

law and the lawyers are kept at the expense of the producer and the worker. If the laws of the land contained more stops so that they would not bear the double interpretation which our lawyer friends are able to discover and on which they advise clients to fight to a finish, it would be better for the State. I was delighted to read in the Press the references made in another place by the member for East Perth (Mr. Simons) to the late Lord Forrest. I endorse every word he said in that regard. It is a standing disgrace to this city and to the whole of Western Australia that no monument has yet been erected to the memory of that great statesman. I hope the Government will see that there is inserted in the State reader or the Swan Reader as it is called, some biography or outline of Lord Forrest's life so that the rising generation in this State at any rate may be able to read of the great work which that statesman did for us and emulate him if they can. I hope that the people of the State will back up the suggestion made by the member of East Perth and see that a memorial is erected without further delay. I regret that Ministers and members of Parliament generally have not taken an opportunity to see more of Western Australia. That is one of the reasons for our bad legislation. The people governing this country and making laws for it do not know the country they are governing or the conditions under which many of the people have to live. As it was put to me recently, the difference between a politician and a statesman is that the politician looks forward to the next general election and the statesman to the next generation. I hope members of Parliament and in particular Ministers will take a broader view in future and look forward to the next generation instead of to the next general election.

On motion by Hon. J. W. Hickey debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.2 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 30th August, 1921.

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

QUESTION—LUNACY DEPARTMENT.

Proposed Royal Commission.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, With reference to his announcement that a Royal Commission is to be appointed to inquire into the care of the insane, their treatment, and the accommodation provided for them by the State, will the Government extend the scope of the proposed Royal Commission to cover the proposals set forth in the resolution carried by the annual conference of the Primary Producers' Association, namely—(a) The Royal Commission to consist of three independent persons appointed to conduct a searching inquiry into the whole administration of the Lunacy Department; (b) To obtain reforms in the present obsolete lunacy legislation for the purpose of—(i.) adequately protecting the liberty of the subject and guarding against abuses; (ii.) ensuring to all patients the right to an examination by an independent legal tribunal; (iii.) appointing a non-medical board of control in substitution for the Inspector General, and generally giving effect to the recommendations of the select committee? 2, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: The question of the appointment of a Royal Commission is now being considered by Cabinet.

QUESTION—MAGISTRACY, BROOME, APPOINTMENT.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Premier: 1, Has the vacant magisterial position at Broome been considered? 2, Has any appointment been made? 3, If not, when is the appointment likely to be made?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The matter is now being dealt with. 3, Answered by No. 2.

QUESTION—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT, RAILWAY FACILITIES.

Mr. HICKMOTT asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to carry out the Railway Advisory Board's

recommendation to give the eighteen returned soldiers settled on the estate purchased from Mr. Michael Brown facilities to get their produce to market? 2, Is any assistance to be given these men in the matter of road clearing and bridges? 3, If so, when will the work be started?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Railway Advisory Board made no special recommendation regarding the soldiers on Noombling estate. Its report mentioned that they would, with other settlers, be served by the proposed extension from Dwarda. 2, Grants of £212 for roads and £600 for bridges have been approved. 3, The Wandering Road Board has been asked to provide labour for the roads, but has not yet replied. Tenders for the erection of the bridges are being called in this week's "Gazette."

QUESTION—COURTESIES TO FEDERAL VISITORS.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: 1, Did he see the complaint made by Mr. J. M. Fowler, M.H.R., in the "West Australian" newspaper dated 24th August accusing the Government of this State of "lack of courtesy"? 2, If so, will he make arrangements that when Mr. J. M. Fowler, M.H.R., condescends to visit this State on any future occasion there shall be extended to him such a welcome as the dignity of his office demands?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Visitors to this State will always be treated with that consideration which attendant circumstances justify.

QUESTION—ROAD BOARD SUBSIDIES.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it intended to revert to the system of paying subsidies to road boards on the pre-war basis? 2, If not, will he kindly outline the Government's policy in regard to such subsidies for the current year?

The PREMIER, for the Minister for Works, replied: 1, No. 2, The policy is to do the best that is possible with the limited funds at our disposal.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Twelfth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous sitting.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [4.39]: I desire to associate myself with the congratulations that have been extended to those members of this Chamber who have been re-elected, and also to new members on their election as representatives of the State. We have heard many speeches from new members on both sides of the House, and I think those speeches show that the new members come

here with an earnest desire to help Western Australia along and to promote the interests of her people. I am afraid, however, that many of the reforms which are advocated here are not to be attained as quickly as many of us would desire—this being due to our somewhat cumbersome system of parliamentary government. The member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) has been congratulated on the unique position which she occupies as the first lady member of an Australian Legislature. I am sure that the unfortunate bachelors in this Chamber join in the chorus of congratulation which has been bestowed upon the lady. Nevertheless, I feel bound to inform her and the prospective lady politicians whom one meets all over the country since the election of the latest member for West Perth, that these congratulations do not indicate on our part, or at all events not on my part, any desire to give up to a lady a seat of greater importance than that in a tramcar. The Governor's Speech records the practical and useful work which has been performed by the Government, and also forecasts a number of Bills which will be presented to the House, and which I shall endeavour to help to mould into practical and useful legislation. I am very glad indeed that the Government have decided to continue the wheat pool for another year. This decision, particularly when compared with the action of the Tory Governments in New South Wales and Victoria, shows that we here have the right kind of National Government. In the other States we find a combination between Labour Party and Country Party to attain the objects which in this State are readily granted by a National Government. The reason for that is that the Government of Western Australia are not under the domination of big business in the way which, I believe, the Lawson Government of Victoria are. Moreover, the Barwell Government in South Australia are dominated by big business interests and by the Tory sections of the community. In view of the attitude Mr. Lawson's Government have taken with regard to the wheat pool, I hope they will not be returned at the impending general election. Our Minister for Agriculture, who is new to the post, has a splendid opportunity to make a name for himself in administering the wheat pool of Western Australia for another year. The difficulties involved in running such a pool will probably be smaller here than in the Eastern States, owing to the many thousands of miles that isolate us from the wheat growing districts of Eastern Australia. Our wheat growers look to the Minister for Agriculture to conserve their interests, and to see that they receive a good price for their produce. In a year's time or so it will be interesting to compare our Minister's activities with those operating in the Eastern States, where there is no wheat pool. At any rate, we rely upon his business acumen and agricultural knowledge to make a success of the pool that is to be run in this State. We all know that if the farmer gets a good price for his produce

prosperity will be radiated throughout the whole of the State, the cities and towns benefiting equally with the country, and perhaps even to a greater degree, in the good times which always follow a good price for wheat. The financing of the pool will probably be a matter of some difficulty to the Government. It is undoubtedly a big task, but I believe that our Government are quite equal to it. I hope they feel that they have the whole of this House and the whole country behind them in their desire to run an equitable wheat pool for another year in the interests of Western Australian producers. Politics in this State are especially interesting at this juncture, having regard to the fact that for the first time we have the Country Party in politics sharing in the administration of the country with equal numbers and equal responsibility as compared with any other party. The progress of the Country Party movement throughout Australia during the last few years has been most remarkable, and I am sure that both the friends and the opponents of the Country Party will scrutinise and watch developments in the Coalition Government which has been formed in Western Australia. If Sir James Mitchell's administration proves successful, certainly that will be half a Country Party success. If, on the other hand, the contrary should be the case—which I do not for a moment anticipate—then the responsibility will be equally a Country Party responsibility. I consider that the three Ministers representing the Country Party in the Mitchell Government are to be congratulated on the opportunity which is afforded them of helping to make Australian history. If during the next three years they give us wise legislation and economical administration, then—though I do not wish in any way to frighten the Nationalist section of the Coalition—the result must be a great increase in the power and prestige of the Country Party throughout the Commonwealth, and not improbably a demand in this State for a straight out Country Party Government. Three weeks ago the Primary Producers' Conference passed a resolution condemning former Governments for extravagance. With the present Government, of course, the Country Party have equal responsibility, and we trust that nothing of the sort will be necessary in future. The Government and members of Parliament are entering on their work of the next three years under very difficult conditions. We have a severe financial stringency, industrial unrest, and prevailing low prices of produce, together with the high cost of rails and other imports. These facts combined mean that this Parliament is facing difficult times and has a great deal to overcome in its work of the next three years. However, the Premier should be pleased at the good feeling and desire to assist him which have been manifested in the speeches from both sides of the House, more particularly in the helpful speech of the Leader of the Opposition. I notice that after giving

these assurances of assistance, members generally have proceeded to criticise the Government in their administration and policy. Following on the same lines, I and other members of the Country Party are giving general support to the Government in both their policy and their administration, but we reserve the right to express our opinions freely, fearlessly and honestly. I regret that the Leader of the Opposition should have stressed the point of the alleged domination of the Country Party by some outside junta. The prestige of Parliament is to some extent lowered by the constant desire of various parties to prove that other parties are under the domination of outside juntas. Personally I have not found that to be the case since I have been in the House. The Australian people understand the general policy of the respective parties pretty well. They know at election time what they are voting on, and that members of the Country Party and of the Labour Party are free to vote as they like, except on certain questions constituting prominent planks in the respective platforms. The sooner the people of Western Australia realise that their Parliamentarians are free agents except in that respect and in respect of promises made on the hustings, the better for all concerned. I notice that last year the actual revenue of the State was £6,789,565 as against the estimate of £6,606,404. In other words the Treasurer received £183,161 more than he estimated when introducing his Budget. It speaks volumes for the resources of Western Australia that the people of this only partially developed country should be able to meet taxation to the extent of paying a revenue to the Government,—including certain payment for services rendered,—to the tune of £17 14s. per head of the population. The 15 per cent. super tax imposed last session bore good fruit, since we find that the estimated revenue from taxation was £805,000, whilst the Treasurer actually received £955,385, or an excess of £150,385 over the estimate. It is interesting to note that from land tax the Treasurer received £57,791 as against his estimate of £50,000, being an increase of £7,791 above the estimate. Income tax also showed a satisfactory increase, the estimate having been £275,000, whereas the Treasurer actually received £334,320, or an increase of £59,320 above the estimate. When we turn to the expenditure side of the ledger, the increases are even more apparent. The actual expenditure of the State was £7,474,387 as against the estimate of £7,005,817. In other words, the Government spent during the last financial year £468,570 more than was originally estimated. The Premier has pointed out that the Arbitration Court's awards occasioned an extra expenditure of £120,000. On examining the figures I find that practically every avenue of governmental expenditure has spent more than was expected, the only two exceptions being the Joint House Committee accounts which you, Sir, control, and the Agricultural Depart-

ment. When we hear of the extravagance of members of Parliament, it is interesting to note that the expenditure at Parliament House, together with that of the Agricultural Department, have alone been kept within the estimate. I congratulate you, Sir, on attaining that result. Also I am pleased that your experience in the matter has been more satisfactory than that of Mr. Barter. It seems a strange irony of fate that the one Minister whose department was so controlled that the expenditure proved to be less than the estimate should have had his head chopped off, whilst attaining that result. It is on the expenditure side of the ledger that the weakness of the control over the public accounts of Western Australia is evidenced, not only by this, but by successive Governments. I find that with all Government departments the excessing of expenditure under various votes has become something more than a habit, and is now really a disease. There has grown up in Western Australia a lax system under which the officials exceed the votes as a matter of course.

The Premier: The Arbitration Court's awards were responsible for the greater part of the excess.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes, I have allowed for that. But during the past 10 years a system has grown up under which what money is required is spent by the officials as a matter of course, whether passed by this House or not. The excess expenditure is then approved by Ministers as a more or less formal matter, and this House has condoned the extra expenditure almost without criticism.

The Premier: No, all that is quite wrong.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am not blaming the Ministers alone. But it appears to me that the system I describe has sprung up, since the excessing of votes extends over practically every department, and this House gets no explanation. I hope Parliament will let Ministers understand that when amounts authorised by this House are exceeded, we shall require an explanation. Personally, I would not object even to a summer session of Parliament for the purpose of affording opportunity for Ministers to bring along to the House for consideration any excess which may be required. If the Government did this they would get the State back to a proper system of close Parliamentary control of the finances. We might even provide that, except in an emergency, it would be illegal to exceed the votes authorised by Parliament. If this were done, greater responsibility could properly be put on this House, instead of being thrown on the Government or the officials. If the Country Party stands for anything, it stands for economy in administration. Although I am sure members on these benches have an admiration for the Treasurer, and a desire to support the Government, I am equally sure that we stand right behind the ultimatum which the Deputy Leader of the Country Party delivered to the Government a few days ago when he said that unless the Gov-

ernment showed determined and persistent efforts to make the expenditure and revenue balance, the Country Party might have to seriously consider its position. Recently we had a census taken throughout Australia. The most remarkable feature disclosed by that census was the shocking drift, during the past 10 years, of population towards the metropolitan areas of the various States. Sydney 10 years ago had a population of 629,503 persons. That number has now increased to 897,640, or an increase of 268,037. Melbourne, 10 years ago, had a population of 588,971. To-day its population is 765,846, or an increase of 176,875. Brisbane, 10 years ago, had a population of 139,408, whereas to-day its people number 209,699, or an increase of 70,291. Adelaide, 10 years ago, had a population of 189,646. To-day its population numbers 255,318, or an increase of 65,672. Perth, 10 years ago, had a population of 106,792. To-day it is 155,129, or an increase of 48,337. Hobart, 10 years ago, had a population of 39,937. To-day the figures are 52,385, or an increase of 12,448 persons. At the present time the population of Australia is 5,426,008 people, of whom 2,336,017 live in the six capital cities. In other words, we have 43.05 per cent. of the population of Australia in the six capital cities. In addition to this the provincial centres, such as Ballarat, Townsville and other outside towns there is a total population of 1,035,886 persons, making a total of the town population of 3,394,803 persons, or 62 per cent. of the total population, as against a rural and migratory population of 2,054,105, or 38 per cent. of the population of the Commonwealth. Ten years ago there were only 1,694,329 persons in the cities against a rural population of 1,868,128 persons, with 865,493 in the provincial cities of the Commonwealth. These figures show an alarming growth in the city and town population during the period of ten years over which the census extends. I would point out, too, that this huge increase in the town and city population has taken place despite the great expenditure of the Federal authorities on the repatriation of soldiers. I am aware that the war has accentuated this drift to the cities, but I venture to say that beyond that there are two outstanding causes for the drift, namely, the oppressive Federal tariff and the heavy increase in railway freights in all Australian States during the past few years. In regard to the tariff, no part of the Commonwealth suffers from this burden to the same extent as Western Australia. We know that in Victoria and New South Wales they seem to have run tariff mad. The reason is not far to seek. It is because Melbourne and Sydney, with their established secondary industries, are out to exploit the remainder of the Commonwealth. Queensland has also benefited to some extent through the sugar bonus, but I am unable to find that Western Australia, or even South Australia, has benefited through the high tariff wall which has

been built up by the Federal Parliament to the detriment of our producers. Western Australia is entirely a primary producing State. Its people are engaged in mining, agriculture, pastoral, timber, or pearling, all of them natural industries, and they have to pay tribute through the tariff in the interests of the eastern exploiters. If our Federal members cannot or will not protect the people of Western Australia against this oppression and exploitation, it is the duty of the State Parliament to take a hand in the matter; it is our duty to take up the matter and to make such representations to the Federal Government as may be necessary to protect our natural industries, and make them progress and prosper. Western Australia suffers heavily from these burdens; our people are suffering by reason of the heavy increase in the tariff. I have been unable to find anyone in this State who has gained anything through the oppressive rates to which the tariff has been raised. I have referred to the growth of the capital cities throughout Australia and I must say that the drift of population in Western Australia to the city of Perth is alarming to those of us who come from the country districts and who have advocated decentralisation, and who desire to see happy and prosperous groups of settlers working the land in the country districts and holding their own small areas throughout the State. The figures I am going to quote are taken from Knibbs. They are not exactly the same as those which recently appeared in a section of the press; at any rate they are the latest figures from the Government Statistical Office. I find that in the past ten years the population of Perth has increased by 48,337 people whilst the population in the rest of the State actually decreased by no less than 1,223. In other words, the increase of population in Western Australia during the last ten years has been entirely in the city of Perth and its environs. The rest of Western Australia has not only failed to retain the natural increase by births over deaths, but in addition it has actually lost 1,223 people during that period. To some extent this is accounted for by the decline—which I hope is only temporary—of mining operations on the Golden Mile. We know that Kalgoorlie and Boulder are not supporting the population that those towns did a few years ago, but we hope that the mining industry throughout the State will revive. I wish to point out, however, that during the past ten years the Government of Western Australia have constructed many hundreds of miles of new agricultural railways. They have settled nearly 4,000 returned soldiers on the land at a cost of no less than £4,383,490—nearly four and a half millions, and during that period also there has been the increasing influence of the Country Party with its policy of decentralisation. Despite all these facts it is alarming to find that the whole of

the increase of population in this State has come to the city of Perth, and that the country districts have not increased at all during the period to which I have referred. The decline of mining on the Golden Mile has to some extent accounted for this, but I shudder to think what proportion of the population of Western Australia would have been in Perth at the present time had it not been for the influence of the Country Party's policy of decentralisation during that period. These figures will have to be carefully weighed by the House in the near future, because we are assured by the Government that it is their intention to introduce a Bill to redistribute the seats for the Legislative Assembly. We can take it for granted that the Bill to be introduced will be a fair and honest attempt to redistribute the seats, that it will carry out the desire of the House, namely, that the redistribution will be effected by an independent tribunal. We do not want any more survey parties to go out surveying timber mills; we do not want political districts or Collie maps; we want a fair and equitable distribution by a commission which will have a judge of the Supreme Court as its chairman. I hope too, that in spite of the increase in the population of the metropolitan area the House will take into consideration the value of our outside industries, as well as the difficulties experienced by the people living in those parts of the State remote from the seat of Government. I hope also the fact will not be lost sight of that every member of the House is constantly in Perth, and that when the redistribution is carried into effect there will be no increase in the number of seats in the metropolitan area.

