual rate we probably pay is about 2½d. per mile—most excessive.

Of course, whether or not railway freights in this business are excessive is a question with which I do not propose personally to deal; nor is the statement that they are excessive one which I personally endorse. But in quoting certain rates supplied to me by the Commissioner of Railways, I think I shall be able to show

at all events that whilst in some instances our railway rates are lower than the rates charged in some of the Eastern States, in other instances the rates in the Eastern States are lower than the rates charged here. I say the companies directly concerned in this industry allege that certain conditions exist in consequence of which they find it difficult to carry on. Against that is the appalling fact, if I may use the expression, that notwithstanding all the complaints of the companies, there has been for a number of years a constant increase in the output of sawn and hewn timber in this State. For instance, we find that during the year 1900 the output reached 112,693,000 superficial feet, while in 1901 it had risen to 122,413,865, rising again in 1902 to 124,005,005, again in 1903 to 126,729,833, and in 1904 rising to no less a figure than 143,582,553. During the last three years there has of course been a vast increase in the export trade. As already pointed out, there was certainly a falling off in the value of timber exported during 1902; but that was compensated for in 1903 by an increase in value of £119,172; while in 1904 an increase was again manifest, amounting to £35,244. The figures for the first three months of the present year, if we may take them as a fair basis for the twelvemonth, indicate that the excellent results of last year are this year likely to be maintained. Unfortunately, the only figures available in the hands of the Government Statistician are those dealing with the export trade to parts beyond the limits of the Commonwealth. These show that for the first three months of the year the trade amounted to £140,069. The figures dealing with the export trade from this State to other parts within the Commonwealth are not up to date, and are not yet available. It is interesting to note that it is alleged by those interested in the local trade that the reason for the alleged falling-off in their output is the fact that there has been a growing development in this same industry in the Eastern States; but it is unfortunate that we find the figures in connection with this trade in the Eastern States are somewhat belated. The latest figures which seemed to be available at the beginning of June were those for the

year 1903. We find that in Queensland there has been a steady rise in the export trade in timber since 1901. In that year it amounted to £17,283, next year it rose to £22,726, and in 1903 to £31,575. So it will be apparent that, notwithstanding the low wages alleged to obtain in Queensland and other places, there has been nothing very serious, and no appreciable increase in the trade during the years I have enumerated. In fact the increase has been so infinitesimal that it need not be taken into consideration at all. In Tasmania, we find that in 1900 the export trade in timber, principally blue gum, I presume, amounted to £40,058. In 1901 it increased by, roughly, £5,000 to £45,630. Then in the following year, so busy were the timber merchants and sawmillers in Tasmania, and so much trade did they do, that they actually managed to export £8,000 worth of timber more than they managed to do in 1901. In 1903 there was an increase again of approximately a trifle over £5,000, bringing the total to £42,867, or roughly £3,000 less than was exported in 1901. So we find that the increased amount of trade done by those two States has been comparatively infinitesimal. New South Wales seems to be the most formidable of our rivals in this matter. We find that in 1900 the timber export of that State was in value £89,611, and that it increased during 1901 to £137,420, and decreased during 1902 to £122,882. I may incidentally remark that there was a general slump in the timber trade throughout Australia during 1902. In 1903 it rose again to £147,693, an increase over the previous year of £24,811. [MR. N. J. MOORE: Have you not got the figures for 1904.] Unfortunately, when this return was compiled for me at the end of May last, the figures for 1904 were not available. I only use these figures to show that during the years I have dealt with the increase in the timber trade of the Eastern States, where it is alleged all the orders that should have come here have gone, is infinitesimal indeed. Of course, I do not for a moment say that there may not be some satisfactory, complete, and comprehensive answer in regard to this question; but my desire is to simply put the matter as fair as I possibly can on both sides of

the issue, and to point out that while there is something to show in favour of those who say the industry is in a bad way, there is something to say on behalf of those who think that things are not so bad as they are painted. Also I wish to emphasise the necessity for a complete and exhaustive investigation into the industry, so that we may be able to overcome and escape the ignorance that now exists in the minds of the public of this State in regard to this industry. What I believe to be the most significant feature in regard to our export trade in timber is the fact that at present we not only seem to be maintaining the standard in the matter of our export, but are consistently increasing it, and I think in greater ratio than is the case in the Eastern States. At all events, this fact seems to me to justify a certain amount of doubt on the part of those who think that things are not as bad as they are painted; and it would, in my opinion, justify those who have no definite opinion one way or the other in asking that an investigation should be made to ascertain whether or not any necessity exists for assisting this industry, and, if it does exist, to solve the means that should be employed in granting that assistance. I think members will understand that my principal anxiety in this matter is on behalf of the workers engaged in the industry, roughly numbering about 3,000; and I think I am safe in saying that the annual wages bill of these workers is not less than £300,000. When we come to deal with an important industry like this we must consider what will be the result if any set of circumstances should arise which would, in the first place, deprive these workers of their employment, and in the second place deprive the people of this State of the advantages obtained by the circulation of the money paid in wages to these workers. I say at once that if there existed other avenues of employment open to these workers, in my opinion the best we could do in the present circumstances would be to close up the industry altogether; because I am fast having the conclusion forced upon me that we are selling our natural resources in this respect too cheaply. I have seen evidence of this with my own eyes. While the West Australian Jarrah Sawmills Co. in 1904 obtained a contract for 7ft. sleepers, 10

