

The Colonial Secretary : Yes.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY : Then that would meet Mr. Sanderson's desire.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. A. SANDERSON moved an amendment—

That in line 7 of Subclause 2 the words "of his competence" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu, "that the applicant has passed such test of uniform efficiency as may be provided for by the Minister by regulation."

Hon. J. F. CULLEN : The best course was to leave the clause as it stood and allow the regulations to provide for this matter.

Hon. F. DAVIS : Even if the amendment were passed and a uniform standard were fixed, the difficulty would arise as to whether the various local bodies would be competent to administer the tremely desirable that there should be some somebody appointed to whom a person could appeal in the event of the local body not being competent to administer the test.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN : The amendment should be carried. It was true that the Minister might achieve this object without the amendment, but it was extremely desirable that there should be some reference in the Bill to a uniform test of efficiency. The Committee were evidently of opinion that a uniform test of efficiency was desirable for the whole of Western Australia, and the amendment would be practically a direction to the Minister to prepare some system by which a uniform standard of efficiency would be required. In the event of that certificate being presented to the local authority it could not be overridden.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM : Seeing in the Bill provision for the licensing of motor drivers, one never supposed that persons would be able to apply for a license without an examination or certificate. He had the strongest objection to seeing women driving motor cars, and he had been congratulating himself that the Government had made provision to prevent unqualified persons driving. It was extremely desirable that a driver should

have a certificate of efficiency, and that certificate would be some indication to the local authority as to the applicant's personal character. It would be impossible for any local authority to say whether a man was efficient or not unless he had some certificate.

Progress reported.

BILL—CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 6.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 22nd October, 1913.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: By-laws of the Municipality of Geraldton.

By the Minister for Lands: 1, Regulations under Section 18 of The Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery Act, 1911. 2, By-laws under The Health

Act, 1911-12 of (a) the Kalgoorlie Road Board; (b) the Municipality of Broome. 3, Amendment of Prisons Regulation No. 187. 4, Documents under Section 60 of The Life Assurance Companies Act, 1889, from the National Mutual Life Association of Australia, Limited; Australian Mutual Provident Society; Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society, Limited; Australasian Temperance and General Mutual Life Assurance Society, Limited; Mutual Life and Citizens' Assurance Company, Limited; Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York; Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States.

By the Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Plans in connection with the City of Perth Improvement Bill.

QUESTION — FREMANTLE HARBOUR EXTENSION.

Mr. CARPENTER asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has any estimate been made of the cost of extending the Fremantle harbour to Rocky Bay, including cost of removal of existing bridges, diversion of roads and railways, resumption of private properties, erection of new bridges, dredging, wharf construction and equipment? 2, If so, what is the amount of such estimate?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: No estimate has been submitted by the Engineer-in-Chief for the consideration of this or any previous Governments.

QUESTION — SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION, CLAREMONT AND COTTESLOE.

Mr. WISDOM asked the Minister for Education: 1, What number of pupils can be accommodated in the proper class-rooms of the following schools, allowing the correct space for each pupil:—(a) Claremont main school, (b) North Claremont school, (c) Cottesloe school, (d) North Cottesloe school, (e) Cottesloe Beach school? 2, What is the number of pupils attending each of these schools? 3, How many pupils are being accommodated outside of the proper class-rooms

of each of the schools named? 4, What is the nature of the accommodation which is being used for pupils, and which is not part of the proper school class-rooms in the case of each of these schools? 5, What premises are being used other than the property of the department in each case? 6, On what terms are they held? 7, For what term? 8, What is the rent in each case?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Claremont 452 (excluding science room), North Claremont 157, Cottesloe 366, North Cottesloe 87, Buckland Hill 120, Claremont Infants' 211, Cottesloe Infants' 208. 2, Enrolment at the end of September.—Claremont 499, North Claremont 186, Cottesloe 464, North Cottesloe 95, Buckland Hill 130, Claremont Infants' 214, Cottesloe Infants' 244. Average attendance for September.—Claremont 466, North Claremont 163, Cottesloe 427, North Cottesloe 86, Buckland Hill 120, Claremont Infants' 193, Cottesloe Infants' 186. 3, Claremont—Presbyterian Hall 44, hatroom 20, verandah 25, North Claremont—Shelter shed 40; Cottesloe—Rechabite Hall 59; North Cottesloe—Church of England Mission Hall 95; Buckland Hill—Nil; Claremont Infants'—Nil; Cottesloe Infants'—School Hall 65. 4, See answer to No. 3. 5, Presbyterian Hall, Claremont; Rechabite Hall, Cottesloe; Church of England Mission Hall, North Cottesloe. 6, Presbyterian and Rechabite Halls—weekly tenancy; Church of England Mission Hall—monthly tenancy. 7, Until more suitable accommodation can be provided. 8, Presbyterian Hall, £1 per week; Rechabite Hall, 10s. per week; Church of England Mission Hall, £1 per month.

BILL — CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Stamp Act Amendment.
- 2, Electric Light and Power Agreement.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands (for the Premier).

RETURN—CRUELTY TO ANIMALS, MOORA PROSECUTIONS.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth) moved—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing—1, The number of cases for cruelty to animals in the Moora police court for the past 12 months. 2, The names of the complainants and defendants in each case; the names of the magistrates, and their decisions.

The object in moving the motion was because he certainly thought that one case, instead of being a prosecution had been a persecution. In his opinion a gross injustice had been done to a gentleman named Murphy, in consequence of his horse having been destroyed. If we allowed this sort of thing it would not be safe for a horse belonging to either a big man or a small man to be sent in to a station. This horse was sent to the station; it had a small growth beside the vulva. Without attempting to find out whether the growth was of a simple or magignant nature, the horse was ordered to be destroyed. It was most unfair to allow such a precedent to be established in any police court in the country. It was indiscreet on the part of the court and an injustice had been done to Mr. Murphy. We had heard from the same district of horses suffering from sores as large as cocoanuts having been taken to the court and the owners had been fined merely nominal sums.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Always wrong at Moora.

Mr. LANDER: It was not his opinion that they were always wrong at Moora. An injustice had been done. He had seen in Western Australia during the last 17 years as many horses suffering from sore shoulders as any man had seen. If the magistrate had inflicted nominal fines in the other cases, it was unfair. In the case of Mr. Murphy an injustice had been done and he was sure the hon. member for the district could bear out what he had said.

Question put and passed.

[70]

RETURN—RAILWAY SECTIONAL RETURNS, PROFIT OR LOSS.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) moved—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing the profit or loss by sections on the following railway lines:—(a) Yilgarn line from Merredin to Kalgoorlie (from date of opening to present time). (b) Kalgoorlie to Leonora and Laverton, (c) Great Southern. (d) Murchison, (e) Metropolitan and Suburban, (f) Bunbury, (g) Profit or loss (separately) of all branch and spur lines throughout the State.

He said: My desire in asking that this report be furnished is because I consider it is only a business proposition. In any private business of any extent such as, say, Brennan Bros., each different department has its debits and credits duly kept in the books of the firm. The Manchester and the millinery and the other departments are shown separately, and the heads of the business know how each different department is paying. I admit that the report of the Commissioner of Railways is an elaborate one, but it fails to furnish to hon. members who, after all have to answer to the country, particulars as to how each particular line has paid. This detailed return has been asked for from the Eastern Goldfields district for some years, because we recognise that we have borne a large amount, indeed the lion's share, in the matter of railways.

Mr. George: Are you sure?

Mr. GREEN: Absolutely sure. The hon. member's knowledge is ancient history. Even with regard to the construction of railways in the Eastern Goldfields areas, they were paid for by the people because the contractors had the right to charge for freights while the railways were being built. That, of course, the hon. member knows full well. There is nothing to show the House just what each line is paying. It is true that in one portion of the report there is a detailed statement with regard to new lines. The Minister, I hope, will not proceed to point out that it will be an impossibility to prepare this return on account of one line overlapping another, but any objection that might be raised could readily be

dismissed, and would be dismissed, if the Railways were run by private people. If the railways were run by private people, each section would be detailed so that the company would know exactly how each particular section was doing, and I contend it is due to the members of this House to know how the different sections of the railroads throughout the State contribute towards the revenue. When we come to consider that we have 8,000 employees and nearly 15 millions of capital invested in the railways, with a mileage of 3,150, it is apparent that a sectional return should be provided. I admit that the return so far as it goes, is good and elaborate in detail, and an immense amount of work is involved in its preparation, but I contend that a large amount of its usefulness is absolutely curtailed because of the absence of this very necessary information which I am seeking. I have much pleasure in moving the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. P. Collier): I hope the hon. member will not press this motion, for the reason that it would be impossible to supply the information.

Mr. Green: A private company would not admit that.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I may say that there is no comparison at all between the private concerns referred to by the hon. member and a business like that of the State railways. I hold that the information given with regard to the earnings of the railways and which appears in the annual report of the Commissioner, is as full as can reasonably be expected.

Mr. George: Hear, hear.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member will realise that it is impossible to apportion a fair share of the earnings and expenditure of a through line, say from Kalgoorlie to Laverton, when there are bookings from Perth and all along the line right through to Laverton. It would be impossible to expect the department to get out figures such as is suggested in paragraph (a) of the hon. member's motion, and to prepare a statement showing the profit and loss on the

section from Merredin to Kalgoorlie, as the hon. member desires, will be absolutely impossible.

Mr. George: What does he want it for, and what good would it do?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Even if the information were desirable, I say it is impossible to pick out the earnings and the expenditure on such a section when it is only a gap in the centre of a line 600 miles in length. If it were convenient or possible to supply the information, there would be no reason on the part of the Railway Department why it should not be supplied, as well as the information which the hon. member will find on page 79 of the Commissioner's report, where the results of the operations of 20 spur lines are given. There is no reason why the department should cover up the operations of this particular section any more than there is that this should be shown in Appendix R. On page 79 the hon. member will find the fullest possible information with regard to the operations of these lines, and he will see there a reference to the loss sustained on the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe and Port Hedland - Marble Bar lines, which amounted to no less than £61,813.

Mr. Green: That proves that what I am asking for is practicable.

Mr. George: But these are separate sections altogether.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The member for Kalgoorlie should realise that it is quite different where we have separate sections, such as those two lines are. It is possible in these circumstances to give the information he is asking for, but it is quite hopeless for him to expect the department to supply the information for a section of the Yilgarn line, and moreover, to go back for a period of 18 years.

Mr. McDowall: They are all in the reports.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The information the member for Kalgoorlie is asking for with regard to the Yilgarn-Kalgoorlie line has never appeared in any report, for the reason that it would be simply impossible to take the results of the working of a section out of a

Merredin to Kalgoorlie, out of a line which is 600 miles in length. I would like to point out to the hon. member that, after all, Kalgoorlie is not bearing the lion's share of the operations of these railways, as he thinks.

Mr. Green: I did not say Kalgoorlie, I said the Eastern goldfields.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Nor the eastern goldfields. The total revenue from the goldfields may be large in comparison with the total receipts from the other lines, but that is only by reason of the fact that the goldfields are doing a big business. The rates to Kalgoorlie are on the same proportion as the rates elsewhere.

Mr. Green: I know that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Then it is not correct to say that the goldfields are bearing the lion's share.

Mr. Green: That is to say that the people have to pay a higher impost for everything they eat and wear.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They are not paying a higher rate than the people of the Great Southern.

Mr. Green: They are further away.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Of course, but surely the hon. member will not use as an argument the fact that the people of the goldfields happen to be further away.

Mr. George: They get bigger wages there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I know the member for Murray-Wellington is anxious to give the member for Kalgoorlie some information on this subject, and I appreciate his anxiety to assist me in this matter. I repeat that the people on the goldfields are not paying any higher rate than other people, and it is not fair to say they are paying more because they happen to be further away from the seaboard.

Mr. Green: They have to pay more out of each individual pocket.

Mr. Harper: They are getting a good water scheme, too.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They are getting a good many things up there. I hope the hon. member will not press his motion, simply because it will

be impossible to supply him with the information he wants. The Commissioner for Railways, in his report for 1912, touched upon this matter, and I will read what he had to say with regard to it—

The completion of the Boyup-Kojonup section which was opened on 21st May, 1912, converted the spur lines from Katanning to Kojonup and Donnybrook to Boyup into a through means of access between the Great Southern and South-Western railways. With the carriage of through traffic it immediately became almost a matter of impossibility to allocate to the Katanning-Kojonup-Boyup-Donnybrook line the earnings of traffic originating therefrom or the proportion of expenditure for which such traffic was responsible, and directions were therefore given that in such cases the separate returns of results would be discontinued. In the case of a spur line it is not difficult to accurately compute the traffic, which it created and the expenditure which it entails, the figures being compiled from returns prepared at the junction stations. When, however, a through connection is made, and through traffic enters into the calculation, the allocation of earnings and expenditure creditable to that particular section becomes so intricate as to render accuracy almost impossible.

I think that fairly sums up the case. If an attempt were made to get out the information no reliance could be placed upon its accuracy for the simple reason that it would be impossible to learn what ought properly to be credited.

Mr. George: And the hon. member would not be a member of the House by the time the return was completed.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I was going to add that before the return asked for was completed we should have a considerable addition to our deficit in that we would have to employ scores of clerks who would be occupied I do not know how many months in order to get out such a statement. I hope the hon. member will be content with the information which is supplied in the Commissioner's annual re-

port, which is all that the department has to give and all that it is possible for the department to furnish at the present time.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): Perhaps I may be allowed to say a few words in connection with the motion. First of all I should like to assure the member for Coolgardie, who made a remark a few moments ago, that returns had been given and that he could show them. Perhaps it will be news to him if I state how those returns were compiled, and the way in which similar returns can be compiled to-day.

Mr. McDowall: You admit they were compiled.

Mr. GEORGE: Yes, but I also wish to state they are absolutely unreliable from the point of view of the member for Kalgoorlie. The way in which they were compiled, and the only way in which similar returns can be compiled to-day, is to take the mileage and take the average rate per ton of train mileage, as shown in the return, and calculated accordingly. With regard to the separate systems, such as that at Port Hedland—a self-contained system—returns can be given quite accurately, and I believe are given, as the hon. member desires. But when we have a portion of a large system as the hon. member mentions in his motion, it is absolutely impossible. I do not like the word "impossible," and I rarely use it unless I am compelled to do so, but if my experience can carry any weight in this House I say it is absolutely impossible for such a return to be prepared. The cost of preparing it would be enormous, the time which would be required to prepare it would also be enormous, and I may inform the hon. member that in 1903, the then member for Wellington, Mr. Teesdale Smith, asked for a return in connection with the railways, and that return has not yet been completed. Whether it is still in course of preparation I cannot say.

Mr. Green: Did they ever start it?

Mr. GEORGE: Yes, and they carried it on for two and a half years, when I came on the scene. But whether it has been continued since I left the railways I cannot say. I will not take up many

minutes of the time of the House, but I would like to point out that if the hon. member wants an absolutely correct return—of course anything else would be useless—every transaction that takes place from every station to every other station in Western Australia must be given, and it must be divided up into each particular section of the railway that is concerned. When I tell the hon. member the system on which the rate-book is made up—it goes up to the first hundred miles at so much per mile, and for the next hundred miles at a fraction less per mile and so on with each hundred miles until it gets to the limit—he will see the difficulty in apportioning a freight of, say, 2s. 6d. It is no unusual thing for a single case of fruit to be sent from the South-West to Kalgoorlie or Leonora and the whole of that freight comes into this graded reduction of pence per mile as the distance expands. The hon. member who has experience and common sense—I am not pulling his leg—will see at once that to take every calculation—and it must be done—the game is not worth the candle. What is it that hon. gentleman is after when all is said and done?

Mr. Green: A business proposition.

Mr. GEORGE: I do not see that. I do not think the hon. member's motives can be impeached. I take it that he is voicing the opinions which are expressed by many persons on the goldfields that the goldfields are unfairly charged, but what good is this return?

Mr. Green: We will get the thing on a business basis.