Mr. McCallum: You do not believe in responsible Government.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is the view I hold, and it is the one way I can see under which we will prevent the drift to the city being accentuated. I believe Washington, the capital of the United States, has no representation, and yet it is very well looked after. The metropolitan area of Western Australia is well looked after by the twelve members who at present represent it in this House. Therefore I hope the Government do not intend to increase the representation of the metropolitan area. For my part I would prefer to see better representation given to our back mining and agricultural centres where the people have difficulties to face, such as is the case in the far North-West. At any rate those people should be permitted to retain their present representation rather than that the representation in the metropolitan area should be increased. We should lay it down as a principle that the further a district is from the seat of Government the more representation the people should have. That has always been admitted so far as the North-West is concerned, and it should apply equally to districts like Kanowna, Sandstone and others similarly situated. I have referred to the heavy protection which

evidently has become the fixed policy of the Federal Government, and since this protective policy is in force, I hope the State Government will continue the work of establishing secondary industries throughout Western Australia. During the past few years we have been urged from a hundred platforms to use Western Australian goods first, Australian goods second and those manufactured in other parts of the Empire next. In this connection I urge on the Government the opportunity that exists to establish the woollen industry in Western Australia. We have heard something about the proposal on the part of an English company to start mills at Albany. I hope the proposals will soon be carried into effect. In the Eastern States one sees that either private or co-operative woollen mills are being established. Glancing through the papers it seems as if every private firm was engaged in starting these mills in towns like Colac, Shepparton, Wangarratta and Stawell. And these are in addition to the already established mills in such centres as Melbourne, Ballarat and Geelong. In view of the activities in this direction in Victoria, it is surprising that Western Australia should so far not have made a start in the direction of having its own mill or even so much as a knitting mill, dozens of which exist around Melbourne. In this connection I would like to say that the activity in regard to the woollen industry throughout Victoria is largely due to the work put into the movement by a former resident of Western Australia, Mr. Stirling Taylor, who to-day occupies the position of director of the Bureau of Commerce and Industry and whose head-quarters are in Melbourne. Mr. Taylor has been very active in this matter. I throw out a suggestion to the Premier, which I believe will be acted upon, namely, that he should invite Mr. Stirling Taylor, who is not only an enthusiast in regard to the erection of woollen mills, but also enthusiastic in regard to the extension of the co-operative principle in connection with woollen mills, to visit Western Australia officially, and lecture on woollen mills from the co-operative and other points of view in the same way as he has done in the Eastern States. I believe the Tasmanian Government extended an invitation to that gentleman to visit that State. Mr. Taylor went to Tasmania and was chiefly instrumental in the establishment there in a large way of the cocoa and chocolate industry. I believe that both Messrs. Cadbury and Fry have built big works there. We have in our country towns the same enthusiasm and the same desire for progress which is being manifested in the country towns of the Eastern States. When I see practically every small country town in Victoria possessed of a woollen mill or a small knitting mill on a co-operative principle, I think that our people here have the enthusiasm necessary to do something on similar lines. I suggest to the Government that it is only necessary to invite someone

here with the necessary knowledge, such as Mr. Taylor possesses, to supply the motive power for the woollen industry to be started throughout the country districts of Western Australia. Second only to the tariff the high railway charges are at present causing the drift to the cities throughout the Commonwealth. Let me illustrate the point by a case which came under my notice a few days ago in connection with a constituent of mine living at Toolabin, about 180 miles from Perth. This gentleman sent me a copy of a letter which he had addressed to the Minister for Railways in regard to a cwt. of cement consigned to him from Perth. This settler bought in Perth for 9s. a bag of cement containing a cwt. It had probably been manufactured locally from material brought from Lake Clifton to the city, and sold to the residents of Perth at the rate of 9s. per bag. When this cement was sent to the settler no less a charge than 7s. 3d. was imposed upon him by the Railway Department. It is impossible for the people in the country districts to carry on their ordinary enterprises in the way of building, for instance, when they are oppressed by such heavy freights. This is only one instance of the many which I could quote. I think every member outside the metropolitan area has received complaints of this kind, and we know that practically all enterprises in the way of improvements and particularly in the way of building in the country are being stopped by the heavy charges imposed by the Railway Department. The extraordinary thing to my mind is that whilst it is necessary for this House to approve of any alteration to the Dog Act or for the imposition of a farthing in the pound increase in the dividend duties, and not only for this House but another place to give their approval before these things can become law, such important things as increasing railway freights are imposed by an administrative act, occasionally just after Parliament has concluded its labours, and without the representatives of the people being consulted in the matter at all. I am not referring for the moment to the question of whether the increases are necessary or justifiable. It appears to me that some alteration in our system is required in this respect, and that this House might well appoint a select committee to go into the whole question of railway freights and the manner in which their incidence is affecting our primary industries with a view to seeing if relief cannot be afforded from the present heavy charges. I listened with much interest to the very important pronouncement made by the Minister for Works upon the question of railway freights. I have here a quotation from the "West Australian" which refers to that speech. The Minister said that if he were again Commissioner of Railways he would act with his experience of previous years and say that if the department

wanted traffic it must create it by making fares and freights sufficiently low to attract the traffic. Coming as it does from a Cabinet Minister, and one who has held the position of Commissioner of Railways in this State for, I think, seven years, the greatest possible weight must be attached to such a pronouncement. I am aware that the pronouncement was not made on behalf of the Railway Department, and I regret that this was so. Wherever the railway system extends in Western Australia, from Sandstone to Albany, and from Jarrahdale to Geraldton, all those who use it will appreciate and be in accord with the remarks of the Minister. The Minister had a good deal to say about the Country Party, but in that respect he laid himself open to the charge of having stolen the Country Party's policy. We are glad to have him with us in the Country Party ideals of lower freights and fares, and more business for the Railway Department. Although I admit the difficulties which confront the Government under the conditions existing to-day, I think this House ought to take the whole question of railway freights into earnest consideration, and see if we cannot afford relief to the people whose only avenue of communication is by means of the railway system. I wish to refer to the tramway fares as compared with the charges imposed by the Railway Department. It is interesting to note that during the years which have passed since 1912 whilst the charges on the tramways have been very much reduced, particularly since they were taken over from the private company and run by the State, we find that during that period the railway charges have been heavily increased. Here we see another reason for the drift of the population to the cities. In 1912, when the tramway company owned the Perth trams, there were no fares, except workers' return fares of 3d. for certain short distances, less than 3d. To-day the railway fares are very much increased and consequently people are drifting from the country districts into the towns. I should like to point out the manner in which unfortunately the anticipations of the Government with regard to the purchase of the Perth trams have failed in their realisation from a profit-making point of view. I have here a copy of "Hansard" dated the 23rd July, 1912, in reference to the purchase of the Perth tramway system. The Premier at the time was Mr. Scaddan, the present Minister for Railways, and the speech to which I wish to refer was made by him when introducing a Bill for the purchase of the Perth tramway system. Mr. Allen, late member for West Perth, interjected "What about the annual depreciation?" and the then Premier went on to say—

The Premier: We allow for that. We have based the profits at £25,000 as against £11,000, because the £11,000 was made when the company were making

hardly any allowance for depreciation. In truth £25,000 is nearer what ought to be the net profits earned by the tramway system than £11,000, if we follow Mr. McColl. We can rest assured that we can make £25,000 profit after the annual allowances for depreciation.

Mr. Allen: And interest and sinking fund?

The Premier: No; after allowing for depreciation we anticipate that we can make a profit of £25,000, which will be sufficient to pay interest at 4 per cent. on £40,000 and provide a sinking fund of £9,000 per annum, which would, by 1939, cover the suggested price of £400,000, so that we would not lose on the transaction, but there would be no profit.

The company was making an annual profit of £41,000. When these tramways were purchased the Premier anticipated that he would be able to make a sufficient profit that they would be able to pay not only working expenses, but interest, and also sinking fund, which would wipe out the cost to the State, of the tramway system, which it would own for nothing by the year 1939. I am sorry to say that these pleasing anticipations are not being realised. We know that the war and other attendant circumstances have cropped up since then, but I wish to point out that during the last financial year the Perth tramway system lost no less than £9,334 on the working expenses and interest, without any provision being made for depreciation or sinking fund. This is the position as far as I can discover it from the balance sheet. We now find that although the tramways cost the State £475,000 originally, to-day they are capitalised at the sum of £654,047. That is a remarkable increase in so short a space of time.

The Premier: There has been an increase in the mileage since then.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. JOHNSTON: When I look at some of the fares which are charged on the tramways during the morning I do not wonder that they are making a loss. It is economically impossible for the State to go on carrying people on the tramways so much cheaper than was done in the year 1912, when the company owned the service, and to pay the increased working costs. There was more than one company interested in the tramway system throughout the city at the time it was purchased. I cannot help thinking that metropolitan influences have been very successful in persuading the Government to reduce the tramway charges to an extent which certainly does not cover the cost incurred by the Government in running the system.

Mr. McCallum: They have been increased for the working man.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Lately, to a small extent.

Mr. McCallum: He is paying more now than ever.

Mr. JOHNSTON: He is paying much less than when the company owned the lines.

Mr. McCallum: I know that in the city workers are paying 5d. where the journey used to cost them 3d.

The Premier: Which way?

Mr. McCallum: I refer particularly to those engaged in the building trade.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Whilst every other form of transport has largely increased in cost particularly the railway transport, the tramways are cheaper than they were when the company owned the lines.

Mr. McCallum: I say they are dearer.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am not complaining about the principle at the moment, but merely stating the facts which the hon. member can verify. Take the Nedlands tramway service. It takes 38 minutes to go from Nedlands to the Town Hall, a distance of five miles 29 chains. It is necessary, for every person, who wishes to reach his office or business by 9 o'clock, to leave Nedlands before half past eight. Every person, be he a director of the Western Australian Bank or the wealthiest individual in Nedlands, is carried this distance by the State for one penny, so long as he starts before 8.30 a.m.

Mr. McCallum: You try to get in for a penny and see how you get on.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Hundreds of people get in for a penny.

Mr. McCallum: They do not.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Government cannot make it pay at that price. Take the trip from the end of the Victoria Park line to the Town Hall, a distance of four miles. Every passenger who starts his journey before 8.30 a.m. is carried over that distance for a penny. Compare that position with the amount charged on a country train. It does not matter what time a passenger starts his journey, he is charged the full amount. I start my train journey at 3 a.m. A country worker who starts by that train is charged his full fare just the same as every other country traveller. The fares by train are at the rate of 2d. per mile first-class and the second-class fare runs out at about 1½d. per mile. The country worker travelling on the railways has to pay 6½d. to travel five miles, while the city workman, providing he joins the car before 8.30 a.m., can travel five miles for a penny.

The Premier: Some of them pay 5d. to get back.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I desire to be fair and will be quite clear about the matter. On the other hand, where the country worker is travelling first class he pays 10d. for five miles or ten times as much as the town worker. That is one reason why most people, and particularly family men, prefer to work in the city for less wages than to go outback where the work is more arduous and where their wives and families do not have the educational facilities and the pleasures which are provided in the metropolitan area.

The Premier: They do not travel every day.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is so but this disproportion between the tram fares charged in the city and the cost of carrying a passenger over the country railways is altogether too great. A different policy has been adopted in Western Australia during the past few years by the Railway Department and the Tramway Department. When increased wages and costs have come about on the railway side, they have been followed with big increases in both fares and freights. On the tramway system, however, on the figures I have quoted, it is quite evident that people can travel much cheaper than in 1912, although, I admit, they travel now slightly less cheaply than they were able to some months ago.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The charges have gone up 50 per cent.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Despite that, however, the city man who comes to town for one penny and who has to pay 5d. for his return journey, still can travel 10½ miles for 6d., whereas the country worker travelling over a distance of 10½ miles pays 1s. 9d. if he travels first class and just over 1s. 1d. if he travels second class. There again the disproportion is altogether too great. Take the case of the Victoria Park resident. He pays a penny in the morning if he joins the car before 8.30 and can come a distance of four miles for that fare. He pays 3d. to go home at night and he travels, therefore, eight miles for 4d. as against the country resident who has to pay 1s. 4d. first class for railway journey over eight miles or 10d. if he journeys over that distance second class.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You cannot compare railways and tramways.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I say the disproportion is too great. Since the period before the war, railway travelling has become dearer and tramway travelling considerably cheaper, although the same causes have operated on the increased costs of the department, respecting both services. Flies come to where the honey is and so the people gravitate to the cities where the best things are to be secured.

Mr. Clydesdale: The railways carry your stock at reduced rates.

Mr. JOHNSTON: These rates have been put up but I am dealing only with passenger journeys. I am pointing out bare facts and I desire to be quite clear. The town worker is travelling daily, as well as his wife and family in many cases, but when the country worker embarks upon a railway journey he very often has to travel for considerable distances to work which is of an irregular nature. He generally goes for a distance of from 100 to 300 miles and he has to bear heavy charges compared with tramway travelling. In addition to that, he gets no concessions or very little concession in holiday time, such as operate elsewhere.

Mr. Clydesdale: Is not the worker entitled to the concession?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am pointing out that the country worker does not get the same con-

cession compared with his fellow worker in the city. That is the whole object of the argument I am putting forward and I regret that it is not clear to the hon. member for Canning. The charges on the railways are really more than the country industries and the country workers can bear. We have heard a good deal about the betterment system in connection with the proposed construction of a tramway extension to Como. We have two tramways running in the metropolitan area at the present time which compare with the proposed tramway to Como and those tramways were built under the betterment system by the private companies who owned the land at the time the tramways were built. The tramway to Osborne Park was not built by the Government, neither was it built by a private company on the basis under which other metropolitan tramway systems were built. I have here an Act, 1 and 2 Edward VII., No. 26, dealing with the North Perth and Perth tramway propositions. This Act confirmed the provisional order authorising the construction of a tramway in the North Perth Road Board area and the Perth Road Board area. In the schedule there is a provisional order setting out that whereas the Town Properties of Western Australia, Limited, who are named as the promoters, have "made application for a provisional order authorising the construction of the tramways," and so on. The provisions under which they were willing to construct the tramway to Osborne Park are set out. In this case we have the Town Properties Company owning a large area of country; they cut it up; they built their own extensions and came to Parliament when they had arrived at a decision to do that work for authority to build the tramline. That took place in 1902, and the agreement was signed by Mr. Walter Kingsmill as Commissioner of Railways. That tramway line was built entirely under the betterment system by a company owning the land and they added to the price of the land the increased value caused by the expenditure of the company's own money in constructing that line to Osborne Park.

Mr. Mann: It was a success.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes. The people not only paid to the company probably the whole cost of the tramway when they paid for their land, owing to the increased value, but they also paid heavy tramway fares until such time as the Government purchased the system. I commend the enterprise of the company in building the line under the betterment system. The tramway to Nedlands was built in the same way. I have here another Act, No. 30 of 1907. It is the Act to confirm the provisional order authorising the construction of a certain tramway in the municipal district of Subiaco and the Claremont Road Board area. The schedule of this Act sets out the following:—

Whereas Edward Bruce, of Folkestone, in the county of Kent, England, Companion of the Bath . . . (hereinafter called the Promoter) has made application

for a provisional order authorising the construction of tramways in the municipality of Subiaco and the Claremont road district

The schedule sets out the terms under which the line was to be constructed.

Mr. Richardson: That has been a payable proposition too.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Here again the betterment system was in operation. The Bruce estate owned the property, built the tramway and, I presume, recouped themselves for the expenditure incurred in connection with that undertaking and they added it to the cost of the land.

Mr. Richardson: That is the betterment principle in operation.

Mr. JOHNSTON: These two proposals cannot be compared with the Government's Como project. Under them the persons owning the land built the line and got the authority of Parliament for the work, whereas with the Como proposition, it is different. The Government are taking the risk.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It depends upon it being a payable proposition.

Mr. JOHNSTON: In these instances I have quoted, the people built their own tramway and I have no objection whatever to the people of Como getting a tramway if they are prepared to pay for it.

Mr. Clydesdale: The majority of the people in the metropolitan area are prepared to pay for their extensions.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is a surprising fact to me that when these private people wished to spend their own money in constructing a tramway to serve their land, in each case it was necessary for Parliament to give clear and definite approval to the whole proposition. It was necessary for these two Acts of Parliament to which I have referred to be approved by this House and by the Upper House before the proposals could be carried into effect.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: At Fremantle the position was similar.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes, but yet we are told that the Government propose to build the tramway to Como without a Bill to authorise the construction of the line or the expenditure of this money, coming before Parliament.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have the power.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If the money of the State is to be spent in this way, Parliament should be given an opportunity to signify its approval or otherwise.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Government have the power under the Tramways Act to build the line.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not want them to have that power. If people who want to spend their own money in building a tramline to open up their own land are required to come to Parliament to secure the approval of the legislature, the Government should do the same thing in connection with the tramway extensions which have been mentioned to Como and elsewhere.

Mr. Clydesdale: The same thing has occurred elsewhere.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That may be so. The sooner this Chamber gets back to the position of being able definitely and clearly to approve of any large expenditure of public money, the better it will be for all concerned. I am sure the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) with his democratic sentiments will be the first to agree that Parliament should control such expenditure.

Mr. Richardson: The Tramway Act was not in operation then.

Mr. JOHNSTON: There is a bigger principle at stake and that is: whether this House should be told clearly or not how the money of the State is to be spent before the expenditure actually takes place. Let us take the position of the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin), whose vote was responsible for the carrying of this particular item on the Loan Estimates. He has stated that he understood clearly the item was for the purchase of extra rolling stock. The whole of the people of the metropolitan area know that extra rolling stock is required. I voted against the item, but at the same time I felt that it related to money to be expended on the proposals outlined in the schedule to the Bill, which proposals were a duplication of the Rokeby-road—Subiaco line, the construction of the loop at the Barrack-street jetty, and the provision of rolling stock.

Mr. Pickering: The South Perth extension was never mentioned.

Mr. JOHNSTON: No. Parliament has never given any approval at all for this particular expenditure on a tramway to Como, and since it was necessary for private companies when spending their own money for the construction of tramways to obtain the approval of Parliament, common justice demands that this House should signify its approval or otherwise of the proposed expenditure on the tramway to Como before that work is undertaken.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: My objection was based on the cost, but the cost has come down considerably since then.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I hope that such a stickler for constitutional government, as the Minister for Railways has announced himself from time to time to be, will not embark on this expenditure until this House has clearly expressed its desires in the matter one way or the other. In connection with the whole problem of tramway extensions, I would point out that we lost £9,000 on our tramways last year. By that amount the tramways failed to pay interest and working expenditure, and they have not paid the depreciation and sinking fund which the Minister for Railways anticipated they would do when he in 1912 introduced the Bill for their purchase.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you know the cause of that loss? It was retrospective pay.

Mr. JOHNSTON: At any rate the loss is there.

Mr. Clydesdale: And £5,000 for re-laying lines, which amount should not be charged to one year.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the profit and loss since the trams were taken over by the Government? Take all the years together. It is not fair to take only one year.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is because the Government propose to carry out this Como extension in one year under the conditions now obtaining that I object to. The loss I have indicated occurred last year, and I believe the reason for it is the large amount of vacant land abutting our existing tram lines. Even along the tracks close to Perth, the Bulwer-street and Newcastle-street lines run past large areas of vacant land, and when we consider the Osborne Park and Nedlands lines, the problem is much accentuated. The only solution is to tax the vacant land. The problem from the point of view of the Tramway Department is that the mileage lies through so much vacant land.

Mr. Clydesdale: A minute ago you attributed it to the reduction of fares.

Mr. Pickering: That is another reason.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The difficulty might be overcome if we had heavy traffic all the time. I was pointing out what the fares really were, and that their cheapness contributed to the loss. The proposed tramway on the route laid down by the Government is five miles 35 chains from Perth to the Como jetty. I suppose that people living at Como would desire a penny fare before 8.30 each morning, the same as those who live on the Nedlands Park line enjoy. I know the South Perth-Como locality pretty well, and I contend that there is altogether too little settlement long the route to enable the tramway to pay at present. Already the trams are losing money because they run past so much vacant land. To my mind it would be an economic atrocity to build the line from Victoria Park to Como under the conditions of financial stringency now existing.

Mr. Clydesdale: What about Como to Mends-street? That is included in the five miles.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That portion could not be built unless the whole of the proposed line were constructed. My remarks apply to the whole proposition. The traffic would be mainly confined to the section between Mends-street and Como. There is too little settlement along the route to justify the tram line. If any hon. member has any doubts on the question, I suggest that he should inspect the route and judge for himself. If he is not sufficiently energetic to do that, he may, by going to the balcony upstairs, get a good view of the South Perth-Como district, and he will be amazed how little settlement there is away from the existing ferry services. This proposition might be a good one in five years' time under the altered conditions which we might anticipate by then.

Mr. McCallum: We will put up that remark against you when you want a railway.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Particularly does my remark apply in view of the dearness of building at the present time. Until building costs come down I cannot believe that there will be any large increase of settlement in the South Perth-Como locality. If the Government have £45,000 or £50,000 to spend, it could be more usefully expended and utilised more in the interests of the people of the metropolitan area by devoting it to clearing work in the country. Let us develop Western Australia first of all. Let us help the people in the agricultural districts, people who have no roads and are not able to get more than small loans from the Agricultural Bank for the clearing work so necessary for their continuance on the land and for the prosperity of the metropolitan area. I am not in favour of spending one shilling on more tramway extensions in Perth until the present financial stringency uplifts. May I remind you, Sir, of the way in which financial stringency and scarcity of loan moneys is affecting the people in the outer parts of the State, people who have been promised railways by Act of Parliament as far back as 1914. These people were out there when there was no demand for a tramway to Como. These people were put on the land and railways were authorised in various agricultural districts of the State. These people have had their hopes shattered. The railways were not built while the war was in progress, and so far as I can see they are not going to be built now, for when the Government have a little money, it is to be spent in Perth, opening up new access to the beautiful Swan River to which the people have so much access at present, to be used mostly during the summer season, but hardly at all in the winter, while people outback are denied conveniences and utilities necessary for their existence which they would use, if granted, all the year round.

Mr. Mann: This applies to people outback who would come to Perth to spend a holiday.

Mr. JOHNSTON: They have already plenty of places to spend their holidays. Owing to railways being denied them, they have too few holidays and little money to spend on them when they do get them. The interests of the metropolitan community itself would be best served by permitting the loan funds which the Government are able to raise to be spent in the development of the country. Let the suburbs wait for tramway extensions until material is cheaper and prospects are brighter. A word now with regard to the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. I commend and applaud the Government for their decision to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into this institution.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister had no option.