inches by 5 inches at 5s. 1½d., the same company were compelled to take another tender almost at the same time for the same sized sleeper at less than 5s.; and I have it on the best of authority that it is impossible for us to sell any timber in South Africa—for the South African trade is the principal, so far as sleepers are concerned—unless we are prepared to quote sleepers in South Africa at less than 5s. The latest tender accepted in this regard was as low as 4s. 7½d. These are absolutely indisputable facts, and it is impossible for us to get away from them. Under the circumstances it seems to me that we are disposing of a State commodity at a price which, in the best interests of the industry and in the best interests of the people of the State, is in my opinion absolutely suicidal. We have of course to take into consideration what is to happen to those engaged in the industry if it ceases to continue. Should there be no other avenues available into which we can absorb the workers to give them employment, we must take into consideration: Is it worth while the State making any sacrifice for the purpose of continuing the employment of these workers? Should it be found by investigation that some assistance is necessary to enable the industry to be carried on, we want to know what is the value of the industry to the State; and having ascertained that, we then require to know whether the cost of production must be reduced in order that the industry may be carried on. If we find that the cost of production must be reduced in order to maintain the industry, then we are face to face with the position and are in possession of knowledge as to the value of the industry to the State. It is matter not for the workers nor for the companies, but one for the whole of the people of the State; and being in possession of that evidence as the result of an inquiry as to whether or not the necessity does exist to reduce the cost of production, and assuming for the sake of argument that it is proved that the cost must be reduced, then we must have an inquiry as to what proportion or how much it will be necessary to reduce the cost of production to put the industry on a paying basis. Then we will have the opportunity of determining between the value of the industry to the State and the amount of

sacrifice the State will need to make to enable the industry to carry on. How can we possibly determine that? Is it possible for any member in this Chamber to determine it without being placed in possession of the details necessary to enable him to come to a conclusion on this matter? In my opinion it is absolutely impossible. Having determined the value of the industry and the amount of sacrifice, if any, it is necessary to make in order to put the industry on a paying basis, then I think we would be justified in asking ourselves what proportion, if any, of that reduced cost of production should fall on the shoulders of the workers in the industry. We must ask ourselves whether the workers can be reasonably expected, having regard to the present industrial conditions, to carry the whole burden or any of that burden. It may be said, and it has been said, that we will have to level down the industrial condition of the workers in this State to the level of the workers in the Eastern States. Whilst that may be perfectly true, it is a proposition I am not prepared to admit, and in view of the circumstances which obtain in this State, one which I think absolutely suicidal so far as the best interests of this State are concerned. You cannot reasonably expect workers to work in a country like this, where the cost of living is so high, for anything approaching the wages paid to workers in the Eastern States, where the cost of living is so much lower than in this State. We are faced with this farther fact, that notwithstanding the wages are alleged to be much lower in Tasmania, New South Wales, and Queensland, which are the principal factors in our export trade, and the hours of labour longer, it is a most significant fact that we still maintain, according to the latest figures available, our export trade; and we continue to add to the volume of our export trade, notwithstanding the low wages paid in the Eastern States. In passing, I am forced to the conclusion that it is borne in upon those in the old country who have adopted the eight-hours principle in connection with many industries, that higher wages and better industrial conditions are the necessary and natural forerunner of greater industrial effort; and I think it is because of

the industrial conditions here being better than those in the Eastern States that the industrial energy and industrial effort of the workers in this State enable employers to carry on the business as they do at the present time. We want, at all costs, to avoid the levelling down process; and I think that is an aspect of the case that warrants the fullest and most complete inquiry. But there are other matters dealing with the cost of production which require investigation. We have, as the principal company trading in this State, a foreign company, a company which, owing to the laxity of the existing Companies Act, it is impossible for us to exercise any control over; a company which may be absorbing 5 per cent., 10 per cent., or 15 per cent. of the cost of production. The workers and the people of the State have to maintain in England an expensive London management, which in my opinion is practically entirely unnecessary. Unfortunately all the information in connection with this agency is absolutely unavailable; it is a beautiful secret in London; and we do not know what percentage is added to the cost by this oversea management. The State is entitled to know whether the agency in this State, with their magnificent pile of buildings, have not sufficient accommodation to enable them to transact their business without having to go to London and have an expensive establishment in the metropolis of the world. The people of the State do not know, and members of this House do not know, anything at all about the cost of the London oversea management. It may be a very important and a very material proportion of the cost of production. We want to know what percentage the London management adds to the cost of production. If it be unreasonable, if it be something unnecessary, it only emphasises the necessity for preventing any trading concern in the State being able to maintain an unnecessary establishment at the expense of the people of the State, more particularly the workers in this great industry. The same thing applies to the local management as far as the information is concerned. The local management is, of course, a matter of necessity. In every large trading concern or in every small trading concern, there must be a certain amount of man-