Mr. GEORGE: The railways of Western Australia are on a business basis to-day, there can be no denying that the report of the Commissioner of Railways is a type and a pattern for all the railways of Australia and it is a pattern for the older railways of the world. I am not impeaching the hon. member's motives, but he is asking the House to endorse a motion which must throw on the staff of the railways work which they are inadequate, in their numbers, to carry out. Their ability no one will question. The actuarial staff of the Western Aus-

tralian railways is equal to any staff in Australia, and they are working to-day—and I presume the Commissioner of Railways to-day does what the Commissioner of Railways who preceded him did—to see that the work is carried out at the least possible expense. This return will interfere with the daily routine of the staff. There is no nine o'clock to four o'clock about the railway accountants' staff, at any rate, it was not so in my time and I do not believe there is to-day. If the hon. member would show that any particular good could come from this return, well and good. If he could show it was going to do good, if he could show that more economy could be effected or some injustice would be put right, there might be something in it. I will not suggest that it is idle curiosity, but the hon. member represents a number of persons on the goldfields who believe that the Eastern Goldfields railway is the main thing, the king pin of the Western Australian railways. No one will deny that as far as this railway is concerned it has been a big source of revenue, but in the first instance what happened? When the railway was built it was considered by the people on the goldfields at that time and for some time afterwards that they were willing to pay what Mr. C. Y. O'Connor considered just, a higher rate from Northam upwards, because the length of life of the goldfields was considered problematical and therefore the people had the convenience of the railway and were expected, and did for some time pay 25 per cent. more rates; but it was not a very long time before the Parliament of the State decided that the ordinary rates should apply to the goldfields railway and they have applied. If the hon. member takes the freight from Perth to Kalgoorlie, the 387 miles, and takes any one single rate on merchandise and divides it by the 387 miles and then takes any item and divides it up by 50 he will see a considerable difference. The difference is so great that it will strike the hon. gentleman in a moment. The hon. member may say that is only dealing with it in one way, but he has failed to show any satisfactory reason why the return

should be got out and from what the Minister for Railways says, and from what I know—and he may take that at his own valuation—if the motion is passed the hon. gentleman will live a good many years before he will see that return prepared. A special staff of clerks will have to be put on and then this return will not be worth the paper it is written on. Every particular item that passed from one station to another station—and there are hundreds of thousands of items passing from one station to another—will have to be looked into. Every railway ticket issued will have to be analysed and dissected and brought to account. I have told the hon. member the plain facts. Does he think it wise to persist in a matter of this kind now? I am not speaking as Commissioner of Railways, I am speaking with the experience I had as commissioner and my knowledge of the accounts which I instituted in that department. The return will impose on the accountant's branch work which would be unfair to them and the information will have no particularly good bearing and it will cost the country a lot of money. I think the motion should be rejected.

Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie): I did not intend to speak on this question and it is only through an interjection which I made, that these sectional returns were kept fairly accurately, that I now address the House. I am not going so far as to say that any great or good purpose will be served by entering into this work, but at the same time, a great amount of this information can be obtained from the past returns without considerable trouble. It can so easily be obtained. I spoke on the Loan Estimates last year upon remarks made by various members, notably the member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper)—my remarks are too long to read *in extenso*, but a paragraph or two will be quite sufficient to illustrate what I was saying—

The hon. member for Pingelly is constantly making accusations about what has been done for the goldfields. It is only a little while ago that he practically said that Coolgardie and the East-

ern Goldfields were pampered and that he had a dislike for them greater than he had for the Murchison, because the Murchison fields were not pampered. And it is because of this constant and irritating defamation of the goldfields that I wish to say that they are not under any compliment to anybody.

I think there were three systems of railways, but the speech is far too long to remember what I said last session without going through the whole of my remarks, but take the section known as the eastern railway to Northam, the profits are given on that particular section. Then there was the construction of the railway from Northam to the goldfields and the profits are given in these returns of that particular section. I am explaining that this information down to 1903 can practically be obtained from the returns in existence as near as is sufficient for the purposes of the hon. member for Kalgoorlie. From 1903 onwards it would be a difficult matter to go through the books if they have not been kept in that manner since. I went on to say last session—

To make a long story short, the Eastern railway from 1890 to 1903, when sectional returns ceased, showed a profit of £580,435. Then take the goldfields railway from Northam, it showed a profit of £716,838, or making a total for the two lines of over one and a quarter million pounds over and above interest on the cost of construction, and working and managing expenses of every possible description. That money went into the Consolidated Revenue of the State. Then after 1903 the sectional returns ceased, for what reason I do not know. In that year the mining industry was at its height and produced between eight million and nine million pounds worth of gold. It is reasonable to assume that the railway earnings for some years after that were considerable, and that a large amount of money was contributed by the goldfields in this way.

My object in bringing these figures forward was to show it was unreasonable to be always making out that the goldfields

were not of the value we maintained they were to the State and I went on to prove, when people talked about pandering to the goldfields, the immense amount of money paid into the Consolidated Revenue of the State in consequence of the traffic to the goldfields. I showed that there was one and a quarter million pounds in profit from the goldfields line paid into Consolidated Revenue to 1903. Now 1903 was a record year of the goldfields production and from 1903 onwards it is reasonable to assume that a very large amount of profit was paid into the Consolidated Revenue of the country from the goldfields. As I have already stated, I only rose on account of my interjection and I have no desire to labour the question, but the member for Kalgoorlie is desirous, as I have been, to get some official record as to how the goldfields stand in regard to the State.

Mr. George: With what object?

Mr. McDOWALL: At the present time it may not be of much use. It is not a bit of use arguing. If I were to point out the most potent facts in connection with the goldfields, members on the other side would say that this is nothing compared with what is going to be obtained from agriculture. I have no desire to depreciate agriculture, I believe in it as much as hon. members opposite do, but we should not lose sight of the industry which has done such a lot for the country and which is producing such magnificent returns at the present time.

Mr. Harper: We are fighting for it.

Mr. McDOWALL: Then you are fighting in a most peculiar manner. I think I have a fair grasp of the way to fight and bolster up a thing. If I happened to be fighting for anything I should not be continually crying stinking fish and saying that the lodes were petering out, that the lodes would be dead in no time. If I were fighting for a thing which I thought to be true, that is not the line of argument I should adopt. I should pass it over and stick up for what I desire to support and stick up for it in language of quite another character. Having said so much, let me add that I would like to

see the return asked for by the hon. member produced, but I realise with the Minister for Railways that the labour which would be entailed in obtaining this report, would be altogether out of proportion to the value of the return when obtained, especially at this juncture of the history of the State, when we want to drop all questions of goldfields versus coastal district, to drop all questions of agricultural production versus gold production, and treat the lot as one harmonious whole. Therefore, I say it would not be of any great advantage to the State to have the return asked for by the hon. member, prepared and laid before the House.

Mr. GREEN (in reply) : I must express regret at the hostility that has been shown to the proposition in some quarters. The main objection that has been urged against it is that it is impossible, and when we hear the member for Murray-Wellington, who prides himself upon doing things and finding no difficulty in anything, making an objection of this character, we must come to the conclusion that he is evidently not the fighting Britisher he thinks he is. I recognise that there would be considerable difficulty in getting out this return, but I contend that sooner or later in this State a return of that character will be kept in regard to the railways as a business proposition.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What good will it do?

Mr. GREEN: What good are any of the returns laid before hon. members of this House? We desire to have the fullest information regarding the trading concerns of this State, and I have not been satisfied by the arguments put forward by the Minister for Railways and the member for Murray-Wellington that the returns attached to the Commissioner's annual report, good and full as they are, are complete in regard to the working of the railways when we are not given sectional returns for the different parts of the State.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The spur lines have been shown.

Mr. GREEN: They have been shown in the published report, and it has been

freely admitted that the information I am asking for was kept until 1903.

Mr. George: It was not kept. I told you how it was computed.

Mr. GREEN: Was the hon. member commissioner at that time?

Mr. George: In 1903, yes.

Mr. GREEN: Well, more shame to the hon. member to admit that a fictitious return was foisted on the Parliament of the State, when members believed they were getting something that was genuine and not cooked. If it is really impossible, and I doubt it very much, to get the return asked for, I trust that the time will come soon when returns will be kept of the operations of the separate sections, and I, as a Labourite, wish to see it inaugurated under the Labour regime. I hope the Minister for Railways will take steps to see that a return of this kind is kept, because I contend that the return we have from the Commissioner of Railways is not complete without sectional details.

Question put and negatived.

PAPERS—FREMANTLE GAOL, DISMISSAL OF WARDERS.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle) moved—

That all papers in connection with the dismissal of warders, recent and pending, from the Fremantle Gaol be laid upon the Table of the House.

As the terms of the motion implied, the matter to which it referred had not been finally dealt with, and it had been suggested that the production of the papers, before the matter had been determined, might in some way harass the Minister. Therefore, he had been advised to defer moving the motion until the subject had been finally dealt with by Cabinet. He had no desire to harass the Minister in charge of the Department, and he was quite willing, if the motion was carried, that the papers should be withheld until the matter had been finally dealt with.

Hon. J. Mitchell: If the motion is carried, that will be for the House to say.

Mr. CARPENTER : The House would not ask the Government to put the papers on the Table until the matter had been settled.

The Minister for Works: If the House says that the papers are to be tabled, they must be tabled.

Mr. CARPENTER : The House did not give any direction as to when the Government should do it. Time and again he had heard hon. members ask when certain papers which had been ordered to be tabled or returns which had been moved for months ago, would be produced. In this case the Government would be quite justified in withholding the papers for a week or two.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Bring the motion up later in the session.

Mr. CARPENTER : Very shortly the usual motion would be moved shunting members' business aside for the remainder of the session, and there would be no opportunity of moving the motion. He asked the Government to allow the motion to go through, and if they wished to defer the placing of the papers on the Table, he would have no objection.

Mr. DWYER (Perth) seconded the motion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): It was true that the hon. member had been asked to postpone his motion and had not thought it advisable to do so; therefore, it would be necessary for the Government to oppose the motion.

Mr. Carpenter: What for?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): No one knew better than the hon. member that the papers to which he referred were being dealt with by the Minister controlling the Gaols Department. Matters had come forward in regard to the dismissal of warders, which it was necessary the Minister should closely scrutinise, and he could not carry out the administration of his office if these papers were placed on the Table and allowed to remain there for the remainder of the session. The tabling of the papers might not harass the Minister, but it would prevent him from carry-

ing out his public duty. It was useless for the hon. member to state that when papers were moved for, the Government could please themselves as to whether they placed them on the Table or not. It had been the usual practice, no matter who occupied the Treasury benches, for papers to be placed on the Table as soon as possible after they had been ordered. What the hon. member had said in regard to returns not being produced for a considerable time was true, but only last week when the member for East Perth had moved for a return, he was informed that it was doubtful whether it would be possible to get the return prepared before the close of the session. With papers such as these, however, there was no necessity for delaying the placing of them on the Table. The remarks of the hon. member for Fremantle showed that he realised it was impossible for the papers to be put on the Table. He regretted that he would have to oppose the motion.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): The hon. member for Fremantle had not given the slightest reason why the papers should be placed on the Table.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is it necessary?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Usually a member had to produce very good reasons, or his motion for the production of papers would be opposed by the Government. The member for Fremantle had been almost apologetic, and stated that if the Government allowed the motion to go through, they could produce the papers when they liked. It was to be hoped that the business of the House was not to be carried on in that way. He trusted that when papers were ordered by the House, the Government would produce them. It was not for the Minister or the hon. member to say just when the papers should be brought down, if the House had determined to have them. When any hon. member moved for papers, particularly papers relating to State business and the control of public officials, he should give good reasons. This was a question of discipline, and the House was asked without a word of reason, to order the production of the papers. He agreed entirely with the Honorary Minister that the hon. mem-

ber for Fremantle had shown no reason at all why he should have the papers.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath): The position as pointed out by the Honorary Minister was very clear in this matter. At the present time there were matters in connection with the particular question of dismissal which were the subject of an inquiry, and the fact that that inquiry was proceeding, that the Honorary Minister himself was dealing with it, made it altogether inadvisable that these papers should be put on the Table. Of course it was not possible under a motion of this kind for Ministers to decide for themselves the particular time when they would place the papers on the Table. The fact that a motion was carried by members of this House implied that, with reasonable diligence, the papers should be produced. Under those circumstances he thought it would have been better for the hon. member to have postponed his motion, either with the idea of introducing it at a later date, or alternatively of approaching the Minister controlling the department, and asking him whether at a later date when the present objection was removed, and the matter finally disposed of, he would accept a formal motion on the matter, and then enable the motion to be dealt with at any particular time and not necessarily on private members' day. That was the course he (the Minister for Lands) now commended to the hon. member for Fremantle. While there was the present objection to the production of the papers, the hon. member should withdraw the motion.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): There could hardly be any objection to this motion if the wording of it applied only to "recent" dismissals of warders, because it would be presumed that the hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) in asking for the papers was satisfied that there was a possibility of an injustice having been done; but when the hon. member went further and asked for all the papers relating to dismissals that were "pending," then he was asking for something which this House could not reasonably grant. The Minister was re-

sponsible for any action he took, and it would seem that to place such papers on the Table would be absolutely subversive of discipline. The hon. member should withdraw his motion for the present, and later on when he felt he had some grounds he should bring it on again.

Mr. Carpenter: I cannot bring it on again.

Mr. GEORGE: The same thing could be brought on again by a variation of the motion. He could show the hon. member a way of doing it. The hon. member had only the right at present to deal with dismissals that had been made recently, and no doubt the Minister would do the same for the hon. member as had been done for him (Mr. George) on occasions—and he was not a member of the same party—that was, let him have a look at the papers; but to ask that papers relating to a matter that was incomplete should be laid on the Table of the House, was not judicious in his opinion.

On motion by the Minister for Works debate adjourned.

MOTION — RAILWAY CHARGES, LINES UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. MONGER (York) moved—

That in order to assist the settlers served by railways now under construction, it is desirable that the charges made by the Works Department should be in accordance with the existing railway tariff.

He said: My motion, as hon. members will see, applies to all railways now under construction, namely, Wongan Hills-Mullewa, Brookton-Kunjinn, and that one in which I am more particularly interested, and to which I shall more particularly refer this afternoon, the Wickepin-Merredin line. I will leave other hon. members interested in the other lines to separate or connect them as they think best in the interest of their particular electors, and either to support or decline to support the motion as they may think fit. Early in September the Minister for Works was communicated with and asked when the Wickepin-Merredin line of railway would be handed over to the Working Railways,

and in the course of his reply stated that he was uncertain as to when such would take place. In the same letter he stated that railway construction rates would be charged on all goods carried over that particular line of railway. During the past few weeks, in replying to a question submitted by myself, the Minister for Works informed the House that a portion of this line, namely, from Bruce Rock to Merredin, would be handed over by the end of this year, and the balance, from Bruce Rock to Wickepin, some time in August of next year. The route has been connected by railway for the past two months, and whilst we are told that one portion of this line would be handed over to the Working Railways in two months, we are led to understand that the ballasting of the other 90 miles is going to take 10 months to accomplish, and enable the Public Works Department to hand it over, a completed job, to the Working Railways. We have my friend the Minister eulogising the department under his control, and speaking of the splendid and efficient staff he has, and of the great work they have done and are prepared to do, and only the other day, in the course of inquiries made by the Press in connection with some proposition submitted by the firm of Norton, Griffiths & Co. in connection with the construction of a portion of the Trans-Australian Railway, namely, from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, we are informed, according to the Press, that the Minister stated that the railways now authorised, and those partly constructed, would be completed within twelve months from that time, and thus the Public Works Department would be able to undertake and handle this big work itself.

The Minister for Works: I am not responsible for what the Press say.

Mr. MONGER: I think we may safely say that by the time the Wyalcatchem-Mt. Marshall Railway, and many other propositions to which the Government are practically bound, and, I presume, including that of the Norseman-Esperance line, if these railways are to be completed within that time, and it takes 10 months to ballast 90 miles of track, instead of the Public Works Department being in a position to handle the Kalgoorlie-Fre-

mantle section of the Trans-Australian line to-day, it will be about 12 years before they can undertake it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you think Norton, Griffiths & Co. should be given the work?

Mr. MONGER: I am not referring to Norton, Griffiths & Co. with that object, and know nothing about it. I am only referring to what the Minister is reported in the paper to have said.

The Minister for Works: You never read that in the *West Australian*.

Mr. MONGER: In response to another question which I submitted to the Minister, asking what rates were now being charged by the Public Works Department for the carriage of goods over lines not handed over by them, the Minister informed me that the present charge was 4d. per ton per mile, and the question of a revision was now being considered. I might say that if a charge of 4d. per ton a mile is to be levied on those settlers who are located between Bruce Rock and Wickepin for the next 10 months, it is going to place a very severe handicap upon them and instead of the Ministry, who declare themselves to be the friends of the settlers, being regarded in that light, they will be looked upon as the very reverse. Take the man mid-way between Bruce Rock and Wickepin, a distance of 45 miles. If he has to pay this rate of 4d. per ton per mile he will be charged 15s. per ton for his wheat or fertiliser for those 45 miles. Is it possible to think that any man can grow wheat and pay such penal charges as those now being inflicted, and which it was evidently the intention of the Minister to give effect to so long as these railways are under the control of the Works Department. I feel confident that it could not be the wish of hon. members seated on the Ministerial side of the House, and I know full well it is not the desire of those seated on this side of the House to see such exorbitant charges inflicted on these people, who went and settled there on the strength of early railway facilities being given to them, and now find that, even when the line is nearly completed many months are to transpire before it will be in a condition

to hand over to the Working Railways. What is the reason given by the Minister? That he has had to take away from that line and place the men engaged there on lines in other parts of the State. We hear of the unemployed; we hear of men every day begging and asking for work. Surely to goodness when a track is so nearly completed one would think the least the Minister could do would be to spend a small additional sum of money, complete the line, hand it over to the Working Railways, and place the settlers in the best position they could expect. So far as I can judge, I understand that the cost of ballasting would not exceed £100 a mile. Does it seem fair and reasonable that a line which has cost anything from £170,000 to £200,000 is to be hung up because the Minister prefers to take away the labour that has been engaged on that line and utilise it on some other, instead of spending the small amount that would be required, some £8,000 or £9,000, to complete the thing and make it fit to hand over. I can only hope that the Minister will give more than ordinary consideration to this question, and at all events treat the people south of Kunjinn, and between Kunjinn and Wickepin in the same manner as he has treated those north of Kunjinn, where the advantages are considerably greater, where their initial expenditure has not been anything like as great as that incurred by the settlers of the south. I commend the motion to the favourable consideration of hon. members.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly): I rise to support the motion. I quite appreciate the amount of good work that has been done in regard to the construction of some of our railways. I would like to point out to the Minister the great importance it is to these people to have the Wickepin-Merredin line taken over by the Working Railways as soon as possible. The matter is of vital importance to these people settled on the land, to our pioneers in that part of Western Australia who are doing good work in the interests of the State. They deserve every consideration at the hands of this or any other Government. We require to keep our people on the land, and to do this we must encourage them. They are work-

ing under very great disadvantages at present in having to pay 2½d. per ton per mile more than the ordinary rates.