Mr. JOHNSTON: At any rate I commend his action. There is no doubt that, since the articles which recently appeared in Stead's "Review," that since Mr. Courthope's pro-

paganda work was carried on throughout this country and since the reports of the Mable inquiry were published, there has been an uneasy feeling throughout Western Australia regarding the facility with which people can be got into the asylum and the difficulty they have, when once there, to get out again. It appears to me that in the past the authorities have been inquiring too late into the mental state of their patients, and have made a very thorough and searching investigation at the wrong time, namely, when they tried to get out, instead of before their incarceration. They have waited until the patients wanted to get out, and the patients have then found it most difficult to leave the institution. If a patient did get an inquiry the authorities always seem to have blocked his departure from the institution. On the other hand, we have the report of the Mable Royal Commissioner, a trained legal man who pointed out clearly that Mable and his wife were put into that institution illegally, although to save the face of the administration he found that their illegal arrest was justified by the facts. Had not it been for the motion of the Leader of the Opposition that the Royal Commission should be appointed, Mr. Mable and 12 or 15 other patients who have since been released, would have still been confined in the asylum. The humanitarian feelings animating members of this Chamber are such that they must applaud the action of the Government in deciding to have a thorough inquiry, and I would urge the Premier to see that a searching inquiry is made into the case of each patient. I am sure the people do not desire that the head of a similar institution should be brought from another State to report on the work of a colleague and confrere in Western Australia. I hope the Government will see that we have a really independent inquiry. As a result of the inquiry it may be found necessary to alter the law under which people are admitted to the asylum. It may be that the law is as much to blame as the administration. I hope that all phases of the question will be carefully inquired into by the Royal Commission. Before concluding I wish to say a word with regard to the co-operative movement for the establishment of bulk handling of wheat throughout Western Australia. Members of the House are acquainted with the proposals of the Grain Elevator Co-operative Company which have been before the State since February, 1920. To-day the company is in a most satisfactory position because no fewer than 200,000 shares have been applied for by free farmers, while 50,000 shares have been applied for by farmers working under the operations of the Industries Assistance Board. I hope the Government will permit the settlers working under the Industries Assistance Board, or those whose position is considered sufficiently sound, to lend their quota of support to this great co-operative movement which will be in the interests of the community as well as of the whole of the wheat growers of Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That will be financing the company with the State's money.

Mr. Mann: Do you mean to bring them in before their debts to private firms are liquidated?

Mr. JOHNSTON: A proper basis upon which they should participate can easily be decided upon; proposals have been placed before the Government which I hope will receive sympathetic consideration from them and from the House. We are assured that a Bill will be introduced this session, and I commend the Government for giving that assurance in the Governor's Speech.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If your conference passed it, the Government would have to do it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I regret exceedingly that such is not the case.

Hon. P. Collier: You ought to be proud to belong to such a strong party.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Federal Government have treated the company most generously in regard to their promise of financial support.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They do not know the company as well as we do.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Federal Government have agreed to lend £550,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has been reduced to £440,000.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Let me explain. The Federal Government originally agreed to lend £550,000 to the wheat growers when 300,000 shares had been applied for. Since then that has been modified, at the request of the directors of the co-operative company, by an arrangement under which the Federal Government will lend £480,000 when 240,000 shares have been applied for in the company. Even that reduced amount will be increased to the original amount of £550,000 as additional capital is subscribed by the wheat growers to the company. The Federal Government's help in this matter has been most welcome and most acceptable. I regret exceedingly in this connection the loss of the two Bills introduced by the State Government last session. Those measures were defeated in the Upper House at the end of the session.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: One of the best things that ever happened in this State.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It was a very deplorable thing for Western Australia, particularly as the Bills were not defeated on their merits but by motions for adjournment. However, we shall have another opportunity of dealing with these matters when the Bill which the Government propose to introduce in order to deal with bulk handling comes down. At this stage I do not propose to hold a post-mortem into the Council's deplorable action, which represents only another instance of that Conservative Chamber opposing not only the desires of this House but the best interests of the people of Western Australia. The debate on the Address-in-reply is now nearing its end, and doubtless the House will shortly get down to work in real earnest on the legislation foreshadowed in the Speech. I believe

there is a bright time ahead for Western Australia. Its people, encouraged by the Premier's optimism, and by their own knowledge of the State's resources, will overcome the difficulties at present confronting them; and particularly will this be the case if the Government carry out a vigorous immigration policy, if we are able to fill up this country with more people, and get them settled on the land, thus reducing the debt per head which the inhabitants of Western Australia now have to carry. I trust that the work of this session will result in advanced prosperity to the State of Western Australia, and that the effect of our efforts will be to increase the happiness and promote the welfare of the people of this State.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [6.5]: I do not intend to take up the time of the House in showering congratulations upon new members. Those hon. members have already received the best congratulations that can be offered them, by being returned to represent the electors. My sympathy largely goes out to those old members who have fallen by the way. After being here for a number of years we all realise that it is very hard for a member to return to the avocation which he followed previous to his election to Parliament. Possibly such a member may have taken on somewhat more expensive habits, or may have become a little collar-proud; or I may put it that he does not like going back into the traces of former years. Further, we all know, after mixing among members for a number of years, that very many of them, irrespective of the side of the House on which they sit, play the game fairly; and, naturally, a friendship springs up among such members, and although we all like to see our particular side returned with a majority, we have sympathetic feelings for our fellows who, as I say, fall by the way. At present the deficit represents the nightmare of our politics. There is a huge amount of interest and sinking fund to be met annually, which in itself accounts largely for the deficit. Then there is the huge decrease in the returns from railway fares and freights. The increased fares and freights mean a very heavy impost indeed on the outback settler, but the effect of the increases has been the opposite to that expected. Instead of bringing in a larger revenue, they have resulted in decreased revenue. Take the Murchison district as an example; many squatters are driving their stock over long distances from Meekatharra right down to Mullewa and Perenjori, in preference to paying the heavy railway freights on stock. Various suggestions have been thrown out for making up the deficit. One is retrenchment. I am with those who are up against any drastic retrenchment in the Public Service before there has been an exhaustive inquiry into administration; and before such an inquiry is held, the heads of

the various departments and sub-departments should be convened to give consideration to the question of economising. A man who has been running a department for a number of years should be an expert as regards the work of that department, and should be best qualified to point out savings that can be made in its running, say by simplifying procedure and doing away with red tape. A mining manager who has a decreased output and wants to economise calls together the man in charge of the treatment plant and the underground managers and asks them to point out where economies can be effected. A corresponding method should be adopted for effecting economies in our Public Service. I consider, too, that savings could be effected by amalgamation of departments. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) laid stress on this feature. The amalgamation of the State and Federal Taxation Departments has resulted in a saving to this State of £20,000 per annum. No doubt a large saving would result from amalgamation of the State and Federal Electoral Departments. It is absurd to have two departments side by side attending to electoral matters for the same people. The names that are placed on the State electoral roll are also placed on the Commonwealth electoral roll. I am not particular as to whether the amalgamated department is run by the State or by the Commonwealth. There could also be an amalgamation of our Workers' Homes Board and the management of the scheme for housing soldiers. Again, the Industries Assistance Board should be amalgamated with the Agricultural Bank. Only a very slight amendment of the law would be needed to enable that to be done.

The Premier: That is the position now.

Mr. CHESON: Probably an amalgamation would mean that the services of a considerable number of public servants could be dispensed with. Another matter requiring attention is the taxation of land values, for the purpose of compelling people who hold land alongside our railways for speculative purposes to bring such land into use. At present our railways are running through huge tracts of unused country held simply for the unearned increment. Our land laws should contain a provision on the same lines as that in our mining laws which imposes certain labour conditions, failure to comply with which involves forfeiture. At any rate, there should be such a provision applying to land alongside the railways. The holding of such land out of use is a serious disadvantage to people seeking land, who are now compelled to go much further afield. It is stated that no less than 20 million pounds' worth of land has been alienated from the Crown. Now, 6d. in the pound on that value would bring in £500,000 annually. If that sum were put aside and earmarked to be used for railway construction purposes, it would be a big factor towards promoting settlement outback. The further a settler goes outback, the more he is penalised. The tax I suggest would not press heavily on the

agriculturist. Our agricultural lands are valued at 10s. per acre for taxation purposes, so that a tax of 6d. per acre would mean only £25 on 1,000 acres. The squatter whose land, since the increased assessment, pays one pound per thousand acres would pay only £2 10s. tax on 100,000 acres. Thus it is plain that the proposed tax would not bear hardly upon people on the land.

The Premier: How about putting a bit on the other fellow, the miner?

Mr. CHESON: At present the people in the metropolitan area pay very little towards the upkeep of our railways. Most of the goods and materials imported into this State are brought up the river from Fremantle by boats, or else by heavy motors.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. CHESON: Before tea I was dealing with the heavy imposts levied on outback settlers through the railways, and advocating land values taxation, the revenue from which should be earmarked for the cheapening of railway freights to remote districts. I was pointing out that the further back one went, the more was he penalised, and that the people of the city paid very little towards the upkeep of the railways, whereas under land values taxation the people of the metropolitan area would be called upon to contribute in more equitable proportion. Our railways have been run out as feeders to the city, and so the people outback should not be penalised but, on the contrary, should be freely encouraged. I am in favour of the continuation of the wheat pool. I should have liked to see it continued under the Commonwealth. I am afraid that if Victoria and South Australia stand out, it will be difficult for this State to successfully carry on the pool, since if wheat is sold cheaply in South Australia, South Australian wheat will be dumped into this State. In giving my support to the continuation of the wheat pool, I would stipulate that a maximum selling price be fixed. If it is proposed to export our wheat to Germany at 7s. per bushel while charging our own people 9s., it will not have my support. The people of Western Australia have done a lot for the farmers in carrying wheat and super over the railways at specially low rates. At all events, if a reasonable maximum price for wheat be fixed, the wheat pool shall have my support, for I do not want to see the farmers go back to pre-war conditions, when all the wheat was in the hands of a few big buyers. With the price of wheat at 9s. it is impossible to carry on the poultry, bacon, and dairying industries, and it is to the interests of the farmers that those industries be maintained.

The Premier: What about the price of gold?

Mr. CHESON: Those concerned are not getting too much for their gold, considering the cost of mining requisites. On the Murchison at the present time wheat is being sold

at 4d. per pound, or £1 per bushel. At one time all the people up there had their own fowls, but with wheat at 4d. per pound, the keeping of fowls is out of the question. I compliment the Government on having brought our railways up to date. One can now ride in a corridor car in the Murchison district, and in addition the service has been rendered much more effective. Still, I think some amendment should be made in the second-class machinery rates. A good deal of second-hand machinery has been shifted recently, but one cannot bring second-hand machinery from, say, Sandstone to Meekatharra at anything below the rates charged for new machinery, although second-hand machinery can be shifted from Cue to the Eastern Goldfields at second-class rates. If mining people wish to shift second-hand machinery from one town to another they should have the benefit of the second-class rates. At present it pays to send second-hand machinery from Sandstone away down into the agricultural areas, and bring it back to Meekatharra, as against sending it direct. I have a word of complaint to utter against the frequent delays in railway transit. A little while ago a truck of cyanide sent from Perth to Meekatharra was hung up at Northam for a fortnight. And cyanide, it must be remembered, is destroyed on coming into contact with water. In other words, it is a highly perishable commodity, and so there should be no delay whatever in its transport. Here is a clipping from the "Murchison Times":—

From time to time complaints are made of delay in arrival of goods sent over the railways. This is very often the case on the Murchison lines. With all the publicity given to railway matters and methods during the past few months one would expect better business methods being followed than has been the experience of a few firms recently. One instance was a consignment of cyanide, which was hung up at Northam for 14 days. It meant loss of time to the working plant. After several telegrams had been despatched, the cyanide was sent on by the next train. The next week inquiries had to be made for some machinery parts consigned from Kalgoorlie on the 21st July. Up to date it has not arrived. It has been 14 days in transit. That item was also located as awaiting a push off at Northam. The delay of the cyanide consignment is noteworthy in the face of a regulation that it can only be consigned to leave Perth on one day a week for the Murchison, yet such a deadly poison as cyanide is allowed to stand for days in an open truck at a railway yard en route. This is not an isolated case of delay and expense to mining companies. Only recently it cost nearly £50 to bring a truck of goods from one of the eastern goldfields because it contained items of various rates. Yet the Minister for Mines says that the Government are

doing everything to help the mining industry.

There should be no delay in the transit of cyanide, especially seeing that it can be consigned on only one day in the week. When the Estimates were before us last session we were promised that there should be no delay in the erection of the Wooroloo recreation hall, provided sufficient money was raised on the pound for pound basis. Unfortunately there has been a little delay in the eastern fields, although there is some £1,400 in the hands of the Ugly Men's Association and another amount in Kalgoorlie. I am very sorry that there should have been any delay whatever in this matter. Anybody who has visited the Wooroloo sanatorium will know that in wet weather the wind blows the rain in on to the patients. This could be avoided by the provision of a few roller blinds, which would be very much appreciated by the patients. The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Boyland) referred to the Miners' Relief Fund. That fund was started in 1915. The contribution then was 3d. weekly. In 1918 the weekly contribution was increased to 6d. and it was further increased another 3d. later in the same year. This means an increase of 150 per cent. in six years. Whereas the miners paid at first 13s. per annum, they are now asked to pay 39s., and in view of the closing down of so many mines it seems likely that it will not be long before the miners are asked to pay one shilling weekly. Then, while the administrative costs of the fund have gone up, the amounts paid to the beneficiaries have been cut down. When the Murchison miners were asked to increase their contribution to 9d., they turned down the proposal and suggested that something should be done in connection with State insurance. We believe that material assistance could be given to this fund through the Charities Department. The inspectors are all through the metropolitan area, and when a beneficiary of the fund comes down here, a visit from the inspector should not entail any cost. On the fields the inspectors have to travel all around and, on occasion, have to come all the way to Perth. This fund should be run either through the Mines Department or through the Charities Department. Then the provision relating to continuity of payments leads to a good deal of complaint. For instance, a miner, after having paid into this fund for a number of years, might go prospecting for six months and, making nothing during that period, come back and work for wages, and renew his contributions to the fund. But if, later, he be stricken by disease, he will find that he cannot get assistance, for the reason that his payments have not been continuous. In my opinion the State should take over this fund and run it as it is run in Queensland. All occupational diseases should be provided for under the Workers Compensation Act. If that were done there would be a bigger inducement for people to engage in the mining industry. In connection with the Arbitration

Act it is time something was done to bring it up to date. At the present time delays occur when people are desirous of approaching the Court. Before one can go to the Court it is necessary to create a dispute, but before the dispute stage is reached, the parties should be brought together, and in that way there would be a better chance of settling a difficulty in its earliest stage. I am a great believer in giving assistance to secondary industries. Our primary and secondary industries should work hand in hand. The question of woollen factories has been touched upon by several speakers. It is nearly time that Western Australia made a start in that direction. As far back ago as 40 years, little Tasmania established a woollen mill in Launceston, and that, too, when that State had less than half the population of Western Australia. While on the subject of secondary industries, I would say a word about the local production of cement. We are using it on the Murchison and we are getting it at a rate which is 50 per cent. cheaper than we had to pay for it before the local works were established. Those works have been a big factor in bringing down the cost. People who use it say that it is equal to anything that was ever imported. A matter that concerns the Commonwealth is the extension of telephone facilities in the out-back parts of the State. Telephonic connection is badly needed between Lawlers and Lake Darlot. If an accident happens it means that a patient has to be conveyed all that distance or a doctor has to be sent for, and the time taken up in travelling may often end seriously. We understood that when the existing charges were increased better facilities would be given to people in isolated districts. Nothing, however, has been done. The people at Lake Austin who are 16 miles from Cue are also unfortunately situated in this respect. They too are isolated, and if anything untoward happens serious consequences may follow. A good deal has been said about the unconstitutional action of the Government in submitting Bills to outside bodies before presenting them to Parliament. This is distinctly a wrong procedure. If a Labour conference sitting in Perth had Bills intended for subsequent submission to Parliament, presented to it by a Labour Government that might have been in power, the State would have known all about it and there would have been a howl from every direction. On the subject of the proposed inquiry into lunacy reform, I hope that the Government will not ask one controller to report upon the work of another. If a Commission is to be appointed it should be made up of outside and independent people. With regard to assistance to mining, the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) has already pointed out that the first thing to do is to remove the tax which is imposed on prospectors, or in connection with the sale of a property. The imposition of this tax has done more to retard the progress of the industry

than anything else I know of. Something should also be done in the direction of providing cheaper explosives, cyanide, and zinc. The high cost of requisites is penalising the industry. We cannot do too much to assist prospectors who, at the present time, are made to suffer even more than companies, inasmuch as when they require explosives they are compelled to deal with a local agent. I know of instances where mining companies were instructed not to supply prospectors, who were told to purchase from the local agent. In that way the local agent is carried entirely by the prospectors. It should surely be possible in all mining centres for the Government to see that the prospectors get explosives at a cheaper rate than is the case at the present time. In answer to a question recently the Minister stated that it was intended to appoint mining boards. There has been a cry for these boards who would be in a better position to assist in selecting legitimate prospectors. We know that the older men by reason of the knowledge they possess of the industry are the more successful prospectors. Once they get on to the track of gold they follow it up to find the reef that shed it. These are the men we want to encourage in every shape and form, and if we do that we shall open new fields. I consider also that prospectors should be assisted when they are 20 miles beyond a battery, that is to say, when they are on a payable proposition. They should be given advances on the assays until there is enough stone to warrant the erection of a mill. That is the only chance a prospector has of keeping the tucker bag going. Another matter on which I would like to touch is that of the ventilation of mines. In all new mines we should see that there is sufficient ventilation circulating through the property. There should be stipulated the amount of air that should flow freely and undiminished through each working space. The present coal mines Act provides for not less than 100 cubic feet of air through each working face. That is a matter that should be inquired into in connection with all new mines. There are one or two big properties on the Murchison, and I trust that hon. members will have an opportunity of inspecting them in the not distant future. One of these is the Big Bell, which is one of the biggest propositions in the State. It is over 100 feet across, and has been sampled for 1,500 feet. The plant erected there is an up-to-date one, and quite lately a good many additional hands have been taken on at the mine. This mine will eventually become a very big proposition, and it is that kind of thing that we must depend on in the future. I trust that when members visit the district, the Minister for Mines will accompany them. I have received a wire from the secretary of the road board asking me to use my influence to secure the attendance of the Minister, when he will have the opportunity of meeting there all the people on the Murchison from Yalgoo to Meekatharra.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [7.58]: May I at the outset join with the other members of this Chamber in welcoming to our midst the new members returned at the last general election, and while perhaps condoling with those who fell by the wayside, may I be permitted to say that I believe the Assembly has lost nothing either in debating power or in the keen desire to do that which is in the best interests of the community. I consider that the advent of Mrs. Cowan (the member for West Perth) to this Chamber is something that will not only be of advantage to the women and children of the community, but will also be of advantage to hon. members, inasmuch as we frequently discuss those matters which can be best understood and appreciated by the womenfolk, and very frequently we disregard many things because of the fact that we have not with us anyone who is directly interested from the point of view of the woman. We also frequently take to ourselves a good deal of credit for understanding womenfolk, and I suppose most of us who have been married for a long time imagine that we know more about them than anyone else. I am beginning to doubt whether we do or not. Be that as it may, I am certain that members of this Chamber do appreciate the fact that we have in our midst a lady who will be able, from the fact that she has given a great deal of attention to matters affecting the women and children of the State, to discuss fully matters affecting their welfare in this Assembly. It is, I suppose, almost tantamount to treason from the party point of view for a Minister of the Crown to suggest that the position is improved so far as the Opposition is concerned as a result of the last general election. It certainly is the case that the Opposition has been strengthened, particularly from the point of view of debating power, and also by virtue of the fact that it has lost some of its members. I particularly desire to congratulate the member for Fremantle in that he has displaced one of those who considered ropes and lamp-posts above everything else in the community. I also congratulate the member for Kalgoorlie, who, in the midst of a mining centre, has captured a seat which has always been regarded as the stronghold of labour. This was due in no small measure to the fact that people, rightly or wrongly, imagined that the gentleman who previously represented Kalgoorlie belonged to what is known as the reactionary and revolutionary section of the labour movement. I believe, with the member for South Fremantle, that after all the British community is made up of persons who are level-headed enough, although they may make mistakes from time to time, to rectify them at the earliest possible opportunity. The people of Kalgoorlie, therefore, expressed a definite and decided opinion at the last election, when they had the opportunity of doing so, on the question of their representation in Parliament. During the

debate we have had all sorts of discussions in regard to economy. I have been wondering what members really mean by their utterances along these lines. If we are compelled in our private capacity or business capacity to effect economy, we do it from the standpoint of making our ledgers balance. I have, however, never held the view that the State is called upon to adjust its balance sheet on exactly the same basis as is a private or business person. The State cannot go bankrupt, and that perhaps is a reason why we have not reached that stage before now. After all, the loss upon a transaction by the Government is not always due to their spendthrift habits, so much as it is a question of economy from the point of view of the general community. We are apt to ride this term to death if we are not careful, and so make people believe that we are in such a tremendously dangerous position that everyone will be closing up in order to follow the lead given by the Government. The newspapers in particular, who are expected to guide the community in regard to matters political, very frequently mislead the public by making them believe that the Treasury is empty and that everything is as bad as it can be. Then our business men, our wholesalers, retailers and producers, generally take fright, and frequently fail to do that which is necessary from their own point of view and that of the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: So you think the newspapers are mild compared with what they were a year or two ago.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know about that. This, after all, is a question of the point of view that the hon. member or myself may take at the moment.

