

Legislative Assembly,*Tuesday, 13th December, 1910.*

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Speaker: Report of the Auditor General for the year ended 30th June, 1910.

By the Premier: 1, Return re cost of Government advertisements from July, 1908, to September, 1910 (ordered on motion by Mr. Holman). 2, Report by the Superintendent of Public Charities for the year ended 30th June, 1910. 3, Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into charges of corruption in the Lands Department.

QUESTIONS—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.*Mt. Magnet-Sandstone.*

Mr. BROWN asked the Minister for Works: 1 (a) Were any sub-contractors or piecework men employed during the construction of the Mt. Magnet-Sandstone Railway? (b) Was the amount paid to them included in the total stated wages sum of £38,211? 2, Are the salaries of the staff employed or any portion of the Stores Branch included in the stated cost of construction? 3. Did the construction branch arrange for and obtain any rebate or reduction in regulation rail freights on carriage of materials used in the construction? 4. What was the total railway freight paid on carriage of sleepers, plant, and materials, other than rails and fastenings? 5. What sum was paid to the Working Railways for water, including railage on same, during the construction? 6. What was the gross amount received for carriage of goods and passengers during the construction (a) prior to April 4th: (b)

after that date? 7. Have these amounts been deducted from the total cost of construction to arrive at the stated cost? 8. Is the sum of £1,860, paid to the Working Railways for maintenance, included in the stated cost?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, (a) Yes; piecework men. (b) Yes. 2, No. 3, No. 4, £17,675 7s. 3d. 5, £304 17s. 3d. 6, (a) Approximately £5,000. (b) Approximately £5,953. 7, No. 8, Yes.

New proposals.

Mr. GORDON (for Hon. Sir. N. J. Moore) asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government, before dealing with new railway proposals, to secure Parliamentary approval of those railways forming part of the programme of the Government at last general election, and funds for which have already been partially provided on a previous loan authorisation?

The PREMIER replied: It is not proposed to make any departure so far as the general policy of the previous Administration is concerned. Parliamentary approval will be asked for the construction of those railways which are deemed most urgent for the development of the State.

Dowerin-Merredin.

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for works: 1, Is it a fact that construction work has been discontinued on the Government section of the Dowerin-Merredin Railway, and the men and plant transferred to Southern Cross? 2, Is it not possible for the Public Works Department to supervise the construction of these two 30-mile sections at the same time? 3. Is the Minister aware of the serious hardship which will be inflicted on the settlers who, on the strength of the promise of construction, have put land under crop this season and placed orders for material for next year's seeding, and will now find the harvest on their hands without the anticipated means of transport? 4, Is it the policy of the Government to make the interests of the settlers a secondary consideration to those of wild-cat manipulators?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, Yes. 3, No hardship will be inflicted upon settlers as the line will be completed within the specified time. 4, No.

QUESTION—LANDS DEPARTMENT, SALARIES OF DRAFTSMEN.

Mr. PRICE asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it a fact that a number of resignations have been received from draftsmen in the Lands and Surveys Department owing to higher salaries being procurable in the Eastern States? 2, Is it a fact that about 15 draftsmen in that department have been strongly recommended for re-classification by the heads of the department? 3, If so, is it the intention of the Government to support the recommendations? 4, Is it a fact that the Public Service Commissioner is obtaining draftsmen from England under contract for three years? 5, If so, is not this a violation of the Commonwealth Constitution Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, During the past 12 months three draftsmen out of 65 employed in the Lands Department have resigned, but only one of these left the State. During the same period 14 draftsmen were taken on. 2, The Surveyor General has recommended the re-classification of the surveyors, engineers, draftsmen, and computers at present in the service. 3, The matter will receive consideration. 4, Five draftsmen specially skilled in drainage work, and five in railway work, have been engaged in England. Land survey draftsmen are being advertised for in New Zealand, and by the last mail 14 applications were received. 5, No.

QUESTION—REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS, ELECTORAL MAPS.

Mr. SCADDAN (without notice) asked the Premier: When does the Premier propose to have the maps prepared showing the boundaries of the new electorates, as outlined in the Redistribution of Seats Bill, for distribution to members and local authorities?

The PREMIER replied: From what I can gather from the Attorney General the maps are being prepared as rapidly as possible, and he will be able to supply members with one copy each this week. With regard to the local authorities, the Attorney General is unable to say when the maps will be ready.

Mr. Johnson: Will the Premier give members a framed copy of the Collie electorate?

The PREMIER: No; the hon. member will be able to make his own tracing.

Mr. Scaddan: I would suggest to the Premier that if the maps are ready the local authorities should be supplied first.

The PREMIER: Before members?

Mr. Scaddan: Yes; because members have the maps here and they can peruse them each day, but the local authorities are unable to see them at all.

The PREMIER: There are only a limited number of maps showing the existing boundaries, and unless we go to a great deal of expense in lithographing new maps we cannot say how many we will be able to supply.

Mr. Scaddan: You have to supply them sooner or later.

The PREMIER: Yes; sooner or later.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES—1910-11.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Taylor in the Chair.

Railway Department (Hon. H. Gregory Minister).

Vote—Railways, £1,154,652:

Mr. GILL: So much had been said in connection with railway administration that there was very little left to say, but there were a few matters which had not been touched upon and which he desired to bring under the notice of the Minister. At the outset he would say, that like the speakers who had preceded him, he was pleased to note the financial position of the railways as presented in the annual report, and upon that position he congratulated the authorities. The report would be satisfactory not only to members of the House but to the whole State, because it showed that the State's biggest

trading concern was proving a success. The figures given to the Committee by the Minister were undoubtedly satisfactory from all points of view. The Minister had stated that during the last three or four years the railways had increased their profits considerably, and the estimate for the present year showed a large advance on previous years. Viewing the railways as a trading concern, that state of affairs was gratifying from all points of view. In a country such as Western Australia it was necessary that we should extend our railways, and by that agency bring means of transit within the reach of the settlers whom we were desirous of placing on our lands, and the present prosperity of the system would be a greater inducement to Parliament to extend it perhaps even more rapidly than in the past. One point in connection with the management, which he had been pleased to hear the Minister allude to, was the construction of rolling stock. The Minister had outlined a big addition to the rolling stock in the near future, and he agreed that it was necessary to have a much greater supply of rolling stock than at the present time, in order to handle the traffic which the railways would be receiving. In that respect it was pleasing to note that the Government were taking time by the forelock, and he hoped that they would proceed with the construction of the new rolling stock, so as to be in a position to handle the railway traffic which all hoped would be forthcoming during the next year or two. The traffic would largely depend on the seasons, but with the extension of farming and land settlement, which he was sanguine enough to believe was more genuine than it had been a few years back, he was confident that the whole of the rolling stock outlined by the Minister when introducing the Railway Estimates would be required. One great difficulty that presented itself was not so much with regard to rolling stock: at the present time we were making provision for that, but the difficulty he could see was as far as the manning of the railways was concerned. He did not know exactly what the position to-day was, but rumours had been current, and

he was satisfied that the department did not have too many men at their disposal, and it would be absolutely necessary for greater provision to be made in the very near future in that respect, for there was no desire to have a block. It was all very well to provide rolling stock, but there should be men to work that rolling stock, and unless some provision was made to have the railways properly manned there would be trouble. He had not noticed in this year's annual report any reference to this difficulty, although it was known that a great number of men were leaving the service at the present time. In last year's report, however, there was some mention made of the fact that a large number of employees had left the service, and were then still leaving, to better their positions outside. The same condition of affairs existed to-day.

The Minister for Railways: Most of them are going on the land.

Mr. GILL: A number of them, it was true, were going on the land, but still there were others who were not following that course: they were being offered better inducements outside. That fact was responsible for many men who had been trained in the service, and who had proved themselves competent, leaving the service, and they were all men that the department could ill afford to lose. Of course a number were going on the land, and everyone was pleased to know that. The Minister in dealing with the manning of the railways made one statement which did not appear satisfactory; it was particularly with regard to the wages staff. The Minister declared that the average rate of wages paid throughout the service was 9s. To a casual observer that would appear satisfactory, but when one looked at the position and took into consideration the large number of men who were engaged in our workshops as tradesmen, and who were getting wages much higher than 9s. a day, the Minister's statement became discounted very considerably. Of course the position as compared with the position of a few years ago was satisfactory. A few years ago things were not as good as they were at the present time, but, viewing everything from the present day standpoint, the situation of the employees was

not as satisfactory as one would like to see it. There were many good men in the service to-day who had entered it as boys, and these men had gone through the whole of their training and studied hard and passed their examinations—he was alluding to the wages staff; these men had spent as much as 10 years in the service, and they were only getting 8s. and 8s. 6d. per day at the present time. A young man in the prime of life who had shown ability by having passed the safe working examination, or signal examination, or an examination for the position of guard, and had in fact shown himself to be quite capable, after having worked eight or ten years, ought to be entitled to more than 8s. or 8s. 6d. a day.

The Minister for Railways: There are increments.

Mr. GILL: That was true, but it was a question which he did not altogether agree with. The member for Guildford said that he did not believe in automatic increases. Generally speaking they were not as satisfactory as one would like, still the system in vogue at the present time was equally unsatisfactory from the men's point of view, and also from the point of view of the working railways. Automatic increases did not always give the best wages to the best men, but it could not be admitted that the present system whether it was based on an annual review of the whole of the wages staff or not, was altogether satisfactory. For some considerable time past he had advocated a system which would be much more satisfactory than automatic increases, or the annual review, neither of which had proved satisfactory inasmuch as there were many men who had passed the necessary examinations and qualified themselves for any position in connection with the working of the railways, and who were still on the 8s. 6d. mark. There were also many men who had been carriage examiners for 13 years, and who were still receiving 8s. 6d., yet members were told that the wages staff were reviewed once a year, and that if the foreman in charge recommended anyone for an increase the person recommended would get it. That recommendation, how-

ever, had not carried sufficient weight in the past to put these men on a satisfactory footing. The consequence was that after spending some of the best years of their lives in the service and thoroughly qualifying for the work, finding that they did not get a fair deal, these men looked around for something else and often succeeded in getting it. Although he did not advocate strict automatic increases, as the men on the wages staff should be entitled to their annual increments until they reached the maximum, unless of course the department could give a reason why those men should not get it. That was the stand which he had taken up for years, but unfortunately he had not been able to get it adopted. At the present time the department declared that these men could not get increases, and there was no appeal against that. A man was not able to prove his worth. To his (Mr. Gill's) way of thinking that was unsatisfactory, and now that there were so many opportunities offering to everyone outside, the railway men were amply justified in availing themselves of these opportunities when they offered. In fact it was a duty that they owed to themselves to go outside the railway fence if by so doing they could secure employment of a more satisfactory nature than that they were engaged upon in the railways. During the past three years the railways had been showing a very good profit, and a larger profit could be anticipated this year, and in view of this position the Chief Traffic Manager should see that those employees who had been in the service for a great number of years got more consideration than they had been receiving in the past, and if that were done it would to some extent prevent a large number of men leaving the service. Three or four years ago when things were not so good as they were at the present time, no increases were granted and the reason given was that times were bad. No one took exception to that. It was realised that when times were bad increases could not be expected, but if men were to be debarred from having their positions improved when times were bad, it was fair to assume that they

should participate in the prosperity when it came about, and, seeing that the State generally and the railway service in particular were more prosperous at the present time than was the case three or four years ago, the proposition that some consideration should be given to these employees was a reasonable one. It was to be hoped therefore that the Chief Traffic Manager would take into consideration this important fact that the men who had qualified for various positions should receive every consideration. There were one or two other matters which he desired to deal with. One was mentioned in the Commissioner's report, and it was a matter of great importance. This was the question of the re-grading of our suburban lines. With that question, he (Mr. Gill) would couple the proposed removal of the locomotive sheds from West Perth and the extension of the railway goods yard. All this work should be carried out at one and the same time, and that was when the lines were being re-graded. It was a work which would have to be tackled in the near future, in fact it should have been done years ago. It was to be presumed that it was the expense which prevented the department facing the matter, and consequently it was shelved. Undoubtedly the suggestion of the Commissioner that the line between Midland Junction and Fremantle, or more particularly between Perth and Fremantle required re-grading was a very proper one, and it would be a great advantage to the Railway Department if this work were carried out, as it would mean that it would be possible to run heavier trains on the rails and to economise in the way of locomotive power and fuel. The work was absolutely necessary and urgent. In connection with that work a matter which was of some consequence was the extension of the goods yard in Perth. This had always been a hindrance to the successful working of the goods traffic, and until something was done in that direction there were going to be great difficulties, and also a considerable expense in handling the traffic. The suggestion had been made in the Commissioner's report that the

locomotive sheds at West Perth should be removed for the purpose of extending the goods yard. That might get over the difficulty, but he (Mr. Gill) thought it was only pottering with the matter if that position were taken up. It was to be hoped that the Government would not accept the suggestion of removing the loco. sheds in order to extend the goods yard. That would only be a temporary expedient which would not answer the purpose. In from five to ten years' time the same difficulties would occur again, and so we would be piling up expense. We had had a lot of this in the past. We had not looked forward sufficiently far, but had been satisfied to overcome the existing difficulties and leave it to someone else to face those which would crop up the next day. A striking instance of this was to be seen in the Beaufort Street bridge. Here was a work on which thousands of pounds had been spent three or four years ago, and now we found that this new bridge required to be altered and extended in order that it might admit of the traffic being successfully worked.