agement. What the percentage of cost is materially affects the people of the State, especially in this particular industry. An important question arises in regard to the company's stores. It is alleged that ever since the timber industry was established in this State and has been in the habit of trading with the employees, the prices charged by the company in their stores are highly excessive. There may not have been written instructions as to where the workers should deal; but it is commonly understood that there is certainly a moral obligation that lies on the workers to deal with the store belonging to the company. Take a place like Mornington Mills. There may be no such obligation; still there is an obligation of necessity, inasmuch as there is no other store within many miles of the mill site. This applies also to the mills at Wellington; but it applies in an accentuated degree to the mills of the company at Cape Leuwin, and at Karri-dale, where there is no store within 50 miles of the mills. If it is alleged on the part of the workers that unduly high prices are levied by the company, and no facilities and no opportunities are given for the workers expending their money in any other stores or with any other business people; and if it be a fact that the company are taking unfair advantage of the isolated position of the industrial establishment, it is a matter on which the workers of that industry have a right to be protected. This may have a material bearing on the cost of living, so far as the workers engaged in the industry are concerned. Then there is the question of lease rents and royalties. Millars, I understand, pay between £11,000 and £12,000 a year for the right to use—I may say more properly for the right to control—certain areas of land; and this may be or may not be an unnecessary charge levied on the industry. It may not be a charge unnecessarily levied by the State, but an unnecessary charge levied by the company themselves. For instance, if they have a mill with power capable of turning out fifty loads a day, and assuming the nature of the country is such that they only require, for the purpose of keeping the mill going for ten years—which I think is a fair life—an area of ten thousand acres, is it right that a charge should be placed on the industry in the shape of

rent, and that the company should be entitled to hold 100,000 acres when only 10,000 are necessary for the purpose? Is it right that the company should continue to pay the rent on an unnecessarily large area of land, making it a charge on the cost of production?

MR. N. J. MOORE: Not a shilling a load in the round.

MR. A. J. WILSON: It may not be one shilling a load in the round; but the hon. member must not forget it is paid every year; whereas if the company paid a royalty they would only pay the shilling once. What I wish to emphasise is this, that if the company are paying royalties and rents on an area of country that they are not likely to use for a considerable time, and they only pay the rent for the purpose of keeping other people off, it is not fair to the State or the industry; and it is a matter that ought to be investigated by some commission or committee of inquiry appointed by the House. We come of course to the great and very vexed question of railway charges. In connection with this matter, some little time ago when there was a big order for half a million sleepers floating around, the Queensland Government made a concession to a tenderer for Queensland timbers, and they gave the tenderer permission, or made a concession to him which enabled him to carry his timber over the Government lines for 51 miles at 2s. 9d. per ton. True it is that only applies so far as that contract is concerned; nevertheless the fact obtains that the concession was made by the Queensland Government, which meant a difference in the matter of railway freights as between that State and this State of not less than 4s. 3d. per ton so far as that contract was concerned. It may be urged in this connection that this was only a special concession made in a special circumstance; but that special circumstance enabled Queensland, in all probability, to secure the contract for 500,000 sleepers which, in the absence of the special conditions and special circumstance, would have come to Western Australia. For that same distance the rate in this State at the present time, or rather was, at all events until the last rate book came out (I do not know whether it has been altered since) 7s. for the same distance, according to the

Queensland rate book. I am informed by the Commissioner of Railways, the rates charged in this State are—Class A rate up to 25 miles; exceeding 25 miles Class M rate, added to the rate for 25 miles. Now the Queensland rate is Class A, according to the figures, that is for ordinary hardwoods, according to the information supplied by the Commissioner of Railways himself. But special concessions are made in connection with logs, piles, and girders. I may say that the figures supplied to me show that the rates in Queensland are higher than the ordinary rates charged here. I am also in possession of a communication which comes direct from Mr. Thallon, the Commissioner of Railways in Queensland, pointing out as follows:—

We carried large quantities of sleepers 51 miles at 2s. 9d. per ton in order to have Queensland timber introduced. The end was accomplished, and rate is now 5s. per ton.