Hon. P. Collier: It depends on which side of the House you are sitting.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite so. I see a great deal that is praiseworthy in the attitude that is taken up by the newspapers, but at times I might view their articles from a different standpoint. This House at all events is not easily led or misled by the utterances which appear in the Press. We have sufficient courage to express our own opinions, notwithstanding that we may be severely criticised by one or other section of the newspapers. I have heard a good deal of criticism levelled at the party of which I am a member. There was the criticism levelled at it by the Minister for Works. There are many persons who want to know what I am going to say in reply to the Minister for Works. I am asked if I am going to answer the Minister for Works who so severely criticised the party. At the moment, however, I am not concerned about the criticism of that party or of the criticism that may be offered regarding any other party in the country. The party which sets out with the deliberate intention of governing this country is entitled, I say, to be criticised from every point of view. It has to go through the fire of criticism and show its bona-fides to the

people. If this party cannot do what is expected of it then it has no right to claim that which the party does claim, namely, the right to be governing this State. Whilst my colleague, the Minister for Works, made a good deal out of the possibility of members of the party in this Chamber being subject to directions from an outside executive or other source, and even went so far, by interjection, as to tell the member for Katanning that he would not be directed by anyone, not even by a beef buccaneer, I venture to say that all of us at one time or another, if we have not been actually directed, have been influenced by the opinions which have been expressed by those attached to their party outside the Chamber. Although we may deny that such a thing is possible we cannot take unto ourselves the glory of being able to assert that we have never yet accepted advice or direction from any quarter. The Leader of the Opposition may know that whilst members of his party may object to straight out direction from their executive or organisation they ought, as we should on this side of the House, willingly look for and accept advice if such advice is worth while. I claim that the Minister for Works, no more than myself, from time to time must have received that which he may regard as a direction, but which has been tendered in the light of advice from one section of the community or another. If a Minister of the Crown, much less a member of Parliament, is not able to sift out that which is direction and that which is advice, he has failed tremendously in his administrative capacity and fallen somewhat from grace. For my part, I am always willing and anxious to accept advice and very frequently seek it, because most of us are able to get good advice from different quarters from time to time. I was not a bit upset over the criticism offered by my colleague. He appeared to be imbued with the idea, though I think that idea has now been banished, that everyone's hand was against him. He was quite wrong. Most of us are on the best of terms with him and wish him well. Reference has been made to the dangers ahead. Most of us can see dangers, but it is quite a simple thing to see a problem though not nearly so simple to solve it. One can go into the street at any time and discuss with men there politics or any other subject, and each person will outline those directions in which he foresees difficulties. It is, however, a difficult matter to induce a person to offer any remedy for undoing some of the things which have happened, in such a way as not to cause tremendous injury to the community while at the same time bringing about the results we all aim at. We can see that Western Australia, in common with every other part of the British community, is to-day struggling against adverse conditions. For things to be any different there would have had to be no great world war. That condition must of necessity lead us into tremendous industrial and other difficulties which we are now called upon to surmount. If we

view these questions from the old standpoint of party then we cannot hope to solve these problems for the permanent good of the community. Some of us will have to change our ideas in regard to political affairs. Whilst some of us may accuse the others of slipping and sliding and so forth, I venture to say that the man who in 1914 had definite views upon political questions and holds exactly similar views in 1921 is either a liar or an ass. It is not possible to conceive such a thing under the conditions which have prevailed since the great war was entered upon. Let us consider the position in which we find ourselves. The metropolitan newspapers take the view that all that is required is to introduce economies into our departments, that our Civil Service is overmanned, that the salaries of the officers should be reduced, and that then everything will be all right. Even if it were possible to dismiss all the officers of the Civil Service and to carry on the services of the State without them it would not be possible to reduce by 50 per cent. the deficit as it exists to-day. It is not the salaries of the service that brings about this position, but rather the services that we render to the public through our Government departments being in excess of that which the citizens of the State are able to afford at the present moment. The question arises whether we are going to continue to render these expensive services to a community which cannot afford to pay for them, and apply the position to that which would arise in similar circumstances in our own private affairs. If we continue to live in luxury in our own homes at a time when our income has been depleted we must expect trouble. Notwithstanding that so much has been said about the need for economy, with the possible exception of the Leader of the Opposition, not a single member who has spoken has done other than urge that we should even extend some of the facilities we are now offering to the public, although the public cannot pay us for that which we are doing now. Most of us apparently look at these matters from the point of view of our own constituencies. Members complain that their constituencies have been disregarded. At Albany, for instance, the people want a new State.

Mr. Corboy: That is only since you have been there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is not so. So far as I am concerned it has not been a 1921 conversion to the question of the better centralisation of Government from the point of view of our different industries. When I was the Leader of the Labour Party in this State, and Premier of the country, I told the public that we were attempting the impossible by trying, with a handful of people numbering 300,000, and with 40 members of Parliament sitting in two Chambers, and only about eight of them actually carrying on the Government of the State, whilst the rest spent their time criticising adversely or otherwise, to govern the State and develop

our industries over such a large area as that lying between Wyndham in the North and Eucla in the South, representing one-third of the total area of the Continent. The man who declares to-day that we can do this successfully and make the State what we desire it to be is not a patriot but is standing in the way of progress. I am not speaking from the point of view of Albany, but as one who represented the goldfields for some years and who occupied the position of Premier. The man who imagines that what may be termed the smaller State movement here means that we slice off a piece of the State and push it off into the Indian Ocean, and therefore lose it altogether, does not appreciate the fact that the opposite event is likely to occur, that we shall be able to centre our administration on that point at which our industries require most assistance. Instead of doing everything in a patchwork fashion, as we are doing at the moment, making a self-contained Denmark, for instance, and then leaving it, we shall be able to build up our industries definitely and distinctly in the interests of the community in one particular centre, and cause it to progress because of the fact that all the States surrounding it are also progressing. Thus Australia will be the richer. We all appreciate the magnitude of the problem facing us. Since 1904 we have been proclaiming the need for a decentralisation policy. I have listened until I have become almost deafened to members in this Chamber as well as other persons on the public platform, and I have read articles in the Press representing all sections of the community advocating the same thing, but I have never yet been able to discover just what is meant.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is only clap-trap.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I would not go so far as to say that. I believe they are genuinely in earnest in their desire for a change, but they do not seem to be able to tell us exactly what they intend to convey. When I went to Katanning I pointed out to the people there that whilst they talked decentralisation they did not practice it. I went to Albany and told the people there the same thing. I told them that although they talked decentralisation they were running accounts with big business houses in Perth, and bringing goods to Albany over the railway system rather than do their business amongst the people of Albany. They do not practice decentralisation. In Katanning I told the people, "You have a farmers' representative on the wheat board, and that board, because they could get .04d. more for wheat by having it gristed in a metropolitan mill, adopted that course, and thereby closed down a Katanning mill which meant a great deal to the people of the Katanning district." As a matter of fact, the only effective decentralisation one can obtain is that which follows from giving the people on the spot the government of their own interests.

Mr. Underwood: Are you in favour of small States?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am. I have never taken any other view. The Leader of the Opposition knows that. It is not a view I am merely expressing to-day. Only a little while ago the leading journal of this State, the "West Australian," in common with other metropolitan newspapers, denounced those who had suggested a division of this State for the purpose of bringing a decentralisation policy into operation. The "West Australian" pointed out that the people who complained had, as a matter of fact, no reason to complain. But this morning the same paper complains of centralisation of the government of Australia from a Western Australian point of view. From the point of view of this State as a whole, we are not suffering as much at the hands of the Federal Government as many of the outlying parts of this State are suffering at the hands of the Government of this State, not from any desire on the part of the State Government to impose disabilities on those outlying parts, but simply by reason of the facts of the situation. How many Ministers, and how many members of this Chamber have ever been north of Geraldton? I do not suppose more than two or three Ministers, and I doubt whether, apart from members representing northern constituencies, more than two or three representatives in this Chamber. In this matter I am not concerned with any question of north and south. The question of division is one for the people of this State. We are living in a free democracy; let us get a free expression of opinion from the people regarding this matter. With all our huge expenditure of public funds during the past 10 years, since 1911, on all sorts of things and sundries, as a matter of actual fact the metropolitan area, comprising about 134 square miles, has increased its population at a greater rate than the whole of the State has done. While our total population has increased by something over 40,000 people, the population of the metropolitan area alone has increased by over 50,000. The value of the production of the people of the metropolitan area, or 48.3 per cent. of our total population, is only 10.4 per cent. of the total value of production in this State—£1,243,000, as against a total production of over 22 million sterling.

Mr. McCallum: But what value does the population of the metropolitan area add to production already here? Take building material, for instance. You are arguing from false premises.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I argue from the figures supplied by the Statistical Department.

Mr. McCallum: Yes, and they take the value at the point of production.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I venture to say that what we have to depend upon from the point of view of our economic existence is, after all, the production of wealth which we can enjoy.

Mr. McCallum: What is the value of coal at the pit's mouth? It is not worth anything until it has been transported.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I venture to say it is worth something.

Mr. McCallum: Then your Statistical Department are in the wrong.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The value of a commodity is not what it is worth in its raw state, but what it is worth when so prepared as to be available for consumption. The value of a commodity is, therefore, its absolute worth as a manufactured article. The coal to which the hon. member refers has value the moment it is put into use. Its value is based on the cost of production and transportation. It is not possible to produce those commodities which mean so much to the general community in so circumscribed an area as that to which I refer, the metropolitan area of 134 square miles when we have so huge a territory as this of Western Australia to deal with. In the interior of this State other than the North-West and the gold-fields and the metropolitan area, 37.4 per cent. of the population produce no less than 14½ million pounds worth of our total wealth production. That process will continue, and it cannot help continuing so long as we have, like we have at the present juncture, all the chief interests of this State through its financial institutions and business enterprises centred in the metropolitan area.

Hon. P. Collier: And also all the instrumentalities of government.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not a matter of government instrumentalities alone. Decentralisation is frequently interpreted as meaning the spreading of the expenditure of Government funds. But the greatest curse in our State is that all our big business enterprises are controlled from Sydney, and, after that, through agencies in Perth. That will always be the case so long as we remain one State.

Mr. Underwood: Would you remedy that by a new State?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not a bit of it!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That has been the experience of every Australian State which has been subdivided. That was the experience of Victoria when it became a separate colony; then the financial institutions of New South Wales established separate branches there. I am merely suggesting that here is a problem to be solved, and that every solution of the problem, whether we agree or disagree with it at the first blush, should receive consideration. To-day a man in Western Australia requiring financial assistance for the purpose of developing our broad acres must make application through the central agency of our banks in Perth; and then he frequently has to go beyond Perth to get a decision from Melbourne or Sydney. But if he wants an advance upon bricks and mortar in the metropolitan area, he can get it straight away—could get it even during war time. Yet those bricks and mortar will not produce

a single penny. As we know, during the war the banks closed their books from the point of view of lending money for the purpose of developing our broad acres. I do not, of course, blame them for adopting that course. It is true that bricks and mortar have their value, and that we cannot do without them; but in times of stress we ought to centre our attention, and the attention of our financial institutions should be centred, on the production of wealth that we can enjoy. In this world nothing can be enjoyed until it has been produced. One of our difficulties to-day lies in the fact that we are centralising not only our system of government but all our commercial and trading interests in Perth, and leaving the rest of our great State to develop itself. The mining districts complain that they are not receiving proper attention, and from the agricultural districts, and also from the great industries of the North, we hear similar complaints. But in the metropolitan area one merely rings up on the telephone, and everything is remedied in 24 hours. To get matters attended to on the spot is not difficult. Now, I have tried to look closely into one or two questions affecting us from a financial point of view. I know some hon. members imagine that it is just a matter of sitting down in an office and saying, "I will cut out £10,000 here, and £10,000 there," and the thing is done. But it is not so. A better appreciation of the circumstances was shown by the Leader of the Opposition when he said that while he was prepared to back the Government in introducing genuine economies in Government departments, he was not going to back them in any measures designed to balance the ledger in a very short space of time, because he knew what would follow in the train of such an effort. If we were to try to reduce our public utilities to such an extent, we would bring about a condition of chaos in Western Australia, a condition which it would take us years to recover from. It is easy enough to say the thing has got to be done, but to do it is something different. Let me explain the position in another way. In 1914 we could borrow money at about 4½ per cent. interest. Last year we had to pay on our borrowings an average of 6½ per cent. And that is not all. For, in 1921 the value of the sovereign depreciated by about 32 per cent., and so we have this position: On the basis of our loan expenditure of 1913-14, which was £2,920,000, we borrowed at 4½ per cent. Last year our loan expenditure was £2,666,000, on which we have to pay an average of 6½ per cent. interest. For the purpose of comparison we can fairly assume a basis of 50 per cent. for the purchase of material at wholesale rates—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But it is not material now; it is land.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: A fair percentage is material as well because, while we advance to the individual for the purpose of going on the land, we have to finance him for the necessary material as well. I

am taking the two years in question by way of comparison, and am assuming that the expenditure was represented to the extent of 50 per cent. by material, and to the extent of 50 per cent. by wages, which works out something like this: The wholesale prices index figure for 1913-14 was 1,086. For 1921 it was 2,480. So that the value of the one half of our expenditure of last year, being £1,333,000 out of £2,666,000, only amounted to £584,911 as compared with a similar expenditure in 1913-14.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is, if you were doing the same class of work.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, for the same class of work. Then take the wages. In 1913-14 the index figure for wages was 1,214. For the last financial year it was 1,600. On the same basis, again comparing the two years, our expenditure on wages for last year of £1,333,000 was equivalent to only £1,011,000 on the 1913-14 basis. Again, on this expenditure we pay $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. per annum interest. So that, for that expenditure of £2,666,000 on which we are paying $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. interest we have only received a value of £1,596,000. It follows that on the 1913-14 basis we are paying no less than $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum interest on the loan money we expended last year. Now let me ask this question: can we expect to get the same results from our Government activities when the money required for the purpose of creating them and keeping them in operation is costing $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum interest, as against the rates current in 1913-14?

Hon. P. Collier: And we shall be loaded with that interest during the next 30 years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There have not been many loans for that currency. Most of that money has been lent to us by the Federal Government. On the other hand, though, we are lending that money to settlers on the land for less than we have to pay for it, the difference being met by the Federal and State Governments. Let me now show what the difference in the cost of money and the value of money means from a railway construction and railway maintenance point of view. On the average basis of cost of construction our railways have cost us £5,100 per mile. I think I am safe in saying that to-day we could not construct our railway system at anything less than £7,600 per mile; that is, £2,500 per mile more than the cost up to 1914. Taking the 1914 rate of interest, $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the £5,100 per mile means an annual charge of £229 interest per mile. To that has to be added one per cent., which is a standard charge in both instances. That would make it £51 or £281 as the annual charge on the construction per mile of railways, under the conditions prevailing in 1914. If we come to 1921 we find we will require £7,600 to build one mile of railway. On that amount we have to pay $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. interest, which works out at £475. Add to that sinking fund of one per cent., which represents £76, this means that the charges on one mile

of railway for 1921 are £551 as compared with £281 for 1914.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That does not apply, because you are not building railways now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: While we are not building new railways, the fact remains that we have to renew lines, and we cannot do that without capital. I will give the hon. member figures later on which will startle him. They will show him what it would involve to keep the system up to standard. As a matter of fact, the increase is over 100 per cent. with respect to the annual charges, and that is carried right through the other charges as compared with those operating in 1914. It amounts to this that the cost of the system to the producer, as well as to the general community, has become almost unbearable. Take the position so far as it affects the Workers' Homes Board. In 1914, the maximum amount available under the Workers' Homes Act, namely £550, enabled a person to procure a very decent house.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A decent house could be built for much less than that in those days.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am taking the maximum figure available under the Act. That money could be procured at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. which, with the sinking fund of one per cent., made the actual cost $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You borrowed at $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am taking the average throughout 1914, the last year of the pre-war period. That represented an average annual interest cost of £28 10s. The same house to-day could not be built for less than £800.

Mr. Corboy: It could not be built for that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am taking that figure in order to be fair.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: An architect said the other day that it would cost £950.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Take the position the Government find themselves in: the money can be borrowed at $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., which together with the sinking fund of one per cent., means a cost of $7\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., or nearly £58 for the same class of house. We are actually paying $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to-day for the same class of house as was previously available to the worker for $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Mr. Pickering: And the cost was spread over 30 years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am pointing this out not because I think we can avoid it, but because we have no control over it. This is one of the matters not generally understood by the community as a whole. These influences are completely beyond the control of the Government. We cannot control the money market of the world, and, in effect, we have to pay what is demanded from us. As it applies to the railways and to the workers' homes, so it applies to individual business concerns. To-

day we are hard up against it as a State and as a community, because of the falling prices, in the world's markets, whilst we are holding products which were produced when the commodity was at its highest point. I will have something to say as to what the position would be had certain methods been adopted some years ago. I mention this aspect in order to demonstrate the difficulties from the railway point of view. State ownership of the railway system is not for the purpose of giving the State control of a business, but for the purpose of permitting a system which can be controlled by the community in the interests of the community and thus encourage production. The man who would say that we should run the railway system on the basis of working out what it would cost to run a ton of goods over a distance of a mile and apply that cost to all goods irrespective of what class of goods they may be, would be contending for something which is not practised in any other part of the world and which would have fatal results if practised in Western Australia. Members have been asking questions dealing with this aspect. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) asked a number of questions regarding the freight on wheat and so on. A member in another place said something about the loss on the carriage of wheat and farmers' produce. As a matter of fact, I do not know that we carried anything at a profit last year unless it was wool and a certain amount of timber. We are carrying our primary products at rates which will enable production to continue or to increase. If we did not adopt that policy we would be killing the goose that lays the golden egg, for that is the wealth which is produced.

Mr. McCallum: You are discriminating between primary producers.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We must do it.

Mr. McCallum: You are giving more consideration to one section than to the other.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It cannot be avoided. Take the question of production. If we continue importing commodities we can produce in Western Australia, from other parts of the world or from the Eastern States, we must produce something else to make up for those importations, because we cannot pay for them by printing notes in the Federal Treasury. We have to pay for those importations by actual production of other produce, and we increase the values of the goods because we have to pay the cost of importing the commodities that should be produced here. It is desirable that we should encourage production even to the extent of a loss on the carriage of the commodities produced.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That all depends on what you get for your commodities.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, that is so. Take the position regarding cream. We set out to encourage the production of cream and we said:—"If you produce cream, we will carry it over the railway system at

less than it cost." We did that in order to encourage the establishment of factories so as to compete with the older factories which have been operating in the Eastern States, and which send butter here—if we may term it butter. As a result of that policy, we have factories established throughout the State. We have them at Busselton, Bunbury, Gnowangerup, Geraldton, Northam, York and so on. They are scattered right throughout the country. Wherever these factories are situated, they get the benefit of the cheap freight over the system. It was very soon discovered, however, that by permitting that one rate to operate over the whole State, a man putting on a quantity of cream at the most extreme point of the railway system got the advantage of the low freight while the man closer to the butter factory was in a different position. We were attempting to promote decentralisation to that extent. The man from outback paid his freight and the man in the metropolitan area taking cream from the long distances and turning it into butter, was able to put the commodity on the market at much less than the factory in the country. If we are in earnest with regard to our decentralisation policy, is there any way in which we can benefit the State to a greater degree than if we assist the establishment of primary industries right at the point of production of the raw material?