Mr. Angwin: Put a line on the South side of the river and you will get over the difficulty.

Mr. GILL: It was not his intention to touch upon that question to-day. In his opinion the suggestion in the report that the locomotive sheds should be removed for the purpose of extending the goods yard, represented only a temporary expedient. Before any money was expended in this direction a thorough enquiry should be held by competent persons with a view to drawing up a comprehensive report on the closely related subjects of re-grading, the provision of a goods yard, and the selecting of a proper site for the locomotive sheds. The work would entail a good deal of expense and it would well repay the department to have such a report by thoroughly competent men in order that a scheme might be outlined on which the money could be profitably expended, instead of continually tinkering with the problem. The extending of the goods yard at West Perth would not prove satisfactory for long. Certainly

some inquiry should first be held in order that a better scheme might be devised. What was the use of continually spending money on works which had to be torn up again the next year? We had too much of this in the railways, and it was time we began to look forward to the requirements of the future. With regard to the ticket collectors mentioned by the member for Guildford, it was true they were not at present doing the work suggested by their title. The attitude of the railways in this respect was nothing more or less than a successful attempt to defeat the agreement entered into between the railway authorities and the railway association. In that agreement provision was made for ticket collectors being paid a certain rate of wage. As their title implied, the duty of ticket collectors was to collect tickets, chiefly at the barriers. At the present time ticket collectors were not doing that work. True, owing to a very strenuous fight put up by the association the ticket collectors, who had been deprived of some of their wages, were recently placed on the wages stipulated in the agreement; but they were not doing ticket collectors' work, which was left to men who, for the most part, were new in the service. These men were established as barrier porters. There was no such classification in the agreement, nor was anything to be found in the Commissioner's report referring to barrier porters. But when the railway association had taken up this matter of the collection of tickets at the barriers they were told these men were not being paid ticket collectors' wages because they were not ticket collectors, but barrier porters. That was a poor old way of getting along with our railways. If our railway officers could not work our railways satisfactorily without evading the agreement made honestly with the men they should allow somebody else to do it. It was unsatisfactory from another point of view, inasmuch as these men did not know their duties and, in consequence, the public were defeating them every day of the week—that was to say people who should pay excess were walking through without doing so. He made that statement seriously, know-

ing it to be a fact that people were walking through the barriers without paying the excess due from them. Recently he had made a comparison between the money collected at the gates during three months of last year with that collected during the corresponding months of this year. Of course there was no guarantee that this comparison was reliable, because there may have been more traffic last year, but he had watched the thing carefully and arrived at the conclusion that the statement that people were not paying the excess due from them was correct. He had asked the Minister a question and in reply had received figures showing a difference of from £60 to £70 in the money collected at the gate during these two periods. He was not going to say that the whole of that money had been lost, but he was satisfied that a great proportion of it was lost through the ignorance of the men at the gates who did not know their work, and who could not possibly know it on such short experience. In the old days ticket collectors had had to go through a stiff examination, and study up the appendix with a view to familiarising themselves with the different kinds of tickets and passes in order that they might become thoroughly conversant with all of them. There were not many men on the Perth barriers who could go through that examination to-day, and consequently the department was being defeated wholesale owing to this petty-fogging piece of cleverness on the part of someone who considered this expedient of putting new men on the barriers an excellent exercise of economy. In regard to the £10 to cadets mentioned by the member for Murray, this amount had been promised to these men for the year 1908-9, but they were deprived of it. Not only had they been deprived of that amount—and it was hoped that as a result of the representations made during the debate the Minister would see that they got it after all—but they were suffering a still greater injustice by reason of the fact that during the period the £10 was withheld a classification board had sat for the purpose of classifying the staff, commencing with those earning £150. In many

instances this classification board had improved the position of those men; but the men who were deprived of the £10, and who in consequence were earning only £140 instead of £150, had not come under the classification, but were passed over. Hence his statement that they were suffering a far greater injustice than was represented in the actual amount of £10. It was only a fair proposition that these men should get the £10 due to them and then go before the classification board, as they should have done in 1908 if they had received the £10 they were entitled to. In regard to the case which had arisen at the Midland Junction workshops, namely Faiching v. the Commissioner, he had asked some questions of the Minister and the replies given were most unsatisfactory. In consequence of this he had moved for the papers, which he would not have done if the replies furnished by the department had not been misleading.

Mr. George: You should not say misleading, you should say inaccurate.

Mr. GILL: These replies had been positively inaccurate. For instance, he had asked did not the Commissioner contest this case in the law courts contrary to the advice of the Crown Law authorities, and the answer had been in the negative. On looking through the file he had found the advice of the Crown Law to be as follows:—

The evidence for the department is based on probability. There is no positive proof that £8 19s. 10d. was handed to Faiching. Mr. Sayer says if the department does not wish to risk losing the case it should not be allowed to go into the court. It is purely speculative how the decision would go.

In face of that how could it be said the action had not been taken contrary to the advice of the Crown Law Department? He contended the Railway Department had gone into court contrary to the advice of the Crown Law Department.

The Minister for Railways: I think you are wrong in your contention.

Mr. GILL: A search of the file had failed to reveal any other explanation. However it was to be hoped the Minister would be able to explain it. Then he

(Mr. Gill) had asked was the Commissioner's object in contesting this case merely to test the legality of certain regulations; the reply to which had been "No." To his mind that had been the purpose of contesting the case. The reply from Mr. Sayer had read—

With reference to your remarks of the 30th ultimo, I arranged for the officer to wait on you and explain the particulars of this case. I note your opinion, but viewing the principle involved, I suggest that the case be defended in court. The system of payment is legal. It is provided in the Government Railways Act Amendment Act, 1907, Section 14, and if we admit Faiching's statement, we would be open to pay an unscrupulous employee, who may be prepared to swear that he was underpaid.

To this he took no objection. Evidently they adopted the right course. But it showed they went to court just to prove the legality or otherwise of the regulations. When the case went to court it was decided against the Commissioner and costs were given against him. Faiching contended he did not receive the extra money supposed to have been given him, and evidence was given in court to show he did not receive it, but in order to prove his just claim to the 19 shillings and some odd pence he had to incur £7 12s. costs, and the court only allowed him £3 6s. 7d. As the case was apparently a test one to prove the legality of the regulations, it was the duty of the Commissioner to pay the whole of the reasonable costs to which Faiching was put in connection with the case, but Faiching was allowed to be £4 5s. out of pocket in fighting for what was wrongfully deducted from him. He was only allowed 7s. 6d. for lawyers' fees. There were not many lawyers in the House who would take 7s. 6d. to fight a case. It was a ridiculous allowance. If lawyers were treated in that way they had one's sympathy. However, these were the facts. This man committed himself to costs amounting to £7 12s., and was only allowed £3 6s. 7d., and it was only a

reasonable request that the Commissioner should make good the man's loss when, contrary to the advice of the Crown Solicitor, the Commissioner went to court to establish that regulation.

The Minister for Railways: What regulation?

Mr. GILL: It was not a regulation; it was the system of paying. The Minister might consider this case. The man was wrongfully dealt with. It was not reasonable to think he could get a lawyer to fight his case for 7s. 6d. Fairplay should be done. The Minister should do something to retain in the service the present wages staff. Men trained in the ranks from boyhood and thoroughly competent to deal with every aspect of the railways should not be allowed to drift out of the service as they were now doing. The only way to prevent it was to compensate them reasonably for the years they had been in the service and for the trouble they had gone to in order to qualify themselves. It was a great mistake to think the Government could go out in the streets or secure an immigrant to replace one of these trained men. Unfortunately, it was a mistake frequently made. The idea was that if another man was put in the place the department was not losing by the transaction. Any reasonable man would know that one who spent a number of years in the service and qualified himself was worth two new hands at any time. The traffic in the near future would be such on the railways that we would need every competent man we had to work the system successfully.

Mr. SWAN: After the speeches delivered during the last two sittings one might be expected to apologise for attempting to talk any more about the railways, but there were a few matters with which he desired to deal before the discussion closed. There were numerous congratulations as to the condition of the railways. If the earning of substantial profits was the chief purpose of a railway system the existing condition of things was a matter for universal congratulation. But that was not the only pur-

pose for which our railway system was constructed and maintained. It was more for the purpose of assisting in the development of the natural resources of the State than to build up profits. So he did not see the same room for congratulation that other members appeared to find. While the Government were paying more regard to the Commissioner's recommendations than previously, they should also pay more regard to what the Commissioner had to say about the cheap and nasty method of construction. The first essential for the economical working of a railway system was a substantial road, but many of the railways recently constructed could not be considered to have been substantially constructed. The Commissioner drew attention to the Pinjarra—Marrinup line in particular. That railway was constructed departmentally, and evidently there was something very wrong with the construction. He (Mr. Swan) would not be at any time surprised to find that a railway constructed by contract was in an unsatisfactory state when taken over by the Working Railways Branch. He believed in the departmental system of construction, and that by it we got the best results, and that if it were more generally used it would give the Commissioner a better basis to work on. In some instances the Working Railways had to spend nearly half the cost of construction in putting into working order railways taken over after construction. That was one of the chief troubles, and the Ministry should pay more attention to it. The Ministry were, to a large extent, responsible for many of the faults connected with the administration of the railways. While the mileage was extended no proper effort was made to bring the trunk lines up to the standard they should reach in order to enable them to carry the increased traffic brought to them by the branch lines. Certainly, there was something being done in that regard, but the Government should take a broader view of the question. They were relaying portion of the Great Southern Railway. Why did

they not go to work and relay the whole of it? It would pay, and pay well, in the long run. Also there was great need for the South-Western line to be relaid with heavier rails, and the Brunswick to Collie section needed reconstructing altogether. This branch railway carried very heavy coal traffic, and it was practically impossible to carry the traffic decently and safely over the line constructed as it was.

The Premier: How many accidents have there been?