In other words, 4d. per ton per mile is the present charge on lines under construction, while the ordinary railway freight is 1½d. per ton per mile. This 4d. represents a very great burden on the people who are trying to develop the country. Of course I know the people appreciate having the line, but at the same time their great distance from the port is an immense handicap, and it is our duty to give those people all the encouragement we can. By reducing their freights 2½d. per ton per mile we will be giving them fair treatment. I was at Lake Yealering last January when the railway came in. That railway is still in the hands of the construction department and during that time—it is not altogether the freight, perhaps, although that is of vital importance, but it is the irregularity of the trains—no proper regulations have been in force in regard to the time at which trains arrive or depart, and so no consideration whatever is given to those people who have so many hardships to endure on account of their great distance from the seaport. I do hope the Minister will see his way to handing over the railway to the Working Railways. Then I would say he might assist, at any rate, in having the freight reduced from 4d. per ton per mile to 1½d. per ton per mile, and see that some regularity is introduced in regard to the running of the trains, so that the people may know when they are to get their produce sent away, and when to expect their necessary fertilisers. Under the present conditions they do not know anything about these questions, and so they cannot determine the quantities they are to deal with. These are essential points, and I would like the Minister to do what he can to alleviate the situation. These people deserve more encouragement than others, because in the agricultural industry we have a standby, and we know that the land will respond and find a living for those prepared to cultivate it. We require to get the people on the land, and every

encouragement should be given them, even at the expense of other people more fortunately situated. In my opinion those within easy distance of the markets should pay more per mile than those so far away from the seaport.

Mr. O'Loughlen : Will you agree to an increase of freights?

Mr. HARPER : Yes, I will agree to support what I am stating. I think the people in out-of-way places should have every encouragement, and I hope the Minister will agree to the motion.

Mr. BROWN (Beverley) : I desire to support the motion because I also am anxious to see a reduction made in the railway freights on the Wickiepin-Meredin line. The settlers in that area have been placed at a disadvantage owing to having no railway facilities in their district. On taking up the land in the first instance they were promised a railway; that was three years ago, and the railway is not fairly open to carry their produce yet. Therefore I consider they are entitled to a reduction in freights to enable them to compete with those on the old established railways.

The Minister for Works : Is it not an improvement on their carting of last year?

Mr. BROWN : Undoubtedly, but they had very little to cart last year. They did not trouble to go in for cropping to any extent and most of those who did crop held over their wheat to await the coming of the railway.

The Minister for Works : What was the idea of rushing the rails out? Was it not to give them assistance?

Mr. BROWN : Undoubtedly. I feel certain the settlers in that area greatly appreciate the efforts made by the Government to put out the line as speedily as possible, but I fail to see why the railway is being hung up for a considerable time merely on the score of ballast alone. The rails have been coupled up now for about two months, yet according to the Minister this line will not be handed over to the Commissioner of Railways until it has been ballasted. It has taken twelve months to ballast the Wickiepin line alone. Efforts should have

been made to have this ballasting done much more speedily in order to enable the line to be handed over in time for the settlers to enjoy the advantage of having their wheat from the coming harvest carried over the railway at ordinary rates. But I know there is a disadvantage as far as construction is concerned in regard to this railway, and the Public Works Department, like private contractors, do not care about carrying produce over a railway. They are not anxious to carry produce over railways under construction, because of certain inconveniences which they have to put up with; but I think a line should be drawn between the ordinary rates and the 4d. per ton per mile.

The Minister for Works : That is not the motion.

Mr. BROWN : Not altogether, but we are supporting the motion in the hope of getting somewhere near the mark in regard to charges. Take the half-way point between Bruce Rock and Wickiepin, a distance of 45 miles. It would be cheaper for some of the farmers to pay the construction rate beyond that 45 miles, to bring it through to the Greenhills-Quairading line rather than send it to Wickiepin and on down the Great Southern. If we take the half-way mark we find that the cost would be 4¾d. per bushel, and then in addition the freight to Fremantle would be 4¾d., making a total of 9d. per bushel on the wheat before it is landed on the wharf ready for shipment.

The Minister for Works : What do you say is the freight from Bruce Rock to Fremantle?

Mr. BROWN : It is 4¾d. per bushel.

The Minister for Works : That is the Working Railways?

Mr. BROWN : No, that is the ordinary railway rates from Bruce Rock to Fremantle, namely 4¼d. per bushel. The freight from Bruce Rock to Wickiepin, a distance of 45 miles, is 4¾d., thus making a total of 9d. freight to the wharf at Fremantle. In addition to this, if the settlers have placed their orders for bags on the market at a later date, they will have to pay threepence per bushel for their

bags. That makes a shilling per bushel, and the price of wheat on the wharf at Fremantle is 3s. 4d., leaving the grower only 2s. 4d. for his wheat. It is impossible to profitably grow wheat at that price. If only the Government would bring about the system of bulk handling of wheat we could use our bags for four years. (The new bags could be returned to us from the ships, and we could use them for four seasons. It would indeed be a God-send in that respect if the Government could institute the system of bulk handling of wheat. These are my reasons for supporting the motion. I am unable to see how these settlers are going to make a profit from their wheat during the coming year unless some reduction is made in the freight. The Minister ought to make a special effort to have the wheat carried for this year. It is not a large amount, I admit, but it is large to the settlers, for they have been there three years, making no money and spending what they had on developing their holdings. If they are enabled to have their wheat carried over the railway at the reduced rate they can straightaway sell, if they so desire, to the different buyers going round, or they can truck it here and send it to the Old Country and reap the full benefit of the profit. The time these construction rates will have been chargeable will be sufficient burden upon them, because on all the stuff they get there, their goods and fertilisers, they have to pay the construction rate, which is the same as on the stuff sent away from the sidings down in this direction. The people there are not in a position to stand this heavy strain on their finances owing to the great difficulties with which they have had to contend, and if they are not assisted, I feel sure that a certain amount of disaster, failure and trouble must occur among them. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore): This motion seems to have taken somewhat the form of a deputation to the Minister for Works from those representing the agricultural districts. Hon. members on both sides of the House cannot but regard the motion sympathetically because they must be aware that on some of these new lands

the people require assistance. I have in mind the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line settlers who have been settled along the route of the railway for three or four years. They went there on the understanding that a railway would be built, and for three or four years they have been struggling through the initial stages of agricultural settlement. Recently they were informed that the railway would be pushed forward to remove their produce after this harvest, and it has come as a great blow to them to learn that the rates charged are so much higher than those now in existence on the railways generally. It is very desirable in the interests of those who have been struggling for so long to get a start that the Minister for Works should do something to assist them. The Works Department should not be placed in the same category as the ordinary contractor. The ordinary contractor charges more than double the rates for carrying goods while the line is in course of construction, but the Government are in a totally different position and they might well assist the settlers by relieving them of some of the burdens which they have to bear on account of these increased rates. The Minister for Works has told us frequently that he can construct his railways by day labour much more cheaply than they can be constructed by contract, and for that reason the Minister might show some indulgence to these settlers.

The Minister for Works: Freights have no bearing on that phase.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: And the Minister might give the settlers some of the money he has been able to save by constructing these railways by day labour.

The Minister for Works: There is no connection between the two.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The Minister's sympathy must be with the settlers who have been struggling so long and waiting for a railway. Many of them have spent nearly all the money they have, and now that they have a crop I hope the Government will assist them to get it away to market. I hope the Minister will allow the House to carry the motion, as it is not only desirable that the rates should be

uniform, but it is more than desirable that these settlers should be assisted as far as possible. Later on they will not be so much in need of assistance but the present is the time when they require it. They have been waiting for the railway and this year they expect to get some little profit from their land and they will be heavily handicapped if they have to pay from Wongan Hills to Dalwallinu additional rates for the carriage of their wheat. I hope the Minister will inform the House that he will be able to assist these settlers in some way.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): This question really opens one of considerably wider importance. I have always held that the construction of railways should be one of the duties of the Working Railways, and my reason is that it would then be possible to complete a section and give the settlers the full benefit of the completed section very much earlier than can be done under the present system of the Works Department undertaking the construction.

The Minister for Works: There is no difference at all.

Mr. GEORGE: The Minister will pardon me if I differ from him. I can see a considerable difference. The Working Railways, by means of their staff, are better able to deal with the traffic on such lines of railway and better able to give facilities to the public than the Works Department or a contractor building railways under the present system can do. The Works Department, so long as they have the construction of railways committed to their charge, have to build the railways, and they will never be experts in running traffic. They are engineers who have to get over the difficulties of constructing the lines, and the traffic ought to be run by men who have made a lifelong study of the subject and who know what is required. I sympathise with the settlers in their difficulty. I can hardly credit that the Minister for Works could have stated, as he is reported to have done, that it will take ten months to ballast 90 miles of railway. If it will take that time it can only be due to a shortage of rolling

stock or to an extraordinarily long lead from the ballast pit.

The Minister for Works: There is six inches of ballast to go under the road.

Mr. GEORGE: With a decent lead, from a half to one mile of ballasting could be done in a day. The ballast could be delivered and the lifting gang could lift the line and top it up ready for traffic. It all depends on how long the lead is, and on the appliances which the Works Department have. I think it would be unpardonable if the opening of 90 miles of railway should be delayed for ten months on account of ballasting, especially when we bear in mind that irrespective of what Government were in power, the justification put forward when these lines were proposed was that at the earliest possible moment the much-needed facilities would be given to settlers—the facilities they required and not simply the facilities to get their wheat away. I was surprised that such a statement should be attributed to the Minister. If it is correct, something is wrong as far as the Works Department are concerned. Either they have not the facilities which they ought to possess, or there are too great claims being made on the department in comparison with the men and material at their disposal. I am of opinion that the best thing for Western Australia would be what I advocated years ago, and that is to place our present Working Railways under three commissioners and let one of them be a chief man from the Works Department and let the construction of railways be taken over and done by them.

The Minister for Works: As a matter of fact, the Working Railways have too much control of loan funds at present.

Mr. GEORGE: I am not so well able to express an opinion on that at present, because my connection with the Railway Department ceased six years ago and I do not know exactly what the Minister is referring to. In my time loan money was carefully expended and my only regret was that there was not more of it. The motion brought forward by the hon. member for York (Mr. Monger) means simply one thing, that under the present

system of carrying traffic, the settler has to pay very much more for the conveyance of his wheat than he ought to have to pay.

Mr. Monger: It is altogether out of proportion.

Mr. GEORGE: And the object of the hon. member is to elicit from the Minister whether it is possible to expedite the handing over of the lines to the Working Railways so that the ordinary rates can operate, or whether he will reduce the present freights to something like what they would approximate under the Working Railways.

The Minister for Works: The hon. member did not say that.

Mr. GEORGE: That is the hon. member's object. Now that the Minister knows what the hon. member desires, it is for the Minister to give the House some assurance in regard to the matter and I hope the assurance will take the form of satisfying the hon. member that the settlers who are labouring under a heavy burden at the present time will have that burden lightened. It may be asked whether the present system is not better than carting, but if we can give the settlers something even better than the present system, we ought to do it. Every cent taken out of the settlers' pockets is of great importance to them, and by rarity of reasoning, every cent we can honestly and legitimately leave in their pockets will assist them to develop the land on which they have been struggling to make a livelihood.

The Minister for Works: That is the point, honestly and legitimately.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): I have the greatest sympathy with the object the hon. member for York (Mr. Monger) has in view in endeavouring to obtain by his motion some assurance from the Government that special consideration will be meted out to those settlers who are to be served by new railways, that is railways now under construction by the Government, and particularly in-so-far as that assistance or consideration

relates to the carriage or conveyance of the forthcoming crop. The information given to the House by the hon. member for York discloses the fact that 90 miles of this railway now under construction will be held by the Public Works Department for some considerable time to come, in fact until months after the crop has been harvested, and even beyond the period during which next year's crop will be put in. This will seriously retard the progress of the farmers living along this railway, and will seriously affect them so far as putting in next year's crop is concerned. I realise that there are difficulties in the handling of traffic while railways are under construction, and it might reasonably be said by the Minister that the same conditions applying to these railways would have applied if they had been let by contract. I would like to say here, however, that the two cases are not altogether in the same category, because, taking the railway that has been recently constructed by contract, that from Tambellup to Ongerup, provision was made so that that railway should be built in two sections, and as soon as the first section, to Gnowangerup, was completed, it would be handed over to the Working Railways.

The Minister for Works: In the meantime what freight were they to pay?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I expect they paid the schedule rates approved of by the Minister.

The Minister for Works: What was it? Sixpence a ton!

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I believe that was the schedule rate at that time, and I believe this would be an opportune time to discuss the question as to whether the schedule rates approved of by the Minister for Railways let under contract were not excessive. The Government have it entirely in their hands to alter that schedule in any direction they think proper. As a matter of fact, I know the contractor for the Tambellup-Ongerup railway carried grain during the construction of that railway at a much lower rate than the schedule rates approved of by the Public Works Department, and if that can be done by a contractor I see no rea-

son why it should not be done by the Government, and I feel sure that the Minister's sympathy must be with these settlers. The House does not expect that the Government should make a huge loss by carrying the goods or produce which will be available on these railways, but at the same time there is a very wide difference between the schedule rates now imposed and the present Working Railway rates.

The Minister for Works: The rates are lower than they were two years ago.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Which are you alluding to?

The Minister for Works: The construction rates.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: They are still too high. I think that if the Minister goes into the matter in a businesslike way he will find that he can help the producer very considerably by immediately deciding upon some scheme of making provision for the handling of the crop, and of chaff and fertiliser, by providing a special rate when these commodities are carried in truck loads.

The Minister for Works: But that is not the motion.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The motion is in that direction. If the Minister will not agree to the motion as moved by the hon. member for York, I hope he will agree to a reasonable amendment. I would further point out that, even at this early stage of the harvest, buyers are already in the market. We know that the majority of the settlers are anxious to get advances upon their crop, and in many cases they cannot obtain these advances unless a straight-out sale is made, and the buyer, whoever he may be, the buyers of grain, will no doubt base their price upon the freights at present existing, and, therefore, it is imperative that the Minister should make an announcement with the least possible delay. First of all he should take the House and the country into his confidence and give some definite assurance that the whole 90 miles of this railway will not be held up and kept in the hands of the Public Works Department, but that the work of ballasting shall be carried on as expeditiously as possible, and the line handed over in sections as

soon as each section is completed. So far as the remaining portion of the line is concerned, the Minister should be able to say that, providing the grain is stacked at various sidings on these new railways, or is loaded into trucks, full truck loads, that certain rates will apply. If he cannot see his way clear to make that rate apply as upon a through load upon the same rate at present existing under the Working Railways, he should be able to say what rate will be adopted. It is also imperative that something should be done in regard to fertilisers. I have already mentioned the section of the railway which the Public Works Department proposes to hold, I understand, until sometime in August of next year. In the interim the farmers in that locality will want a very large supply of fertiliser, and if they have to pay fourpence per ton per mile upon their fertiliser it is going to cost a considerable amount to provide that necessary article, which we know it is essential that farmers should have in many cases to ensure a successful crop. I trust the Minister will give this motion every consideration, and that he will be able to make some announcement to-night as to what is intended to be done, as I think he is entirely with us in the desire to make the position thoroughly clear for those people who have their grain to sell, and will be selling, if they have not already sold some, within the next few weeks, and that they should get the fullest value possible in the circumstances. He will admit that if the rate outlined by the hon. member for Beverley (Mr. Brown) is imposed it will be a serious drawback to the people who are going to use the railway, and at this period, when so much help is required by those people who are struggling in these outback places, I think it would be a very graceful act on the part of the Government to strain a point and meet these settlers in the direction indicated.