Member: That is what we want.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is true. And that is where Kendenup has set us a very good example. It would be of advantage to the community as a whole if the State could do what Kendenup has done. I do not know whether the Kendenup scheme will fail; I do not think it will fail. If we could do for the State what the Kendenup company are doing for the settlers on their estate, it would help considerably towards decentralisation. The company are taking the products of their settlers for a period of years, and they are assisting the settlers by guaranteeing them against loss by taking over their products. The company are taking their commodities and despatching them to Perth, and thus securing to them a return for their labour. Our necessities here are to find the cash to pay the expenses of sending the commodities for somebody else to consume.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the consumer has to pay.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Often they have not to pay, but the producer has to face a loss. I do not say that that always follows. There should be a solution of the problem, but we have not achieved it yet. We should see that a man's produce secures to him a fair return for his labour. The producer is entitled to that just the same as any other man. We have not arrived at that position yet, and because we take a man who is producing cream and assist him by sending his goods to market, in order that we may tackle the position, we

are accused of doing something detrimental to the community as a whole. One of the leading journals dealt with this aspect.

Hon. P. Collier: You must particularise when you refer to the leading journals. We do not know which is the leading one.

Member: Was it the "Call"?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was not the "Call." That paper is only dealing with oil. Our rates on the carriage of cream in Western Australia are not to be compared with those operating in the Eastern States of Australia. In Western Australia our rates up to 150 miles, which is about the greatest distance cream is hauled at the present time, is 6¼d. per can. In South Australia the charge is 1s. 11½d. per can; in Victoria it is 2s. 3½d. per can, and in New South Wales 2s. 1½d. per can. I asked for figures regarding this position to show the position of local factories with respect to the country institutions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Don't say too much or you will be hauled over the coals.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: By whom?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not object to telling the truth or hearing it, although it is sometimes hurtful. If we take the position of a butter factory in a country district, where they are collecting cream from a radius of 40 miles, which is the radius of influence for each factory, let us see how it works out. Take the factory at Narrogin. Cream can be sent to that factory from any point within the radius of 40 miles. On 560 gallons the charge is ¾d., which works out at £1 15s. That is the approximate quantity required to get a ton of butter. On the basis I have mentioned that represents in freights £1 15s. When the butter is manufactured and sent to the markets in Perth the butter factory has to pay £2 3s. 4d. freight and handling and other charges amounting to 4s. or a total from the point of factory to the market of £4 2s. 4d. per ton of butter. Under the new rates which were recently introduced, the local factory would have to pay £4 13s. 4d. on cream within that 40 miles radius. From the point of view of the Government I think that is fair consideration.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In one case the butter has double handling.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: You cannot help that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am only pointing out that fact.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: These things are essential from the point of view of the interests of Australia, and of encouraging thriving industries in these districts, because it is essential that people interested in producing cream in Narrogin or any other centre should have an outlet for their commodities. That fact was realised by the producers when it was brought home to them by the establishment of factories in their centre.

Mr. Johnston: On the old basis the country factories were handicapped compared with Perth.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is what I am pointing out. Then there is the case of the Albany butter factory. Within the radius of 40 miles cream is collected and taken to the factory where the butter is manufactured for £5 10s. 7d., while the Perth manufacturer can get the cream from within the radius of the Albany district and have it carried over the long distance by rail and yet put the butter manufactured from it on the market at £5 5s.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I suppose they are using real cream at Albany now; not water, as they did before.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Surely it is not necessary for me to tell the hon. member that they use only the finest cream at Albany. It is in my own electorate.

Mr. McCallum: But you are in control of all this. How is it that you have not altered it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have altered it. I am showing what alterations have been made. As nearly as possible all the factories are now on equal terms.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Except that Perth does not compete with Albany, whereas Albany could send to Perth to compete.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member will realise that a factory in Albany established merely for the purpose of supplying the requirements of Albany, would be so small that one would scarcely know that it was on the map. However, the only purpose I had in bringing about this alteration was the putting of them all on an equal footing. One hon. member criticised my action in respect of Mr. Macfarlane. Mr. Macfarlane is a personal friend of mine, and as a rule I do not set out to injure my friends. Still, as a Minister of the Crown and a trustee of the public interests, I do set out to do what is right, irrespective of friend or foe. As a matter of fact, we have not injured Mr. Macfarlane, except that he is not now in quite so good a position as he was formerly. However, he is still able to compete with butter factories in all parts of the State.

Hon. P. Collier: He is still making a living.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think so. I have mentioned this in order to point out that the only alternative to that proceeding is to increase our cream freight up to that obtaining in the Eastern States, or else to bring it up to the average cost of carriage per ton per mile over the railway system. Taking into consideration all other conditions, if we attempted to do that we should not only kill the existing butter factories, but would kill the industry for many years to come. So we have to use our railways as a means for giving our producers what might be termed a bonus.

Mr. Mann: Victoria paid a bonus on butter production.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That was on butter produced for export. We cannot do that, and so we have to introduce other methods for achieving a similar object.

Hon. P. Collier: Victoria did that before the advent of Federation.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, Victoria could not do it now, although New South Wales has found a method of giving a bonus to the flour mills in that State—which reminds me that we must wake up and see if we cannot do the same for our flour mills. That is one of the positions in which we find ourselves. I ask members whether they are really serious in asserting that I must compel the Commissioner of Railways to balance his ledger? It would be a very simple thing for me to issue such an instruction, and probably the Commissioner would carry out that instruction. But in the process we would not only kill all the industries, but kill our railways as well.

Mr. Johnston: Take the advice of the Minister for Works—encourage business.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is simple enough to talk about, but it is often found to be a difficult proposition when put into practice. If we were to increase freights to a point where production was no longer profitable, people would refrain from producing. Also I agree with the member for North-East Fremantle (**Hon. W. C. Angwin**) that the production of some of our commodities will expand until we are able to put them on the world's market, and thus return some compensation to the producers, who, in turn, ought to be paying something to the general community for having enabled them to reach the world's market.

Member: Wheat, for instance?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, I would exclude wheat for the time being, because we have now some two million bushels which we cannot sell, there being no market for it. However, if we put such restrictions on the carriage of commodities produced in the State that the producers decide to go out of production, then it will reflect not only on the railways, but on all our industries as well. The member for Collie will realise that if we do not get traffic for our railways, we will not burn his coal on the railways, and if the coal is not wanted, there will be no coal mines in operation, and if the coal mines are not there, there will be no occasion for the shops and other business concerns of Collie, and so in the end there will be no Collie.

Mr. J. H. Smith: And no electors of Collie.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That would be one of the worst features, because we would not then have the member for Collie. Last year our business undertakings were responsible for the deficit on the year's operations. I venture to say that the business undertakings are going to be responsible for continued shortage for a number of years to come. The question is whether we should continue to operate them at a loss, or try to

build them up on a basis that would close down other industries. Try what method we will, there is no third way out of the difficulty. The business undertakings, so essential to the production of wealth, must be continued, even if at a loss. We hope to cut that loss as much as possible but, rather than add burdens to the producers, we must carry some loss for a number of years to come. If you make my salary as Minister for Railways contingent on my making the railway finances balance next year, I will get out to-morrow.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We can raise the rates still further—and have nothing to carry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is the point. We would have nothing to carry. But we can still put our house in order if we are in earnest. I will show how. If we were operating the railways as a private firm, we would look at the position and ask, "Is every mile of existing railway running into districts where production is encouraged, while in other districts production is starved for want of facilities for getting the produce to market?" If we found that was so, as business men we would adopt other methods. However, I will come to that later. Losses on railway operations are not restricted to Western Australia. During the six years 1914 to 1920 inclusive Western Australia lost on her railways £1,337,000, South Australia lost £1,045,000, Victoria lost £2,031,000, New South Wales lost £1,011,000, Queensland lost £4,917,000. Last year we lost £418,000, South Australia lost £550,000, and New South Wales lost £577,000—and the Treasurer of that State estimates losing something over two millions next year.

Mr. McCallum: He only said that when giving special evidence in the Arbitration Court.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Out of 3,000 miles of railway, we have approximately 1,000 miles operating in goldfields districts. Whether we like it or not, mining has been suffering a terrible depression during recent years, and is likely to continue to suffer a depression, through causes over which we have no control. In the United States of America gold production during the four years 1913 to 1917 declined by 48 per cent., while the gold production of the world during the same period declined 25 per cent. Ours has declined in common with the others. Our railways are suffering through having non-paying lines in goldfields districts. I do not suggest that we should tear up all those lines just because they do not happen to be paying. Later I will show some of my friends on the cross benches what the gold production of Western Australia meant to us in a time of crisis. Then we have non-paying railways at Phillips River and at Marble Bar, we have had the increased cost of all commodities used on the railways, coal has gone up tremendously during the last three or four years, we have an increased interest rate to pay on all capital expenditure—and each year there is a tremendous expenditure of capital—and we have had a reduction in traffic, due not only

to increased freights but to a general trade depression which is in evidence the world over. Then we have had a general increase in cost of the labour necessary to operate the system, and also increased cost of all material used. The Commissioner of Railways, instead of being barked at by everybody, ought to be given all possible encouragement. If some hon. members were in my position for a few weeks, they would get an idea of how very trying is his position. It is not easy for me as Minister to get done what I want done, and it is far more difficult for the Commissioner, who is met with opposition whichever way he may turn. First of all he has the union representing the railway men complaining about the railway officers, and in turn the railway officers making complaints against the railway men.

Hon. P. Collier: What we want is one big union.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And what will happen when we get one big union? In accordance with human nature, they will pick out Tom Smith, who is seen to be getting to the top, make a target of him, and push him over the precipice. Have not we seen it in the Railways? Colonel Pope was the best man in the system until he was appointed Commissioner, but he was not in office very long before all and sundry were up against him, and there was not a man in the service who did not think he could run the system better than could the new Commissioner.

Mr. McCallum: Well, nobody could make a bigger mess of it than is being made now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, of course not. Everybody knows that nobody in authority knows anything about his job. Take the hon. member: he is an encyclopædia on all questions. To appease him, I will for the moment accept him as knowing all about all things. But he is a tremendously foolish individual to be sitting in his place in this Assembly if—

Mr. McCallum: You have no right to say that! You are not going to tell me—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. McCallum: I am not going to let him put that over me. He is not going to tell me—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must keep order.

Mr. McCallum: Then, don't let him misrepresent me.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am very sorry if the hon. member is annoyed. I am afraid he does not appreciate the fact that if he criticises he must be criticised in return. In an Assembly like this he cannot express strong opinions without having to listen to the opinions of others.

Mr. McCallum: There is criticism and criticism. I am not going to listen—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must keep order.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If there is in the House any hon. member who can run the railway system better than can the Commissioner of Railways, that hon. member

is very foolish in remaining in the House instead of taking over the Commissioner's job.

Mr. Corboy: The only one who claimed that ability was your own colleague, the Minister for Works.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not deny that he did. I do not deny that there are quite a number of people in the community and probably some among my own colleagues who think they could do better than the Commissioner of Railways. I do not deny their right to think that, but I have my own opinion as to their ability to do so. In justice to the present Commissioner, let me point out that ever since he has been in office, there has been a continual increase in the cost of operating the railway system due to causes over which he has had no control. By an award delivered on the 16th December, 1919, which was made retrospective to the 1st August, 1919, the basic rate of wage was increased from 9s. 7d. to 11s. a day, an increase of 1s. 5d. per day. Other rates were increased from 1s. 5d. to 2s. 11d. a day and salaries were increased by £22 per annum. The cost of the award from that date until the 30th June, 1921, was no less than £479,000.

Hon. P. Collier: Which was covered by increased freights.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, it was not.

Hon. P. Collier: The report of the Commissioner of Railways said so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is not correct. I have the figures. A railway award was delivered on the 19th September, 1920, and this also was made retrospective from May, 1920—back into the previous financial year.

Mr. Pickering: And there was a further increase of freights.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Under this award wages were increased by 2s. 4d. a day and salaries by £37 per annum. The cost of that award to the 30th June last was £295,500, or taking the two awards a total increased expenditure for wages and salaries in the Railway Department of no less than £774,500. During the year 1920-21 no less than £545,500 of the £774,500 had to be found, and the total increased revenue from increased freights for the same period was £48,400—

Mr. Johnston: Enormous!

Hon. P. Collier: It was pretty close up anyhow.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Or a shortage of £56,100 on the basis only of the cost of labour. Does not the Leader of the Opposition appreciate the fact that these figures represent only the increase in the cost of labour as applied to the Railway Department?

Hon. P. Collier: I would like to quote the Premier's figures against yours.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have obtained my figures from the Commissioner of Railways within the last few days.

Hon. P. Collier: Well, I suppose the Premier obtained his from the same source.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The increased freights did not meet the additional expenditure on salaries and wages alone. I am not complaining of this, but I am arguing that the Commissioner is confronted with difficulties which are not appreciated by members of this House or by the community at large. Over and above the increased cost of salaries and wages, he has had to meet the increased cost of materials put into the railway system ever since he has been in charge of the railways, and the increased freights have not met even the increases for salaries and wages alone. We have an award affecting engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners. From the latest figures which the Commissioner has got out, this award will cost us an additional £34,600 this year. The Commissioner has to find that £34,600 somewhere, and of this amount no less than £9,000 represents work performed during the last financial year which amount he would be unable to recover whatever he did. It is not always realised that an award does not mean merely the increases which appear on the surface. It is not only a question of the rate of pay per day; the conditions surrounding the employment have to be taken into consideration. At the present time everyone admits that the essential need of the country is not less work: even if it is not more work, it is certainly as much work as before that is required. I do not suggest that men should work longer hours or harder than before, but I do say that their work should not be less than before. Yet the Arbitration Court, under the recent award, gave special consideration by way of holidays to engine-drivers and firemen. The Court did not follow out the same principle with regard to cleaners. The award provided that after 12 months' service 12 days' holiday should be allowed. Enginedrivers and firemen were granted an extra four days. For engine-drivers and firemen situated east of Yalgoo and north of Goon-garrie an additional two days was allowed, making in their case no less than 18 days a year. For working on Good Friday and Christmas Day, although extra wages were stipulated, an additional two days holiday have also to be allowed. Therefore, in the case of many of these men, it might mean an annual holiday of 20 days.

Mr. Boyland: What did they get in the old days?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nothing like that period. Taking the minimum allocated to engine-drivers and firemen they get 16 days per annum made up of 12 days ordinary, plus four days for being drivers and firemen, with a possible holiday of 20 days a year. If we take 16 days for the purpose of calculation and apply it to the 938 engine-drivers and firemen in our service, the total number of days of idleness for which they have to be paid is 15,000 a year. The average wage of these men is about 18s. a day under the award; in three years' time it will be

about 21s. a day. This will mean that we shall be paying £13,500 to our engine-drivers and firemen by way of holidays for remaining in idleness every year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Did not they have 12 days before?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not concerned about that; I am telling the House what they are getting now.

Mr. McCallum: Is not it a payable proposition to grant annual leave to any class of worker?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not denying that.

Mr. McCallum: The court, in awarding that, must have thought so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not arguing for or against the award.

Mr. McCallum: You appear to be arguing against the decision of the court.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member may say so if he wishes, but other members will appreciate the facts which I am bringing before them. The Commissioner of Railways, owing to conditions over which he has no control, has to find more money in order to operate the system, and he has only one way of doing that namely, by increasing the freights, unless we make up the difference from general revenue. To blame the Commissioner for not making the railways pay is as absurd an attitude as anyone could possibly adopt.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not think any member has blamed him for not making them pay or even for the financial results.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have heard a good deal of criticism about the railway operations.

Hon. P. Collier: But not on the financial position.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, on the financial position. There have been articles in the Press pointing out the tremendous loss made on the railway system, and indicating that all that was required to make it pay was to sack a few salaried or wages men. By refusing to provide facilities for the community, we are apt to lose trade. The United States of America lost business very effectively during that period of the war when they operated their railways in such a way as to induce road transport to compete, and that business has never since been regained by the railways. To-day, in the United States, road transport which was encouraged during the war is successfully competing with the railways. The alternative suggested is that which has been adopted in South Africa. The other day we read in the Press a cable message from Johannesburg to the following effect—

A circular which has been issued by the railway administration says that the deficit for the first quarter of the financial year amounts to about £600,000, making the accumulated deficit over £3,000,000. The circular adds that as the increased rates have failed to produce the anticipated amount of revenue, the Government feels that it

cannot justify the continuance of the present heavy expenditure, and it proposes to introduce a system of short time in preference to a general retrenchment, and to revert to longer hours in connection with certain grades where the work is not of an intensive character. The Government has invited a delegation from each union to attend a conference with the Minister for Railways (Mr. J. W. Jaggars), in order that this matter may be discussed.

I want to ask this question—Are we justified, in matters affecting the welfare of the men employed in the Government departments, whether in the railway or any other department, after having submitted the case to an independent board of arbitrators such as the court and having received their award, in abiding by that award, asking the whole of the community to bear the burden, or should we ask the users of the system to bear the burden? It is a burden which someone must carry. I venture to say that our producers, irrespective of whether they are gold miners, tin miners, lead miners, or producers of wheat or potatoes, cannot produce their commodities on a basis which will give them a fair return, if the cost of carrying their commodities to the markets is increased. Therefore the community will have to carry the loss. It might be an unpleasant fact, but it is a fact which exists and which must be faced. Now may I come to the question which has caught on very effectively with our friends opposite; I refer to what they term a lack of proper appreciation of the valuable services rendered by the men in the Railway Department. After all they forget that the reflection they cast was not cast on the Commissioner alone but that it also applied to the members of his staff and to the employees generally. We are told that a year or so ago so many men were employed and so many train miles were run, and that last year so many men were employed and so many train miles were run.

Mr. McCallum: The member for Fremantle (Mr. Gibson) I think, quoted those figures.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No.

Mr. McCallum: I think he did.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Mr. Cheson on behalf of Mr. Corboy submitted a question.

Mr. McCallum: But the member for Fremantle mentioned it after you replied to that question.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for South Fremantle need not be disturbed about it. I am going to defend those men whom the hon. member has evidently forgotten. To the 30th April, 1921, 4,169,000 train miles were run, and during the same period of 1920, 4,015,000 train miles were run—an increase of 154,000 train miles. If we allow for the train miles which would have been run if the strike had not occurred, and we are entitled to do this for the purpose of comparison in relation to the number of men employed, the total would have been

379,000 train miles in excess of the previous year. Up to that point, therefore, members will understand the reason why the number of men employed on the railway system was greater for this year than for last year. Our mileage had increased tremendously. It is well to realise also that on the railway system, we have busy periods which are often followed by periods of slight depression. If the men employed were put on the basis that every time the traffic fell off for a week, a fortnight, or a month, numbers of them had to be dismissed, our railway system would soon be in a very chaotic state. Because there happens to be a falling-off in business during one month, we do not work on the policy that the falling-off will continue permanently.

Mr. Corboy: Is not that what you are really doing by dismissing men at the present time?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am coming to that. As soon as it was discovered that the falling-off in our traffic was due to a general trade depression and was likely to last for an extended period, we took the earliest opportunity to adjust the manning of the system. It is an unpleasant thing to have to do, but as the Leader of the Opposition said, we are not entitled to continually shut our eyes to the fact that we employ men to render service commensurate with the wages or salary paid to them.

Mr. Pickering: In New South Wales they are expecting an increase of £2,000,000 in their administration costs.