According to the Queensland rate book the charge for timber for a distance of 51 miles in Class A would be 8s. 3d. per ton, as against Western Australia 7s. per ton. But it seems to me that since this concession was made for 2s. 9d. per ton for a distance of 51 miles the rate for the carriage of timber has been altered, and instead of being 8s. 3d., as would appear from the rate book, it is only 5s. per ton for a distance of 51 miles, being in that event of course 2s. per ton less than the rate which obtains here. In this connection it would seem that the rate which applied in the case of timber cut into lengths—jam-boxes, butter-cases, etc.—which was 4s. 11d., approximately 5s. for 51 miles, has been adopted in regard to the carriage of all timber taken over the Queensland railways. In these circumstances it would seem unnecessary for me to give in detail the rates that have been supplied by the Commissioner of Railways so far as the Queensland rate book is concerned; because from the telegram I have read it would appear there has been some departure from that as far as timber is concerned, and that is the only freight we are dealing with at the present time. Now I come to deal with the rate so far as New South Wales, which is far the most important competitor, is concerned. I find in regard to all timber not less than 6in. x 6in.—which I may say would cover all sleepers for South Africa,

because their dimensions would be larger than the 6in. x 6in. ratio, and sleepers are the principal item of export, and which would cover bigger timber, bridge timbers and baulks and so on—the rates are very much lower than the rates in this State. For instance, for a distance of 12 miles in Western Australia, the rate would be 2s. 10d.; in New South Wales the rate is 1s. 10d., or a difference of 1s. per ton. For a distance of 25 miles the rate would be 4s. 10d. per ton in Western Australia, and 3s. in New South Wales, or 1s. 10d. less. In this State, for a distance of 82 miles from Fremantle the rate would be 9s. 3d., and in New South Wales the charge for a like distance would be 7s. 7d., or a difference of 1s. 8d. Now, the other rates total up to different distances, say between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie, a distance of 387 miles. The rate for that distance in this State would be 24s. 9d., as against 21s. 11d. in New South Wales, or a difference of 2s. 10d. in favour of the New South Wales rate. And the intervening rates are necessarily proportionately less so far as New South Wales is concerned than the rates obtaining here. In Queensland, as I have already pointed out, if the information supplied since the last Queensland rate book was issued is correct, the rate is, for a distance for which 7s. would be charged in this State, only 5s., so therefore we find that so far as the principal item of export is concerned, the Queensland rate is much lower than it is here. We also find that so far as New South Wales is concerned for timber of greater dimensions than 6in. x 6in. the rate is also considerably lower than it is here. I may add that on timber less than 6in. x 6in. the rate in New South Wales is considerably higher than it is in this State; but as that rate does not bear on the principal item of export I do not think it becomes necessary in the circumstances to pursue that any farther. Another important item affecting this matter is the question of wharfage. We find from a return also supplied by the Commissioner of Railways that the charges for wharfage at Fremantle under the Fremantle Harbour Trust are 1s. 6d. per ton, plus handling charges direct into the railway wagons or *vice versa*. Bulk cargoes of not less than 250 tons, inwards 6d. per



ton, outwards 7d. per ton; smaller lots 9d. per ton in and out. The Railway Department charges wharfage haulage of 6d. per ton on all timber to or from ship's side. Therefore, it will be seen that with a wharfage charge of 1s. 6d., excluding the handling charges and the haulage charge levied by the Railway Department of 6d., the wharfage and haulage aggregate an amount of 2s. per ton. This is at Fremantle. At Bunbury or other ports the wharfage, exclusive of the loading and handling charge, is also 2s. per ton. I find, much to my surprise, that in New South Wales the charge is 2s. 6d. per ton inward wharfage from ports outside New South Wales, and there is no outward wharfage. In Queensland the wharfage charge is only 1s. per ton, and for this shilling there are included shunting, the use of skids and craneage. When we come to deal with that aspect of the question we find the facts would seem to indicate that the traders in the Eastern States have a decided preference in regard to the railway rates, and a decided preference as to the question of wharfage, a preference which may or may not operate to the disadvantage of the people who are trading in exporting timber from our own State. Another very important matter in relation to the Railway Department—I regret the Minister for Railways will not be able to bear with me whilst I elaborate this matter—if it were as important to him as it is to me—

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: I have been listening to you all the time.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Another important matter is the question of demurrage. This is certainly a most important matter in connection with the Railway Department. It will be readily understood that when people are loading vessels say at Bunbury for instance, a timber company may have three, or four, or five vessels in at a time. It may require 100 trucks from the Railway Department and calculate on being able to load 100. But it finds from circumstances over which it has no control—whether the Railway Department is able to control it I do not know, but it would seem as if it had little control over the circumstance—it is supplied with 80

trucks to-day, 90 to-morrow, and then on the following day 130 trucks. Is it to be wondered at if the persons responsible for loading those trucks find it difficult to load in the time allowed by the department more trucks than they have provided for? I think it will be apparent that when demurrage is occasioned by circumstances such as those, there ought to be some latitude allowed by the Railway Department. Personally I have not the remotest idea what the amount of the demurrage on timber is, but I am given to understand it is a fairly considerable amount. The question, however, is not what the amount of it is, but the justice of it; and if the amount is significant it must materially affect the cost of production. Another important matter in connection with the cost of production is the question of shipping freights. It may be possible for the State to do something in the direction of securing the safety of shipping and the conveniences of handling, and so reducing the cost in that direction. There is another very important item which wants dealing with. Take the South African trade, for instance, and the Asiatic trade. In cutting for instance sleepers, beams, bridge timbers, or wharf timbers there must necessarily be a certain amount of timber that is impracticable or useless for these purposes, and which must necessarily be cut into smaller timber for scantling, or else consumed in the firehole. If some means could be devised for the purpose of utilising this we may call by-product of the timber industry, it seems to me that the cost of production would be considerably reduced. For instance, I may point this out in passing. There are some small mills working away out in the Nelson electorate. My friend the member for Collie (Mr. Henshaw) will know some of them. They have been engaged in cutting under contract for some big trading companies; for instance, the Kirupp Company and the Greenbushes Timber Corporation. They have been cutting 10 x 5 and other size sleepers for the timber trade, and of course there is a certain amount of residue which is cut up into 3 x 2 or 4 x 3 and flooring and weatherboards and so on, and which they find a considerable difficulty in disposing of. In fact, I know of one timber broker who disposed of a