Mr. O'LOGHLIN (Forrest): For the first time in this Chamber I find myself in sympathy with the mover of the motion. I admit that the Minister is likely to put up some opposition on the score that at the present time, and in the present state of the finances, the country re-

quires all the revenue that can be derived from railways under construction, and, after all, he cannot be blamed if he puts forward that plea—

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why continue the charge?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Because for many years past, and even while the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) was an Honorary Minister, this practice was carried on. I have a vivid recollection of asking for a revision of rates when the Mount Magnet-Black Range railway was under construction—it was during a discussion on the Estimates—and the Minister of the time—Mr. Daglish I think it was—steadfastly refused to make the concession. I was surprised at hearing the remarks of the last speaker in connection with the Tambellup-Ongerup railway, in regard to the contractor's attitude, because it is the first instance on record, I think, that a contractor has taken less than he was entitled to take.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: I say in some instances produce was taken at less than the schedule rates.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I can hardly imagine a contractor taking less than he would be allowed by law to take, as I venture to say the magnet which attracts contractors to undertake big public works is the opportunity they have, while the railway is in course of construction, of charging fairly heavy rates and getting revenue from that source. If we were to advertise to-day for tenders to make 100 miles of railway, we would have contractors coming around like flies after honey, and I believe the magnet attracting them would be the opportunity they would have of charging these excessive rates. A short while ago a railway was completed through my electorate, and the Minister for Works or his officers collected an enormous amount of revenue from that railway for the period of 12 months. I brought the matter under the Minister's notice and he made a reduction, but not nearly enough. This was the Pinjarra-Hotham line. I admit that the people down there did not grumble very much, for the simple reason that some of them had been there 40 years languishing for railway facilities, and were so glad to get

a railway at last that they were prepared to put up with these inconveniences. I believe a good deal rests with the officers. In some works we have officers engaged who are prepared to be out for revenue all the time, and I have a good deal of admiration for those officers, particularly as I am supporting a Government who are hampered for funds. I regret, by the way, to hear that the officer responsible for that line has now left the department, but I want to say of him that he was always diligent and alert, and while perhaps the system he engaged in was wrong, he at least saw to it that the department got all the revenue they could from the construction of that railway. I think the Minister for Works can very well meet this motion by some compromise: he might accept an amendment which will make it less harsh, but I also desire to distinctly point out that the Minister should not take steps such as those which have been suggested, because they might benefit settlers in one particular district. I take it that whatever is done will apply also to railways which may be sanctioned in the future. I recognise, perhaps, that it may be difficult for the Minister to agree to the motion as it is framed, that is, to charge existing railway rates on all lines under construction, because it is obvious that the Works Department do not carry on the routine work connected with the lifting of passengers and freight for the Railway Department.

Mr. George: They lift the money though.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: They do that effectively judging by the remarks we have heard from some hon. members to-night. The Works Department, however, cannot be expected to carry freight and passengers at existing railway rates. I have had a grievance in my own electorate, in connection with a railway which has shown the highest profit of any spur line in Western Australia. I refer to the Pinjarra-Holyoake line and the extension to Hotham. That was principally a timber railway, and although I got very little satisfaction from the Works Department when I asked for a reduction of the

freights, there was a difficulty after it was taken over by the Railway Department in getting from that department anything like an adequate service. I clamoured that the line should be handed over by the Works Department to the Working Railways, and then when it was taken over the most shocking service in the State was given.

The Minister for Railways: Look at the reduction in the fares.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I admit that the people appreciate the reduction, but at the same time they want to see the trains running a little more frequently.

Mr. George: There is a State hotel where they can put in their time.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, and it is doing particularly good work.

Mr. George: It is not bringing in a profit.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I might state for the hon. member's information that it is showing a profit of over £100 a week. In regard to the motion, I desire to say that if no amendment is moved I will support the member for York, because I believe it is necessary that some such action should be taken. I realise the difficulty of the Minister, and I also realise that this is hardly a fair proposition.

The Minister for Works: Yet you support it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am supporting it hoping that the Minister will suggest some compromise or accept an amendment which may be moved. We want in the way of rates something between those which are existing at the present time and those levied by the Railway Department. I have the figures charged on the Pinjarrah-Holyoake line—I do not know whether Mr. O'Grady, who was the officer in charge, was responsible for them, but as I said a little while ago, that officer was out for revenue the whole time—but the fact remains that this train could not be run two miles without that officer coming along to extract fares from those who were using the line, and pretty hot fares they were too. The construction train from Holyoake onwards never ran

fares were collected from whoever boarded that train.

Mr. George: And why not?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I only mention this because I know that in other instances the officers allowed the fares to go. The Minister told us that a lot of people rode on the Wickepin-Merredin railway without paying their fares.

The Minister for Works: They rode on the trucks.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Down our way they are quickly jumped off unless they have their fares in their pocket. That was due to the vigilance of Mr. O'Grady. If the Minister is not prepared to agree to the motion I trust that he will consent to hand over the line to the Working Railways section by section. That was not done in the case of the Pinjarrah-Holyoake line, and it was a period of fifteen months from the commencement before the line was taken over. The department pointed out that if they handed over the line they would practically be breaking up their depot, from which they directed operations. The last speaker referred to the disabilities the Wickepin-Merredin settlers would have to put up with if the present system continued. I realise that the exactions made on new settlers to-day are fairly heavy, but I say that while the Government have done so much for the settlers, and while I believe they are sympathetic towards the motion, it seems hardly a fair proposition in these times that they should be asked to forgo the whole of the revenue that can be derived in these directions seeing that other Governments in more prosperous times had the use of the whole of such revenue. We must admit, however, that the railway charges are excessive, and that those levied on the line to which I have referred are of a Shylock tendency. I do not know whether the Minister for Works has any suggestion to offer, the effect of which would be to tone down this motion.

The Minister for Railways: If it is not toned down, it will be toned out.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then the Minister is admitting that a wrong has been perpetrated.

The Minister for Lands: We do not admit any such thing.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the Minister for Lands were conversant with the facts regarding these new railway propositions, he would not make such an assertion. The Minister is not aware that excessive fares and freights are being levied by the Works Department. I am not saying that one section is deserving of sympathy more than another, but I say that if the charges are not reduced by the Works Department when at least a section of 20 miles has been completed, the section should be handed over to the Working Railways.

Mr. George: Then they could not build cheap railways.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I admit that the only alternative to that is to allow contractors to build these lines, and of course we know how popular the contract system is with hon. members opposite. Contractors are given the opportunity to extract a toll from all sections of the people, and I venture to say that we would not improve things by going back to the contract system. I repeat that I hope, if the Minister cannot accept the motion, he will accept an amendment.

Mr. Monger: What is the amendment?

Mr. Thomas: He is sitting on a rail now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If I had done so as often as the hon. member who just chirruped, my career would be very short. I have no hesitation in saying that I am going to support the member for York.

Mr. Thomas: You are looking for a way out now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the hon. member could see a way out of his difficulties he would sleep a little better at night. I would be prepared to move an amendment, but I do not know the Minister's intentions in the direction of laying it down that once a twenty-mile section is completed it should be handed over to the Railway Department, or that the fares and freights should be reduced to the level of those of the Railway Department. The contractor for the Dowerin-Merredin line handed that work over in sections. There was an agitation for the sections

to be taken over, but I regret to say there was no undue haste shown in my electorate in that direction. The people often grumbled very much, but they recognised that railway facilities were something that they were in need of. Yet the charges are excessive, and I will do my best to lighten the burden as much as possible. I do not know how far the Minister is prepared to go, but if he will not accept an amendment or a compromise, I shall, in view of my experiences, support the motion.

Resolved: That motions be continued.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): I was under the impression that the member for Northam was going to speak, but I suppose he is adopting his usual tactics of speaking after the Minister has replied.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I can please myself.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course, but when the hon. member was on this side of the House there was no one who complained more than he did in regard to the procedure he is adopting now, and consequently I thought he would practise what he preached.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I never complained in my life.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The position is that the hon. member who moved the motion outlined that he had received a letter from me intimating that the Government were going into the question of the revision of these rates.

Mr. Monger: I said the information was given in reply to a question.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At any rate an intimation was conveyed to the hon. member that the matter was under consideration. Before going into the question any further, I desire to point out the position the Government found themselves in when they took over the control of affairs, more particularly the control of railway construction. A lot has been said to-night in regard to the rates charged on these railways, and but few members have pointed out that this rate, about which so much complaint has been

made, is a rate which was imposed not by the present Government but which has been in existence for years. Previous Governments were asked to reduce it on goldfields lines, but they absolutely declined to do so. Of course it was all right when these rates were applied to the goldfields people; it was all right to exact full toll from them, and give no consideration to their requests. When it comes to the farmers, so long as hon. members opposite were themselves applying these rates, it was also all right, but when others followed their example the charges were excessive and it was a wrong procedure to adopt. And I would like to point out that hon. members go through the country declaring that the finances are in such a condition that the ledger does not balance. They go through the country and say that the present Government are incapable of managing the finances of the State, after which they come into the Chamber and move motions of this description, to reduce the revenue which they themselves collected. It is absolutely unfair. Indeed one could almost use a harsher word in respect to their action. Let us look at the railway construction policy which was left to this Government to carry out. After giving the figures in regard to that I will explain why we introduced the present policy of getting the rails rushed out as fast as we could in order to give relief to the settlers. When we took over the control, the previous Government, a week or a month before the elections, had started three lines, the authority for which they had had for a considerable time. These lines were the Northampton-Ajana, 33 miles; the Naraling-Yuna, 12 miles; and the Tambellup-Ongerup, 59 miles. One had been started departmentally, and for the others contracts had been let. The total length actually started, although little or nothing had been either done or paid in regard to the lines, ran into 104 miles.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: What about the Katanning-Nampup?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was farther advanced. I am speaking of lines which were actually only started.

Men had been put on and a bit of a show made before the elections. But, apart from that, little or nothing had been done. There were authorised at that time, but nothing done in regard to them, a total of 411 miles of railway, made up of the Quairading-Nunagin, 48 miles; Wickepin-Merredin, 109 miles; Wongan Hills-Mullewa, 198 miles; and the Brookton-Kunjin 56 miles. That meant that when we took over in October, 1911, there was a railway programme of 515 miles for us to construct. Let us look at what was done by our predecessors, and calculate how long it would have taken them to build this 515 miles. On going back to 1907, when they practically took control, we find that in 1907-8 they built 204 miles of railway: in 1908-9 they built 102 miles: in 1909-10 they built 100 miles, and in 1910-11, just before the election, they completed 232 miles. Then we built in 1911-12, between us, the greater portion being built by our predecessors, 222 miles, while in 1912-13 we built 256 miles, the greatest length which had been built in any year for a considerable number of years past. Let us take the record of the gentlemen opposite who are talking so much in regard to these agricultural railways. From 1907 to 1911 their average was 160 miles per annum. They left us a programme of 515 miles. Taking the average of their building we had a programme which would require five years to complete before we could authorise a single railway.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member is going to bring his remarks to bear on the motion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Certainly.

Mr. SPEAKER: They are not bearing on the motion just now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The position is that the present Government have introduced a new policy in regard to railway construction, and I desire to point out why we introduced that policy. That policy has a direct bearing upon, as a matter of fact it is the cause of this motion having been brought forward. I shall make that clear before I sit down.

Hon. gentlemen opposite built on an average 160 miles of railway per annum. They left, for us to construct, 515 miles, or a matter of over four years' work. Since then we have had authorised 218 miles of railway, made up of the Yillimining-Kondinin 72 miles; the Wagin-Bowelling 62 miles; Mount Marshall 52 miles, and the Bolgart extension 32 miles, or a grand total of 733 miles of railway left over by the previous Government or subsequently authorised by the present Parliament. Of this 733 miles there has been finished 152 miles to date. We have in hand at the present time 430 miles, and we have yet to start 146 miles. Of that length of 733 miles no less than 307 miles were standard lines. The Wongan Hills-Mullewa is a line of standard construction carrying six inches of ballast under the sleeper, and heavier sleepers, although the heavier rails have not been laid on that line. On the Wickepin-Merredin line we have the heavier sleeper, the heavier rail and the heavier ballast, making it a full standard line. Seeing that we had that huge quantity of railway construction ahead of us, and also realising that hon. gentlemen opposite had promised the people concerned that they were going to get the line within a year or so—take the people of Cowcowing and of Mount Marshall; how many times were they told they were going to get the lines within a reasonable time? How many hundreds were encouraged to go out there on the promise they would have the line in the shortest possible time? Take the Wickepin-Merredin and the Wongan Hills-Mullewa lines. The people in those districts were led to believe that they would get the railways within a year or so. Of course these statements were made before the elections, but the people accepted them on their face value and took them as an honest representation of the possibilities of railway construction, with the result that they rushed on to the land and started to clear and improve it and to produce from it. When the Government took over we found in all these centres the people clamouring for the railway and pointing out that they had been encour-

aged to take themselves, and their wives, and their families out on to the land and spend their money on improvements, and that in consequence they had the produce, but that there was no hope of marketing it, no possible chance of profitably carting it in by team. They appealed to us to get the railway out at the earliest possible moment. How could we get out a matter of 733 miles within two years? It was an utter impossibility, and no man could expect the Government to carry out the railway programme to that extent. We decided to do the best we could. We made up our minds to rush the rails down in every place we could. The hon. gentleman gives me credit for the fact that the rails were laid with great expedition between Wickepin and Merredin, but he complains that after the rails were laid the line was not finished. The member for Irwin (Mr. Moore) will give me credit for having rushed the line between Wongan Hills and Mullewa. We are doing the same in respect to the Yillimining-Kondinin and the Brookton-Kunjin lines.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is all rush.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a rush unprecedented in the history of the State. Why are we doing it? Because it is possible to cart on a construction railway, but to cart by team is an impossibility. Therefore, we say that while it is impossible for us to give the Working Railways' rates on these construction lines, we can cart on them at a big reduction on what it would cost the settlers to cart by team. We find now that we have laid these rails down in order to reduce the cost of carting as compared with the cost of carting by team, the settlers are turning round and saying, "We have got the Government to expedite the laying of the rails, and now we are going to use all the political influence we can to get them to reduce the rates, because they cannot lift the rails again." It is a repetition of what we had in regard to the extension of the water service to the agricultural areas. We were encouraged to rush along the pipes, and immediately they got the pipes down

the settlers said, "The Government cannot lift the pipes, so we will agitate to get the water for practically nothing." The hon. gentleman is doing the same thing in this instance. He says, "I have got the rails laid, and now I will agitate for reduced freights," and so he moves a motion which, if carried, would possibly secure a reduction at an absolute loss to the State. Then it is said we ought to do it section by section. That is an absolutely selfish view. If we started doing lines section by section, we would have to do all the ballasting and would have to complete railway yards and stations and telephones, so that everything would be ready for the Working Railways to operate. While doing that we would be penalising somebody else who wants the rails. It is a question of the best method to adopt, whether we are going to follow on as the previous Government did—

Hon. J. Mitchell: You will never do that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope to God we never will. If we were to adopt the slow rate which satisfied the previous Government the country would never be developed. If we were to adopt their tactics we would be doing one portion and delaying the construction of the others. Is it not better for us to continue the policy we have in force to-day of rushing the rails out so that we can give the settlers a reasonable opportunity of getting their machinery out and their produce in at a rate which, although higher than that of the Working Railways, is still considerably less than the rate charged for carting by team? Again, I would point out that the previous Governments always charged this rate, and that we also charged the rate in regard to the Quairading-Nunajin line, which was constructed since the election of the present Parliament, the rate of 4d. per ton per mile. There was no agitation at that time. The people recognised that it was a big reduction in comparison with what they were charged for carting to and from the Eastern goldfields line. They gave us credit for having rushed the rails out and given them an opportunity of getting their produce through

at a lower rate than it cost to cart it by team. The hon. member asked, "Why not get on with the ballasting as fast as possible?" He forgets that we have four railways in course of construction, inasmuch as the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line is being constructed from both ends, and the Wickiepin-Merredin line also is being constructed from both ends, both railways being of standard construction. If we attempted to ballast all these lines we would require all the rolling stock and all the locomotive power that we have to attend to these lines, while the other lines waited. Is the member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper) going to endorse that policy? Does he propose that I should stop the Brookton-Kunjin line and go on with the ballasting of the Wickiepin-Merredin line, or that I should put the rails out and lift the harvest on rails, instead of compelling the settlers to lift it with teams; or is it better to delay the ballasting of a few lines in order to give the rails to other people? I am satisfied that the hon. member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper) knows that I am doing the right thing, and other members who are waiting for railways, more particularly the member for Toodyay, will realise that I am doing the right thing in getting the rails out in these various districts at the earliest possible moment. Then in regard to the construction rate charged, it must be borne in mind that even the present rate does not pay. When it is realised how it disorganises all construction, that while carrying traffic we cannot do anything else, it would be better for us, and contractors have said the same thing, not to carry traffic at all. The small amount of traffic in the shape of train loads offering does not compensate for the disorganisation of work which it causes. Hon. members must recognise that even at the present rates there is no profit, but I am prepared to admit that it may be possible to reorganise things so that we can lift up in train loads, and, working in with the Working Railways, bring about a better state of affairs than we have to-day, ensure greater despatch and a better handling of trucks, and possibly make a reduction in the rates. But I want to point

out also that already we have made a reduction. We get no credit for the fact that the construction rate has been reduced where people had wheat held over from last year and were anxious to get it to market for the beginning of this season.