Hon. P. Collier: That was said when a wages case was being heard.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I want this position to be understood, because some people are very free in criticising the railways from a bald statement of comparative figures, without realising how those figures should be applied. There is a certain number of the staff included in the number I have already mentioned who are not in any way affected by an increase or falling-off of traffic. I refer to the men in our workshops. Unless we deliberately dismiss highly skilled tradesmen because there is a little depression extending over a month or two, and as a consequence allow all our maintenance work to fall into arrears, these men are not affected. We have 1,500 men employed in our workshops, and the reason why we have a greater number of men employed in the whole of the railway system is due to the fact that we have introduced and are continuing the very solid policy of manufacturing on the spot every possible thing we can require in our railway system, instead of importing it. What we are actually doing, and should be supported in by the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy), is that we are employing as much labour as we can in Western Australia instead of leaving that labour to be employed in America, England, or the Eastern States.

Mr. Corboy: I do support it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The figures quoted are misleading and are apt to indicate, unless they are properly understood, that we are employing more men than should be the case for the work that is being done.

Mr. McCallum: Why did you not put a foot-note on the return that you gave to the House?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That return was prepared by the Commissioner of Railways, and is in accordance with other returns that are made up for comparative purposes.

Mr. McCallum: I am not complaining; I am glad to hear it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Notwithstanding this criticism, and the possibility of the position with regard to the number of men employed being misunderstood, I am urging upon the Commissioner wherever he can, by the introduction of modern machinery, to employ more men, instead of importing the material that can be manufactured here. It is all in our favour to have more men employed in Western Australia rather than that they should be employed elsewhere, and send the material here that could possibly be made within the State. We do not separate the number of men employed on capital expenditure from those employed on ordinary maintenance expenditure for the purpose of this return. Our capital expenditure last year was very much in excess of the capital expenditure for the previous year, due to the fact, as mentioned by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum), that we are making up to-day 24 bogie tram cars such as have previously been imported or distributed amongst other manufacturers.

Mr. Angelo: Were those the cars that were promised for last Christmas?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. The hon. member ought to know that last Christmas has gone and that we are approaching another Christmas.

Mr. Angelo: Evidently the tram cars think so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member should get it into his head that we are now in a new financial year, and have entirely new works on hand. We are building 24 new bogie tram cars at the Midland Junction workshops. Every man employed on the work is included in the staff of our railway system which has been so much criticised. We are building 100 louvre bogie wagons for perishable traffic, and 40 cattle four-wheeled wagons.

Hon. P. Collier: Are you building any tram cars?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are building 24. Apparently another hon. member has just awakened. We are also building 140 four-wheeled sheep wagons and 20 bogie sheep wagons. We are manufacturing four moulding machines which would otherwise have to be imported, and are manufacturing vacuum brake cylinders and parts. We are

manufacturing steam injectors for locomotives, and new parts for the maintenance of the plant for the electrical supply station. We are also making carriage fittings, such as locks, handles, wash basins, and lamp and other fittings, which would otherwise have to be imported, and parts in connection with the maintenance of the tramway system generally. Hon. members should take an opportunity of looking at the exhibition in Barrack-street, where they will see a display of the work that is performed by the men in the Midland Junction workshops. I am sure they will admit at once that nothing better than this has ever been imported into Western Australia.

Mr. Corboy: There is nothing better in the world.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so. If they would have a talk to Mr. Evans they will find that some of the parts there shown have been tremendously improved upon as a result of the ideas put into practice by the men in the workshops.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Invite them to go to the workshops.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Let the Minister deliver his address without so many interjections.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am getting pretty tired. In the past we have imported dogspikes, of which we use a tremendous quantity. We have now ordered a machine which will manufacture from 5,000 to 6,000 dogspikes every hour. Previously we did not think it worth while to spend even that small amount of money in obtaining such a machine. We have allowed our locomotives to get into such a state that if we get a peak load, such as we had last year, we shall have difficulty in handling our traffic. We have asked for quotations for the supply of the locomotives that we require. After going into the matter we discovered that by the expenditure of a fairly large sum of money we could manufacture every part of these locomotives in our own workshops at Midland Junction and establish that particular business on a permanent footing. This would lead to the employment of additional labour, the circulation of money within the State, and effect a saving, after providing the necessary machinery, of something like £10,000 on the manufacture of eight locomotives.

Hon. P. Collier: And on the 44 hours a week basis as against 48.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You will get our vote to manufacture them here.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not want the hon. member's vote. I am going to do it without that. When I make up my mind to do something, I go ahead, and take the risk of getting a vote upon it. I know, of course, that I will get it because I always do the right thing. I want to increase the number of men employed on the system, so long as it does not mean unduly increasing

the number of men to operate the system, which for the most part is intended for the requirements of our primary producers. If it is a question of providing the necessities for our railways, tramways, and electricity supply, in order to meet the requirements of the State, by local manufacture rather than the purchase of imported goods, it would be better to increase the number of men employed by the State rather than go outside for that which we require.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is this brought about by the increased tariff?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Partly, but not wholly. Quotations were invited for eight Garratt engines for light railways, of which type we are shorter than in respect to any other engine. The estimated cost as given by manufacturers in England was £13,350 for each engine put into traffic. We found, however, that we could do the work locally for less than £10,000 each, representing a saving of nearly £4,000 per locomotive.

Hon. P. Collier: Did you get quotations from the Eastern States?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They cannot do it any better than we can.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We can do it here all right.

Hon. P. Collier: I merely wanted to compare the prices.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am nervous about making too many inquiries along those lines, for sometimes things do not work out as we expect. On these eight locomotives we shall be able to effect a saving to the system of approximately £30,000. All that it is necessary to do is to purchase additional machinery which will cost us £20,000. We shall then have that machinery for nothing and still show a profit of £10,000 on the transaction. Is it not better to do that and stand all the criticism that may be offered, and employ the additional number of men represented in the workshops at Midland Junction? We have about 3,800 miles of railway traffic to look after, and there are about 2,000 sleepers per mile in our roads.

Hon. P. Collier: The report says 3,500 sleepers.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am taking in all the sidings, etc., which have to be sleepers as well as the roads. The mileage of traffic which has to be sleepers is 3,800 miles, and at 2,000 sleepers per mile it works out at 7,600,000 sleepers. The average life of a sleeper is 15 years, when the heavy as well as the light traffic is taken into consideration. If we keep our sleepers up to standard we require about 500,000 sleepers every year. We have a railway mill at Dwellingup which, when in full operation, can turn out 200,000 sleepers per annum. This leaves a balance of 300,000 sleepers which we have to get from some other source. The railway mill can turn out sleepers at 77s. per load, which is equal to 3s. per sleeper. This figure includes working expenses, depreciation and interest on the outlay upon the plant. The

quotation from the State Sawmills for 200,000 karri sleepers, not powellised, the supply commencing in February next, was £5 10s. per load, and for powellised sleepers £6 10s., as against the railway mills estimate of £3 17s.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are they not in the ring?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know. If they are they will be squeezed. The outside quotations range up to £8 10s. per load. The Kauri Timber Company at Barrabup, put in a quotation of £1 per load above cost, which they estimated at between £5 10s. and £6 per load. In September, 1920, after consultation with the Conservator of Forests, the Commissioner of Railways reduced his specification for sleepers, in the belief that by so doing he would cause the throwing open of certain bush and thus effect a reduction in the price of sleepers for railway purpose. We made areas available to the hewers and they started off by supplying sleepers at 75s. a load. It was not long before they asked for an increase to 85s., and they got it. The quantity of sleepers they supply is not of material consequence, being small when compared with the total requirements of the service. We then wrote to the Sawmillers' Association, which refused to supply except at open market rates. They evidently followed the example of some of our friends and demanded the world's parity, no matter whether the business would be of benefit to the State or not. They said, "If you will pay us what we can get for sleepers overseas, we will supply you."

Hon. P. Collier: They ought to have asked more than world's parity for local consumption.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Department offered £5s. 10s. per load. The result was that we asked the Conservator of Forests, when issuing his new permits, to make provision that a certain percentage of the sleepers taken from the area should be made available to the Railway Department at a price of £1 above the cost of placing such sleepers on trucks at a point nearest to the sleeper cutting operations. Even under these conditions we shall have difficulty in getting the sleepers under £5 10s. or £6 10s. a load. The Commissioner has made a proposal that notwithstanding that we are taking from our timber forests quantities of sleepers and sending them overseas, we should establish another mill operated by the department at an approximate capital cost of £100,000, so that we may be able to do justice to the requirements of the railways. If we are asked to go on to the open market and buy sleepers at possibly £8 10s. per load, when we can produce them ourselves for 77s. we ought to take upon ourselves the onus of doing so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would it not be better to see if the State Sawmills have not made a mistake?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We can deal with that later. In 1907 the cost of

sleepers per load for the railway system was 35s., equal to 1s. 4½d. per sleeper. The present costs are 77s. per load or 3s. per sleeper. We paid the hewers 85s. per load or 3s. 4d. a sleeper, the State Sawmills 110s. per load or 4s. 4d. (that is to say, if they get their demands), for unpowellised karri sleepers, and 130s. per load or 5s. 1d. per powellised sleeper. In these circumstances it is difficult to withhold approval of the expenditure upon a mill of an additional £100,000, and so enable us to get our supplies at a reasonable rate. There is only one other method which we shall have to adopt, and that is impose such freights on timber for export taken over our railway system that will make it worth while for the sawmiller to supply our own requirements first at a reasonable figure. I am not keen on increasing railway freights, but I do not see why we should starve whilst others are able to live in affluence and practically at our expense. The member for South Fremantle has raised the question of the re-arrangement of the staff. The hon. member in getting replies to certain questions was able to say that we have increased our clerical and professional staff, when we should have been reducing it. Such is not the case. In 1920 we had 55 professional men in the branches affected, carrying a salary of £19,606, a clerical staff of 55 carrying a salary of £12,516, inspectors of permanent ways and buildings, 21, carrying a salary of £6,865, or 131 officers aggregating £38,987 in salaries. This year, thanks to a re-arrangement decentralising control in our railway system, having men on the spot to see what is happening, we have 50 professional men—as against 55 previously—carrying salaries of £17,493, 55 clericals and cadets carrying salaries of £13,378, and 21 permanent way inspectors carrying salaries of £6,949; or a total of 128 staff—as against 131 previously—carrying salaries of £37,829; or £1,158 less than before, and with considerably better supervision, thanks, as I say, to the system of decentralisation. The total I have quoted, moreover, includes all the automatic increases to which the men were entitled under the conditions of their employment. Before passing from railway matters, let me say that economy in them can be carried to a point where it becomes distressful to the general community. Though there is a temporary depression, yet if we have faith in this country of ours, and are sincere in our desire to assist production, surely we cannot take the view that our traffic has fallen off permanently. Therefore it is infinitely better to carry the trained men in our service, whom we know we shall require in a short while, than to dismiss them and before very long have to appoint untrained men in their stead. Thus, while endeavouring to retrench we have tried to avoid any retrenchment which would seriously and permanently affect men who mean very much to our railway system as a whole. Again, we consider it desirable that the rail-

ways should use our local products—for instance, our native coal. We are using as nearly as possible 100 per cent. of Collie coal on our railway system. I consider it is a good practice. But now I am told that by using all Newcastle coal in our northern district, we could save £12,528 per annum to our railway finances. I am quite satisfied the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) will not contest those figures. But the point I have to consider is whether it is desirable that we should import that coal, thus employing miners in Newcastle and putting our own men in Collie out of employment. The Commissioner of Railways from his point of view is, of course, entitled to say to me, "You must carry the difference in cost, and not ask me to bear that burden."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the Commissioner did not take that stand during the war.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member does not follow my argument. I am drawing no comparison between the value of one coal and the value of another. But when economy is talked, we should realise whither it may sometimes lead us. The few thousands of pounds saved to the railway system by the use of Newcastle coal as suggested, would mean a loss to the whole community, and particularly to the men employed in the Collie coal mines. Again, some lines operating in this State to-day are not by any means paying. There are two of them I desire to mention particularly. First there is the Mt. Magnet-Sandstone line of 93 miles, the loss on which since the inception totals £50,765. Then there is the Bullfinch line, of 20 miles, the loss on which since its inception now totals £14,807. A return for the six months ended on the 30th June last shows that the tonnage of goods carried over the Sandstone line of 93 miles, or over any part of it, was £1,007, while the gross earnings amounted to £1,400. Passengers booked numbered 37, and passenger earnings totalled £18, for those six months, while the average load of the train, the tare train and the goods and passengers, was 115 tons.

Mr. A. Thomson: You should pull that line up.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of that 115 tons train load, 83 tons was tare, and 32 tons contents. That applies to each train travelling along that line during those six months. As regards the Bullfinch line of 22 miles, for the six months ended on the 30th June last, the tonnage of goods carried was 540, and the freight earnings £250, the passengers booked numbered 250, and the passenger earnings totalled £30. The average load of the Bullfinch train was 76 tons, of which 55 tons was made up in weight of carriages and trucks, and 21 tons of contents. What I want to come at is this: Any man operating this State as a huge business concern would look around to see whether there was any other means by which he could serve the needs of those two communities, thus setting free the rails to be laid down in some

district where a line would prove payable. I am convinced that no person whatever between Sandstone and Mt. Magnet would suffer in the slightest degree if we took up the rails of that line, made a road bed, and operated the railway line as a road with a transport system. The result would be a better and cheaper system of transport from every point of view, and the setting free of 43 miles of rails to be laid down in a district where a line would pay. The same considerations apply in the case of the Bullfinch line. In recent years road transport has made such progress that it can compete even with railway operation. Where one has a good road bed already in the form of a railway track, no great harm can result from pulling up the rails and substituting motor transport.

Mr. A. Thomson: Why do you not adopt that system?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are considering things. We cannot do this in a hurry. Parliament has to agree to it. These lines were built by Act of Parliament, and if the rails are to be taken up, it will have to be done by Act of Parliament. Let me take another case. Some years ago we duplicated the 24 miles of line between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. It has been suggested that we should take up one of these sets of rails, because the other set can, without any question whatever, do all the work. But thereupon the Mayor of Kalgoorlie, no less a person, one who probably shrieks for the exercise of economy, comes along and suggests that from sentimental considerations, and from a regard for the moral effect the pulling up of one set of rails would have on the mining community, we should leave those two lines down. If we are going to pay regard to sentiment under existing conditions, we are going to land ourselves in serious difficulties before very long.

Mr. Angelo: The sentiment in question has not many roofs to live under up there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The misunderstanding has been created by men holding high public positions.

Hon. P. Collier: And by the members for the district; I do not refer to the present members.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The present member for Kalgoorlie might easily have been led into error when the mayor and the councillors and other public men were crying from the housetops against the Government's proposal. The member for the district might easily have come in with the wash.

Hon. P. Collier: Or gone out with the wash.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member has already shown his courage by refusing to join the agitation.

Mr. Boyland: I want some of these rails for Esperance.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I want to emphasise the fact that to-day in this State we are carrying on business in no small measure merely on grounds of sentiment. Some-

body feels that from a sentimental point of view, from regard for the moral effect, it is not advisable to do this, that, or the other. But we cannot consider business questions from such aspects. I ask hon. members to bear in mind that while it is easy to curry favour with an electorate to-day, by affecting conformity with the wishes of the electorate, it is not possible to retain the favour of the whole of the State permanently by allowing the interests of the State to be subordinated to moral effect, by disregarding the general welfare of the community, which is the essential thing under existing conditions. In passing let me mention the motor trains as to which the member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson) was so concerned. Those cars will be arriving at the beginning of next year. The hon. member came along to me with a catalogue showing the magnificent motor trains being operated in various parts of the world—four of these trains were thus shown, and the fourth was pictured as operating here in Western Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: Are these English or American cars?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: English, I think. In ordering them we had to bear in mind that we must not take something that might break down and block the line. The cars have been built to our own specifications, so that, if the motor itself does not operate, we can make the car a part of our actual train system.

Hon. P. Collier: I would try one or two before I got many of them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have only ordered three as yet. We are not in a hurry.

Mr. Underwood: You have been in no hurry as regards the Marble Bar line.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I can assure the hon. member that I am never in a hurry to get to any bar. As the tramways are connected to some degree with the railways, let me say one or two things regarding tramway extension. It seems to me that some members have a poor conception of what is due to the community from the Minister, and from Parliament to the community. In 1912 we deliberately took over from a private company the operation of the tramway system in the metropolitan area. During the whole of that period the Government have been operating those trams, supposedly in the interests of the community of the metropolitan area. Now I want to ask hon. members, irrespective of what interest they represent in this Chamber—and I myself occupy a somewhat invidious position in that regard—whether the Government, having taken over that tramway system, are entitled to turn round and tell the community from whom they took the trams, "Well, we have got the trams, and you have got to do without any extensions or additional conveniences, because at the moment it does not suit us to furnish them."

Mr. A. Thomson: That principle is applied to the country districts.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No; that principle is not applied to the country districts.

Hon. P. Collier: It never has been.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member should know; that is, if he knows anything at all—

Hon. P. Collier: Which is doubtful.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not quite accuse the member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) in that way.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is crushed at any rate.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have not had any tramways under construction for a year or so.

Mr. Johnston: Nor railways.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: On the contrary, we have increased our railways until we have one mile of railway for every 93 of the population.

Mr. Johnston: The capitalisation has increased.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of course it has increased, because we have had to re-lay some of the lines and have increased the number of carriages and so on, which means that the capitalisation has had to be increased to that extent. While this has operated, there has been a great increase in population in the metropolitan area, and some 50,000 extra people reside in the metropolitan area compared with the earlier period. What do hon. members want? Do they want to see the working man who is living in the metropolitan area deprived of any means of communication; do they want to see him crowded into dwellings in the city or else walking long distances to get to his work? This sort of thing cannot go on. I know there are many workmen who have to walk very long distances to work and labour all day at their toil, only to walk long distances back at night.

Hon. P. Collier: They have to do the walk morning and evening.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and yet when people in certain localities say, "If you give us the facilities, we will shoulder the cost of the work," can we withhold those facilities?

Mr. Johnston: They said that at South Perth.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They said that in every place where they asked for these facilities.

Mr. Underwood: Do you take their word?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, I am too cautious for that. This is what I am prepared to do. I am prepared to come down to the House with a proposal that where local authorities, acting for the people of their district, are prepared to tax those people to raise the necessary amount to cover interest and sinking fund on the construc-

tion of a line, the line should be authorised; but not otherwise.

Mr. Clydesdale: They are prepared to do that at South Perth.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member need not assure me of that fact. The people of South Perth have given me that undertaking in writing long since. We want to give these people the facilities because they are prepared to help themselves and because, if hon. members do not want the working man to get cheap land and secure a cheap home, he will demand higher wages.

Capt. Carter: A little while ago you were talking about decentralisation and now you are referring—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Does the member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) say it is not decentralisation if we send this line through South Perth to Como and open up more land close to the city where the workers can get homes instead of living in a crowded condition in the city? Does he want all these men to settle in Hay-street, crowding three or four families in one house? I want to send them across the river, where they can get fresh air. It is coming to this point, that we cannot get the members of this Chamber to distinguish between centralisation and sending men away from the city to live in the suburbs where they can live under far better conditions.

Mr. A. Thomson: Is there any vacant land along the railway line between Midland Junction and the city?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, any amount.

Mr. A. Thomson: Any amount?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, certainly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. Mann: This proposal is to endeavour to provide the working man with cheaper homes.

Mr. Pickering: It will not be cheaper.

Mr. Mann: Yes, it will be.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Although I am representing a country constituency I hope I shall never get so narrow in my views as to decline to deal fairly with the interests of all sections, although it may not suit the liking of some of the residents in my constituency. If the members on the cross benches are ever powerful enough to occupy the whole of the Treasury bench, do they suggest that they would turn down everything except that which suits the interests of the men in the country areas?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is what we are afraid of.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: You need not be afraid of that.

Hon. P. Collier: They will never get there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We know what was said when the Labour Government came into power, and we know what the result was.

Capt. Carter: Will you always consider the economical point of view?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member cannot see that I have to consider the general position. I could be a jolly good fellow in the country districts if I stood out against tramway extensions in the metropolitan area, notwithstanding that I know that two or three families are residing in one house, notwithstanding the exorbitant prices charged for land within reasonable distances of the tramways and railways, and notwithstanding other considerations as well. I could make myself a jolly good fellow if I adopted that attitude. I have to remember, however, that I have a trust, and while I am in charge of the railways and tramways of the State I am going to judge matters according to the welfare of the general community, and from the interests of the people the facilities are to serve.