Mr. SWAN: It was marvellous there were not more accidents. It was a tribute to the capacity of the men working on that line that the accidents had not been more. The Premier must know as a practical man, that the railway was not constructed in a way to carry the traffic required to be carried by it, and the traffic could not possibly be carried economically over it. It would pay the Government to reconstruct the line. It had always been a source of trouble. Not only was it unsatisfactory from a traffic point of view, but it tore the rolling stock to pieces. It was about time the Government woke up to the necessity and took a bigger view of our railway system. It was time the Government built up the trunk lines to carry the traffic which we might look forward to in the future. The Government seemed to pay some regard to the Commissioner's recommendations, but in the past the Government had ignored them. The Commissioner had not taken too broad a view of this question, but, when he had asked for money to carry on highly necessary work, and when he had shown foresight in connection with building rolling stock, the Government had discouraged him in every possible way. The position to-day was that notwithstanding what we were told about the way the traffic was dealt with, it would be almost impossible for the department to cope with the traffic this wheat season. The Government were, however, waking up to the fact that more rolling stock was required and more accommodation at Midland Junction. Years ago he (Mr. Swan) had come to the conclusion that we wanted increased accom-

modation at Midland Junction, but the Minister did not wake up to this matter until the rolling stock was sorely needed. Then he started to increase the size of the Midland Junction workshops. We had one of the most up-to-date workshops in the world at Midland Junction, but the design was ridiculous; it was impossible to carry out work there economically. He knew positively so far as the fitting shop was concerned that there was not half the accommodation that was required to carry out work economically.

The Minister for Railways: You said the "design."

Mr. SWAN: Yes, the design, and if the design were to be continued in connection with the extension of the workshops then it should be stopped at once and a different design adopted. It was an impossibility to economically carry out the whole of the overhauling of locomotives in the workshops.

The Minister for Railways: Where was it wrong?

Mr. SWAN: There was not enough room to handle the stuff. The pits were crowded too close together.

The Minister for Railways: If we extend the shop then it will be all right.

Mr. SWAN: No; the shop might be large enough—he knew it was not—but the position was this: the pits in the shop were too close together. A man stripped a locomotive, and the whole place around was covered up; he could not walk about. There was money being lost every day in connection with this matter. There were men working in the shops to disadvantage; they were tied up all the time. For example, after a man got the gear off the engine for overhauling purposes he had to stack it under the engine, and then work on the top. He was sorry to hear the Minister say the design was being perpetuated in the extension, because as to the fitting shop it was an impossibility to carry out work satisfactorily.

The Minister for Railways: We hope to be able to manufacture engines there.

Mr. SWAN: The remarks he had made did not apply to the construction of new work so much as to the overhauling, for the overhauling of an engine required

more room than the building of a new engine. He was glad the Minister was making a move in this direction. His grievance was that the Government should have shown greater foresight and had the extension carried out a few years ago so that they would now have been in a position to build the greater portion of the rolling stock required in this State. There was no reason why the whole of the rolling stock should not be built in this country; it would be more satisfactory to all concerned. Mr. Short said in his report in this regard that the cost of ten imported boilers was £300 greater than the cost of 10 locally constructed boilers, and he went on to show how many would be required each year assuming the average life of a boiler was 20 years. It was a very extravagant assumption that he was going to get 20 years' life out of a boiler in this country. If the workshops had been extended years ago we should be able to construct the boilers here without importation at all. There was no question whatever about the quality of the work. The Government had shown some improvement, he admitted, this year in dealing with this phase of the railway system, and he hoped they would go on in that connection, and give Mr. Short an opportunity of getting the railway system up to date. The branch lines were getting out of proportion to the trunk lines, and the Government must grapple with the question, and if necessary spend a few hundred thousand pounds so as to run the system economically, for the Government could not run heavy engines on light lines. Another question which was mentioned in the Commissioner's report was that of reducing the grades in the metropolitan district. Money expended in this direction would be the best possible investment the Railway Department could have. Whilst we had to cope with heavy grades and sharp curves we must increase the size of the locomotives, or spend money in other directions. It would be an ever recurring expense to carry the heavy traffic, but if the department brought about a proper system of regrading, especially within the metropolitan district, it would enable the department to run at a higher speed and give a more satisfac-

tory service to the metropolitan district, to say nothing about the outlying centres. Incidentally he would remark while speaking of the suburban lines that he was glad the Railway Department were waking up to the necessity for removing the great eye-sore of the West Perth railway station. The member for Guildford the other night complimented the department on the fact of the fine buildings and clean trains. While he agreed with that member to a large extent—comparing our railways with those in South Australia for the station buildings in that State were very mean indeed so far as their appearance was concerned, there was no show about them at all, in fact the department were too miserable to paint them—but he doubted if one could see anything worse than the West Perth railway station, and it was about time we got a more uniform system of railway buildings within the metropolitan district. It would be a cheap matter to set fire to the West Perth railway station. He was glad the Government intended to deal with this question at an early date. While discussing the question as to the necessity for improved train service for the metropolitan district, he might mention that with the re-grading carried out it would make it much more easy to give an improved suburban service. Personally he was of opinion that in a city such as Perth is today, the very least we should have was a quarter-hour service between Subiaco and Maylands. This service came into competition with the tramways, and when we considered that Maylands had an hourly service, it might lead one almost to believe that the Government were playing into the hands of the tramway company. We ought to do what we could for the people who lived in these places without regard to the profits of the tramway company, and he hoped the Minister would seriously consider the question.

The Minister for Railways: I do not think you should assume that.

Mr. SWAN: One was almost led to believe was what he had said. No State was so far behind with regard to the suburban passenger service as we were. He believed Mr. Short held the same opinion as he (Mr. Swan) did on this question.

and he hoped the Government would not allow a few pounds to stand in the way of Mr. Short carrying out an improvement. His remarks would not be complete without saying something about the staff, for he knew something about that. He was pretty well acquainted with it, as he was a member of the staff for some years. Notwithstanding all the congratulations, he was prepared to go this far at the outset and say we had a more contented body of railway employees to-day than at any time during his experience in Western Australia. That was not to say that there were no really legitimate grievances that ought to be set right, and the Minister knew that as well as he (Mr. Swan) did. The improved conditions were obtained through the discussion in the House last year, which had a marked benefit on the railway service. The fact of the men being contented and satisfied had resulted in a far better service to the State. That was a good line for the Minister to follow in connection with the matters that were not now fixed up. It had been pointed out that the average wage to-day was higher than it was last year. It did not follow from that that there had been any substantial increases in the rates of pay in the various grades. He knew there had been some, but it was largely owing to the fact that a larger number of mechanics were employed to-day who were receiving higher rates of pay. He had endeavoured to deal with a number of these employees last year, and the discussion that had taken place then had since resulted in some of the grievances being remedied, but in other cases no alteration had been made. Take the case of the examiners, for instance. Any man who knew anything about the railway service would be aware that they were amongst the most important engaged on the system, men on whose services the safety of the travelling public largely depended. They worked all hours of the day and in all sorts of weather, and there was a large element of danger in their occupation, yet after 10 or 12 years' service they were receiving not 8s. 6d. per day as the member for Balkatta had stated, but 8s. per day.

What did the hon. the Minister for Lands think about that? That hon. member was no advocate of low wages and it was to be hoped that he would wake up his colleague, the Minister for Railways. There was an absolute necessity for this particular class of employees to be dealt with, and action could not be taken too soon. A little while ago, through the instrumentality of the men's society, the wages of the lower paid men in the workshops had been increased by sixpence per day. That had broken down the old conservative idea that no labourer in the workshops was worth more than eight shillings per day. Such an idea was absurd, for he had known men as valuable to the department as mechanics, receiving only eight shillings per day. Some of these men working for any private employer would receive 10s. per day without any argument. He wanted the Minister to give attention to that matter and to deal with the case of examiners particularly. That was one of the cases he had arranged to discuss with the late Premier in addition to the case of the old men who had been retrenched. Unfortunately, the matter had been in hand when the late Premier fell ill and consequently it had been hung up and he had not known what to do. The attitude of the present Premier was not sufficiently encouraging for anyone to broach the matter to him. Sir Newton Moore had given a definite promise last year that he would go into that question with him (Mr. Swan) but when the negotiations had reached a certain point they were interfered with owing to Sir Newton's illness, and he had not thought it worth while speaking to the present Premier, from whom he did not expect consideration. As he had stated before, these old men were still out of work after having served as much as 29 years in the department. Some time ago he had asked the Minister for Railways whether, in view of the number of accidents on the suburban lines, the department would favourably consider the appointment of some of these old men as crossing keepers, and the Minister had then replied that the Commissioner was investigating the matter. That was some months ago and nothing more had been

heard of the matter. Would the Minister state whether anything had been done? That matter brought to mind the question of level crossings, and he considered it incumbent upon the Government to adopt some policy in connection with these crossings. He had had considerable trouble over the crossing in his own electorate, and the matter was one which ought to be grappled with at once. It was not reasonable to expect people in the suburbs to travel half a mile to get to railway crossings. That was the position at Maylands where the town was cut in half by the railway, and a person desiring to effect a crossing in a vehicle had to travel half a mile or so. He trusted that the Minister would give consideration to that question generally, and adopt some definite policy. Also, he hoped that the Minister would not forget that he had stated in the House that the Commissioner was considering the advisability of employing these old men as crossing-keepers. There was in addition the question of men relieving officers in higher positions not receiving the rate of wage for those positions. To his mind that amounted to an absolute "take down." The principle was recognised in the agreement with the wages staff that if a man was temporarily occupying a higher position he must get the minimum pay for that position; and had the officers not the same right as the wages men in that regard? He was prepared to admit that the officers were largely to blame for that system growing up, because it was only lately that they had taken upon themselves the responsibility of combining to fight their battles. As yet they had not broken down the system of giving treatment to them which was different from that given to the wages men. There were cases that were glaringly unfair, and he trusted that the Minister would look into them immediately. There was, for instance, the officer relieving the station-master at Albany. That station-master was receiving £275 per annum, but the man who relieved him for as much as eight months in the year was receiving only £170. Was that a fair thing? If the position was worth £275 per year, why was the relieving man paid one hundred pounds per year less?

The Minister for Railways: It does not necessarily follow that he must get the same salary. Difference of service might apply, but he ought to get some consideration.

Mr. SWAN: A man relieving for that length of time should at least receive the minimum for the position during the time he was relieving. It was the recognised principle with the wages staff.

The Minister for Railways: It does not apply in the Public Service generally.

Mr. SWAN: It was distinctly unfair.

The Minister for Railways: We often give bonuses for extra work.

Mr. SWAN: The treatment of officers had given a lot of trouble in the past and was going to cause more trouble in the future. There was no doubt that they were treated unfairly. The member for Claremont had spoken of the grievance of a very highly paid servant, but that hon. member never looked into the grievance of a man on 8s. per day.

Mr. Foulkes: I thought this a very serious case.

Mr. SWAN: There are many more cases equally as serious and more unjust than the treatment meted out to Mr. Triggs, but the member for Claremont would not go across the road to find out about them. Whilst appreciating what the hon. member had said about Mr. Triggs—and he believed it to be right—he could not help noticing that although the hon. member represented some of the 8s. per day men he had never been heard to raise his voice in their behalf, except when forced to do so by members on the Opposition side.

Mr. Heitmann: Not even then; not once has he spoken up for them.

Mr. SWAN: When the department lost a highly paid official the member for Claremont brought the case up, but there were scores of employees in subordinate positions whom the department was losing every day, because their worth was not properly recognised. These men were just as important in the making up of an efficient railway system as Mr. Triggs had been, although he fully recognised the merits of that officer. He had every respect for Mr. Triggs, but he knew men

in subordinate positions whose services contributed very largely to the success of the Railway Department. He had mentioned the case of a man relieving an officer who was receiving £275 per year, and, although the former was a thoroughly smart and reliable officer, he received only £170. Would it be any wonder if the Department lost the services of that man? Dozens of men had gone to the Eastern States after having been years in the West Australian service without receiving recognition, and when they got away they received superior positions almost at once. If the Minister doubted that statement he could give him the names of the men, the positions they had occupied, the positions they now occupied, the conditions under which they worked in this State, and the conditions under which they worked in the other States. That was the sort of thing which was depriving the State of the service of good men, not only in the railways but in other departments. In addition to the failure to pay the minimum rate of pay to men relieving in higher positions, the department kept men on busy stations working twelve hours per day. He knew he was becoming somewhat wearisome to the Premier in dealing with these matters, but the Premier became wearisome to him at times.