Mr. Moore: One shilling per bushel for 120 miles.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is not so. The hon. member knows full well that when he brought that under my notice I told him it was a misunderstanding, that I had made a reduction in other cases where we had proper loading, and if representations were made the same reductions would be allowed in this case as on the Wiekpin-Merredin line. Without taking up any more time, I want to point out that it was only a week ago that I conveyed to hon. members, if not by letter, at least verbally, that I was satisfied that the Government were going into the question with a view to a revision of rates. What I have done is to arrange for a conference between the Working Railways and the Public Works Department. I am calling in the engineers of the Wongan Hills-Mullewa and Wiekpin Merredin lines, so that they by their local knowledge may be able to tell us what we are likely to be called upon to do, and by co-operating with the Working Railways arrange what is possible for us to do under the best conditions and at a minimum of cost. Whilst the Government cannot possibly agree to the motion that we should carry at the same rate as the Working Railways, because that would mean a huge loss, which the country should not be called upon to face and could not possibly face, still, seeing that the Government have already intimated that we propose to go into the question of revising these rates, I do not think this motion should be moved. That has been conveyed to hon. members, and when we have failed to carry out that promise, it will be time enough to bring this motion forward, but seeing that we have announced our intention to hon. members, I do not think it was fair to bring forward the motion at this stage. If I remember correctly, the conference is fixed for Tuesday next, and it

may be because of that the hon. member has moved this motion in order that he may get the credit. If that is not so, it is strange that this motion should be brought forward at a time when a conference is to be held to bring about, if not the same thing as the hon. member desires, at any rate, an alteration which will tend in that direction.

Mr. Monger: This is the first intimation I have received of any conference.

Mr. George: The conference may be in consequence of the motion. That construction can be placed on it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. I stated some time ago that the question was being considered with a view to a revision of the rates, and that was before the notice of motion was given. Hon. members opposite have agreed that the motion would not be a fair proposition for the Government to adopt and they say that some modification should be agreed to. I am going to oppose the motion. I do not see how it can be amended, but I will give the House an assurance that the Government are calling a conference of all these expert officers with a view to bringing about a better state of affairs and giving the settlers an opportunity of removing their wheat at the cheapest possible rate, and also of getting manures in cheaply so that next year they may be encouraged to have a good crop ready to keep the Working Railways busy and so that this year they may get some return from the crops which they have sown in the expectation that railways for which they have been waiting for some time would be built.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) : When the Minister rose to reply, he complained that members on this side had not all spoken. It is customary for a Minister to reply after a motion is moved, and we have a right to hear the Minister before proceeding to deal with a proposal of this kind. However, as is usual with the Minister for Works, instead of dealing with the motion as it was dealt with by other speakers, he has levelled a tirade of abuse at the past Administration. He has told us of the work he has done and he says it is magnificent. We

have heard that time and again, and representatives of the farming districts have time and again complained and brought forward motions in order to get relief. Some hon. gentlemen opposite stated that the goldfields had borne the disadvantage of a special heavy rate during construction. Well, there were goldfields members here, and they might well have given voice to the objection raised, I suppose, by the people themselves, but if they were not as wide awake as hon. members representing the agricultural districts, they have nothing to complain of. I should like to point out to the Minister that his figures in connection with railway construction are not correct. I have here the monthly *Statistical Abstract* and it shows just exactly what has been done in connection with railway construction.

The Minister for Lands : It does not. Those figures represent only railways completed and handed over.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : We want lines to be completed and handed over. That is what we are discussing. We say they should be handed over as speedily as possible, section by section, in order that the people may not be unduly penalised. During our last year of office, we handed over no less than 231 miles of completed railways, which I believe is a record for Western Australia. It is quite true that last year, including the Port Hedland-Marble Bar line, which was almost built before the present Minister took office, 250 miles was handed over, but that mileage was not the result of the Minister's activity. He would have had less than 200 miles to hand over but for the activity of the previous Administration, which he has criticised so strongly to-night. Our total of 231 miles is a record for railways completed. We had accelerated the speed of construction until we had reached that stage, but if we had been in office during the last two years, the 700 miles which the Minister has referred to would have been completed and handed over.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister) : It is easily said.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : It is easily done.

The Minister for Lands : I wish you would show how.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : It could be done. However, I pointed out that the Wilson Government completed more lines than any other Government.

The Minister for Lands : The hon. member is misleading the House. Those figures do not represent railway construction at all.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : Are not these constructed lines ?

The Minister for Lands : Some of that mileage was completed in the previous year.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : If the railways were partly built in previous years, they were built by a Liberal Administration, and if they were in course of construction previous to our last year of office, there were also others under construction at the end of our last year of office. Some of the railways which the present Minister has completed were lines for which contracts had been let by his predecessors. There are always some lines under construction. The Minister stated to-night that he has four lines under construction and he called them the Wongan Hills northward, and the Mullewa southward, and the Wickepin northward and the Merredin southward, although they represent really only two lines. At any rate, I claim that we did more in connection with this policy of railway construction than our successors have done, and we were responsible for the policy that has opened up this country. The Minister has complained that we promised railways. We did promise railways and they were authorised.

Mr. SPEAKER : Order ! I hope the hon. member is going to bring his remarks to bear on the motion. I must make the same suggestion to him as I made to the Minister for Works.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : May I have the same latitude as the Minister for Works ?

Mr. SPEAKER : Yes. The Minister for Works assured me that he intended to bring his remarks to bear on the ques-

tion, which he did towards the conclusion of his speech, but—

Mr. George interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member for Murray-Wellington mind his own business while I am addressing the House. If the hon. member for Northam intends to bring his remarks to bear on the motion as the Minister for Works did, he may proceed. I cannot allow an argument across the floor of the Chamber as to which party built the most railways, because that has nothing to do with the motion.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: May I reply to the remarks of the Minister?

Mr. SPEAKER: Provided they bear on the motion. The hon. member will recognise that if I were to allow a discussion on every remark made by other speakers, the debate would not be relevant to the motion at all. That is what I desire to provide against. If the hon. member will connect his remarks with the motion, he will be perfectly in order, but I cannot allow him to discuss an argument used by another hon. member unless it has some bearing on the subject of the motion.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is a little difficult to answer in any effective way the remarks of the Minister for Works if I must confine myself to the wording of the motion. I thought that the Minister dealt with the policy of railway construction, which he claimed had been more actively pursued by the present Government than by their predecessors, and he also said that we promised railways which were not constructed. I had hoped I would be allowed to say a few words in regard to that.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not wish to embarrass the hon. member. I only desire him to bring his remarks to bear on the motion.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister pointed out that he was pushing on with the rails and intended to come back and complete the line after providing the farmers with the means of transport they now have over the Wickepin-Merredin line, notwithstanding its incomplete condition. The question of new railways has

some bearing on the subject, if that is the policy of the present Government. I entirely agree that this should be done. In all these districts in which we have authorised railways, the railways should be built as speedily as possible. I do not agree with the charge which has been imposed on the settlers, and only to that extent do I disagree with the Minister in regard to the carrying of goods.

The Minister for Works: Why did not you fix that charge?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Minister will lay these railways to every district which it was promised would be supplied with a railway, his action in that regard will be satisfactory. The Premier says that this cannot be done as speedily as he would like it to be done owing to the want of funds. The Minister for Works says it cannot be done because it would be impossible for any Government to build lines quicker than he is building them. It is utterly impossible for settlers to pay the high cost of freight that is imposed upon them when they have to cart long distances, and it is quite impossible also for them to pay the two freights referred to by the member for Beverley—the short distance freight over the Minister's line and the second short distance freight over the Commissioner's line. The member for Beverley pointed out that on wheat carried from Bruce Rock to Fremantle the freight would be 9d. a bushel—

The Minister for Works: The freight you fixed.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Ninepence a bushel as against 5d. a bushel if the Commissioner were now in control of the whole of the line. The Minister by interjection just now said that I fixed the freight. I was never Minister for Works.

The Minister for Lands: You were a member of the Government.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am quite aware of that and I was as much responsible for that as the present Minister for Lands is responsible at the present time. If there had been any outcry, we would certainly have rectified the charge.

The Minister for Works: What about the goldfields?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is a fact that there was very little freight to be carried over the lines when we were constructing them, but it is a totally different proposition to-day. Here we have all along these lines which the Minister is laying, hundreds of wheat farmers who have crops growing, and good crops too, and this wheat will have to be carried to the seaports. It is possible that a farmer will agree to pay a high freight on a truck of horse-feed, but it is a different matter when he has many trucks of produce to send to market. It is not right that the farmer should be penalised to any great extent. During the construction of a railway inconvenience is caused through traffic going over the line. There is a disadvantage when the Minister has material going out to complete the line. I can understand that it is more costly to run traffic over a line which is only partially completed, but I cannot for the life of me understand why the freight should be higher in the case of the Wickpin-Merredin line, which is coupled up and over which the Minister need not run anything but ballast. The Minister has his sleepers down and has laid the rails, and I understand that he has the sidings in and that everything is complete except the ballasting.

The Minister for Works: The freight is lower than that you charged.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not care whether it is half the price. The line now only needs to be ballasted and that can be done, but it will be done apparently at the Minister's leisure. It is work that can be done, I suppose, in a few weeks, but during the whole of the time that the ballasting remains undone, the people are to be penalised. There is a special rate imposed upon them, a rate lasting not for a week or two, or for a month or two during the legitimate time for the completion of the construction, but a rate continued long after the line should be completed. The Minister admits that for his own convenience, and for the convenience of other people, he is leaving the ballasting of the line over for some months. I have no quarrel with him, because we want as many miles of rails laid down as it is possible to lay, but the peo-

ple who are living near the line that is not quite completed have a right to object to being penalised while the Minister delays the ballasting.

The Minister for Works: Should they not have any consideration for their neighbours?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is not for them to have consideration for other people; it is for the Minister to show that consideration.

The Minister for Works: I do not think the farmer has. He is a selfish individual.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The fact that the Wickpin-Merredin people have a line has nothing to do with the people of Mount Marshall. They, too, want a line. The people on the Wickpin-Merredin line have no right to be penalised because the Minister delays the completion of the work. It is not a question of charging a higher freight during the ordinary term of construction, but it is a question of charging a higher freight during the time the Minister's men and plant are away doing other equally necessary and probably more important work than the ballasting.

The Minister for Works: Even then it is double as fast as you were doing it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister has no pace on at all.

The Minister for Works: It took you eleven months to do the Dumbleyung extension, a matter of 25 miles.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am not concerned with what has gone before. We are dealing with the position as it exists at present. The Minister has been telling the public that he has been constructing railways at a very rapid rate and he has been telling the House and the country that he has been charging a lower freight than we charged. I do not know whether he is or not, but he has no right to hang up a line and charge a freight of 9d. a bushel on wheat to Fremantle when the charge ought really to be 5d. There is no gainsaying the fact that that is wrong, and the Minister should agree to rectify that by accepting the amendment or reducing the freight to the amount charged over the Commissioner's rails. The people in the agricultural districts should be provided with railways as speedily as

possible. The Minister for Works need never complain that he is building railways too fast. He will never construct railways fast enough to satisfy me. We have to remember also, and I think this ought to appeal to the Minister for Lands, that settlers in our back districts have waited a considerable time for railways. They have experienced one bad season and a second indifferent season, so that all the assistance that can be rendered to them should be rendered. If the Government can make the lot of the farmers out there easier and better, they ought to do it. One of the ways in which they can help them is to reduce the freights to the lowest possible cost. All the hon. members from the farming districts ask that this should be done, because they know the trouble which the settlers have been put to. That is the reason why we are asking for a reduction now. Two or three years ago, when these farmers were more prosperous and before they experienced bad seasons, they were satisfied to pay a higher rate during the construction of these railways, but they are not satisfied to do so now, largely for the reason that they cannot afford any additional impost. I hope the Minister for Lands will use his weight with the Minister for Works and get him to see the position of the settlers as I have explained it. The Minister should remember that we build these lines for the convenience of the people, and he should make the lines to the greatest possible convenience at the earliest possible moment. I do not wish to criticise the Minister further or to delay the House any longer, but before resuming my seat I would like to remind the Minister that two years have elapsed since he took office and before very long it will not avail him much to say that many lines are being laid. Actions will speak louder than words and the people will understand the purport of these actions, and the people who are being inconvenienced at the present time are the ones whom the Government will have to reckon with. In this case at any rate, where by a stroke of the pen the Minister can do justice to a deserving class, why not do it? It will be an easy matter, and it will be the right thing to

do. I seriously urge on the Minister to accept the motion moved by the member for York, and I hope that hon. member will force the motion to a division. It is only right that the country should know just what we, their representatives in Parliament, think should be done for them. We want to see that justice is done, and to show the people who their friends are.

Mr. Turvey: You did not always do it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I hope the Minister will agree to the reduction of freights and thus assist to further the production of the State.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath): I cannot help saying that the amount of hypocritical pretence behind the representations made in objection to these rates is absolutely nauseating, and the attitude taken up by the hon. member for Northam is probably the most callous and cold-blooded I have ever listened to.

Mr. George: Good gracious! What next?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have heard hon. members, who were on this side of the House for a period of six or seven years, and during that time, as has been pointed out by the Minister for Works, not these rates to which they are objecting now, but higher rates were exacted from the persons using the railways without one word of objection at any time during the whole period I have been in the House from any one of the hon. members who have spoken here to-night. We have never heard one word of objection from the hon. member who has moved this motion, and the hon. member for Northam was a Minister in the Cabinet which enforced these rates for years, and although he tries to cover himself by the paltry excuse that he was not Minister for Works, no one knows better than he that as one of the members of the Cabinet, he could have used his influence if he did object to these rates and made representations to his colleagues either privately in Cabinet, or as a Minister sitting in this House. But when on any occasion did the hon. member ever offer any objection?

When on any occasion did we hear the hon. member expressing his opinion as a member of this House and as a Minister, that his Government were enforcing rates which he considered unfair and altogether exorbitant?

Mr. George: That has nothing to do with the question.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That interjection by the hon. member just shows the unfair attitude which hon. members are prepared to adopt when they acquiesce in this condition of things for years at a stretch and then turn around with an air of indignation and join in a chorus of disapproval in regard to rates which they submitted for years.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We never took 10 months to do the ballasting.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member's Government took 11 months to construct 25 miles of railway, and then he says they never took 10 months to do the ballasting. The Minister for Works deserves the commendation of the House for attempting to meet the needs of settlers, not only on one line, but the needs of those who have been promised lines in different portions of the State, in getting the rails down in order that they might have the difference between the works construction rates and the cost of carting by road by team, instead of concentrating on one or two lines and leaving the others until those were completed and handed over to the Working Railways. It is distinctly unfair, and I deplore the lack of fair mindedness which hon. members opposite display when they get into such a turmoil of indignation, especially when we remember the attitude of acquiescence they adopted for so many years when their party were in power.

Mr. George: Is it desirable to reduce the rates?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is time that some protest was made against this unfair attitude. If hon. members opposite cannot rise to something like a decent sense of justice then their representations require very little consideration. Then again, we have to bear in

mind that if, because it is desired that the rate should be reduced to a low limit, we are to hamper the Works Department in the construction of these railways; if we are to penalise them in that work of construction by asking them to carry traffic at a rate which is altogether unremunerative, and at the same time undergo all the harassing conditions of running traffic at the same time as the work of construction is going on, it will mean that the taxpayers will be asked to foot a much bigger bill in connection with the construction of these railways, and it would be infinitely better for the Works Department to say "No. if we are going to be faced with these conditions, both from the standpoint of the credit of the department and the standpoint of the taxpayer, it is infinitely better that we should refuse this traffic, and say we will not carry it." That is essentially the position at which we will arrive in view of the fact that from so many directions we have this clamour for a reduction here, and a reduction there, which was never heard when those gentlemen were on this side. We are asked to forego revenue in so many directions, and at the same time are attacked from the other standpoint, that the financial position is not as satisfactory as hon. members would like to see it, and I say it is about time members of the Government raised a protest against the absolute unfairness of the attitude adopted by hon. members opposite.

Mr. WISDOM (Claremont): It seems that the principal cause advanced for this extra charge for freight on these lines is that a certain amount of inconvenience is caused to the constructors by running ordinary traffic over lines under construction. But surely, as the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) has pointed out, the rails and the sidings have been laid down, and the line has only to be ballasted—

The Minister for Works: That is not correct, of course.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You said so.

The Minister for Works: I did not.

Mr. WISDOM: At any rate the inconvenience cannot be anything like so great.

The Minister for Works: The rails are laid down, but buildings are not up.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WISDOM: The inconvenience cannot be anything like so great as it would have been until the rails had been laid from end to end of the line, and when the line would be required to a much greater extent for the carriage of material. At present, I understand, the only material for which the line would be required consists mainly of ballasting and therefore there seems to be some very good reason for a reduction in the charges originally levied upon the settlers, and which have been continued up to the present. I personally hardly think that there may be reason for a complete reduction to the rates charged by the existing railways, but I do think strong arguments have been put forward in favour of a considerable reduction of the present rates, and it is with a view to arriving at some compromise which I think might be accepted by the Government that I move an amendment to the motion—

That the words "in accordance with the existing railway tariff" be struck out and "materially reduced" inserted in lieu.