Capt. Carter: Will you let the House judge in this particular instance?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If I did so, the hon. member would find they would judge in a way that he did not anticipate. They would realise that it was in the interests of decentralisation.

Capt. Carter: Will you let hon. members decide?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have never heard anything so ridiculous as the attitude adopted by the member for Leederville. He is complaining of the extension of tramways to one section of the metropolitan area and at the same time is advocating the duplication of some of the termini. He objects to conveniences being given to people who are without them, and at the same time asks that the conveniences enjoyed by people in another part should be doubled.

Mr. Clydesdale: Oh, but that was for Leederville.

Capt. Carter: That is a misstatement of the facts.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If we had a single line of railway serving some settlers it would be just as reasonable to advocate doubling that line by giving them two railways, notwithstanding that there were other settlers who wanted a line, but were without any such facilities. There is no member sitting on the cross benches who would not say that it was a ridiculous proposition, and yet when the member for Leederville objects to an extension to South Perth and Como, he claims at the same time that lines already laid down in other parts of the metropolitan area should be duplicated.

Capt. Carter: That is not the point.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a national view of the position.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am saying that that is the attitude adopted by the hon. member.

Capt. Carter: That is not so. You should read "Hansard."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member cannot get me reading "Hansard." I have heard a lot about the subject without having to read about it.

Mr. Johnston: There are not many settlers along that route.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Now the hon. member is honest. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) says there are not many settlers where the trams are to go.

Mr. Johnston: There are not many settlers to the mile along that route.

Mr. Corboy: The line is to give them an opportunity of settling there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, we are going to provide the working man with that opportunity. To-day there are two or three families residing in one premises and they should get out into the open air, and therefore these facilities should be given. We are giving the facilities which the hon. member himself advocated a few years ago. In view of the fact that these people are prepared to take the full financial responsibility, we have no right to refuse them those facilities. If the hon. members sitting opposite adopted the same attitude with regard to railways, where would we get to?

Mr. Pickering: We have been trying to get a railway for years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is no one down there who is prepared to carry the responsibility for the cost of running their railway.

Mr. Pickering: Is there anyone in any other part of the State who is prepared to do that?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There are some who are asking for other railways.

Hon. P. Collier: There are only about five settlers on the railway the member for Sussex refers to.

Mr. Lambert: Will money be—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Coolgardie must get back to his own seat.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Or get out. I emphasise this fact that whether members are aware of it or not, provision was made on the last Loan Bill for this work.

Mr. Johnston: It was never mentioned.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Since I first joined this House in 1904, I have never heard so many complaints from members in this Chamber of being misled. There is no foundation whatever for the suggestion that they have been misled in this instance.

Mr. Johnston: There is foundation in this instance.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is none.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There was mention of it in the last Loan Bill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have here the Loan Bill passed by this Chamber. Does the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) admit that he never looked at the schedule to the Loan Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: That is quite possible.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Does the hon. member admit that he was so uninterested in it?

Mr. Johnston: There is no reference to Victoria Park or South Perth there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is no mention of all the details as to routes.

Mr. Johnston: There is no mention of this route.

Mr. SPEAKER. Hon. members must keep order. This fire of interjections must cease.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: As a matter of fact, the hon. member does not object to the tramway extension according to his latest interjections, but he is objecting to the route.

Mr. Johnston: I object to any route.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member says that it was not mentioned. The schedule to the Loan Bill of 1920 contains the following—"Item 10. Tramways, Perth electric and extensions, including rails and fastenings, and rolling stock, £100,000."

Mr. Johnston: There was no schedule showing what it was for.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is from the schedule. Does the hon. member admit he did not take sufficient interest in the items and that he did not take sufficient interest in the financial position as affected by an item dealing with £100,000.

Mr. Johnston: That is incorrect. It did not say rolling stock.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. Johnston: That is so, Mr. Speaker, but the Minister is misrepresenting me.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member does not cease his interjections, I will name him.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member is not right, as this is the Bill which dealt with the matter, and the schedule is the one I have read. There is no explanation apart from that.

Mr. Johnston: That is not an explanation.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot continue in this way. I was dealing with—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! These interjections must cease.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Estimates of expenditure from Loan funds as presented to this Chamber also dealt with the matter in item 27. "Tramways, Perth electric and extensions, £87,000." That is clear enough.

Mr. Johnston: The Como route is not mentioned.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I gave an explanation regarding the Government's programme, and indicated that it would have to be carried out over a considerable period. The Commissioner's Annual Report last year contained the following paragraph regarding extensions of the tramway system:—

A complete scheme of tramway extensions, providing for the requirements of the city and suburban area, covering both immediate and future needs, with estimates of the costs of the individual works, has been prepared. The extension of the tramway system, involving as it does the expenditure of a considerable sum of money, is a question of policy to be determined by the Government. The proposals drawn

up by the Department have accordingly been submitted for consideration. The programme submitted will take a considerable time to complete, and it will be necessary to spread the expenditure, so that a defined amount will be authorised to be spent each financial year, until the works are completed. Owing to the heavy outlay involved, the question of how far the proposals can be proceeded with will be governed by the extent of the financial provision which can be made at the present time.

Mr. Money: Were these proposals ever considered by Parliament?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Surely the member for Bunbury knows very well that the Bill and the schedule to the Bill is presented to Parliament, and the explanation is given to members in the House. It is the usual course for members if they do not agree with any extensions suggested by the Department to strike out the item when it is before them. If members have read the Commissioner's report, they will have seen the references there regarding the demands which are made through the local governing authorities for tramway extensions. I also made a statement regarding the same matter through the Press and stated therein that I was having a scheme prepared to catch up the leeway; that when the scheme was completed, I would determine the order in which the extensions were to be taken in hand; that the work would have to be spread over a number of years and that the scheme would be continued until we had caught up the arrears. These are some of the details which are matters of common knowledge seeing that the Press published them.

Mr. Johnston: As a constitutionalist, why not let the House decide upon the expenditure?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member's constitution is not too sound tonight.

Mr. Johnston: My judgment is all right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member has adopted this attitude at the eleventh hour because we have struck financial difficulties.

Mr. Johnston: We never knew of this route; it was never mentioned.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Now the hon. member indicates that he only takes exception to the route.

Capt. Carter: Is not the financial position a potent factor?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member tells us it is so, I suppose it is.

Capt. Carter: I do.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member is generally most brilliant upon subjects he knows nothing about.

Capt. Carter: The Minister has a monopoly of all knowledge.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I accept the hon. member's assurance. I know that a little while ago members were in favour of tramway extensions but now the member for Leederville (Capt Carter) wants to qualify his attitude because he objects to one of the

tramway extensions. Of course it would be very nice to make of me a sort of Aunt Sally, but I am not taking it.

Capt. Carter: Well, get the justification of the House for your action.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have it.

Capt. Carter: You have not. Ask the member for North-East Fremantle, who voted for it, and he will tell you that he thought he was voting for rolling stock only.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I never said anything of the kind.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not going to be criticised by my friends on the cross-benches as though I had committed an unpardonable sin, when as a matter of fact I was not in the House at the time.

Hon. P. Collier: When the motion was moved, the member for Williams-Narrogin did not speak to it.

Mr. Johnston interjected.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Now, of course, it is good business to make an Aunt Sally of me. But I object.

Mr. Johnston: I thought then as I do now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Then there is no change. Still, we ought to be honest in our attitude.

Capt. Carter: Why talk about honesty of attitude?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Well, the hon. member is objecting, not to the principle, but to the route.

Capt. Carter: I made my attitude quite clear the other night.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Apparently it was that those who already have conveniences shall get more, while those who have none must be content without any.

Mr. Money: When the House passed it was it intended to expend the vote that way?

Hon. P. Collier: Possibly it was. The Minister made it clear that the scheme was to cover the whole of the suburbs.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I said a scheme was being prepared and that I would accept the advice of my officials. As it has proved, they gave precedence to South Perth over Belmont or Mount Lawley or Claremont. As a matter of fact we are so far in arrears with our extensions that we cannot get them into proper perspective. We have to begin somewhere, and I have accepted the advice of those who ought to be able to advise me.

Mr. Clydesdale: You are beginning in the right place, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Personally I do not know whether it is the right place; I have taken the advice of my officials, which certainly is the right thing to do.

Mr. J. Thomson: If you had gone to Claremont, it would have been all right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member will get there before me. The mining industry has probably suffered more from the difficulties pervading the financial world than has any other industry in the State or elsewhere. The function of the gold mining

industry is to establish a monetary standard. What with the war and the general upset of the financial conditions throughout the world, it lost that function. Some countries attempted to continue the standard by Acts of Parliament. The United States of America made provision that gold should not be sold above the standard price. Even in Australia, with a disregard of the world's parity the gold miner had to go on producing his commodity at the same old figure. So serious did the position become in America that a demand was made for action on the part of the Government. They introduced what was known as the McFadden Gold Bill. It represented the ideas of those who thought they could get out of the difficulty and maintain the purchasing power of the dollar by providing that the mint should purchase all gold and pay the companies for all gold produced, on the basis of the world's value for gold required for the arts; still maintaining the monetary standard, but making those using gold for other purposes pay the full market value. I do not know whether that Bill was passed. The price of gold, unlike that of most other commodities, is fixed by law. Here it is fixed by the value of the sovereign. Although the purchasing power of the sovereign depreciated, the man who produced the gold had to accept the standard price of £3 17s. 10½d. per ounce. For a long period during the war, while everybody else was claiming the fluctuating market values, the gold producer had to struggle along in the face of greatly increased costs. The other day I asked for some information in regard to the operation of the Gold Producers' Association, an association formed by arrangement with the Commonwealth Government. They formed themselves into a company, the object being to provide at standard price so much of the gold produced in Australia as was necessary for what might be termed local consumption, and export the rest at the highest price they could get in the world's market.

Mr. Underwood: How was the gold producer paid?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In commodities.

Mr. Underwood: He could not be paid in gold.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, but his gold value remained the same, while the commodities with which he was paid increased in value. That was the difference.

Mr. Underwood: It was mere exchange.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, but if he previously paid 1s. for a pound of butter and at a later date found that his shilling would purchase only ¾lb. of butter—

Mr. Underwood: He could not sell an ounce of gold for £5 if it was worth only £4.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, but what previously he could get for £4 he afterwards had to pay £5 for. That was the position.

Mr. Underwood: It was mere exchange.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was not mere exchange, but it was against the

interests of the gold producer. Between 1915 and 1919 the Gold Producers Association sold gold to the following values:—1915, five millions, 1916 four and a half million; in 1917, £4,121,000; in 1918, £3,723,000; in 1919, £3,118,000. The mint value of the gold sold in 1919 was £3,011,423, the amount realised by sale was £3,710,845, and the amount of premium was £699,422.

Hon. P. Collier: That is for Australia as a whole.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, there was distributed to the producers £627,370 of which Western Australia received £436,536.

Mr. Underwood: They got credit for it. They could not be paid in gold.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was exactly the same. The average rate of premium was 19s. 8d. per fine ounce produced over the whole. But they maintained the home consumption price. What they really did was to form a gold pool and by voluntary arrangement the producer sold all his gold through the Gold Producers' Association. But Australia and the Empire said, "In order to meet our needs, that which we require from the pool for our own use we will take at standard value, and you may sell the balance at the world's market value." If the gold producer had been like the wheat producer, instead of putting his gold into the pool he would have said to the consumer, "You pay me in goods the market value of that ounce of gold." If that had happened the gold industry would not have been stifled to-day, but would have been flourishing, which from the point of view of the industry itself would have been very satisfactory, but from the point of view of the community at large would have been most unsatisfactory, because it would have disturbed our balance of trade. It shows what was done during a time of stress by the gold producers. They allowed so much gold as was necessary for home consumption to be taken at pre-war or mint values, notwithstanding the tremendous burden they had to carry. The member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson) the other night made a statement which he must have studied for weeks, perhaps months. Explaining that he did not wish to be misunderstood, he said he had written out this particular statement, that he wanted the House to grasp it and the Press to get it in full. Then he read this:—

The present Government have done more to retard the gold mining industry than have any other Government since the Colgardie discovery.

Mr. J. Thomson: And it is quite correct.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was the most incorrect statement ever heard in this Chamber. But the astonishing thing about it was that the hon. member, not imagining that anybody would doubt his veracity or suggest that he did not know what he was talking about, made the bald statement and then closed up like a book.

Hon. P. Collier: And passed on to other subjects. That is so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, apparently nobody could doubt his words; there was no need to explain. Of course he comes from Claremont, where there is a large population and among them many old and infirm, not to say worn-out, in the Old Men's Home, while others in another institution down there unfortunately are just a little erratic in their ideas. It was not to be thought that the hon. member could possibly be astray. He was not to be thwarted. He was content with the bald statement. It was not necessary that he should follow it up by explaining in what way the Government had retarded the industry.

Hon. P. Collier: He thought it was so very obvious to everybody.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Apparently he did. Let me tell the hon. member that unless the Government had come to the assistance of the gold mining industry—for which I personally take not the slightest credit—the industry would have suffered to an extent which would have resulted in tremendous injury to all other industries.

Mr. Underwood: You were pretty slow in getting the cyanide going.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Perhaps so, but we got it.

Mr. J. Thomson: What have the Government done for the gold mining industry?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will try to tell the hon. member. Probably it will astonish him. I will tell him what the Government have done for the industry, and I will give him proof of it, because my veracity cannot compare with that of the hon. member. I have written it down, so as not to be trusting to memory. I doubt whether, after all, the hon. member actually wrote down his statement; I think it was put up to him by somebody in his electorate. Everybody says we have not done more than scratch the surface of the mineral resources of this State. Therefore, we should give every encouragement to the prospector and this we have attempted to do.

Mr. J. Thomson: You have not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Before I took office the most the Government did for the prospector was to provide him with a limited outfit. When I took office we decided to provide not only the outfit but also a weekly sustenance.

Hon. P. Collier: I did that on occasions.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In a few cases, yes; but it was not a definitely established policy until I took office.

Mr. Underwood: It was a bad policy, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: After that interjection, I am thoroughly satisfied that I did the right thing. Knowing that the hon. member differs from me, I am convinced that I must be right. In addition to providing the outfit and sustenance, we told the prospectors that in the event of their making a discovery we did not want them to

have to use political influence but would provide a board composed of men having no other interest than that of assisting the industry whom they could approach, and subject to the board's approval, the Government would come along with cash and equipment. We have done this to a greater extent than was ever done before in the history of the State.

Mr. J. Thomson: And what have we got? The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have got quite a lot as I shall demonstrate to the hon. member. But first of all, I wish to point out how our finds are being decried instead of supported by people within the State. I have never come across such a croaking lot of people as we have in Western Australia. Whenever a new proposition is brought under notice, somebody comes forward and says it must be a failure. Even our geologists tell us that it cannot be here or there. Everyone cries stinking fish before he thinks of doing anything else. Then it is not long before the public men follow the hue and cry and a doleful and depressing atmosphere is created all over the State. One does not hear the same rotten things said outside of Western Australia as one hears in Western Australia. Let us consider for a moment the settlers at Kendenup. Where did the people responsible for Kendenup get their encouragement? Was it in Western Australia? No. They had to go East. All they could get here was an intimation that Kendenup could not possibly be a success. Yet some of the people who were decrying Kendenup have been condemning me because I did not urge the Government to purchase the estate. The member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson) talks about discouraging the mining industry, and then he asks, "What have we got from it?" We have not got even an expression of appreciation from the hon. member.

Mr. J. Thomson: It would have been better if you had cried stinking fish in regard to Hampton Plains.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I never boom and I never cry stinking fish. I let a new discovery stand on its own bottom. I do say, however, that there are other finds, such as Mt. Monger and St. Ives, which, had they received Eastern encouragement, instead of getting into the hands of merely a lot of hanging-on investors, might have been producing gold in fair quantities to-day. I have not received very much support over the attitude adopted by the Government in this connection. Though the member for Claremont talks about us damaging the mining industry, I can tell him that the greatest setback the industry has suffered has been at the hands of those investors who have let these propositions loose on the public here and elsewhere.

Mr. J. Thomson: You supported them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member is what I am not permitted to call him. Dealing with the discoverer of Ives' Reward, Ives had been tramping this country as a prospector for 15 or 18 years, backed

up by a few citizens of Perth. He made this discovery. Unlike the provisions which govern the discovery of oil, Ives had to put in his pegs quick and lively. He had nothing and the same applied to those at the back of him. The proposition was submitted to a gentleman with an option of purchase for £10,000 cash, the payment of the Federal tax, and a 10 per cent. interest in shares. That was passed on to another who got a little out of it; it was passed on to another who got a little more, and passed on to a company until finally faith was kept with the prospector by giving him 25,000 shares as his one-tenth interest in a company of 250,000 shares. Ives, or his widow, received £1,000 and the crooks who got on to Ives' Reward and called themselves promoters got something like £6,000, and they have a fair chance of getting the mine and cutting the widow out of the one-tenth interest through the company not fulfilling their obligations. These are the men who are damaging the industry, and yet the member for Claremont does not know it.

Mr. J. Thomson: Did not you send a cable?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, to try to stop this ramp. If these men in Western Australia are able to make a million out of a show, I do not mind so long as they are fair and just in their dealings, but these men are only damaging the mining industry. They come along and impose such conditions as rob the prospector and rob the subscribing public on whom the industry has to depend for the future.

Mr. J. Thomson: You do not blame me for that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Why did not the hon. member raise his voice in public against that sort of thing?

Mr. J. Thomson: I did.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Then the hon. member's voice must have been having an interview with his feet; he must have kept it pretty low. I would like to ask members whether they are prepared to take up this attitude: Suppose we stepped in between this Ives prospector and the subscribing public in order to protect them, would members agree to it? Members of this House would say it was an unfair interference with the freedom of contract.

Mr. J. Thomson: They would all support you.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am delighted to hear it. The position is pretty serious. Part of the purchase price of that mine discovered by Ives was not only the cash but the one-tenth interest.

Mr. J. Thomson: Why did not you step in?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I put up a regulation the like of which had never previously been proposed in order to stop this ramp.

Mr. Underwood: What is the result? Ives still loses.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This is what the industry is suffering from to-day. I desire to protect the industry from the men who are putting up these ramps and I do

not care whether those men occupy influential positions or not. Under existing conditions I do not like to boast of increased expenditure, but this has been the case under the Mining Development Act. One might be persuaded that it was inadvisable to give support to the development of mines because of the shortage of money during the last two years. Some years ago, however, we came to the aid of the settler who through drought had lost his crops. We assisted him, although money at that time was not too plentiful. So we came to the assistance of the prospector also, and in this connection we have expended more in the last two years than was expended in the previous seven years. We have done quite a lot for the mining industry.

Mr. Underwood: It was not wisely spent.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: But for the aid given by the Government to the people at St. Ives, Mt. Monger and in other directions, those places would probably have been closed down. At Mount Monger we have a 10-head battery, five of them operating and five to be ready in the course of a week or two, on mines which will produce a good deal of gold. At St. Ives a State battery will be operating in the course of a few weeks. These were cases in which the Government took no notice of the cry of stinking fish, but went to the assistance of the industry. If we were not prepared to do that, we would not be fit to remain in office; it would be time for us to get out and let someone else come in. I could occupy at least another half hour in explaining to members what we have done to encourage mining operations. The member for Claremont is of opinion that we have not done all we might have done with regard to taxation. I do not think that the House understood what was happening when the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act was passed. Fortunately for me, I am completely innocent in this connection because I was not in the House when the Act was passed. I venture to say, however, that there is not a single member of the House who was aware how that Act would operate with regard to the mining industry, or who understands now how it came to be provided in a Land and Income Tax Assessment Act that a tax should be imposed upon the sale of mining property as if it were income derived during the year. I do not think that even the Minister who introduced the Bill realised that it would operate in this way. Yet this is what has happened. The Government have decided to repeal that provision of the Act because it is an unjust and an unfair imposition, inequitable in its incidence. It is of such a nature that I doubt whether, under our Constitution, we were really entitled to impose it.