very considerable quantity of this at an absolutely absurd and ridiculously low price. He was absolutely compelled to do so, because largely of the distance at which they found themselves from any market for this particular article. If by any kind of inquiry we can place this portion of the business upon a paying footing, it seems to me to be the duty of the State to do something in that direction. There is another very important matter. I do not know whether members have yet done so, but if not, I hope they will peruse a report which comes from the office of the Agent General, and which appears in both leading morning journals this morning, dealing with the question of the condition of the timber trade, the necessity of pushing on the sale of hardwoods, and the advisability of appointing State representatives for the purpose of pushing the interests of this industry of the State in the different parts where there is a demand for our timber. New South Wales, I understand, has already taken some action of this nature; and the improvement in her timber trade is probably due in a material degree to that circumstance. But another important fact ought not to escape the notice of the Government. Some time ago the Government of New South Wales issued a circular in which they endeavoured to display the demerits of our hardwood and the merits of the New South Wales hardwood. The pamphlet showed a section of an alleged jarrah pile, brittle as a result of the ravages of the toredos, and a section of a turpentine pile, apparently as hale and sound as on the day it was driven in. If such statements are allowed to circulate uncontradicted, there can be but one result. The pushful, progressive New South Wales agent, with a pamphlet like that in his hand, is not likely to advertise our timber more advantageously than he can possibly help. He will advertise it to its detriment; and unless we have someone looking after our interests, we may anticipate one thing and one thing only—a continual decrease in the demand for our own timber, and an increased demand for that of New South Wales. Personally, I am not prepared to say whether relief is or is not needed. I am prepared to say that this is not an industrial dispute in the ordinary sense of the word. I say it is not an industrial

dispute at all, within the meaning of the interpretation section of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act; and it is a dispute which it is impossible for the Arbitration Court to investigate. I say this is a State matter; a question whether the industry is of any use to the State; whether our maintaining the industry will cost us more than it is worth. If it will, we need not waste time on an inquiry. If we find it is an industry which ought not to be assisted, then the only remedy is to do what we ought to do with any unprofitable industry—stop it at the earliest possible moment. So far as the industry itself is concerned, we have in my opinion more to gain by closing it down than we can gain by depleting our forests as they are now being depleted; because every man who knows anything of the industry knows that in every forest where the timber is being cut down, great numbers of trees are felled before they reach maturity. True it is that some of the trees cut down are over-matured, and (if anything) have begun to decay. But so long as the forests remain as they are to-day, for every tree that is depreciating in value there are five, eight, or ten trees increasing in value to the State and to the industry. Therefore, were it only a question of the industry itself, probably we should serve its interest best by closing it up and refusing to grant any relief. But I again emphasise the fact that the majority of the public and the majority of hon. members are entirely ignorant of the actual facts of the case; and it is for the purpose of putting them in possession of that information, for the purpose of preventing any injustice being done to those directly interested, that I suggest a form of inquiry which will enable us to apply proper remedies, if remedies are found to be necessary; remedies which will be equitable and fair to all concerned—the workers, the companies, and the State. Should the House agree to this motion, I have no desire in any way to bind the hands of the Government. Personally, I should like to see appointed an independent commission, altogether apart from this House; a commission of men who from their long experience of the industry and from their general knowledge would be able to investigate all the circumstances, and to

enable us at an early stage to ascertain how best to put the industry on a sound and satisfactory basis. I leave my motion in the hands of members, not knowing whether I shall find a seconder; but I hope someone will be good enough to second it, so that we may have an opportunity of discussing the matter, to see whether someone in this Chamber can place the exact position before the country, so that we may know where we are, in spite of the haze which now seems to cloud our view of this great commercial undertaking.

DR. ELLIS (Coolgardie): I second the motion.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS, debate adjourned.

#### PAPERS—POLICE FORCE ASSOCIATION.

MR. A. A. HORAN (Yilgarn) moved:

That there be laid upon the table of the House all papers in connection with the request submitted to the late Colonial Secretary for permission for the police force to form themselves into an association.

If objections to the motion were forthcoming, they would be combatted; but before long there would probably be another opportunity for the expression of members' opinions as to the necessity for such an association. The reply of the ex-Colonial Secretary (Mr. G. Taylor) to a question on the subject was not altogether satisfactory.