I have consulted with the mover, who is prepared to accept that amendment, and I hope the Minister will also be amenable to reason in this respect, and accept the amendment.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I second the amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the question.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (on amendment): I hope the Minister for Works will accept the motion as amended. I think the House should give expression to some opinion, and probably after the Minister's statement in regard to his intention it will be seen that the motion as amended will meet the case. The House has heard what hon. members have had to say in regard to this question. As for the utterance of the Minister for Lands, there was no consistency about it at all. What I have done in the past has nothing to do with the position at present, as the

conditions have entirely changed. We were building railways under entirely different conditions. In this case it is not a question of a line under construction in the ordinary way, but a question of carrying freight over a line which the Minister, for very good reasons, because he has his gang elsewhere, is hanging up for the time being. I do not wish to debate the question at any great length now, but I hope the Minister will agree to this amendment, and that when it is carried, as I hope it will be, he will see that freights are considerably reduced. Too much heat, unnecessary heat I say, is imparted to these matters when they come before the House. It should be recognised that as the man on the land has had a very strenuous time, anything that can be done for him should be done cheerfully and willingly. I hope the Minister will see that what has been said on this side of the House is in the interests of the people generally, and not only of the people on the land, as all are concerned more or less in the success of our settlers.

Mr. HARPER (on amendment): I hope the Minister for Works will agree to this amendment. During the discussion on the motion a good deal of heat certainly was engendered by the Minister for Lands, for which I think there was no occasion. No one on this side of the House got heated over the question. We are not finding fault with the Minister for Works, and we know the financial position of this State. We know all these important questions he has to deal with, but what we are urging is that a lesser rate should apply for those who are in isolated portions of Western Australia, and I maintain that it is the duty of this House to do so, at the sacrifice of the rest of the citizens of Western Australia, as unless the agricultural areas go ahead this State will go down or get behind.

The Minister for Works: The State cannot make reductions to an unlimited extent.

Mr. HARPER: I quite agree that there is a certain limit to all reductions, but I say the hope of Western Australia rests with the people on whose behalf we are advocating to-night. Unless we can keep

them on the land and encourage others to go there and settle, clear the land, and subdue the wilderness, the reputation or credit of this State of Western Australia will have to suffer. It is a necessity that we are advocating. These people cannot afford the high rates, and they are the people to whom Western Australia has to look. I maintain that other residents of the State are infinitely better treated than these men on the land. The goldfields towns have certainly been more assisted by Governments in the past. The city people have been assisted by Governments past and present, and both the cities and the goldfields have been infinitely better treated than the men on the land, who have a harder row to hoe than any others in Australia. I hear a good deal about humanity, the generous treatment of workmen, and the short hours they work on the fields, but what about the hours worked by the farmers? I know hundreds who have not clothes to their back or boots to their feet.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. HARPER: It is to the point of reducing rates that I am speaking, and that is the reason why I am advocating so much for the farmers of Western Australia, as everything depends upon them. Anyone can criticise the farmer and despise him, but I say this country and the future of this country entirely depend on the farmer. I do not care whether it is the hon. member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) or any other hon. member who criticises the farmers, but I say we must realise what would Western Australia's position be to-day if it were not for the prospects of a good season and a good harvest. The reputation of Western Australia in regard to its financial position depends upon that absolutely. What we are advocating on behalf of the farmer and the settler in isolated parts of Western Australia is not with any party feeling or in any antagonism to the Minister for Works, and what we are pleading for is justified in order that these people may continue to develop the agricultural lands. From what I know in my own experience I consider that the hardest and most in-

considerate treatment has been meted out to the farmers.

Mr. TURVEY: By the present Government?

Mr. HARPER: By every Government. I am not speaking of the present Government or any Government. I say more should have been done for the farmers in the past than has been done. I hope the Minister for Works will agree to this amendment, as in doing so he would be rendering a good service to Western Australia, apart from party politics or anything of the kind. We do not always want to be on the party question. It is not because past Governments have been charging exorbitant rates that they should be continued. We live in days of advancement, and why should we stick to the old order of things, and decline to accept the new. We want to improve as we go along in every direction. Therefore we should not continue to levy these exorbitant rates from people who are unfortunate enough to be in isolated parts of Western Australia and a long distance from ports.

Mr. THOMAS (Bunbury): I cannot help congratulating the Minister for Lands upon having so aptly described the attitude of my friends opposite. It is becoming the practice in this House of late to hear continuous appeals by hon. members on behalf of the unfortunate individuals who are starting on the land. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat almost dissolved into tears in attempting to draw a picture of the hardships experienced by these people. Of course I know the hon. member has to do this, otherwise he would be fired out. The time will come when it will be necessary for him to appease these individuals. Therefore, he now makes all sorts of extraordinary and absurd requests in their behalf. I refuse to believe for one moment that the honest farmer expects half the things that hon. members are continually crying out for in his interests. The man who goes out and has the hardihood to fight his way on the land and make a home for his wife and family is not the individual who will come here and ask on every possible occasion that

a miserable appeal should be made for assistance in his behalf.

Mr. George: It is only the miner who does that.

Mr. THOMAS: I do not think that charge can be laid against the miner. The Minister for Mines will tell us that the fewest requests come from those members of the community. With regard to the farmer I honour him too much, and I have too much faith in his sturdiness of character to believe the absurd requests which have been made by hon. members this evening. It seems to me that they are truly ridiculous. Hon. members opposite when on this side of the House experienced many prosperous years, and always a bounding revenue, and when they had the opportunity of doing the things they now ask this side to do, it never occurred to them to carry them out. Can such conduct be described as anything but hypocrisy? Immediately they get into opposition and see the difficulties that will arise from adopting such a course, they immediately become most enthusiastic in their desire to see those things done by the other party, things which they never had the moral courage or decency to do themselves.

Mr. George interjected.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member is wrapped in such a pachydermatous hide, and has such self-appreciation that it is impossible for any words of mine to have the slightest effect upon him.

Mr. George: Look into the glass when you go home.

Mr. THOMAS: If the hon. member looks into the glass when he goes home he will see one of the most objectionable faces in Western Australian politics to-day.

Mr. George: That will do.

Mr. THOMAS: Not only have we had this example of hypocrisy, not only are they complaining that these fares and freights are not altered in the direction they desire, but they overlook the fact, reiterated by the Minister, that the charges are less to-day than they were when the Liberal Government were in power. They have also forgotten the surcharge of 1s. per ton

which was imposed by the Liberal Government on all spur lines and which brought in a revenue of £25,000 per annum.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It never reached £14,000.

Mr. THOMAS: I prefer to accept the assurance of the Minister for Railways who informed us that according to the statement of the Commissioner for Railways the surcharge produced between £20,000 and £25,000 per annum. We hear this whine to-night about what we ought to do for the suffering farmer, and here are the party who imposed this surcharge which took £25,000 per annum from the farmers whining that we are not doing anything to assist that section of the community. Have the annals of Western Australian Parliamentary history ever displayed so much hypocrisy? Here are the things we have done, and there are the things hon. members opposite have done, and yet they have the audacity to sit there and charge us with not doing those things that ought to be done in the interest of the farmer.

Mr. George: What things?

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member is a persistent interjector, and he makes use of the most asinine interjections it has ever been my misfortune to listen to. He never says anything to illuminate a discussion; he prefers to talk gibberish and make childish interjections which are unworthy of any hon. member.

Mr. George: What have you said?

Mr. THOMAS: If the hon. member will only keep quiet he will have the opportunity of learning. I hope, Mr. Speaker, you will not blame me for breaking away from the subject matter of the motion. It is because of these continual interruptions that I am forced to get a little bit off the track sometimes. I was trying to drive home that we are being blamed for faults which are not ours, and that we are being asked by hon. members opposite to do things which they themselves never had the moral courage to do, and when we return to the charge and say, "You had the opportunity of doing these things," they reply, "Why refer to what we should have done; why not con-

sider what you should do yourselves." All the history of mismanagement, all the history of the faults that have gone before, the weight that bore the hon. members down and placed them in the position they are occupying to-day, are, *heigh presto*, to be forgotten. We are to forget all these things, and we are to set up a standard of conduct they never could hope to aspire to. Of course it would be delightful for the Minister for Works on all these newly constructed railways to reduce the freights by half or a quarter, and it also would be very nice for the Minister for Railways in order to assist that unfortunate person we often hear almost tearful tales of—the man on the land—to reduce the fares by a half or a quarter. It would be very nice, too, if the Minister for Lands would give away the broad acres of Western Australia. All these things would assist the poor struggling settler, but as the Minister for Works said just now, there is a limit to the price we can pay for the prosperity of the farmer. While I claim there is no man in Western Australia, and certainly not in this House, who has more sympathy for the man struggling on the land than I have, I say, and justly I think, that there are some other people in Western Australia beside the farmer; there are others who have to be considered. Whilst on the one hand we are urged to make these reductions, if the Minister for Works happened to be foolish enough to concede the request, a very few minutes afterwards there would be a howl that we did not know how to control the finances of the country.

Mr. George: You have shown that all right.

Mr. THOMAS: We are between the political devil and the deep sea, and so far as I am concerned, therefore, I sincerely hope that the Minister for Works will not dream of conceding the requests which have been made. We know that there is no section of the community which likes taxation; everyone would be pleased to do away with it, but the affairs of this country have to be administered; we have a deficit at the present time, I regret to say, and it would be absurd in

the face of that to go on making impossible concessions. I sincerely trust that the Minister will maintain the attitude he has taken up and that he will have the unanimous support of this side of the House.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat has as usual entirely missed the point before the House. The amendment which has been moved contains what the Minister indicated in his speech he was prepared to do. The Minister told the House that he would call a conference of the officers of the Public Works Department and the Railway Department to see whether it was possible to make any alteration in the charges. That is all that is wanted.

The Minister for Works: Then why do you not withdraw your motion?

Mr. GEORGE: It is not my motion. If the member for York chooses to withdraw it well and good, that is his business. I am going to deal with the peculiar tirade we have listened to from the member for Bunbury and which was quite apart from the real question before the House. The hon. member knows more about the medicines which another hon. member gave us two hours of the other night.

Mr. Thomas: Good old medicines again.

Mr. GEORGE: Let me say first that the Minister in his reply certainly made out a very fair case. He put it this way—whether it was better to lay the plates along the whole distance and give the farmers a chance of participating along the full length of the line, or complete a portion and give that portion to the farmers so that they might have the full effect of the reduction to the existing rates. Hon. members can form their own conclusions. Then again, I might refer to the utterances of the member for Bunbury when he spoke about the farmers. The farmer referred to in this motion is not the farmer who has already gone through his trials, nor the farmer who started from scratch and has made good, but the man who has gone on the land with the promise of a

railway to assist him to convey his produce to market. Yet we have the member for Bunbury, who knows as much about farmers as a pig does about his grandmother, or perhaps as the hon. member himself knows about his own grandmother, referring to members on this side of the House who are closely connected with the man on the land and the trials that he has to undergo, in the language we have heard. Why, if we wanted to deal with hypocrisy where could there be a greater hypocrite than the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas)? He had the impudence to come into the House and try to introduce a Bill to enable him to swindle the people of the State by—

Point of Order—An Incident.

Mr. Dwyer: On a point of order, is the hon. member in order in saying that the member for Bunbury introduced a Bill to swindle or by which he might swindle other people?

Mr. Speaker: No, the hon. member is not in order.

Mr. George: I was simply drawing attention to the fact that the member for Cue (Mr. Heitmann) dealt the other night with patent medicines, and the member for Bunbury, who is accusing this side of doing all sorts of things, actually tried last session to have carried a Bill which would enable him and gentlemen of his kidney to sell those medicines which the member for Cue declared ought never to be allowed to be sold.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Perth may state his case.

Mr. Dwyer: I would point out that the hon. member used the word "swindle" and that he directed that word as against the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas). I think the word "swindle" is uncalled for and unmerited, and is opposed to the privileges under which the hon. member has to address the House.

Mr. Speaker: I will ask the hon. member if he made those remarks attributed to him.

Mr. George: I stated that the member for Cue mentioned the other evening

that there were certain patent medicines—and he told us what they were—

Mr. Speaker: I understand that perfectly, but the statement made by the member for Perth (Mr. Dwyer) is that the hon. member said that the member for Bunbury introduced a Bill for the purpose of swindling persons.

Mr. George: I should like to see the record of the exact words I used.

Mr. Speaker: I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to obtain a copy of those words from *Hansard*.

[Transcript of notes supplied].

Mr. Speaker: I will now read the remarks of the hon. member, which were as follows:—

Why, if we wanted to deal with hypocrisy, where could there be a greater hypocrite than the member for Bunbury? He had the impudence to come into the House and try to introduce a Bill to enable him to swindle the people of the State.

I think the hon. member is mistaken. I will ask him to withdraw his remarks and apologise.

Mr. George: Yes, I will withdraw the statement, and I suppose I must express regret at having made it in the heat of the moment. I could have expressed my meaning in words not so strong, but which at any rate would have conveyed to the House what I intended.

Mr. Thomas: Have another try.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. George: I could have another try at the hon. gentleman, but he is not worth it. He is one of those individuals who hide themselves in—but I will leave him at that.

Mr. Speaker: Order! Is it worth while?

Mr. George: No, but is it worth while for that thing to talk to me?

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member will take his seat. When he is again calm, I will ask him to apologise. I am sure he made that statement in the heat of the moment, and it is not my duty to be hard on any member when his

passion is aroused. I will ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement.

Mr. George : I have already withdrawn it.

Mr. Speaker: Order ! I ask him to withdraw the statement that the member for Bunbury is a thing.

Mr. George: I will withdraw the statement that he is a thing.

Mr. Speaker: No hon. member makes a statement of that character unless his feelings are aroused. I do not wish to be hard upon the hon. member, but I hope he will withdraw.

Mr. George: I will withdraw the statement that he is a thing. He is nothing.

Mr. Thomas : Am I not entitled to an apology ?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will stand in his place and apologise.

Mr. George: What for ?

Mr. Speaker: I asked the hon. member to withdraw the remark that the member for Bunbury was a thing.

Mr. George: Yes, I did so, and said he was nothing.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member said he would withdraw the word "thing"; but he went on to state that the member for Bunbury was nothing. The hon. member is not justified in making any statement when withdrawing a remark. He must withdraw and apologise.

Mr. George : Well, I withdraw and apologise. May I ask you to ask that hon. member to contain himself, for I am not going to allow him to talk to me and I not reply.

Mr. Speaker : If the hon. member seeks my protection he will get it.

Mr. George: Oh, I can protect myself.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Murray-Wellington has asked that he be not interrupted, and I am going to insist that he be not interrupted.

Mr. McDowall: What will the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) do ?

Mr. Speaker: Order !

Debate resumed.

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member will mind his own business. Now that we have got over that, and the House is getting

into a good temper again, I hope I will be permitted to continue my remarks. The Minister for Lands made mention about this side being hypocritical. But I think he went beyond what his calmer judgment would tell him was the proper thing to do, and I am glad he was not subjected to what I myself have been subjected to this evening. So far as the Minister for Works is concerned, I am free to confess there is a considerable amount of weight in the argument he put forward, namely that it is better to run the plates a considerable distance and give even a partial aid to a greater number of farmers than to give more complete aid to a few, as would be the case if the line were entirely completed for a short distance. But he did not take into account what I said. I listened with considerable attention to his reply. Perhaps the reason why the line was not ballasted was owing to the fact that there was not sufficient rolling stock to do it, or perhaps the distance over which the ballast had to be brought was too far. If it be that there is not sufficient rolling stock, and not the means to put on more, that, to my mind, would be a sufficient reply to the question of non-ballasting.

The Minister for Works: We really have four lines to work, being two ends of the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line, and the two ends of the Wickepin-Merredin line. Consequently an enormous amount of rolling stock would be required.

Mr. GEORGE : It simply comes down to what I said. If we have not sufficient rolling stock to be able to do all this at once, I doubt whether it would be wise to increase the plant to enable them to finish 733 miles in record time. No doubt the farmers should have the assistance, but some reason must be exercised or the State might be landed with a tremendous amount of plant, for which, after the completion of the lines, there would be very little use. That is one of the reasons why I stated it would be better if the policy could be carried out which I recommended seven or eight years ago, namely, of handing over the construction of the lines to the Working Railways. Then the Working Railways

could easily make provision, not only for the construction, but also to carry on the traffic as they completed the different sections. I intend to support the amended motion, because it is one which the Minister could easily accept. If he declines to do so, and reduces the question to one of party politics, as suggested by an hon. member who has just gone out of the Chamber, then of course, he will not accept it. But I think it is a matter which should be kept apart from party. As the member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper) said, it does not matter how black the Liberal Government may have been. What does it matter? The present Government came in on the cry that they were going to do better things. We desire that they should do better, and we desire to assist them in that laudable effort. We give them an opportunity of saying to the whole of the people of the State, "This is the voice, not merely of the Government, but of the Parliament of Western Australia." It is desired that if possible the rates charged on these lines shall be reduced. The Minister says he is convening a conference, and he leads us to believe that if the conference recommends a reduction it shall be carried out. I think, therefore the motion should be accepted as amended, and I want to see it voted on.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth): In spite of the pill, and a non-sugared pill at that, which the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) administered to this side of the House, I am able to rise to my feet to support the amendment and to express regret that so much heat should have been introduced on the simple amendment moved by the member for Claremont (Mr. Wisdom). No matter to which party we may belong, we are all here to do the best we can for the farmers and all others in the community. To my mind the debate, which up to the present time has been very heated at some stages, is hard to understand. True, the members on the Government side have taken exception to some remarks made by hon. members on this side; because they say that those hon. members are criticising the Government for not doing things which they them-

selves did not attempt. To my mind, as a comparatively new member of the House, two wrongs do not make a right, and because the previous Governments made mistakes or did not do all they might have done, is no reason why the present Government should excuse themselves for not doing all they possibly can for this industry. The member for Pingelly made an earnest appeal, and he can do so because, being a representative of a farming district, he knows perhaps better than I do some of the sufferings and hardships which the farmers of the State have had to endure and are still enduring. In a young industry like agriculture is in this State, in which so much has to be endured by the early settlers in clearing the land and making their homes, everything we can possibly do to assist them should be done.