The Premier: By the appearance of the benches opposite, you must be wearisome.

Mr. SWAN: The relieving officers at many busy and important country stations continued to work twelve hours a day and night, but with the increase of traffic on the railway system the time had come to reduce the hours of these men to at any rate nine hours per day. If the Minister had any regard for the future working of the railways he would give that matter attention. He believed that in discussing the hours and wages last year he had done the Commissioner an injustice, for he had placed on him the whole of the responsibility for the existing state of affairs; but from something which appeared in the annual report this year he was satisfied that the Commissioner had made an earnest endeavour to get an increase for some of his employees, but

that the Government had sat back and would not let him do so. If the Government were going to continue that policy our railway service would never be a success. We had as fine a body of railway servants in this State as could be found in any part of the world, and it should be the policy of the Government to retain all those capable servants. It appeared, however, that the Government were not sufficiently alive to their responsibilities. The Minister might inform the Committee whether he was going to reconsider the question of the 12 hours shift at stations such as Pinjarra on the South-Western line, and many others which could not by any stretch of imagination be now considered country stations.

Mr. Price: And on the Great Southern.

Mr. SWAN: There were many also on the Great Southern which were becoming too busy to expect men to attend for 12 hours at a stretch.

The Minister for Railways: We do not want any man to work 12 hours.

Mr. SWAN: It might have been all very well some years ago before the settlement of land became such an important matter, and in those days many of the present day big stations were of no great importance, and there might have been some excuse then for working a man 12 hours.

The Minister for Railways: There is a difference between a man being on duty for 12 hours and working for 12 hours.

Mr. SWAN: But these men were working for 12 hours, and it was not a fair thing. Another matter that the Minister might give some attention to was the question of the payment for postal duties at the various railway stations throughout the State.

The Minister for Railways: That has already been brought up in the debate.

Mr. SWAN: The position was that in many instances railway officers were called upon to carry out postal work in their particular districts, and they received nothing for it notwithstanding the fact that the Commonwealth Government were paying the State £800 per annum for the services of these men. The argument would doubtless be used

that these men had not much else to do, but he knew of cases where men had been called upon to carry out postal duties, and after fighting the matter out for some considerable time the postal work had been separated from their railway duties, and the Commonwealth appointed two men to do what the railway man had previously done single handed. It was distinctly unfair that these men should be called upon to do that kind of thing. This criticism was offered in no party spirit at all; no one was more anxious than he (Mr. Swan) to have a successful railway service. He had been employed in it, and, consequently, was much interested in its welfare, and was proud of it. His only desire was to place the Minister in possession of facts that perhaps might not have come under his notice. The last matter that he desired to touch upon was the question of the recent transfer to Albany of the late secretary of the Railway Officers' Association. The Committee, of course, would be told that this was in the best interests of the department, but he knew the Railway Department and its officers too well not to know exactly why this man was transferred to Albany. In years gone by when he (Mr. Swan) was an active member of the railway organisation he was offered promotion at Yalgoo where, of course, there would have been less scope for his energies in the union arena. The same thing, it was to be supposed, applied to the secretary of the Railway Officers' Association. This officer was very energetic both as far as his society and the Railway Department were concerned, and he was the most capable telegraphist employed in the Government railways, and, strange, to say, the department found it necessary to transfer him to Albany where about 10 telegraph messages were sent each day. This officer was sent down there after having been employed in the central telegraph office in Perth for a considerable time, and where he largely assisted in the inauguration of the telegraph system. This officer was an old telegraphist from Victoria, with a lot of railway experi-

ence, and his services were utilised until he made himself somewhat of a nuisance by fighting the battles of the officers as their secretary. Then he was transferred to take the place of a booking clerk or an officer of that description who was receiving something like £100 a year, and where the telegraph part of his duty would be a minor detail. Prior to leaving Perth this officer had no opportunity of appealing, but when he got to Albany he wrote appealing against the transfer, and he was informed by the Commissioner that the telegraph office in Perth was to be considered only a training ground for officers. This officer, however, was an experienced telegraphist before he ever went into that office. If it had been necessary for him to obtain experience of a clerical nature there might have been some excuse for transferring him, but, as a matter of fact, he had had years of experience in the Eastern States before he came over here, and still the exigencies of the service required that he should be transferred to Albany and at a critical time in the existence of the Railway Officers' Association, when Mr. Short had seen fit to refuse recognition to that association. This man was transferred to Albany simply on account of the position he held in connection with that society, and in support of that contention it might be pointed out that the officer found it necessary to write in his capacity as secretary rather strongly to the Commissioner, and in reply the Commissioner practically threatened him for the manner in which his correspondence was written, reminding him that he was a railway officer. It might be mentioned that this officer wrote in his capacity as secretary of the association, and as he was instructed to write. Moreover, he (Mr. Swan) knew that the letters written to the Commissioner were couched in respectful language. He would not support the officer if the latter had done anything else. The Commissioner, however, did not seem capable of separating the individual from the officer. The Minister should inform the Committee when replying

whether he was prepared to inquire into this matter and see whether the officer was getting a fair deal, or whether it was necessary in the interests of the department that he should be sent away from the metropolis. The Minister would have to admit on the face of it that it looked like victimising a man on account of the position he occupied. The other day when discussing the Railway Estimates and dealing with the matter of Mr. Triggs' retirement, the amalgamation of the audit and accounts offices was mentioned. Now, it was his desire to draw attention to one of the results of that amalgamation. Whether Mr. Triggs was to blame, or whether it was the Commissioner or anyone else did not matter, but an absolute injustice had been done to one of the employees concerned. He (Mr. Swan) had placed the matter before the Minister and it was understood that the Minister had discussed it with the Commissioner with the view of offering the officer in question some relief. The position was that this officer, after some 15 years of service, and when he was in receipt of £265 per annum, found that his position on the amalgamation of these two offices was practically abolished, and he was notified that he would suffer a decrease in his salary of £30 in the next following year, and a further £30 in the second year. Surely the Minister did not consider that there was proper justification for such a drastic reduction? In other cases where more favoured officers were concerned, although their positions were re-classified at a lower rate, those officers did not suffer a reduction in salary. Why, then, were the department not capable of adopting an equitable system of dealing with cases of that kind, and why make fish of one and flesh of another? He was prepared to give the name of an officer—and possibly that officer might be found to be on friendly terms with someone occupying a high position in the railway service—who had had his position reclassified without suffering any reduction in salary.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. SWAN: It was unsatisfactory to a speaker to find himself addressing empty chairs.

The Minister for Works: There is a fair number present on this side of the House.

Mr. SWAN: So unusual was it to find Ministerial members present when an Opposition member was speaking that he hastened to thank those in the Chamber for their attendance. But while it was unsatisfactory to be addressing empty chairs, so far as he was concerned he would prefer that to addressing a number of members engaged in private conversations.

Mr. Gordon: What about empty talk?

Mr. SWAN: The member himself was a judge of that. To revert to the transfer of the late secretary of the Railway Officers' Association to Albany, it should be said that that officer was admittedly a thoroughly capable telegraphist, perhaps the best in the service. The most important telegraph work of the Railway Department was in Perth, at the central station. As he had pointed out, there was at Albany comparatively little telegraphic work, and the Albany cadet relieved by the officer under discussion had shown himself thoroughly capable of dealing with the clerical work and what little telegraphic work there was to do at that station. This ex-secretary was essentially a telegraphist, although having considerable experience in clerical work, and it made one wonder why the department should have sent so capable a man to a place like Albany where there was so little scope for his abilities. It might be contended by the department that telegraphists were not required in Perth. But after the transfer of this particular officer applications had been invited for the position of telegraphist in the Perth office. And there were at Northam and Midland Junction at the present time junior porters, in receipt of 6s. a day, employed on telegraphic work. The position was indefensible. It had been proved to his satisfaction that this ex-secretary was victimised by being transferred to Albany. He (Mr. Swan) challenged contradiction by the Minister of this officer's

capabilities, and he desired to know why the transference had been made, particularly when the society was sustaining so strenuous a battle. Together with the previous case mentioned by him, namely that of the officer reduced by £65 in two years, this pointed to the absolute necessity for an independent appeal board for officers, such as was provided for the wages men. When discussing railway grievances on last year's Estimates he had been hopeful that this matter would be attended to. This was another case of discrimination as between the wages men and the men working on salary. He did not think the department could put up a decent justification for that distinction, and he hoped the Minister would see that this matter received some consideration. The officer whose salary was so drastically reduced had appealed to this alleged appeal board, but was not given an opportunity of placing his case before the board, being told simply that the board could not alter the decision; this to a man who, after 15 years of service, had suffered a reduction of £65 per annum. He (Mr. Swan) had been twitted with bringing individual grievances into the House, but where he found such glaring instances as he had pointed to, he proposed to take every opportunity of ventilating them; and not merely would he raise his voice on behalf of the highly paid officers but he would do the same on behalf of the "bottom dog" also. It was contended by the department that in the administration of the appeal board for the wages men the intention of Parliament was given effect to. But this was not so. He knew that the employees were continually robbed of opportunity of having their cases placed before that board. The appeal board was instituted for the purpose of dealing with certain grievances, but time after time when appeals were lodged by dismissed employees the department got back on the contention that it was owing to retrenchment, and therefore could not be dealt with by the appeal board. This was absolutely unfair, and not at all in accordance with the expressed wish of Parliament when provision was made for the appointment of the appeal board. He desired to express satisfaction at the in-

creases shown on the Estimates for some of the officers. He noted with pleasure that the Chief Mechanical Engineer had received an increase on this year's Estimates. At the same time he (Mr. Swan) had pointed out last year that the heads of departments would not be highly paid at £1,000 a year. In its present stage of development a State such as Western Australia could not afford to employ cheap officers in a big profit-earning department like the railways. While we found that the Chief Mechanical Engineer's salary had been raised—

The Minister for Railways: Last year; not this year.

Mr. SWAN: At the same time two other officers in almost equally important positions had been overlooked. He knew that each of these gentlemen had received increases in their pay, but his contention was that men occupying such positions as those of the Chief Mechanical Engineer, the Chief Traffic Manager, or the Engineer for Existing Lines, should receive not less than £1,000 a year. If any of these men were considered unable to earn £1,000 a year, they should be got rid of; because we could not afford to keep cheap men. He was not suggesting they were not capable of earning £1,000 a year, for he had the greatest respect for these three officers, and he thought it was time Western Australia should treat its officers decently and pay them a becoming salary. These were a few points he had thought necessary to bring under the notice of the Committee, and he hoped the Minister would give some attention to them in his reply.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (in reply): It would be his endeavour to reply to many of the criticisms offered in the course of the debate. In the first place he felt gratified that members realised our chief trading asset of the State was in a prosperous condition, and were prepared to admit that our railway policy of the past few years had generally met with their approval. Many small points had been raised in the course of the debate which he felt sure hon. members would excuse him for not replying to inasmuch as it would be impossible in a short speech to answer all the var-

ious statements made. However, he could assure hon. members that anything which might miss his attention on this occasion would be dealt with in recess, when he proposed to go thoroughly through *Hansard* with the Commissioner of Railways with a view to examining into complaints made, when, if convinced that there was justice behind those complaints, he would see that some satisfaction was given. The member for Balcatta had spoken of the number of workmen leaving the railway service. He could assure the hon. member that a great proportion of the losses in this way sustained up to the present had been due to men leaving the department for the purpose of going on the land. Any of our officials or workmen who desired to take up land and make a home for themselves and become permanent settlers in the State were to be commended. There would always be instances of our losing officers, prominent or otherwise. Arguments were raised in regard to the duties and pay of certain subordinate officers. There was every desire on the part of the Commissioner to carry out to its fullest extent any industrial agreement entered into. If there were any errors in the administration of the agreements there could be a conference. Now all quarrels with the association were at rest, the officers of the association could meet the Commissioner in conference, and if there were any errors in the past they should not continue in the future. The station-masters' work compelled them to work long hours in some cases. For the last couple of years there was a growing increase of business, and that, perhaps, necessitated an undue increase of work on an officer before his request for assistance might receive the attention it needed. However, this point was being attended to. The department had already appointed assistant station-masters at a number of stations, and this policy would be continued; but if there was a big rush of work no station-master would mind putting in a little extra if he was enthusiastic, as he ought to be, though he would not like to do it all the year round, nor would we expect it of him. There