Question put and passed.

#### PAPERS—EMPRESS OF COOLGARDIE G.M. LEASE.

MR. A. A. HORAN moved:

That all papers in connection with the mining lease known as the Empress of Coolgardie be laid upon the table of the House.

Without going into details of this historical and rather complicated case, he took strong exception to the manner in which the present Government had treated the opinions of select committees and Royal Commissions generally. In fact, these might be considered little better than farcical. In this case, however, there were legal complications; for it bristled with law points at every stage. Many of the complications might have been avoided had the Premier complied with the request made last session, that the committee should be granted legal advice. The member for Coolgardie (Dr.

Ellis), while on the committee, was reported to have said that a sum of £250 would be sufficient to compensate a working man for the loss of his rights; but subsequently the hon. member had evidently acquired a true conception of the importance of the case, and had increased the sum to £50,000, or even £70,000.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): As the case presented legal difficulties, the papers might be needed by the Crown Law Department. Presumably they would be available if necessary.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

Question put and passed.

#### PAPERS—ABORIGINES COMMISSION, OFFICERS AND CENSURE.

MR. A. A. HORAN moved:

That there be laid upon the table of the House all papers in connection with the suspension and reinstatement of the Commissioner of Police (Capt. Hare), and the censure upon Mr. Octavius Burt, in connection with the information supplied by them to the Press regarding the report of the Royal Commissioner upon the aborigines.

That these papers should be tabled was only fair, in order to set at rest any doubts or misconceptions which might have arisen by reason of statements made and circulated at home and abroad.

MR. F. F. WILSON (North Perth) seconded.

Question put and passed.

#### PAPERS—SUNDAY FOOTBALL.

On motion by Dr. ELLIS, ordered that all papers and correspondence concerning football on Sundays be laid upon the table.

[MR. QUINLAN took the chair.]

#### MOTION—PRISON WARDERS, EIGHT HOURS.

MR. E. NEEDHAM (Fremantle) moved:—

That in the opinion of this House the time has arrived when the hours of the warders employed in the Fremantle Gaol be reduced to eight per day.

It would not be necessary to go very much into detail in connection with this matter. A similar motion had been brought before the House last session, but the debate

was then adjourned on motion by the then Colonial Secretary; and though he (Mr. Needham) had hoped that before the session closed the House would have given an opinion on the matter, the motion was expunged from the Notice Paper towards the close of the session. Now, in pursuance of his determination to have the question ventilated in the House and to get the opinion of members upon the matter, he again brought the motion forward. Last session he had quoted from a return laid on the table, certain figures to prove that the conditions under which the warders in the Fremantle Gaol worked were intolerable in the extreme, and that it was not a credit to any employer, particularly the Government, to have men working such long hours or to compel them, even when they were working the short periods, to put in such long time to work those hours. The memories of members would be refreshed by re-quoting the figures given last session relating to the hours worked by the warders previous to last session and which, with a slight alteration, they were now working. He had said the hours were:—

In the cell division in the first period the maximum is 63½ hours and the minimum 60 hours; in the divisional duty by day the minimum for the week is 57½ hours, and the maximum 68½ hours. The figures are given in this way: First period, 62½ hours; second and third periods, 63 hours 45 minutes. Divisional duty by night—First period, 53 hours; second period, 51½ hours; third period, 50½ hours. Reception and discharge of prisoners—First period, 63½ hours; second period, 66½ hours; third period, 68 hours. Charge of trial and of youthful prisoners—First period, 65 hours; second period, 63½ hours; third period 65 hours. Charge of prisoners under separate treatment—First period, 58 hours; second period, 61 hours; third period, 64 hours. Infirmary—First period, 58 hours; second period, 61 hours; third period, 64 hours. Cook-house—First period, 62 hours; second period, 65 hours; third period, 68 hours. Charge of gates and prisoners at night—First period, 77 hours; second and third periods, 73½ hours. Orderly—First and second periods, 63½ hours; third period, 65 hours. Charge of works—First and second periods, 56½ hours; third period, 59½ hours. Public works—First and second periods, 57½ hours; third period, 60½ hours. Inside guards and sentries average weekly 56 hours, and the matron in charge 60 hours. Day and night duty changes weekly, seven nights per week averaging 68 hours.