The Minister for Works: But there must be a limit to the cost.

Mr. ALLEN: I am aware of that, but the amendment is such a simple one. I am rising to take exception to the heat that has been imparted into the debate and the personalities which have been indulged in, which I have expressed my regret for, and which the member for Bunbury has so often deprecated. If the Government can see their way clear to do anything to assist the struggling farmer by reducing these rates it is their duty to do it, and although something of a party nature has been introduced into this discussion, I hope the Minister will see his way clear to accept the amendment, which practically asks for what he has stated he intends to do by a conference of his officers, of which the member for York told us he had never heard until this evening, although the Minister for Works insinuated something to the contrary. I again express the hope that the Minister will agree to the amendment, and that if it is in any way possible to reduce the freights, and so assist our farmers, that will be done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson) on amendment: I am not prepared to accept the amendment. I have told the Chamber distinctly, as I told the hon. member for York by answer to a question which he asked

previously, that the Government would go into this matter with a view to revising the rates. If members on the Opposition side are not prepared to accept my assurance, I am not going to accept a motion dictating to me that which I have already said I am going to do. It is distinctly unfair and is a course which I have never known to be adopted in this Chamber previously, that when a Minister stated that a course desired by hon. members was being followed, they should then persist in the motion for the purpose of showing that the improvement on the conditions hitherto existing was the result of their action. For that reason I say it is distinctly unfair to propose the motion, and if hon. members opposite had desired to be fair they would have withdrawn the motion immediately I pointed out what I was doing; as a matter of fact, the motion need not have been moved in view of the statement I made in answer to a question that the Government were going into the matter of a revision of the rates.

Mr. Monger : Look up your answer of September last.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member knows I stated that the revision of the rates was under consideration. I just want to point out in connection with this rushing out of rails, that there seems to be an idea in the minds of hon. members that the only thing we have left undone is the ballasting of the lines, but the ballasting of the lines, while it may be the most costly, is after all not a big question in regard to the saving of time that we effect by running these rails out. In the first place we do not build the bridges or culverts unless they are of a small character. We run through a gully or creek and afterwards come back and build a bridge, while operating the line to assist the settlers. We do not put in the cattle stops but return and do that in due course. Station buildings and loops to sidings are not put in. We rush the rails through as fast as we can in order that we may carry produce at the earliest possible moment, and then, as soon as practicable afterwards, come back and pick up the work we have left undone.

So, when we speak of finishing the Wickpin-Merredin line, it is not only a question of ballasting the line; the station buildings are not built, the cattle stops, bridges, and culverts are not put in, and the station yards are not made. The consequence is that an enormous amount of work is left undone so that we may assist the settlers by getting the railway operating at the earliest possible moment. I claim that the policy we have adopted is the best policy for the largest number of settlers. The policy which hon. members opposite advocate is a policy of finishing a bit of line and handing it over. That policy is to assist a few at the expense of the many; our desire is to assist the many possibly at the expense of the few. It is just a reversal of the policy carried out by our predecessors. It is distinctly unfair to persevere with the motion after the promise I have made, and I am going to ask the House to vote against it.

Mr. TURVEY (Swan): I merely desire to say that, had it not been for the definite assurance given by the Minister, I would have supported the amendment moved by the member for Claremont, but I feel that it would be altogether wrong to expect the House to support the motion moved by the member for York, in view of the report that is now before hon. members by the Commissioner of Railways, in which he points out that even the existing rates to-day are not paying. Our railways are losing on the existing rates and yet the motion asks that on lines under construction the rates should be the same as those charged on the working railways. May I say that insofar as the amendment is concerned, I believe it would have received the hearty support of members on both sides, but I personally feel that it is absolutely unwarranted at the present juncture, in view of the assurance given by the Minister to-night, and previously, in reply to certain questions asked by the member for York.

Mr. Monger: Very different from his letter of September last.

Mr. TURVEY: It is all very well for hon. members, who for years allowed this rate to be imposed, to now urge upon the present Government to do that which they

themselves absolutely refused year in and year out to do, and yet I venture to say during the next few weeks each hon. member sitting opposite will have a good deal to say about the deficit. I would like to ask those hon. members whether they are prepared to assist the Government in raising revenue by the forms of taxation proposed. When we find that the Government propose to raise additional revenue by increased taxation, hon. members are up in arms immediately; yet to-night we find them urging the Government to reduce the rates upon the railways I have referred to. In his report for last year the Commissioner of Railways deplored the fact that the Government had even gone so far as to make that reduction of 1s. per ton on the spur lines. He pointed out then what it meant to the State, and here again to-night we have hon. members opposite urging the Government to make further reductions, in spite of the fact that the Commissioner has persistently pointed out that the present rates do not pay. I would ask hon. members who sit in Opposition to consider whether, if they expect other hon. members to support them in this motion, they will give their support to the Government when they propose to raise revenue to meet the cost of the construction of the various lines throughout the State; will they then support the Government in the other forms of taxation proposed?

Hon. J. Mitchell: Certainly not.

Mr. TURVEY: But hon. members are ready at all times to urge the Government to reduce the rates on agricultural lines, and would by inference in the House give the country to understand that they are the only persons who have been attentive to the wants and requirements of the farmers of Western Australia. I noted to-night it was quite evident that some hon. members were smarting under the whip of the Farmers and Settlers' Association. Some of them were spurred on by the fact that their seats are in jeopardy. That was their reason for trying to point out to the country that at the point of the bayonet they are demanding from the Government that these reductions shall be made. They knew before the motion was launched that

the Government had promised to do all they possibly could to assist the farmers in that respect, but notwithstanding that fact we have the hypocrisy to-night of this motion being brought before the House. I hope hon. members will accept the Minister's assurance, knowing as they do that not only the Minister for Works, but all his colleagues in Cabinet, have given an earnest of their desire to assist the settlers throughout Western Australia. Mr. MONGER (York): I have in the first place to congratulate the Minister for Lands upon his rather objectionable speech this evening. The Minister went off like a cracker. He reminded me very much of the attitude he adopted on the occasion of that famous water conference at Tammin, when he and the Minister for Works were present. He started the morning's proceedings in the same way but when evening came, and he found that he had very strong opposition, the attitude he adopted was very different. The Minister for Works made reference to the farmers wanting everything, and to the way in which they agreed in the first instance to take water from the scheme at any price, and then when the pipe line had been laid down attempted to repudiate their agreement. At that conference I have referred to, when the Minister for Works started in the morning, he told the farmers he would not budge one iota.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member can apply this discussion to the motion I will be quite satisfied.

Mr. MONGER: Am I not justified in replying to the remarks made by the Minister; he referred to water supply?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member just now made a remark about the Minister for Lands, but another hon. member would not be justified in rising to discuss that remark.

Mr. MONGER: Surely I am entitled to reply to the remarks of another hon. member.

Mr. SPEAKER: Such remarks must have a bearing on the motion. If the hon. member can satisfy me that the remarks he is making now bear on the motion I will be perfectly satisfied to allow him to continue.

Mr. MONGER: I think I can prove to you that they bear on the remarks made by the Minister for Works when he referred to the fact that the farmers agreed to pay a certain price for the water, and the moment the pipes were laid they refused to carry out the contract. I want to show to you and to the House that at that particular conference the Minister at 10 o'clock in the morning said that the price would be eight shillings per thousand and gallons, and that he would not budge one iota, yet before the day's proceedings were over the Minister agreed to a reduction of 25 per cent.

The Minister for Works: I did not.

Mr. SPEAKER: What has that to do with this motion?

Mr. MONGER: I am only replying to the Minister.

The Minister for Works: That was weeks afterwards.

Mr. MONGER: Coming closer to the subject, I am accused of having on the 5th September been aware of the intention of the Minister to have a conference with his engineers on this particular question. I want to say that I had no information whatever on the point until this evening, and to prove my statement I want to say that on the 5th September the Minister, in writing to another hon. member said—

Railway construction rates will apply on this line until it is taken over by the Commissioner.

That was on the 5th September. On the 14th October, in reply to a question asked by me, the Minister said—

The present rate is 4d. per ton per mile, but the question of revision is now under consideration.

Before I received that reply to my question, I had tabled the motion which has been the subject of discussion this evening, and until the Minister rose and informed us that a conference was about to take place between himself and his engineers, I was not aware of it. Even if I had been aware of it, the Minister's reply to that question that the rate is 4d. and that the question of revision was under consideration did not indicate whether the revision is going to have a

tendency towards lowering the rate or towards increasing it, and I think we are perfectly justified in asking him to-night to express in a somewhat more definite manner than he has already done what his intentions are and what he proposes to suggest to that conference, because we know that in reality it will be a one-man conference. Whatever the Minister suggests his engineers and advisers will naturally agree to. Under the circumstances I think that, with all the assurances, we on this side of the House are perfectly justified in giving the matter every possible publicity. In the course of the remarks which have fallen from the hon. members for Bunbury and Swan, hon. members on this side of the House have been accused of hypocrisy. The hon. member for Swan said that if it had not been for the assurance given by the Minister, he would have felt disposed to support the amendment of the hon. member for Claremont, and yet a few minutes afterwards he accused hon. members on this side of the House of being hypocritical. I think that statements of this kind coming from those hon. members are certainly not deserved by us. The hon. member for Bunbury received well-deserved castigation for his insulting remarks towards hon. members on this side of the House, and I will even go so far as to say that you, Sir, should occasionally hear the innuendoes that fall by way of interjection, *soto voce* from the hon. member for Bunbury. If you had done so, I do not think you would have called the hon. member for Murray-Wellington to order.

Mr. Lander: You rap a few out, too.

Mr. MONGER: That was no reason why the hon. member for Bunbury should interject as he did. I propose to ask hon. members to divide on this question, so that we shall ascertain the real feeling of those gentlemen who have posed as the farmers' friends—that term which was so sarcastically reviewed by the hon. member for Bunbury. Let us see how many of them are prepared to support those on this side of the House to carry a motion which can have but one object in view, and that is to render assistance to a highly deserving class and a class which

is doing more towards the development of Western Australia than any other section in the State.

Mr. Foley: That is a question.

Mr. MONGER: I hope therefore that we shall find a few independent spirits on the other side of the House who, even when the whip does crack, will be able to say that they will continue to give support and try to render assistance to a class whom they have always, or rather lately, championed.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE (Toodyay): I had no intention to address the House on this motion until having heard the speeches of some hon. members opposite, since which I feel it my duty to say that this is not a hypocritical movement. The motion is fully justified, and although we have the assurance of the Minister that there will be a conference, there is no assurance forthcoming that that conference will have for its object a reduction of the rates charged. The Minister merely assures us that there will be a conference. It is most difficult to understand the attack or the indignation of the Minister for Lands, because there is no member in this House who is more conversant with the position of the men on the land than the Minister for Lands. He knows full well that many of them have two years and running into the third year of rents due, and it is with the greatest difficulty that these people are able to carry on. Now, however, they have a crop which will return them some little for their last three years' labour, and here we seek only what is fair, and that is a reasonable rate for the carrying of their produce over these lines.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Why was it not fair when your own party were in power?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: The farmers were in a better position then. The Honorary Minister has only to think for one moment and he must realise that the farmers were much better off financially two years ago than they are now. How can the few extra pounds which the Government will receive from the higher rates materially affect the financial position of the State? It will very materially affect the position of those farmers from whom it will be

extracted. It is a serious matter for them; it is a big sum for them, but for the State it is a small sum. I feel sure that hon. members opposite must realise that they should not take this motion in the light of an attack on the present Administration. It is nothing of the kind. It is a matter on which we feel it our bounden duty to make clear the fact that this is an unjust demand on the farming community. I hope sincerely that the Minister will go further with his assurance, and say that he sees fit to induce the conference to bring about a reduction. The Minister ought not merely to assure the House that a conference will be held; we know what conferences are. We have had them from time to time; we remember especially the Tammin conference. There is likely to be little derived from the forthcoming conference, knowing as we do from repeated experience what sympathy is extended by the permanent officers in their conferences with the Minister. I contend that the circumstances justify the motion, and I feel sure that the Ministers, if they speak honestly, must admit that these people are entitled to all the consideration that can be given to them in the present circumstances. If there is hypocrisy anywhere, it is on the Government side.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora): After hearing the many speeches on this question I would suggest that the mover should withdraw the motion. I do so for this reason—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is discussing the amendment.

Mr. FOLEY: If the motion were withdrawn there would be no need for the amendment, and rather than see the amendment carried I think it would be better to have no motion at all on the record of proceedings, because the Minister, in his reply to the mover of the amendment, pointed out clearly his intention to settle this question once for all by placing it in the hands of men who understand it, and to settle it not with consideration to party or politics, but from the point of view of the finances of the State. As one who has no political connection whatever with the farming in-

terests. I consider that each and every member in this Chamber has at heart the interests of any man who is opening up this country whether in farming, mining, or any other form of industry. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat pointed out that the last two seasons have worked great hardship on the men who are struggling on the land, but the point of difference which I have never heard discussed is this: when we are considering these rates we are not considering solely those men who are opening up the land at the present time, but men who in many instances are in a thriving position and who have attained that position through much assistance from various Governments irrespective of whether they were Labour or anti-Labour Governments. The hon. member for Toodyay said it was not good enough for him that the conference should argue the question from the point of view of its effect on the State as a whole, and I take it that he wants it to be a win, tie, or wrangle arrangement. When the conference meets the hon. member desires that the sole intention will be, not to regulate the freights, but to consider how far they can be reduced. The Minister has given his assurance that the farmers and the country generally will be considered to the extent that the men who are capable of discussing this question will deal with it, and when the report is available hon. members will then have a better idea how to vote if a vote is called for. I do not doubt the honesty of hon. members who have spoken regarding the conference—I did not know until to-night that this conference was to take place—but when the Minister told the House that the rates would be considered I think that after the various promises made in the past and the fact that the results of those promises are manifest to the House, hon. members should have accepted that assurance. The hon. member for Toodyay stated that the last two seasons had done much to militate against the success of the farmers, but it is surprising that not long since, when the same hon. gentleman was discussing the farmers—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. FOLEY: If I am out of order I will not touch upon that phase of the question, but I want to say, as a member who does not represent a farming constituency at all, that I have the benefit of this State at heart. There is no need either for the motion or the amendment.

Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie): The hon. member for York made the threat a little while ago that his object in enlightening the House on this question was to let the farmers see who took an interest in them and who were anxious to assist them. I would not have risen on this question at all but for that threat, which was a very unfair remark to make in a debate of this kind. As the question stands at the present time we cannot absolutely vote for this motion. It would be like holding a pistol at the head of the Minister for Works if we carried a motion of this description, as the Minister distinctly stated that the question of these rates was under review. He has distinctly stated this evening that he is having a conference to deal with them. Some hon. members want to go further and say he must do these things, thus placing the Minister in an undignified position. It is absurd to say that because we vote against the motion we are voting against the interests of the farmer. That is all I desire to emphasise, as it is an unreasonable position to place us in, and the farmers need not imagine we are against them because we cannot support a motion which is unfair and places a Minister of the Crown in an undignified position.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): In a few words I would like to point out that the hon. member for York (Mr. Monger) has been a member of this Chamber for many years, but this is the first time he has seen the necessity, in connection with railways under construction, of reducing the rate to the farmers. During all the years he has sat in this Chamber he has never seen the necessity for it previously. Even his colleague, the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) never saw any necessity for it.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Yes, always.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The hon. member says "yes, always," yet all the time he was taking this money from the farmer. I want to point out that no Government in Western Australia ever did more for the farmers than the present Government have done.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Said more.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): If anything at all, we have done too much, and I am very much surprised that at the present juncture a motion of this kind should be brought up in this Chamber.