were, however, some crossing-places in charge of officers whose duty it might be to attend to a couple of trains during the night. Twelve hours' service in these circumstances could not be considered 12 hours' work. The member for North Perth did not mean his complaint to lie in that direction. But in those places where there was a regular station-master doing station duty all day and perhaps attending to his books at night things should be remedied, and after the Commissioner and the association consulted in regard to the matter it would be found that the Government had no desire to compel a station-master to act as clerk at all hours of the night as well as attend to his station-master's duties during the day. There were complaints in regard to the railway between Midland Junction and Fremantle, and in regard to matters generally in the metropolitan area, but he would urge members to leave this matter entirely in abeyance until we were dealing with the Loan Estimates. In introducing the Railway Estimates certainly he had referred to the fact that authorisation was given to the Commissioner to construct large quantities of railway stock from loan funds, but had he not given that information hon. members would not have been satisfied in dealing with those Estimates that, during the coming year, the department would be able to cope with the increased traffic. He had special reasons for delaying any discussion in regard to improvements in the metropolitan area until we were dealing with the Loan Estimates, but members could rest satisfied that the requirements of the railway system in the metropolitan area would be thoroughly looked into and given effect to. There was a remark made by the hon. member for North Perth to which exception must be taken, though the hon. member probably meant no reflection on the Government. The hon. member, in dealing with the train service to Maylands, led members to believe that the Government had no desire to injure the tramway service. The hon. member could rest assured that the Commissioner would resent any action on the part of the Minister or the Government giving in-

structions in regard to the time-table, if it was thought that it was for the purpose of assisting the tramway system. In fact the hon. member could be assured that in no instance had the Commissioner been asked to reduce the service. In nearly every instance when the Commissioner's attention was drawn to the service it was after a deputation had waited upon him (the Minister) and he had asked for an increased and not for a reduced service. Tramway system or not, the railway system was run for the benefit of the people; and although some years ago it was necessary to reduce the mileage, the action of the Commissioner at that time was justified. The train service to the country was too large at that time, and reductions had to be made; but as traffic increased and as it was found a good proposition to increase the mileage, the train service would be increased. For instance, in connection with the Albany service, formerly there was only one train a day to Albany, leaving early and reaching Albany late at night, whereas now there was one train leaving Perth for Albany in the evening and travelling all night with sleeping accommodation provided, and there was a special daily train service to Katanning. Similar action would be taken in regard to other railways as occasion demanded. The member for North Perth would be given any information he desired in connection with the rates of pay. A letter had been received from the association pointing out that a number of men were on the minimum rate, but the condition of things was not nearly so bad as shown in that letter, a greater number being paid 8s. 6d. instead of 8s. The case of Mr. Parry he proposed to go into again. The reduction from £265 to £200 was quite justified, and every inquiry was made, yet the department was hardly justified in making such a big reduction in two years. Reductions in the public service were made to extend over five years at 20 per cent. per annum. He would consult the Commissioner again in regard to this large reduction which took effect in the short period of two years in connection with this officer. It was

pleasing to hear from the hon. member, who probably voiced the opinion of members generally, that some of the higher officers should receive larger salaries. The salary of the Chief Mechanical Engineer was increased last year from £850 to £950, and there was a large number of other officials who should receive increases this year. The Commissioner recommended that the Chief Mechanical Engineer and also the Comptroller of Accounts should be brought to their maximums, but it was thought by him (the Minister) that, having given increases last year, they should not be again given this year. He was more desirous of seeing the increases apply to lesser officials, but not because he thought that the Chief Mechanical Engineer, for instance, was not deserving of the increase. The Chief Mechanical Engineer was one of the best officers in the system, and it would not displease him (the Minister) if the Treasurer would allow of the amending of the salary this year to bring it up to the maximum fixed for the position some years ago, more especially on account of the excellent work Mr. Hume did in regard to the inquiry into the corrosion of the Coolgardie water pipes. According to the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton), the railways in the metropolitan area were in a bad state. The hon. member spoke of the starvation and neglect of the permanent way between Midland Junction and Fremantle. The engineer's instructions were to keep up the permanent way to the highest standard, and no money was ever refused to the engineer in connection with the keeping up of the permanent way. To-day it stood as good as if not in a better condition than it had ever been in. The hon. member spoke of a couple of accidents near Claremont and made out that the permanent way was in such a state as to cause these accidents. One accident was due to a broken spring on a truck, and an accident like that would occur anywhere. We must commend our engineers and also our staff for the fact that we had been so free from accidents. One did not like to boast, because one never

knew in a railway system when there would be a serious accident; but undoubtedly it was a great pleasure to find that after so many years we were so free from accidents. The second accident at Claremont was caused through a signalman's error. Neither accident could be a reflection upon the state of the permanent way. The hon. member also referred to the Jandakot service and stated that the Commissioner did not sufficiently use the Jandakot line. Any goods sent from Fremantle to Bunbury were charged and paid for at the rate of the shortest route, that was *via* Jandakot. If some of the goods did occasionally get carried *via* Perth it was simply because it suited the convenience of the Railway Department. The people in the Jandakot district could rest assured that, as soon as the district warranted increased service, the Railway Department would give them increased communication, and endeavour to build up the district. The member for Guildford had asked that the matter of certain workmen, Italians the hon. member called them, being carried from Kurrawang to Doodlakine be dealt with. On the 16th May seven workmen travelled from Kurrawang to Doodlakine, and on the 17th June seventeen others travelled down. These men travelled in carriages and paid single fare. They had five hundredweight of effects, mattresses, stretchers, etcetera, and paid freight and £7 9s. 10d. single fares down. On the return journey they made arrangements for two covered vans to carry up their luggage and effects, and paid £10 13s. 4d. for freight and single fares also. It was understood that some of them got inside the vans where there luggage was and slept in the vans. They paid their fares both ways, and paid for the carriage of all the goods they had with them.

Mr. Underwood: They were not in a crate then.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member said they were. What did it matter to the hon. member or anyone else. These men paid their fares and full freight on their goods, and some of them got into the truck where the goods were and laid down to sleep.

Mr. Johnson: That is against the regulations.

Mr. Gill: It is a direct violation of the regulations of the railway service and some officer is responsible for it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They got in at Doodlakine, and he did not know if the official there was called upon to explain why they were allowed to get in the truck. He did not know that these men were Italians, but he knew that they paid their fares and freight. The question had been raised, and very largely raised, in regard to the question of cadets. In 1907-8 no increases were provided on the Estimates for any officers receiving over £100 a year. That did not extend only to cadets in the Railway Department but to those in the Education Department, and right throughout the public service instructions were given that no increases were to be made on any salaries of £100 a year and over. In the following year, to make amends, a double increase was given. He did not want members to assume that the £10 of the previous year was paid, but he would give an instance. A cadet who was receiving £100 a year, instead of receiving in the following year £110 was paid £120. The cadet classified at £130, instead of receiving the £10 increase and being placed on the Estimates at £140 received £150. Some members seemed to be under the impression that these cadets were losing the £10 each year, and he wanted to make it clear to members that that was not the case. The member for Balkatta made some remark as to the classification board. Let him (the Minister) inform the member that no classification board was in existence. When it came into existence the double increase had been granted.

Mr. Gill: The classification board came into existence between the time that the £10 was stopped and the £20 granted.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It came after the £20 was granted.

Mr. Gill: Are you positive?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: An assurance had been received from the secretary that that was so, and he (the Minister) believed that was the case.

Mr. Gill: I may have made a mistake, it may be that the classification board was appointed afterwards.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The salaries were made up to what they would have been.

Mr. Gill: But they have not received that £10 yet.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In the following year the salaries went on as if no deduction had been made. The member for Murray in a speech the other night said that the ex-Premier had made a promise that the £10 would be paid. Where did he make that promise?

Mr. Johnson: In this Chamber.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Upon searching *Hansard* he had failed to find the promise. He was not reflecting on the member for Murray, but what he wanted to get from him was whether it was a private conversation or was the promise made in the House? He had no knowledge of it in any shape or form.

Mr. George: I should like to say the ex-Premier not only made the promise in the House on the night of the fire at the Midland workshops, he also promised me. Talking to him in the corridor the ex-Premier confirmed the promise the other evening. He had made the promise and could not understand it not being carried out.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If the promise was made by the Premier in the House it should be carried out, but if the promise was made by the Premier to the member for Murray he (the Minister) should have been advised.

Mr. Johnson: It was not made to the member for Murray but to the Chamber.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If that promise had been publicly made he would give an assurance that the amount would be paid at once. He wanted to go further and say that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to pay the money.

Mr. George: Personally, I do not think you were averse to the payment from the start.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Premier would be only too pleased to carry out any promise

made by his predecessor. The Premier had just advised him (the Minister) to that effect, and any promise made would be carried out. As far as our cadets were concerned we wanted to go a little bit better than in the past. He (the Minister) commended the ex-Commissioner for the rules and regulations dealing with cadets. The hon. member did a lot of good work in reference not only to the cadet system but in regard to railway institutes, but we were going one better than he did, probably because it was found necessary. Under the old scale, in the first year £40 was paid to a boy of 14 years of age, we intended to make that £50 in the future, dating from the 1st September; in the second year £50 was paid now, we intended to make it £60; in the third year £70 was paid, we intended to make it £80; in the fourth year, £90, which was going up to £100; in the fifth year £110 was paid, now it would be £125; in the seventh year £120 was paid, that was to be raised to £140; in the eighth year £130 was paid, that would now be £150, and in special cases the amount of £160 a year would be paid. That should do a great deal towards inducing boys to join the service. The member for Claremont spoke of the high freights on the railway system; for many years past we had been making reductions, and big reductions were made on the carriage of timber. The grain freight had been reduced, also the freights on potatoes, onions, flour, meat, and stone fruits were carried on passenger trains, and there had been a great reduction on mining timber. No person could complain as to the rate charged on manure, which was ¼d. per ton per mile. In all these matters reductions had been made, and he only knew of one instance where there had been an increase. He remembered the brewers coming to him and urging that the 6-ton rate should be abolished on account of the competition from the other States. They afterwards asked him to replace the 6-ton rate, which he refused to do.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You have not made any reduction on sandalwood.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No; that could afford to pay. We had to

get something back, we carried vegetables and flour to the fields at an exceedingly cheap rate, and if we got a bit of back loading then we were doing well. We were carrying ores from the fields as back loading at as low a rate as $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton per mile, the same rate as manures. If there were sulphuric ores of no mineral value fit for treatment we were carrying these down here at a cheap rate, instead of the sulphuric manufacturers having to send to Spain for their pyrites. We induced them to bring the sulphuric ores from the fields at a rate which did little more than pay the expenses, and he hoped it would help to build up the mining industry as well as the industries at West Guildford and North Fremantle. Objection had been made by members to the Railway Department not paying officers more where they were carrying out postal work. It had been the rule in all departments that there should be one rate of salary for an officer, and when we asked an officer to carry out the duties as postal officer we classified the station according to the duties which were placed on that officer.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There are so many places.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There were many places on the goldfields where we had stationmasters whose duties were very light, there being only one or two trains a day, and if we could work in with the Commonwealth so that our officers could do not only our duties but those for the Commonwealth, then it was a good thing for us to use the Commonwealth officers, and it was a good thing insofar that we were able to send an officer to a place where otherwise we could not afford to send him, and which enabled the Commonwealth people to give postal facilities in small localities. Members ought to be glad that we are trying to work in with the Commonwealth in these matters.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You do not give them sufficient pay.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If we were not giving them sufficient pay then we should have to look into this matter, and we should have to ask the Commonwealth people to pay more. At

the present time the Commonwealth paid as a minimum £3 per annum and the maximum was £30 per annum. At Tambellup the Commonwealth paid £3 for an officer who was doing postal work. We should have to go into this question to see if we could not effect some different arrangement.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Three pounds a year?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; that was all they paid for doing the work at Parker's-road.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Have you asked for more?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In making these remarks he was not condemning the Commonwealth. At Tambellup the Commonwealth sent an officer to whom they paid £170 a year, whereas they were paying the Government £30 a year previously. At Goomalling they were paying £21 a year.