It was intimated in this return that in 1903 the present Superintendent of the

Fremantle Gaol had suggested an alteration in the hours which would have reduced the time worked by the warders something like an hour per day; but it necessarily meant an increase in the staff. No alteration took place prior to the close of last session; but since then, there had been a rearrangement, and the staff he believed was increased by one. Members should say that the warders should enter the prison, work their eight hours as warders did in the penitentiaries of the Eastern States, and then come out again. At present the Fremantle warders were, as it were, continuously at the beck and call of the authorities in the gaol. In one instance they went on duty at midday, returned to their homes for four hours in the afternoon, and then went back again to complete their full number of hours. In another instance, they went on in the evening, worked until midnight, then went to the guard-room or somewhere else where they slept for four hours before resuming duty, and came off at five or six o'clock in the morning. It might be contended in that case that the men were not continuously on duty; but when a man left his home and went to the scene of his work and was there from 10 to 14 hours, even though he was not on active duty during the whole of the period, he was still away from home, and it was a condition of things no member of the House would care to put up with. On various occasions on public platforms and on the hustings most members had advocated eight hours, and eight hours alone, and the system was becoming a practice throughout Australia; and particularly in regard to Government employees, why should any distinction be made? When one portion of the service worked eight hours, surely it could be arranged at very little cost to the country so that the men employed in the Fremantle Gaol would also work eight hours? Regarding the remuneration received by the warders he again quoted from his remarks of last session:—

For first-grade warders the maximum annual wages received is £224 15s. and the minimum £177 15s., always including quarters, uniform and sanitation. In the second grade and temporary the annual wages received is a maximum of £142 7s. 6d., which evidently is also the minimum, apparently being a standard wage.

Seeing that this £142 7s. 6d. also included

uniforms, quarters and sanitation, the real monetary reward for the warders' services was small; and seeing that the men worked seven days in one week and six days in the next week, it would seem that they were receiving somewhat under the usual remuneration of 8s. a day. In this particular kind of employment it was wrong to have men undergoing such long hours and such unnecessary strain. It was not only the duty of a warder to look after those who might be for the time being committed to his charge in the ordinary humdrum fashion, but it was also the warder's duty and the desire of hon. members that he should attempt to reform the prisoner, so that when the latter left the prison cell the term of his incarceration might tend to help him again to resume the straight path from which for the moment he had strayed. Therefore the hours the warders worked were too long; and the House should express an opinion in that direction, and the Government of the day should take the earliest possible opportunity of removing the grievance which now existed. On the last occasion the matter was brought before the House an amendment was moved to make the motion apply to all prisons in the State; but there was, strictly speaking, no prison other than that at Fremantle. [MR. NELSON: That was no boast.] Granted. He (Mr. Needham) was speaking in regard to the application of the system. There were places in the State where prisoners were temporarily retained, but we could not expect the system to apply to them, because the warders in those places were not continually on prison duty. Fremantle was the prison headquarters of the State, which placed it under the same category as penitentiaries in the Eastern States, where the eight hours system was in operation. There was no necessity to labour the matter farther. He did not know the intention of the Government, but in view of the fact that it was the second time the matter was before the House and in view of the satisfactory evidence brought forward that the present system was pernicious and not at all in accordance with things as they ought to be, the House should deal with this question.

On motion by the PREMIER, debate adjourned.

#### MOTION—ENGINE-DRIVERS' CERTIFICATES.

MR. E. E. HEITMANN (Cue) moved:—

That all papers in connection with the last two examinations for engine-drivers' certificates, held at Cue and Peak Hill, be laid upon the table of the House.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS (Hon W. D. Johnson): It was not desirable that these papers should be laid on the table, as examinations were to a large extent of a private nature. There was no objection to the hon. member seeing the papers, and if the motion was not pressed they would be laid before the member.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

#### MOTION—RAILWAY PROPOSAL, GOOMALLING TO MOUNT MAGNET.

MR. A. A. HORAN (Yilgarn): I beg to move—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that a railway should be constructed from Goomalling to Mt. Magnet.

I must express my surprise that the motion has been reached thus early, at a time when I am hardly prepared, though I will do my best. I also wish to express my pleasure at the remark of the Premier that this House will be asked to deal with the Midland Railway question next Tuesday. A railway from Goomalling to Mt. Magnet can be supported by strong arguments, strange though it may appear to some members. There is a fine agricultural area running out from Goomalling right through the celebrated Cowcowing country, and the line will open up a fine territory.

MR. BURGESS: What is it fit for?

MR. HORAN: For pastoral and agricultural purposes. I have looked into this matter. There is a good rainfall, and the district lies in quite as good a geographical position as the land along the Great Southern Railway. This proposed railway would pass through land within the 10-inch rainfall area, and the country is well supplied with water. If members think the object of the motion is to upset the Midland Railway Company's deal, they will be mistaken, because this railway will tap the eastern portion of the Midland Company's land, and will prove a fine channel for people to convey produce to market. The line

will shorten the distance between the Northern Goldfields—Cue, Mt. Magnet, and so on—by at least 200 miles, and it will also shorten the distance between Kalgoorlie and the Murchison by at least 300 miles. Members have been asked in the Governor's Speech to provide  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions of money for the purchase of the Midland Railway. If the Government refuse to purchase that line, I do not suppose that anyone will take it up and carry it away; and we shall have the right to impose taxation on the Midland Company's land if we think fit. It is said that an American syndicate, instead of building the Pilbarra Railway, intend to invest their money in the purchase of the Midland line. I should like them to do so; and if they do so it will liven things up. A railway from Goomalling to Mt. Magnet might be constructed for three-quarters of the sum proposed for the purchase of the Midland Railway; at any rate, it could be constructed for three-quarters of a million. The expenditure of £750,000 in building the railway would open up new country, and give work to men who want it; and politics do not do so much good as the giving of work to men out of employment. I think it desirable to expend £750,000 in the construction of this railway in order to provide connection between the Eastern and Northern Goldfields. The proposed line would open up new territory and do a great deal of good to the country; therefore I think the motion should be accepted seriously. It is suggested that the Midland Company's deal is not one of so great importance as would appear at the present time. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. E. E. HEITMANN (Cue): I second the motion.