Mr. Monger: Oh!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): It is all very well for the hon. member to say "Oh"; he should have said it a long time ago. If he thought the rates charged on new railways during construction were too high, then it was his duty to bring it before Parliament. Did he do so? The rates charged now are no different from what they have been since Western Australia has been building railways; if anything they are less. So far as the farmers are concerned the charges have been less every time, so far as the present Government have been concerned, but hon. members opposite are anxious to see the present Government in financial difficulties if they can manage it. We have done more for the farmers than ever any hon. member opposite has done. If I had my way I would not agree to reduce these rates at all. I say the system which has been followed by previous Governments, and the charges which have been made by previous Governments, have been maintained so far as the present Government are concerned.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Would you apply that to fertiliser?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): I would apply it so far as new railways are concerned. It is not so very long ago since hon. members opposite found it necessary to charge increased rates on new railways handed over to the department. Last year the present Government had to make a reduction to the extent of £20,000.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That was in terminal charges, largely paid by timber companies and not by the farmers at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): Take the new railway from Northam to Dowerin, and take the railway from Katanning to Kojonup. Were they timber railways or farming railways? So far as this motion is concerned, it has been brought about with one special object, because the farmers themselves have been compelled now to band themselves together to protect their interests from those who have been supposed to represent them in this House for so many years. They have banded themselves together to get rid of that yoke which has been upon them for so long. One gentleman said it was because a certain party was not sincere. Everything that it has been possible to do for the farmers has been done by the present Government.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies): The remarks of the hon. member for York (Mr. Monger) when speaking to the amendment gave his own case away. I refer to the hon. member's remark that he intended to call for a division to show the farmers who were their friends and who were opposed to them. I cannot help having formed the opinion that this was more the hon. member's object than to assist the farmers. I intend to oppose the motion after having heard the explanation given by the Minister for Works, showing that the whole resources of the Public Works Department have been strained by endeavouring to bring the rails out into these farming districts and putting these facilities there, with the result that the farmers are in an infinitely better position this year than they were on previous occasions, and are better off than possibly they ever hoped to be under the administration of our friends who are now on the Opposition benches. This motion has been submitted to-night for electioneering purposes, and, therefore, I intend to oppose it, as the Minister for Works is doing all that can reasonably be expected to be done in the interests of the farmers of this State.

Amendment put and passed.

Question, as amended, put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	10
Noes	23
				—
Majority against				13
				—

AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Monger
Mr. George	Mr. Moore
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. A. E. Plesse
Mr. Male	Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Wisdom
	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lander
Mr. Bath	Mr. Lewis
Mr. Bolton	Mr. McDonald
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Collier	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Foley	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Gill	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Green	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Heltmann
Mr. Johnson	(Teller)

Question as amended, thus negatived.

BILL—WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Legislative Council with an amendment.

BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Legislative Council received, notifying that the amendment made by the Assembly had been agreed to.

MOTION—HOSPITAL FOR INSANE, CLAREMONT, TO INQUIRE.

Mr. GILL (Leederville) moved—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the management of the Hospital for Insane and Inebriates at Claremont.

He said: I do not intend to say a great deal in commending this motion to the

House, and it is not my intention to make any rash statements against the administration of the department with which the motion deals. During the past few months there have been made some serious charges made in regard to this institution. I have had them made to me by different persons, and they have been made even within the last day or two. They bear somewhat seriously on the administration of the institution, and for that reason I have taken this action in order to clear up the matter. I hesitated for some time to take action, realising, as I did, the difficulty there would be in proving statements made regarding an institution of this kind. I know often times tittle tattle is heard about the streets and persons are prepared to make charges, but when it comes to an investigation, these persons are found wanting. Realising that, I hesitated for some time before moving, but the people to whom I have alluded have persisted in their statements and particularly so in regard to the unnecessary expenditure now being incurred in connection with the employment of attendants at that institution, and seeing that they have persisted in repeating them, and declaring that they were prepared to come forward and substantiate what they stated, I considered it my duty to move as I have done with the idea of clearing up the atmosphere.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Is that the only point?

Mr. GILL: That is one point, and it is sufficient, I think, to warrant me in asking the House to appoint a select committee. It has been stated that there has been unnecessary expenditure during the last three or four months in the employment of attendants, and that this expenditure has run into some £1,500. The chief point that concerns me and concerns those who have made the charges—and I have no hesitation in saying that the people who have made the charges are attendants employed at the institution—

Hon. J. Mitchell: Could not the Minister make the inquiry without appointing a committee?

Mr. GILL : I prefer that there should be an independent inquiry into the matter, and perhaps there are other matters also that will bear an investigation. However, the point that has been stressed to me is that most of the unnecessary expenditure has been brought about within the past few months. It may seem strange that this charge should be made by some of the attendants themselves, and we would not expect such a thing from those who are working there. At the beginning of July of this year, the Government decided to adopt the eight hours principle at that institution. It was well known that the head of the establishment was strongly opposed to its introduction, and it has been represented to me that with the object of bringing the system into disrepute and disfavour, the superintendent has overloaded the place with attendants to the extent of ten more than are required to the work. If the men who are prepared to point out that and prove that the head of the institution has been employing that number of men more than are necessary, I think those who have supplied this information should be commended.

Hon. J. Mitchell : They should go to the Minister and not to you.

Mr. GILL : They have come to me, at any rate. I cannot prove whether or not these statements are true, but they are sufficiently serious to warrant an inquiry being held. It has been suggested to me, not by the Minister, but by others that we should have a departmental inquiry, but I object to such a method of investigation. To my way of thinking, it is only natural where we have public servants as heads of departments, conducting an inquiry, that they will be sympathetic towards each other, and therefore by a departmental inquiry it would not be possible to get at the true position in the same way as we would by means of a select committee. It has been pointed out to me in connection with the overlapping that is going on at that institution that one shift comes along at 7 o'clock in the morning and works until 4. Another shift comes along at 12.30, and goes on until 9. A third shift comes

along at 3 and works until 11; so that at one period of the day there are the whole three shifts at work.

Mr. George: That is a reflection on the management.

Mr. GILL : It is if the statement is correct. It has also been pointed out that before the introduction of the eight hours system, the number of men employed in the wards on Sunday never exceeded six, and sometimes there were five, but at the present time there is never less than nine and oftentimes eleven. If such is the case, that matter should be investigated. Altogether the statements are sufficiently serious to warrant an inquiry being held, and as I have already stated, I prefer that the inquiry should be by members, who will do what I believe to be justice to all parties concerned. If these statements are correct, they ought to be righted, and if they are incorrect the management should be exonerated. These statements have not been made to me alone, they have been made to other hon. members.

Mr. George: It is not the easiest matter to get superintendents for such institutions.

Mr. GILL: I do not think that is a matter which should come into the question.

Mr. George: A superintendent of such an institution should be judged by his peers, those who know the work.

Mr. GILL: We do not require an expert in lunacy to determine whether the administration at the institution in the respects I have indicated is right or not. What we want to find out is whether the statements are correct or not, and whether this unnecessary expenditure has been incurred since the introduction of the eight-hours principle. Naturally, there must be an increase in the expenditure owing to the fact that an additional number of attendants is required in connection with the introduction of the eight-hours system, but the statement has been made that there has been spent £1,500 unnecessarily, and I desire to clear that up. There are other matters which will also be inquired into if the committee is appointed; for instance, expenditure has been increased in the en-

gineering division. There may be reasons for that, and it will be good to investigate that matter as well. It will be noticed that I also include in the motion the inebriates' ward. In connection with that, we have had some questions asked in the House, and there is no doubt that there is room for improvement in regard to the treatment of the persons in that branch of the institution. The statements which have been made are that persons who are admitted as inebriates are often allowed to spend a day in the city, attend to their business and do as they please and return to the institution at night. Very often they go down there late at night and there is a cab at the station to meet them. If that state of affairs is correct, it should not be permitted to continue.

Mr. George: It is a sort of boarding house.

Mr. GILL: It is better than a boarding house, because cabs do not meet boarders at a railway station. There were many inmates of that ward who desired to have a look at the show, but they were refused permission, yet others are allowed day after day to go to town, transact their business and go home when they please, and be met at the station by a cab.

Mr. Allen: That is part of the treatment they pay for.

Mr. GILL: If that is so, it is time we altered it. I do not know what the charges are, I understand that these people pay £1 a week. There are many other statements made, but I have no intention of taking up much more of the time of the House. What I have said ought to be sufficient to show that the management is not all that could be desired, and it is time some inquiry was made. I do not know whether the Government will oppose this motion or not. I am convinced, however, that there is sufficient to warrant an investigation of some kind in connection with this institution, and I hope the Government will agree to the appointment of a select committee, so that the matter may be cleared up. I am particularly anxious to get rid of those by whom I have been pestered a good deal during the last few months, owing to a desire on their part to have

an investigation. I have hesitated to ask for an investigation, or to move in that direction, owing to the difficulties which, I realised, presented themselves. However, that is the case so far as I am concerned. There are many smaller details in connection with this matter which require investigation if the committee is appointed, and I hope it will be appointed, for the purpose of going into the whole question in connection with the whole management of the institution.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora): I am glad that the hon. member who moved the motion did not do as is done so frequently, namely, take one side or the other on a question which he is endeavouring to have investigated by a select committee. The hon. member has taken a fair view of it and stated that certain assertions have been made against the management, and that some of these assertions, he considers, are backed up by strong argument, while, perhaps, there is not such good foundation for others. He wishes a committee to be appointed, and he wishes it to have the fullest scope, and that when the committee has arrived at a decision it shall give to the House the benefit of the knowledge it has gained. Reference has been made to the eight hours system in the institution. As one who believes in that system, I do not think that the system should cost any more than any other from a financial point of view. I do not see why a very much greater number of men should be called upon to do the work. I do not see also that the money, if it is being wasted, as the hon. member has been led to think it has in regard to the inebriates department, should be wasted. We all know that when the Bill was going through the Chamber the Attorney General, in introducing it, had one specific idea in his mind, namely, that of endeavouring to do some good by attempting to cure the disease of drink. As one not narrow-minded on that question, I say each and every member who supported that measure was earnest in his desire that the institution should do something towards the elimination of that disease; but when we find statements made that

men are in there at the will of the Government and of the department, I say it is up to this Chamber, if it is at all possible, to see that the taxpayer who pays his money without being affected by the disease, to see that his money is not wasted in the direction of providing what is practically a home for men for whom it is almost impossible, through that Act, to do any good in regard to the disease they are suffering from. If the committee gets to work and discovers all it is possible to find out in regard to that question, I do not think that the time and money expended by the committee will have been wasted. Reverting to the eight hours system, I know personally that the head of that institution is not favourable, I do not know whether to the eight hours system, but I am positively certain that that gentleman is not in favour of unionism. This is evidenced by the fact that when a union was formed, and some of the employees of that institution wished to hold a meeting, and when, to allow the employees to know that the meeting was taking place, a notice was posted in the institution—which is the usage adopted in every institution where there is unionism—that notice was torn down and the man who put it up was carpentered and told that there was to be none of that business in that institution.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Hear, hear.

Mr. FOLEY: The hon. member does not know what unionism is. It is only when unionism is banded together against helpless persons who cannot assist themselves, that the hon. member understands it. Whenever that phase of the question is brought forward we find there are some who stick up for unionism. When there is, unionism amongst persons otherwise not able to help themselves, such as the unionism in this institution, when the servants of the institution find that they are not working to the best advantage, that the labour they are selling to the Government is not being sold under the best conditions, it is not a question, as the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) will say, of sacking the men who made the complaint. They should rather be lauded to the skies if they are honest

enough to say that by their employment, once they have had an opportunity of saying what the conditions of sale of their labour shall be, they are willing and anxious to give a fair day's work for a fair day's wage. If there were more servants desirous of giving to the State a fair day's work for a fair day's wage there would not be much criticism, nor such a deficit as there is at the present time, and the day labour system right throughout the State would be having a fairer go than it is getting at the present time. If this select committee can only bring out the fact that a reduced amount of expenditure in the employment of employees in the hospital for the insane and inebriates can be brought about, the money will not have been wasted, and it will be an incentive to other members of the House to endeavour to make reductions in the expenditure in other industries and institutions under Government control.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): The member who moved this resolution made out a very weak case indeed. There is one point to which I object very strongly, namely the statement that the management deliberately set to work to show that the eight hours system would be too costly, and employed an unnecessary number of men, merely to increase the expenditure. I think that is a very serious statement to make and a reflection on the Minister.

Mr. Dwyer: He wants an investigation.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There is no case for a select committee, although there may be some case for Ministerial inquiry. The hon. member should have gone to the Minister and told him what he had heard. If the people at the asylum are satisfied that wrong is being done they should have gone to the Minister. The men who fail in their duty to their Minister are the men who usually suffer and not the men who are doing the duty for which they are engaged. It seems an extraordinary thing that this matter should be brought up in this House. We are asked to have a select committee because £1,500 a year is being paid away in wages to men whose services are un-

necessary. May I ask the Honorary Minister if he thinks that is a justification for a select committee? It would be ridiculous to appoint a select committee to inquire into a small expenditure of this kind.

Mr. Dwyer: Fifteen hundred pounds is a fair amount.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, but the Minister is responsible. Will the House say that the Minister is not capable of dealing with this simple matter? Having listened to the mover of the motion, will members say that it is a matter which justifies Parliamentary intervention at all?

Mr. Foley: You say that the Minister is capable of nothing.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: He is capable of something.

Mr. Dwyer: Capable of managing a lunatic asylum.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Some hon. members are qualified for that place. No case has been made out for the select committee, and I hope the Minister will oppose the motion. I realise that whenever men are employed, workmen can take to some member a complaint against their employer or their immediate chief. The very slightest matter is often sufficient excuse for a man to go to a member and ask for a select committee to inquire. But that is not sufficient justification for that hon. member to move in this House. So far as the inebriates are concerned it would be well if hon. members gave the proposal of the Attorney General a chance. Let us see what the authorities can do. They have done magnificent work up to the present, and there is no reason at all why a man who places himself under the care of officers of the Government should be treated as a prisoner. The officers are doing a grand work. Therefore, let the system alone, and let the men who are reforming have the greatest possible chance.

Mr. Gill: Where is the reform when they are in town all day?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There may be some reform. A man places himself under the control of the officers and asks to be

allowed to go to town in the day. He comes back sober in the evening—

Mr. Dwyer: Then why does he take a cab?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Why does the Honorary Minister have a car to take him home? Is it because he is tight? I believe that great good is being done at this institution. A man who places himself in the hands of the authorities cannot give up his business unless the authorities think it necessary. If they have him there for a month or six weeks and then think it is possible to allow him to go to town on business, why should he not be allowed to go out? I say that we should treat the patients as well as we can. The great object is to cure them of the drink habit.

The Minister for Lands: But we ought to get enough from them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That is a Ministerial matter. Ministers are quite capable of charging two guineas a week without appointing a select committee.

The Minister for Lands: If the Minister had to concern himself with the amount to be charged as board he would never get through his business.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I believe a Liberal Minister could. I do not know about Labour Ministers, but I believe that the two Honorary Ministers could very well go into this matter.

Mr. Gill: They would send an officer to make inquiries and he would come back and say that everything in the garden was lovely.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I know the hon. member who moved the motion thinks it is necessary to appoint a select committee, but the case he made out is altogether insufficient. If Ministers themselves think they are incapable of dealing with such a matter as the number of servants to be employed, then I quite agree with the hon. member that we must have Parliamentary intervention. I merely rose to say that I think the hon. member will do well to give the inebriates a chance. When the Attorney General placed that Act on the Statute book he did a good work for Western Australia, and I think it would be a pity if members of Parliament interfered and

destroyed the good work that is now being done. The management must be supported. If we are to have discipline in the service we cannot have these constant pinpricks against the men in control. I hope Ministers will resist the motion for a select committee, inquire into the matter themselves, and then make a frank statement to the House. If there is anything behind the statement that has been made we can go into that, but the hon. member who brought forward the motion is responsible. He has merely given us a statement which he says justifies his action, and he cannot now say that there is something else which he wishes to have inquired into. Whatever is done I hope discipline will be observed, and that the good work being done will not be placed in jeopardy by undue interference. More than once this question has been referred to and I think it is to be regretted. I hope that Ministers will make inquiries and submit a statement to the House, and that when that statement is made it will satisfy hon. members and that for the time being at least they will refrain from criticism. It is a departure that I approve of entirely, and I believe the public generally approve of the good work that is being done.

Mr. Foley: You would not stick up for the management right or wrong, would you?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I would not stick up for the Minister if I believed he was wrong, but I believe the Minister is capable of dealing with everything brought forward by the hon. member tonight, and we expect him to do that. At any rate we are not going to stultify ourselves by agreeing that the hon. member was justified in bringing the matter forward. The hon. member has the Minister to go to and if the Minister has not time to go into the matter he is not fit to be Minister. I think he has the necessary time. If the worst that can be said of this institution has been said then there is very little to complain of. There may be waste in the Claremont asylum. If we want to preserve the interests of the people and to reduce expendi-

ture, there are heaps of opportunities very much better than this case presents. However, I merely enter my protest against the motion, and as I said, I hope that the discussion will be adjourned, and that when the matter comes on again the Minister will make a frank and reasonable statement, and will tell the hon. member he agrees with me that a select committee should not be appointed.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister) debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 23rd October, 1913.

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

PAPERS—SEED POTATOES, IMPORTATION.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) moved—

That there be laid on the Table of the House all the papers in connection with the experiment of importing seed potatoes from England, including—
(1) *the cost of the seed; (2) the money derived from disposal of same; (3) the results of the experiment.*

He said: In moving the motion standing in my name, I desire to call attention to the fact that from what we can hear there have been very large sums of money expended in introducing new potatoes into the State, and all with a very good object; but from the man in the street