Mr. Swan: Now they have two men there. It means the officers were being overworked in some cases.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We should have to look into this question because if that was the case undoubtedly the officers must have been worked too hard, and should have had assistance. That was where the advantage lay in a debate of that sort, if the only desire was to show where anomalies existed. If it was found that two men had to be sent to Goomalling, where one man had had to do all the work on the railways, that man should even now get some compensation. He agreed that the Government ought to look into the question as to the amount paid by the Commonwealth to the State with a view to making more equitable arrangements at some of these places. Undoubtedly the principle was a good one. At places like Bardoe, and Broad Arrow the duties of the stationmaster were very small indeed, and the duties of a postmaster could not be very great. In those circumstances it would be a good thing if the two Governments could combine and appoint an officer to serve both. Until the country became more settled there would be many places where the two authorities could well work together,

and save a good deal of expense. Generally the Government ought to see that none of their officers was unduly harassed. There were places where the State could not afford to employ a station-master, but the Commonwealth and the State in conjunction might find it worth while to keep a reliable officer at such places. Reference had been made to the fact that the coal boxes intended for use in the shipment of Collie coal had been used for departmental work. Instructions had been issued that the coal boxes were to be used for the bunkering trade only, and as soon as the stress of work in the Midland Junction workshops was overcome the Government would undertake the construction of more boxes in order more conveniently to handle that trade.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Considering the amount of coal which the Government are taking now, you will not want any boxes soon.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In any circumstances more boxes would be required. One matter to which he wished to draw the special attention of the Committee was the speech made by the member for Claremont in dealing with the retirement of Mr. Triggs from the railway service. In putting the case of Mr. Triggs before the Committee the member for Claremont had not been quite fair, but in any case it was apparent that he had not fully absorbed the large amount of correspondence, because he had fallen into a serious mistake in regard to the sick leave—a mistake which had already been partly corrected by the member for Murray. But according to the report in the Press the member for Murray had also been in error, because he had spoken of 12 weeks' sick leave granted to Mr. Triggs, whereas the actual time was 31½ weeks.

Mr. George: I said "thirty-one and a half weeks."

Mr. Foulkes: I asked you to correct me when I was speaking.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Foulkes had required correction often during his speech, particularly in regard to his inferences. Undoubtedly Mr. Triggs was a very excellent officer, and a

splendid organiser, but he had been disloyal both to his late chief, Mr. Short, and to the previous Commissioner, the member for Murray, as could be shown in his own communications.

Mr. Heitmann: He also said that Mr. Short was disloyal to the previous Commissioner.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, he said so.

Mr. George: Nothing will make me believe that Mr. Triggs was disloyal to me.

Mr. Foulkes: What is your object in trying to prove that Mr. Triggs was disloyal to Mr. Short?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The object was to ensure that the Committee would be fair in the matter. The hon. member for Claremont had read a lot of extracts in regard to that case, and it was his (the Minister's) intention to read more of them. Mr. Triggs had entered the department some 10 years ago, and last year made application for a change, but recently, having obtained a position in the Commonwealth service, resigned from the department. He wrote to the Commissioner advising him that he intended to retire, and asked for special treatment on account of the special work he had done in the railway service. The Commissioner before sending any reply had placed the case before him (the Minister) and stated what he intended to recommend. To that he (the Minister) had agreed. When Mr. Triggs was informed what treatment was to be given to him on his retirement he demanded that the papers should be referred to the Minister, but as he had already dealt with the matter, the papers were sent on to Cabinet. Mr. Triggs in referring the whole question to him had drawn attention, in a lengthy communication, to the special work he had done in the service, and had pointed out that he had reorganised the accounts branch, the stores branch, the audit branch, and the clerical and accountancy work of the Chief Mechanical Engineer's department. He had managed the death benefit fund and the provident fund, and had been chairman of the staff selection board since its inception. Mr. Triggs had urged that he was entitled to three months' long service leave for

his first seven years' service. The railway regulations provided that any officer who had been 10 years in the service could claim three months' long service leave, but that was conditional on his remaining in the service. If he wanted to leave the service that right disappeared. Mr. Triggs had also written—

The concentration of all accountancy and staff work into one office caused an enormous amount of personal labour and overtime to myself. When this was completed, the reorganisation of the stores branch, which was also in a deplorable condition, was undertaken. Upon the death of Mr. T. Patterson, the Chief Auditor, I took over, at the request of the department, the whole control of the two branches.

That was where he wanted the member for Murray to take careful note, because Mr. Triggs had been careless whether he reflected on the present Commissioner or the previous Commissioner.

Mr. Foulkes: That is what you call disloyalty.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner had been asked to make a full statement in reply to the lengthy minute by Mr. Triggs.

Mr. Angwin: Those statements were true.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The statements were not true. Mr. Short had replied as follows:—

I refrained from making any comment upon Mr. Triggs' statements when sending forward his letter, as I had no desire to influence you in the matter, but since you require my views on certain points, I will give them as briefly as possible. I do not intend to detract one whit from any credit which may be due to Mr. Triggs for the work he has done during the past ten years. It is, however, impossible to admit his claim to practically the sole credit for all reforms and improvements which have been effected in branches with which he has come into contact; such a claim is unreasonable and unfair to those officers associated with him.

Mr. Hudson: What credit did Mr. Triggs give to his junior officers?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: None whatever.

Mr. Hudson: The Commissioner gave him credit for his work, but he gave no credit to anyone else.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Not one word of credit to others is contained in all these communications; he refers only to what he did himself.

Mr. Foulkes: Was he asked to recommend his successor?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know.

Mr. Foulkes: You know perfectly well that he was.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner's statement continued—

I will first deal with the points raised by you. 1, Term of service, etc. —1-6-00, Chief Clerk, C.M.E. Office, £375 per annum; 1-7-00, Chief Clerk, pay increased to £400 per annum; 1-7-03, Chief Clerk, pay increased to £450 per annum; 1-2-04, Acting Chief Accountant, £450 per annum; 1-7-04, Chief Accountant, £600 per annum; 1-7-05, Chief Accountant, pay increased to £700 per annum; 1-7-09, Chief Accountant, pay increased to £750 per annum. Long service leave—Mr. Triggs claims long service leave under the Public Service Act, but the late Commissioner informed him on the 29th August, 1905, that he would come under the salaried staff regulations, dated 1st July, 1905, which provided for three months' long service leave after ten years' service. As shown above, he completed his ten years on the 1st June last, and I therefore proposed to pay him for the three months. I do not intend to discuss the legality or justness of the late Commissioner's decision in this respect. It does, however, seem strange, that Mr. Triggs has allowed five years to pass without questioning it in any way. 3, Reorganisation schemes—I propose to deal with these under their separate headings—(a) The reorganisation of the Accounts branch. On page 2 of Mr. Triggs' letter to you, he says the clerical

cal and accountancy work of the Locomotive branch was in a chaotic state, and the Chief Accountant's branch was in nearly as bad a condition. This is strong language, and when it is borne in mind that the late Commissioner had a good knowledge of accountancy, and had been in charge of the department for nearly two years, and further, that Mr. Triggs succeeded Mr. Toppin, who had been selected for the position of Auditor General from applicants from all over the States, I think a most undeserved and unwarrantable reflection has been cast upon those gentlemen. It is certain that Mr. George had intended alterations in the system of dealing with accounts, time-keeping, etc., and when Mr. Triggs took charge of the Accountancy branch these were effected. Naturally the centralising of the work meant reorganisation and remodelling of the system, but in carrying out this work Mr. Triggs had the advice and assistance of some of the most capable officers in any accountancy work, and to their advice and assistance much of the subsequent success is due.

Mr. George: I do not think he would deny that. He was most proud of his officers.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There was not one word in all the communications about any credit due to the officers.

Mr. George: He was in charge of the work, and had to take the full responsibility for what was done.

Mr. Gordon: Well, he ought to give some credit to the others.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Short's minute continued—

(b) The reorganisation of the Stores Branch.—Here again Mr. Triggs claims credit for "the reorganisation of the Stores Branch, which was, he states, in a deplorable condition." Whether Mr. Triggs claims the credit for reorganisation prior, or subsequent, to my assuming charge of the department, I cannot say. Some measure of

reorganisation had taken place prior to my time, and certainly it was Mr. Triggs who first drew my attention to the necessity of thoroughly reorganising this branch. After going into the matter I appointed a committee in August, 1907, consisting of Messrs. E. A. Evans, C. S. Gallagher, and G. G. Haldane, to investigate and report on the working of the Stores Branch, and consequent on that report I carried out some drastic changes.

Mr. Angwin: When I asked for a report of that committee you said there was no report.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member was not correct in that statement—

In the subsequent reorganisation of the branch, I had, of course, the benefit of Mr. Triggs's advice and assistance, but to say that he is entitled to the whole of the credit for the changes is going beyond all reason. The officer at present in charge of the Stores, and those working with him have done much, and are deserving of the highest credit for what they have done. but in this, as in everything else in a large department like this, the co-operation of many is necessary to work with any measure of success. It is not a one man's job as Mr. Triggs would infer. In the Stores management I have taken a very keen interest, and studied detail to bring it up to a high standard, and whilst giving Mr. Triggs credit for his share in the matter, I cannot allow him to rob others of their share of the credit. (b) The reorganisation of the Audit Branch.—Mr. Patterson, the late chief Railway Auditor, died at a time when I was straining every nerve to effect retrenchment and economies in the working of the department, and I seized on the opportunity afforded to effect savings by amalgamating the Audit and Accountant's Branches under the one head. (I may add that out of consideration for Mr. Patterson's bad state of health, and knowing that he contemplated an early retirement, I did not press him too hardly in the matter of reorganisation.)

Before issuing the final instructions I had both Mr. Triggs and Mr. Higgs before me, and clearly expressed my wishes in the matter, and then confirmed my instructions in writing, as per copy attached (marked "A"), the details of course, being left to those gentlemen to arrange. Mr. Triggs subsequently submitted his recommendations, and until a few days ago, I understood that they were his own ideas, but I now learn that they were principally Mr. Higgs' recommendations, and, strange to say, the original minute from Mr. Higgs to Mr. Triggs does not appear on the departmental file.

Mr. Hudson: Was there not a Mr. Evans concerned?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Not that he was aware of.

I wrote him, therefore, on the 11th instant, see attachment "B," and I enclose a copy of his reply (marked "C"), in which he seems to have altogether forgotten himself, and I have replied to him as per attachment (marked "D").

(d) The reorganisation of the Clerical and Accountancy work of the Chief Mechanical Engineer's Branch.—This goes back many years, and although I have not an intimate knowledge of the working of the Chief Mechanical Engineer's office prior to Mr. Triggs's advent, I can quite believe it was in a very unsatisfactory condition. Mr. Triggs did good work in that Branch, and reorganised the work of the Branch.

Mr. Foulkes: Mr. Triggs had no knowledge of this communication you are reading.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, it was dated the 15th November.