MR. R. G. BURGESS (York): I do not see why the time of the House should be wasted with such an absurd motion. It is about as absurd as any motion ever brought before the House. I do not think that the hon. member who proposed the motion knows one inch of the country through which the line would pass, except that near Mount Magnet and the land about Goomalling. I am surprised any member should propose such a motion to sensible men. He has given no information to members. The hon. member stated that there was good agri-

cultural and pastoral country along the route. I know a little of that country and I should like to know where the agricultural and pastoral land is beyond an area of 95,000 acres of first, second and third-class land laid out by the department during the last six months. Beyond that there is only medium, patchy pastoral country, and the area north contains only second and third-class pastoral land. A good deal of the land could not even be classed as fourth or fifth-class land that from Cowcowing Lakes to Mount Magnet. I would like to know what idea the hon. member has in moving such a motion. I suppose the hon. member brings this question up as against the purchase of the Midland Railway. If the hon. member has no better proposal than this to bring forward, he had better not waste the time of the House. I appeal to members on both sides to say that the motion is absurd, and should be wiped out altogether.

THE PREMIER: It is you who are speaking now.

MR. BURGESS: I think it is waste of time to go on.

THE PREMIER: So do we.

MR. BURGESS: I think the motion should not be agreed to.

Question put, and negatived on the voices.

#### PAPERS—COMMISSIONERS FOR AFFIDAVITS.

MR. A. A. HORAN (Yilgarn) moved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing,—1, The number of officers employed in the Supreme Court who are commissioners for the taking of affidavits. 2, The number of affidavits sworn before such officers for the first six months of the present year. 3, The total amount of fees collected for such service. 4, Whether these fees have been paid into revenue in accordance with the Audit Act, 1904. 5, If not, for what reason.

There were a number of officers in the Supreme Court who were commissioners for taking affidavits, and these officers pocketed the fees, generally charging £1 1s.; but according to the regulations only 1s. 6d. should be charged. These fees were not paid into the Treasury. There were many public servants who were being paid to perform their duties, but who received fees of this character, although under the Public Service Act and Audit Act they were not entitled to

do so. Officers in the Supreme Court, so he was informed, made £50 to £100 a year in fees for work done in the performance of their duties. It should take very little to furnish the information asked for; and such information would certainly satisfy a lot of people as to what had been transpiring in the past.

Question put and passed.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE laid on the table the return the hon. member had moved for.

#### RETURN—PIPES MANUFACTURE, COST.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford) moved—

That a return showing in detail the cost of manufacture of cast-iron pipes by the Government be laid upon the table of this House.

He did not propose to make any lengthy speech in regard to this motion, having already had an assurance from the Government that the return, if moved for, would be provided; so he was content with moving the motion he had just read.

Question put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The list of business for the day being disposed of, the House adjourned at 5:33 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 2nd August, 1905.

	PAGE,
Motions and Questions relating to returns, when formal	533
Charge against a Member, Committee's Report	534
Bills, first reading:	
Legislative Council Referendum, division on motion to introduce	534
Perth Mint Act Amendment	534
Inspection and Regulation of Mines	534
Workmen's Wages Act Amendment	534
Maximum Eight Hours Day	534
Bill in Committee: Electric Lighting Act Amendment	540
Motion: Ministers to be Elected by Assembly, mover's speech	534
Address-in-Reply, presentation	540

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3:30 o'clock p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS RELATING TO RETURNS, WHEN FORMAL.

DR. ELLIS having given notice of a question relating to figures,

MR. SPEAKER said: In connection with the question just asked by the hon. member, I find myself in some difficulty in carrying out the Standing Order relating to questions that may necessitate a return being prepared, and should therefore be the subject of motion.

DR. ELLIS: The answer simply means a line of figures in each case.

MR. SPEAKER: In using my discretion in that direction recently, I find that some of the questions which looked simple on the Notice Paper required an extensive return; and in order to get over the difficulty and allow of speedy returns being obtained, I have arranged with the Leader of the House that motions for papers and returns, if unopposed by the Government, may be treated as formal and placed as such on the Notice Paper before the Orders of the Day. Formal motions are moved without debate. Motions which it is desired shall be dealt with in this manner are to be indorsed "Formal," and the Leader of the House agreeing, they will be given preference in the day's business. The information will thus be obtained almost as quickly as if questions had been asked. In view of the fact that some of the answers, ap-