Mr. Lambert: If you make the repeal retrospective, you will meet the Scotch instincts of the member for Claremont.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not wish members to confuse the question of tax-

ation on mining with the proposal of the Primary Producers' Association that, for the purpose of calculating income, a producer should be permitted to take the average over a number of years. There is no comparison between the two. The sale of a mining property represents the sale of an asset, just the same as the sale of a house. If a man sells a mine for cash or for bonds he is merely turning his asset from one form to another, namely, from a lease document to a bond. Suppose there are two leases: one worth £10,000 is disposed of for that amount of money to a firm, company or individual. The seller, under the existing law, is immediately taxed as having received an income of £10,000 during the year in which the sale took place. Suppose the owner of the other lease retains his interest, which in that lease produces for him some 5½ per cent. on the £10,000. All that this man pays by way of tax is on the income from the £10,000, whereas the other man is asked to pay tax on the full asset of £10,000 instead of on 5½ per cent. of his bonds. It will be seen that this provision is inequitable and quite against all ideas of British justice. The Government, on discovering how unfairly the provision was operating, immediately indicated their intention of repealing that section. The Premier in his policy speech at Northam took the earliest opportunity to declare that he would ask Parliament to repeal the provision which imposed such an inequitable form of taxation. More than this it was impossible to do, but I may mention that the Federal Government appointed a Royal Commission to deal with the question of taxation as it affected the whole community in Australia, and the Government of Western Australia gave to that body a commission to inquire at the same time and advise us on the question of taxation here. We have done our best in this direction as well. I now wish to refer to the question regarding which the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Boyland) and other representatives of goldfields districts are so much concerned, namely, miners' complaint, which is affecting our men so seriously. We are not going to solve this problem by merely doling out charity, and, further, the providing of charity does not represent a very satisfactory effort. We practically say to a man, "We see you are going to your grave; all we propose to do for you until such time as you can no longer work is, while permitting you to hang on, to dole out a little charity to you." I believe we can deal with this matter much more effectively by taking the men out of the mines before they become human derelicts. Surely we can say to these men "You have had enough." Members representing goldfields constituencies can support me when I say that every year since I have been sitting in this Chamber men have come along and have told me, "Twelve months ago I little dreamed that I would be a wreck to-day; I could do a day's work as well as any man. I will not go to a doctor now: I am right out." If we had a system of effective

inspection, then when a man showed the first symptoms of the disease, we could tell him to come out of the mines, we to undertake to find employment suitable to his physical condition and such as would give him an opportunity to throw off the disease. A system such as this would not only benefit the Government but would be in the interests of the community, because the men to whom we would have to dole out charity would be provided with employment which would enable them to go on producing wealth instead of absorbing or consuming it. We have to set ourselves to that task.

Mr. Boyland: Why don't you bring in a Bill?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: First of all we have to get the public to appreciate the value of a proposal. I fear that the miners themselves do not always realise its value. They want their freedom; they want to be able to come and go as they please. I do not think that if we attempted to bring in a Bill to compel the men to get out of the mines they would accept it.

Mr. Teesdale: The liberty of the subject would come in.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so. Before I set out I want to be in a position to learn from the men to whom I guarantee employment that such employment is favourable to them. I have asked the departments, particularly the Forests Department, to earmark a certain amount of work each year for those who will be compulsorily withdrawn from the mining industry, in order that the men may have plenty of open air and given every opportunity of recovering and going back to the industry, subject to medical inspection. For sewerage work no men are better fitted than miners. Just as we give preference to our returned soldiers who fought for us, so should we give preference to those who are fighting for us in mines, and endeavour to find satisfactory employment for them before they reach the stage of becoming physical wrecks. I know of no proposition that has ever been put up under which the Government would undertake to put men into other industries after they had been compulsorily taken out of the mining industry. The only alternative is to place a charge upon the mining industry for the welfare of these men. If we were to place such an impost upon the industry, in the form of an annual payment, I am afraid it would kill the industry. It is better to put the men into healthy occupations where they may have every reasonable chance of recovery. It is the duty of the Government to do what they can for them, but let us be given a chance of finding a solution of the problem before we actually tackle the position. I have no desire to rush into a matter like this; it is too important.

Mr. Boyland: That has been the opinion of the Government for the past eight years, but nothing has yet been done except under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is known in South Africa. They have introduced methods there, but I do not know that the position has been solved. They are doing it by imposing a tax of about £800,000 a year on the mining industry. They would do a great deal better if they told the men to get out of the industry.

Mr. Boyland: They are taking them out; I have information on the point.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I say they are not.

Mr. Boyland: I will bring the matter before the House.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are advising the men to get out, but telling them that if they wish to stay they must do so. If a man does not leave the industry and reaches the second stage of miners' phthisis he loses a certain amount of the pension which he would otherwise get. He is not compelled to leave the industry. For his own sake and for the sake of the State I want to compel him to do so. Dr. Hill, of South Africa, recently announced that after he had made careful investigation he found that silicosis, which affects miners, was caused by the lodgment of certain particles of earth upon the lungs. He also discovered that in certain mines this lodgment did not take place and silicosis was not brought about. He believed that it would be found, by introducing another form of dust into the mine, it would have the effect of absorbing the harmful dust which caused silicosis. He instanced certain dust with which the miners came into contact. He thought that by introducing the other kind of dust into that which brought about silicosis it would enable the miner to throw it off and thus prevent the inroads of the disease.

Mr. Boyland: I wish he was right in his theory.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not say that he is right or wrong.

Mr. Boyland: I say he is wrong.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is at all events worth taking a note of. If it is discovered to be right in South Africa we ought to introduce the system here. I am not blindly walking about shutting my eyes to what is taking place in other parts of the world, nor do I think that anything that happens outside Western Australia is no good, nor that we cannot learn something from other parts of the world. If the system is proved to be satisfactory in South Africa I will not be backward in introducing it here. With regard to the question of the Cypress pine forest in the north, raised by the member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack), I believe that if the forest was of the extent suggested, it would have been dealt with long ago. Millars' Company have, I understand, sent a man up to report upon it, but we are told that after a tram line was built to the forest and a mill was put up, the forest would have gone. In the circumstances this company did not think it worth touching it. I hope they are proved to be wrong. We do

not want any more of these company promotions. A company was promoted some time ago to operate the North-West pine forest, but failed to do any good. I do not want Western Australia to get a bad name. We should hold up the forest until we have sent an officer up to make an inspection. If the timber is there we will make it available so that the State may get the best results from it.

Mr. Durack: You have been contemplating sending an inspector there for the past 10 years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In view of the advice we have had from other quarters there does not seem to be any urgency about the matter. No one seems to have come along for a permit as yet, but the company promoter. No application has yet come from a company already formed and ready to go into the forest, but from men who want to hawk it round the world. I must apologise for the length of my speech, but it would be impossible to conclude without some reference to the present industrial position. I cannot help it if members doubt the sincerity of my remarks. No one in this Chamber is more desirous than I of seeing that the man who labours at someone else's behest, whether it be the wage earner or the salaried man, obtains a fair return for his work. I warn members of the Opposition of the possibilities which may arise out of the present industrial position. The member for South Fremantle was rather severe in his criticism in my action as Minister controlling the police, in having made, as he calls it, a display of police force on the Esplanade. It may be that it did not appear to be necessary, and that it was as has been suggested, far-fetched. Whatever may be the opinion of the hon. member the fact remains that no bones were broken and no one was hurt. Everyone went home peacefully and quietly. Anything else might have happened. I am no more blood-thirsty than is the hon. member, but I do say that in a free democracy and in a self-governed community like this, if the people desire a change and say it in a constitutional manner, no set of individuals or organisation of any description has a right to come between the people and the constitutional authority, that is Parliament, and its executive. I have just as much sympathy with the man who works as ever I had, but I have no sympathy with the man who merely uses a soap box to make himself popular, but who when the crack comes is found beneath the soap box and not on top of it. I want men to stand up to their guns. So long as I am in charge of the police I will not permit any section of the community, be they made up of powerful capitalists as they are sometimes termed, or powerful labour organisations, or any other form of organisation, to take possession of the reins of Government unless the people of the State say they are in accord with such action.

Hon. P. Collier: It has been done in the State during the last three or four years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It has not been done so far as I know. I have not been desirous of influencing any industrial dispute. When the Esplanade dispute occurred I took no personal interest in it. I was asked by the proprietors if I would see them. They wanted to give me the details of the dispute. I replied, "I am sorry; I am not interested in the dispute." "Well," they said, "we want you to give us protection." I said, "You go to the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner of Police has been instructed by me, following the policy of this Government, to afford protection to any individual, humble or otherwise, in this community against interference with his property except by lawful methods." That is all. I venture to say I could not have done less.

Hon. P. Collier: Armed men have frequently terrified the community on the goldfields.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know of it. I would not permit it. When the shearing trouble existed not long ago, I had a request to send armed men to a certain point in this State. I asked, "Why?" The reply was, "We have news that they are organising to make an attack." I said, "Let me tell you right now that, so far as I am able to ascertain from all quarters, there is not the least evidence of anything of the kind being in contemplation. I am not going to let the police force which I control be made a kind of show by you or by anyone else. If you can bring me evidence, and if my inquiries show that there is ground for any such apprehension, I will give you the protection that you are entitled to, and that anyone else in the community is entitled to." However, nothing happened. The hon. member knows my attitude on this subject. I made it public when on the platform in Albany, and said I was prepared to stand or fall by it. I am still prepared to adhere to that policy of not allowing anyone to do injury either to a working man or anybody else.

Hon. P. Collier: I will give you instances when we come to the Police Estimates. What was done to the man who dragged an engine-driver off his engine at Kalgoorlie and pointed a revolver at him?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have heard something about that. So far as I am personally concerned, I want to be impartial.

Hon. P. Collier: Use physical force against the other side too, when it is required.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am prepared to do so.

Hon. P. Collier: The things I complain of have happened repeatedly.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Every time the police are used for the purpose of maintaining order and preventing loss of life or property in the community, somebody raises complaints about an overbearing attitude on the part of the police. I

believe thoroughly and honestly that one could go the length of the world without finding a better or more law-abiding set of individuals than the members of the Western Australian police force.

Hon. P. Collier: I am not saying anything against them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No; but suggestions have been made.

Mr. Lambert: Only by irresponsible persons.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In every large body of men there will always be one or two who stray from the narrow path. But the police have not been given a fair deal in the past. At Fremantle we allowed the police to be deliberately knocked about. In that connection I produced in this Chamber a piece of cane with a lump of lead on the end of it. Night after night the police stationed at Fremantle went in fear of their lives, the only protection they had being a mere baton. I say that no man doing the right thing in this State has any fear of the police. I determined to give the police a fair chance, and therefore I gave them arms.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There was never any interference with the police.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Never after they were armed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Nor before.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Evidence was brought that a man deliberately pulled a revolver and pointed it at a policeman.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That was after the arming, and it was an empty revolver.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Imagine the hon. member having a revolver pointed at him and asking "Is it loaded?" The policeman at whom the revolver was pointed showed more consideration than I would have shown. He merely knocked the revolver aside, and then found it was not loaded.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I say that happened after the police were armed, and not before.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I can produce all the evidence necessary to show that the police at Fremantle were knocked about. I ask the hon. member now whether the police unduly interfered with any citizen peacefully carrying on his occupation? Has anyone been injured? No. There has been peace and quiet. All I have done as regards the police is to give them an equal chance with the rest of the community. In connection with a deputation to me of my friends opposite an ex-member of the Council appealed to me to disarm the police. I replied, "All right; I guarantee to do so if you can get all the men attached to your movement to knock off the soap-box method of oratory, talking about lamp posts, about daytime not being the proper time for attacks on property and individuals." He said, "Of course we cannot do that, but we are officially as desirous of maintaining order as you are." I said,

"I am prepared to accept that statement as honestly as you make it." Let me tell the House that I do not believe the leaders of the organisations can control all their members. There is white-anting in the Labour movement. That is going on in Western Australia just as everywhere else. But until the leaders of the Labour movement can control those individuals, I cannot stand by, because that would mean letting those individuals tyrannise the community. If we did that, we should lose our self-respect as individuals and as a Government.

Hon. P. Collier: I can tell you of a lot going on on the Eastern Goldfields that you do not seem to know about, as regards the police.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member is trying to draw a red herring across the track.

Hon. P. Collier: Not at all. I object to your shutting your eyes to what the police do in some cases. There are cases where your police inspector walks around and says, "Please don't do anything, please don't do anything."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not saying the hon. member is not correct; but that has not been done by any instructions of mine.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not suggest that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In the Labour movement of Australia there are sections, and there always have been. The hon. member knows very well that when we were a Government we had sections which were always giving us trouble.

Hon. P. Collier: There are sections in all movements. In other movements they are not all paragons of virtue.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member is not entitled to preach about outside direction unless he is prepared to resist outside direction. Our friend Catts in New South Wales has formed an organisation, which of course has now been declared black. Only recently he wrote an article with regard to the doings of an all-Australian congress. In that article he said that they were aiming at the dictation of the proletariat which is operating in Russia. I am as certain as that I am standing here that the Leader of the Opposition has no more sympathy with the dictation of the proletariat—

Hon. P. Collier: I have no sympathy with what Catts does.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is my point. As a matter of fact, the working class movement—that is the better term to use—throughout the world is being split asunder because of these factions. We must take that into consideration.

Hon. P. Collier: There was a split in the old Liberal party.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They have had their difficulties as well. I do not want the member for Boulder to say that all the virtue is attached to the party he represents. I know he does not mean that.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not, but it is my duty to point out the errors on the other side. I take it our virtues are granted.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: What do we mean by the "dictatorship of the proletariat?" Hon. members know that there is the Third Internationale or what is known as the Moscow Internationale. The members of that organisation demand that everybody affiliated with them has to be pledged to the support of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Hon. P. Collier: The Melbourne conference, with the exception of two votes, turned down the dictation of the proletariat—practically unanimously. Our movement does not stand for it. We repudiate it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not want any such admission from the Leader of the Opposition. I do not suggest that he would adopt any other attitude. I have been associated with him too long to know that he would do otherwise, but I want the people to have an understanding of the position. Some of the leading socialist organisations have repudiated this movement. Morris Hillquit, the leader of the Socialist Party of America, declared that his party was against the Third Internationale.

Hon. P. Collier: The English Labour Party turned it down too.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so. Morris Hillquit said—

We are discussing forms of struggle that we are to apply in our movement, and there is no reason in the world why we in the United States should take it upon ourselves to adopt the ideal of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." If we do that, and if it is made a condition of our affiliation that we recognise the dictatorship of the proletariat, we must adopt the Russian definition of the term, and what is that definition? The "dictatorship of the proletariat" implies the disarming, disfranchising and outlawing of the bourgeoisie. In America, as in all countries of democratic and parliamentary traditions, the Socialist movement cannot consistently employ such methods, because if we did, we would practically say to the parties of the bourgeoisie, to our Democrats and Republicans, "Gentlemen, we want to take advantage of the ballot box in order to get into your legislative bodies. We want to get into power somehow, but when we are in power we shall disarm you and disfranchise you and outlaw you, as a necessary measure," and the logical reply would be, "All right, gentlemen, but to-day we are already in possession of the public powers which you seek to conquer, and consequently we shall disarm you and disfranchise you and outlaw you as a measure of self-preservation."

Socialism must be one thing or the other—either a fight with physical weapons, a reversion to the old methods of street barricades, or a political fight with weapons and methods of political democracy. If we accept the "dictatorship of the pro-

letariat" in the sense of destroying, disarming, and disfranchising our opponents, then we have no grounds for complaint if the ruling classes use the methods that we say we shall use against them.

In a community such as ours with our freest of franchises, with our Parliaments where an opportunity is given to members to express their opinions freely even to giving immunity to almost treasonable utterances, we are surely able to live along the road of democracy with safety to the community. The will of the people must prevail and constituted authority be upheld. Debates in this Chamber are permitted with absolute freedom so that the people may feel that we are proceeding in accordance with the interests of the public, by the ventilation of what members consider are matters that should be ventilated. By this means the people, who are the arbiters, shall decide between the contending parties. We shall not assist at all if we disagree with that idea.

Hon. P. Collier: I endorse that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I want to tell those who indulge in party politics and contend that their party is right all the time and their opponents are wrong on all matters, that no Government can rule a country satisfactorily unless there are fairly reasonable compromises from time to time. If the Opposition, for instance, take up the view that when they secure control of the Treasury benches they will reverse everything that the Government have done, and also if we in our turn adopted the view that we would endeavour to reverse everything that the Opposition were able to accomplish when in power, where would it lead us?

Hon. P. Collier: I have been criticised in the Press for not starting off this session with more of a party fight.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is to the credit of the member for Boulder, and not to the credit of the paper indulging in that criticism. A State cannot be governed into permanent stability by force of ridicule and of aspersions upon individuals nor yet by the party spirit. We must not abuse people because they do not agree with us. We must reason with them and debate the subject, in order to gain their support. The majority of to-day becomes the minority of to-morrow, as it was the minority of yesterday. By the adoption of these methods the majority of to-day becomes very often the minority of to-morrow.

Mr. Lambert: That is, by misleading the people at times.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not very often.

Hon. P. Collier: It all depends on who is most successful in misleading.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not say that a party will not state what is not quite right at times or will not be contending for something that is not in the best interests of the public. On the other hand, however, the public are not slow in determining their attitude and in voicing their

demand that the wrong shall be put right. It is only a matter of time and the position is rectified. Our system makes it safe for democracy. Our actions as a Parliament are free and, as a matter of fact, we protect members even against bribery and violence and we protect them from the law in connection with statements made by them in this Chamber. Anything which members think is in the best interests of the community can be stated on the floor of this Chamber.

Mr. Money: Members have been doing it to-night.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: While we are not always right, we are by no means always wrong. We may be in a majority, but we cannot use our majority to coerce the other side.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You would have a difficult job.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: While I continue to occupy a seat on the Treasury bench, I will not refuse to receive advice from any quarter, but I will refuse to accept dictation from any quarter, I care not from where it comes. The man who will adopt an opposite attitude and reject advice from every quarter, will not be acting in the best interests of the community. Let us freely discuss these matters and get away from party domination. There is surely enough at stake to enable us to deal with these matters without paltry party interests entering into the subject. If we look at questions from that broad point of view any Government will be the better for the support and advice tendered them, and thus they will be able to work more effectively in the interests of the community as a whole.

On motion by Mr. J. MacCallum Smith, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.59 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 31st August, 1921.

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

QUESTION—RIVERTON ESTATE.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (for Hon. F. A. Baglin) asked the Minister for Education:

1, Is it true that competent agricultural experts, such as Messrs. Tyler and Newman, reported against the Riverton estate as suitable for the settlement of returned soldiers? 2, In what amounts and to whom has the Agricultural Bank given financial assistance? 3, At whose instigation, and upon whose recommendations, have such advances, if any, been made? 4, What was the total sum of money incurred in settling soldiers on the Riverton estate? 5, How many so assisted are at present residing on the estate?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, A Tyrrell Williams, £388 8s. 5d.; E. Gaynor (who subsequently transferred to Chas. Ginbey), £497 15s.; Thomas Greig, £494 11s. 11d.; T. E. Simpson, £416 6s.; C. E. Jones (transferred to Alec Dewar), £431 12s. 1d. 3, The advances were made by the Agricultural Bank at the request of and upon the indemnification of the Government of the day acting upon the recommendation of a select committee appointed by Parliament. 4, £2,228 13s. 5d., exclusive of interest. 5, Two, including one of the original settlers.

QUESTION—LUNACY DEPARTMENT.

Proposed Royal Commission.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education: Will the Government, when submitting terms of reference to the Royal Commission about to be appointed to inquire into and report upon the Hospital for the Insane, Claremont, direct the Commission to inquire into and report upon the justice or otherwise of the dismissal of certain returned soldier employees during the influenza epidemic in 1919, and the many subsequent refusals to reinstate some of those employees?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: No. This matter has already been inquired into and determined.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

Debate resumed from previous day.

Hon. J. MILLS (Central) [4.35]: I, too, wish to join with other hon. members in expressing regret at the death of the Hon. E. M. Clarke. I did not know Mr. Clarke until I became a member of the Council a little over three years ago, but since my first meeting with him I learned to hold him in the very highest respect. A number of speakers have referred to the financial position, and to the deficit. Personally, I do not blame either the present or any previous Government entirely for the condition of our finances. I believe we are the victims of circumstances over which we have no control, and that the reasons for our present condition are not so much within as without the State. Until trade