He also says he carried out a scheme of classification in connection with the loco. employees, for which he received the thanks of the Government, and a special honorarium. His record shows he was paid a higher salary than any other chief clerk, and, further, as he admits, his work in that branch brought him promotion to the position of Chief Accountant. What more can be expected? (e) The management of the

Death Benefit Fund.—(f) The management of the Provident Fund.—I do not intend to say much in regard to these funds. They are excellent institutions, and are the outcome of suggestions by some of the outside staff. Mr. Triggs has done good work in connection with them, but he has had able assistance, and I do not think the actual work or worry entailed is very much. I look on the position of chairman in the same way as the chairman of other societies, or the president of the Railway Institute, which latter institution is intimately associated with railway working. So far as the Provident Fund is concerned, I understand that the members intend making a presentation to Mr. Triggs, and they are, if any, the proper persons to recognise his services in that respect. Were the reorganisations initiated, etc., by Mr. Triggs?—So far as the reorganisation of the Accounts Branch is concerned, the files indicate that it was done on the initiative of the late Commissioner, who took an active interest in that branch. I have dealt with the reorganisation of the Stores and Audit Branches, and do not think I need add more to what I have already said. The Death Benefit and Provident Funds are also dealt with under their headings. I would just add that in all these matters, the Commissioner has exercised his own judgment, and did not simply confirm or endorse anything or everything put before him. Before referring to the other paragraphs of your minute, I wish to make a few brief observations on some of the statements contained in Mr. Triggs' letter. In the first place I must entirely repudiate his suggestion of unfairness towards him. He has undoubtedly worked hard, but this is not peculiar to him, as I am glad to say we have a goodly number of hard-working officers in responsible positions. The work he was engaged in has been strenuous, and the book of instructions issued in 1906 is deserving of every praise. He has quoted you the opinions of several persons of standing, and it is not necessary to add to these. But in

the compilation of that book he was fortunate in having the advice and assistance of some very smart and able officers, and as he stated in his minute to the Commissioner "every officer has been afforded an opportunity of taking a share in its preparation, both in construction and revision." This was a very proper course to pursue, and it is only reasonable to suppose that, in consequence, his work was rendered much less arduous. In January 1907, Mr. Triggs was granted twelve weeks recreation leave, and he travelled through the States. His break down in health was not until October, 1907, some fifteen months after the issue of the instruction book. Further, the fact that earlier in that year he had three months holiday rather discounts his claim that the break down was consequent on his earlier work. His complaint was a severe attack of sciatica. Mr. Triggs says that during his term of office he undertook and carried out, mostly in his own time, the preparation of seven instruction books which he enumerates. I am surprised to learn this, as I know that committees were appointed to prepare the instructions, and these committees were at work for considerable times. Then again, special officers have been at work on the books, and the part taken by Mr. Triggs was more in the nature of editor than author. In connection with the Station Accounts and forms, they were considered by a committee including officers from the Traffic Branch, and finally they were dealt with by the Chief Traffic Manager, the Auditor of Receipts, and Mr. Triggs, conjointly, before being passed to me. After going through them I had to return them with alterations and suggestions for further consideration, and on the principle acted upon by Mr. Triggs, I might fairly claim the whole and sole credit for the alteration and improvement in system of Station Accounts. The preparation of these books, etc., being subsequent to his break down in health, cannot be said to have had any influence on that misfortune. I candidly admit that in Mr. Triggs we have

had an officer of considerable ability and a good organiser, but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that he has been fortunate in having associated with him officers possessed of much zeal and ability, men who were capable of drafting the necessary instructions to carry out any scheme desired. It would have been impossible for him to have done much but for the able and ready assistance afforded, and it would have been more just and generous on his part had he given this assistance more than a passing acknowledgment. I quite concur with you that consideration should be shown to any officer compelled to retire on account of ill-health, especially when such ill-health is caused wholly or partly by the arduous nature of his duties. In such circumstances I would be prepared to strain any regulation in favour of such an officer. These conditions do not, however, apply in Mr. Triggs's case. He leaves of his own accord to take up a position under the Federal Government. That he was an applicant for the position he goes to I know by rumour only. He had not advised me that he was applying for the position, and the first official intimation I had was on the 18th ultimo, when Mr. Green, the Commonwealth Public Service Inspector, called and informed me that Mr. Triggs had applied, and had been recommended for the position. This is not the only application he has made for employment elsewhere, and why he expects special recognition for his services under such circumstances I cannot imagine. It is no use trying to hide the fact that for some considerable time he has been a man with a grievance. He considers he is very much underpaid (not that he is singular in that respect), and I am afraid this idea has got such a hold on him that it has warped his better judgment to some extent. He has laid the blame for his treatment financially at my door; this, as Cabinet is well aware, is absolutely unjust to me, and I therefore appreciate the remarks made by you in the last para-

graph of your minute. Mr. Triggs has been paid the salary fixed by the Government and Parliament, and I do not now consider that he is entitled to anything more. It is quite a new departure to look upon one's salary as a kind of part payment only, reserving the right to adjust at some later date. To sum up, during Mr. Triggs' service of ten years, his salary has been nearly doubled. He was given the greatest consideration when he was ill, for, as previously mentioned, he was allowed 31½ weeks sick leave on full pay during the last three years, which followed within a few months a period of 12 weeks recreation leave. He is now leaving the service entirely of his own accord to better his position, and is being paid equivalent to six months' salary. In my opinion he has, under the circumstances, been liberally treated, and his expressions should be those of gratitude rather than of complaint.

That was written a few days after Mr. Triggs forwarded his appeal. He (the Minister) asked the Commissioner certain questions and the matter was referred to Cabinet on the 18th November. There were two Cabinet meetings held, and some members of the Cabinet thought that as Mr. Triggs had left the service on six months' leave on full pay he was being treated well.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Did Cabinet approve of withholding his pass?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That question was never before Cabinet, but he would explain it later. He (the Minister) was extremely sorry that he could not give Mr. Triggs a final answer before that gentleman left the State. Owing to a divergence of opinion the matter could not be fixed up. Since then, however, the Premier had agreed with the recommendations of the Commissioner, and Mr. Triggs had been wired to and informed that the Commissioner's recommendations would be carried out. As far as Mr. Triggs was concerned members should look at the position from the following point of view: Mr. Triggs entered the service ten years ago. Undoubtedly he had done good work, but during that ten

years his salary had been doubled by the Railway Department. Some time ago the late Commissioner asked that the maximum salary should be fixed in the case of the Comptroller of Accounts and the Chief Mechanical Engineer. Cabinet agreed to this and made it £800 in the case of the Comptroller of Accounts, and £1,000 in the case of Chief Mechanical Engineer. Up to last year, however, the Government were not able to give an increase. Last year Mr. Triggs's salary was increased to £750, or £50 less than the maximum, and the salary of the Chief Mechanical Engineer to £950, or £50 less than the maximum. This year increases were provided for the Chief Traffic Manager and the Engineer for Existing Lines, because these officers did not get an increase last year, and the department did not think they would be justified in asking the House to again in this year increase the salaries of the Comptroller of Accounts and Chief Mechanical Engineer. The Chief Mechanical Engineer knew that he had the confidence of the Commissioner and the Government, and that as speedily as possible his salary would be raised to the maximum amount. With regard to Mr. Triggs, out of the twelve weeks recreation leave that he received, nearly four weeks were spent in departmental business for which Mr. Triggs received payment and that was not counted against his accumulated leave. In fact that officer had taken only eight weeks and four days of recreation leave during his ten years of service. Although that officer had been sick occasionally he had never seen fit to take his recreation leave, and the late Commissioner had given him distinctly to understand that his recreation leave could only accumulate up to six weeks. During the past three years this officer had had 31½ weeks of sick leave on full pay, for which no reduction had been made. It was not, as the hon. member had said, that in counting up his recreation leave the department had deducted his time on sick leave.

Mr. Foulkes: You took that into consideration.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The department had not deducted from

his recreation leave or long service leave one day that the officer had been away on sick pay. It had not been taken into consideration at all; it had merely been mentioned in the correspondence.

Mr. Foulkes: I do not wish to interrupt the hon. member—

Mr. Heitmann: Then sit down.

Mr. Foulkes: but certainly it was taken into consideration by the Commissioner for Railways.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It had not been taken into consideration at all beyond being brought under the notice of the officer. The only fact taken into consideration were that the officer had been ten years in the service and for that he had been allowed three months on full pay. On receiving the resignation the Commissioner had decided to give the officer the value of three months' leave on full pay. In addition the officer's recreation leave had accumulated to 20 weeks. No officer was allowed to accumulate leave for more than six weeks, but Mr. Triggs, when away on 12 weeks' holiday, had taken eight weeks and four days recreation leave, which was deducted from the 20 weeks recreation leave, and the department agreed to pay him, in addition to the three months leave on full pay, for 12 weeks and four days recreation leave. Further than that, last year Mr. Triggs had been allowed to act as Commissioner for the Federal Government, a task which had occupied some seven weeks of his time, and for which he had received his full salary and a bonus of £100 from the Federal Government.

Mr. Price: Why did you pay him?

Mr. Heitmann: He should never have received it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: But he carried out his usual work?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, Mr. Triggs had left the department for the whole of the time and the Federal Government had paid him a bonus of £100. The department had not treated this officer badly; in fact he had been well treated, and having made the Railway Department a stepping-stone for his own advancement he had now left it.

Mr. George: Did not the Commonwealth Government recoup you his salary while he acted as Commissioner?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Mr. George: Then you did not have to pay his salary.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Would not the hon. member admit that if the department had not been desirous of assisting Mr. Triggs it could have refused to allow him to act as Commissioner for the Federal Government? Then there was the question of the free pass for Mr. Triggs. The regulation providing for inter-State free passes only allowed the several State Commissioners to issue passes to officers in their employ.

Mr. George: He was still in your employ while on leave.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, he had resigned, and the resignation had been accepted.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is a very small thing, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There was a very grave principle involved if after an officer had left the service he was to be allowed a concession intended for railway officers only. Moreover it was to be remembered that the Commonwealth Government had taken over Mr. Triggs and, presumably, had paid his travelling expenses.

Mr. Foulkes: Why do you come to that assumption?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Because if the Railway Department of Western Australia had been bringing over a highly qualified officer the department would have paid his expenses. Mr. Triggs had severed his connection with the department and therefore it would have been wrong in the Commissioner to issue a pass to him. But the Commissioner had offered to give Mr. Triggs a letter to the Railway Commissioners of the Eastern States, and no doubt on the strength of that letter, had he accepted it, Mr. Triggs would have been granted free passes. The member for Murray himself would not have issued a pass to an officer after that officer had resigned from the service and his resignation was accepted.

Mr. George: I would not have allowed him to pay his fare, and his wife's fare from Perth to Fremantle.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Was the hon. member sure that Mr. Triggs had had to do that?

Mr. Osborn: Why should he not; I have to pay my wife's fare.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It would have been an improper thing for the Commissioner, contrary to the regulations framed by the several State Commissioners, to have issued a free pass to an officer who had left the service. It must be recognised that the Railway Department had treated Mr. Triggs with every respect. Certain recriminations had been made in the course of correspondence between Mr. Triggs and the Commissioner with regard to the acceptance of Mr. Triggs's resignation, but hon. members would see that in consequence of the reflections Mr. Triggs had made in his letters that officer could scarcely expect anything but a short and curt letter from the Commissioner.

Mr. George: But the letter you refer to was written after the acceptance of the resignation.

Mr. Foulkes: The Minister knows that well enough.

Mr. Heitmann: Anyhow Mr. Triggs can fight well enough for himself.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: With regard to the consideration of the papers, there had been no delay except a brief one owing to a difference of opinion in the Crown Law Department in regard to certain phases of the question. Since then the Premier had agreed that the recommendations of the Commissioner should be given effect to. In conclusion he would again assure members that he would look up in *Hansard* any matters brought up in the course of the debate, but which he had not dealt with, and would go into them with a view to seeing what could be one.

Mr. Gill: What about the Faiching case?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It seemed the hon. member had misunderstood the matter. Faiching had been employed at the Midland workshops and his name had appeared on the time sheet for

£8 19s. 10d., whereas the amount actually payable to him was £7 19s. 10d. Presumably the extra pound had been paid to him, and the department was firm in the belief that this was so. In consequence the extra pound had been deducted from Faiching's next pay, whereupon Faiching had sued the department for the amount. True, the Crown Law Department had advised that it would be hard to prove Faiching had received the money, and, as a matter of fact, the department had been unable to prove this in court, and so had lost the case. However the department still felt satisfied that Faiching had been paid the extra pound, notwithstanding that Faiching had won the case.

Mr. Gill: Don't you think it would be a fair thing to pay his costs?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The department had paid the costs allowed by the court.

Mr. Price: Was the Minister prepared to make any statement with regard to the alleged victimisation of the late secretary of the officers' association.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The position to which that officer was sent was one where the officer would get general work, which there was no chance of getting in the Perth office.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is he not already qualified?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think so; only as operator.

Mr. Price: He was taken from the traffic branch into the telegraph branch.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think he has been more than three years in the service.

Mr. Price: He was in the clerical branch prior to that.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: did not know sufficient about it to know whether the hon. member was correct or not, but understood the officer was sent to this place to get a general knowledge of railway work; that he was a fairly good officer, and that there was a desire that he might get general work with a view to further advancement. He was under the impression the officer had only been about three years in the service. It was of course not necessary

for the Minister to have a knowledge of every officer. He would, however, make inquiries and let hon. members know the result. He was pleased hon. members considered the railway proposition at present was a flourishing one in every sense.

(Mr. Brown took the Chair.)

Item, Chief Traffic Manager, £850.

Mr. JOHNSON: There was a new regulation introduced compelling women to pay threepence for conveying go-carts by train, and also compelling them on the Perth station to pass through the parcels office, which necessitated their going earlier to catch trains. This was distinctly unfair to what might be termed the producing portion of the community. Would the Minister investigate this matter to see if it could be avoided? Of course it was known that the guards' vans were becoming crowded with these go-carts, but it was not a matter for putting on a penalty, it was rather a matter for offering a special bonus.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Folding go-carts were allowed to be taken into the compartments free of charge; but he was informed these go-carts were growing in size. There was a regulation now in existence by which stamps for go-carts could be purchased at the ticket office.

Mr. George: Why charge more than a penny?

Mr. Johnson: The charge of threepence is a big item.

The Minister for Railways: I will look into the question of price.

Mr. JOHNSON: Would the Minister give an assurance that the price would be reduced? It should either be wiped out, or reduced.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS would look into the matter to see what could be done. He wished to know something of the circumstances before giving any assurance.

Mr. GILL: Several officers who were not receiving £150 when the classification was dealt with did not get the £10 advance.

The Minister for Railways: I will look into that.

Item, Comptroller of Accounts, £750.

Mr. FOULKES: The Commissioner's reply in reference to Mr. Triggs's letter was received by the Minister on the 15th November. Mr. Triggs left the State on the 22nd November. This was just an example of the way in which Mr. Triggs was dealt with by the department during the last few years, because here we had read to-night for the first time a statement which attempted to refute the statements made by Mr. Triggs. The Minister had the audacity, now Mr. Triggs's back was turned, to publish this statement, knowing full well no opportunity would be given for a reply.

The Minister for Railways: I did not read part of it; I read it all.

Mr. FOULKES: That was just the type of excuse that would appeal to the Minister. It was an ingenious defence, but did not do any good.

Mr. Osborn: Were we not discussing the item for the future Comptroller of Accounts?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is quite in order.

Mr. FOULKES: The Commissioner's statement said that Mr. Triggs was most disloyal to Mr. George when Commissioner of Railways. So far as one could gather, this disloyalty consisted in Mr. Triggs having said that the accounts of the Railway Department, when he took charge of them, were in a most unsatisfactory state.

Mr. George: It is quite true they were.

Mr. FOULKES: Another charge of disloyalty was because Mr. Triggs wrote an indignant letter to Mr. Short. Were we to understand from the Minister that a civil servant was to be regarded as disloyal because he chose to criticise actions of his superior officers? Was the sole way to obtain promotion to remain silent or refrain from criticism? One could remember the time when high officials in the Railway Department were suspended. Because the Government of the day, of which the Minister for Railways was a member, did not have suffi-

cient confidence in some of the heads of the department, the Commissioner was suspended.

The Minister for Railways: That is quite wrong. I wish the hon. member to withdraw. I was not interested.

Mr. FOULKES: It was not said the Minister was interested; it was simply said the Minister was a member of the Cabinet that suspended high railway officials. The Minister referred to the fact that Mr. Triggs entered the service at £375, and at the end of 10 years received £750. That was not an enormous increase for a man in 10 years. It was to be regretted that this policy had driven some of our best civil servants out of the State during the last 12 months. Mr. Triggs had applied in other directions for employment, which showed that he was not satisfied with his position here, and he was justified in expressing his dissatisfaction. The fact that he had obtained employment under the Commonwealth Government showed that the Commonwealth authorities were satisfied with his services, and it also showed that we had lost the services of an experienced officer. One sad feature of the affair was the tactless manner in which Mr. Triggs's resignation was accepted. The unsatisfactory part of the business was that a civil servant who had given good service to the State was allowed to retire with no acknowledgment or appreciation of his services. The Minister allowed this officer to go out of the country and had not the courtesy or good manners to thank him for his services. The member for Cue had said that it was all very well to mention the case of a high officer when there were many in the lower ranks who had been treated in a similar manner. His (Mr. Foulkes's) reason for taking up this case was that if it was found that an influential officer in the service was treated in this manner it was only to be presumed that those in the lower ranks would not be treated any better. It was an unhappy and discreditable incident so far as the civil service was concerned.

Mr. GEORGE: The Minister was not justified or quite kind in making the

statement that Mr. Triggs was disloyal to him (Mr. George) when Commissioner. Mr. Triggs was a most loyal officer to him (Mr. George) and to the Railway Department. As to the work Mr. Triggs carried out during his (Mr. George's) term as Commissioner, it was carried out well, and it ill became any member, whether Minister or not, to try to discount those services. As to whether Mr. Triggs desired to claim credit for all the work that he did in the department, his (Mr. George's) answer was that during the time he was Commissioner Mr. Triggs was most careful to bring under notice the good work which his subordinates had performed, and it was to be supposed he would continue in the same course. As far as the leave was concerned, he understood from the Minister that it was going to be paid. As to the special allowance for special work done, no word had been given by the Minister, and he supposed that the Government did not intend to give any special allowance. This was to be regretted because it was due to Mr. Triggs that he should get it. The statement made by Mr. Triggs when he took over the accounts, that they were in a deplorable state, was absolutely correct, and it was also correct as stated in the Commissioner's minute that the direction for looking into the accounts was given by him (Mr. George). It should not be necessary when an officer left the service for any matters over which officers differed to be raked up. While he (Mr. George) regretted that we had lost an officer of ability and integrity, we should rather rejoice because he had always felt that it was a credit to the Railway Department to be able to produce men whose merits were recognised at a higher rate outside than the rate that he (Mr. George) when Commissioner was able to recognise them. That was the spirit in which officers should be dealt with. As to the six weeks' leave; the reason why the restriction was brought about was that shortly after he became Commissioner he was faced with the tremendous quantity of leave which had not been taken out by officer after officer, hundreds of them, and he would

not allow the system to be carried on longer. He could see that if the leave was claimed in a bunch the whole system would be disorganised.

Mr. Angwin: On a point of order. Was the Committee dealing with the ex-Commissioner or the Comptroller of Accounts?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was quite in order.

Mr. Angwin: But the hon. member was dealing with, "when I was Commissioner."

Mr. GEORGE: It was laid down distinctly that if it was not possible for the department to give an officer his six weeks' leave, that it could, with the permission of the Commissioner, be held over, and he believed that was the rule to-day.

Mr. SWAN: The member for Murray seemed to be quite satisfied that there was no possibility of disloyalty on the part of Mr. Triggs. One of the things that he most admired about Mr. Triggs was the free expression of opinion on the acts of the then Commissioner for Railways, the member for Murray, and if the member for Murray knew as much as he (Mr. Swan) did about these matters the member might have a different opinion about the loyalty of Mr. Triggs. One of these matters on which Mr. Triggs had so freely expressed his opinion, was the employment of sneaking detectives around the shops at Midland Junction. Mr. Triggs was very emphatic about the action of the then Commissioner and he (Mr. Swan) found himself entirely in accord with Mr. Triggs on that matter. It was a pity the member for Murray did not allow his consideration for the public servants to go a little further than the consideration for heads of departments. He knew of men in the service who had suffered greater injustice than Mr. Triggs had, and this, when the member for Murray was Commissioner, and he did not attempt to remedy the injustice.

Item, Works Manager, £550.

Mr. JOHNSON: What was to be done in the case of the striker, Phillips? There was a principle at stake, and the regulations guiding the appeal board had been

departed from. Was this case to be allowed to go, and the appeal board allowed to decline to take up this case of Phillips? If so, then the appeal board could decline to take up the case of other servants who had grievances. This board was appointed to protect civil servants. Phillips was a good worker, but because he did not please his immediate head he was victimised, and the appeal board refused to hear his case. How could the Minister endorse the attitude of the appeal board, which was appointed to protect men like Phillips, who was suffering from an injury done.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: This matter had been dealt with at a deputation which waited on him lately, and the answer which he then gave was similar to the answer he would now give. He was quite prepared in this instance to allow the appeal board to be the sole judge of the cases to come before them. He was not going to interfere with the working of the board in any shape or form. The best procedure to adopt in this case was to allow the matter to be dealt with by the appeal board.

Mr. JOHNSON: The grievance was that the appeal board refused to hear the case, and the Minister had endorsed their attitude. The Minister had not carried out the policy which had been endorsed by Parliament. Mr. Phillips had been 13 months in the employment of the Government, and the Act stated that any servant employed for 12 months had a right to appeal to the appeal board; the appeal board refused to hear the case, and on an application being made to the Minister he took no action. He wanted to know whether the Minister was now going to see that Phillips obtained the rights given to him by Act of Parliament, and was allowed to appeal to the board against the injustice done to him.

The Minister for Railways: I am prepared to allow the case to go before the appeal board, but if the board say he has no case I can do nothing.

Mr. JOHNSON: The Minister had been understood to say that if the man had been 13 months in the employ of the department he should go to the appeal

board. It was not his desire to in any way influence the board but only to give that man, the right of having his case heard.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Of course, he could not direct the appeal board to hear the case, but if the officer had been in the department for 12 months he should be able to go before the board.

Mr. Johnson: That is the point; he has been there for 13 months.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In those circumstances the man's case must go before the appeal board.

Mr. Johnson: You are prepared to instruct them to hear it?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The board would be recommended to hear the case.

Item, Chief Mechanical Engineer, £950.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Would the Minister state the intentions of the department in regard to the extension of the telephone on the Dwellingup railway line? The railway had now been constructed as far as Holyoak, and the people had asked that the telephone should be extended the full length of the line. The Minister had replied that because the telephone was not required for railway purposes it would not be installed, but as the residents were willing to bear the expense themselves, he was prepared to make arrangements for the telephone line to be continued. Was it the policy of the Government to refuse facilities of that kind? Within the last few months at least 1,000 residents had gone into that district, and it was unreasonable to refuse the slight extension of the line. Seeing that the Government had introduced a Bill to extend the railway a further 25 miles it would be a good policy to also extend the telephone line.

The Minister for Railways: The residents had suggested that they should construct the line themselves.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But the department would want the line for its own purposes within six months.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The department had no need for a telephone there. If the hon. member would wait for a few weeks he would see whether the department required an ex-

tension of the telephone line, and, if it did, he would have the work constructed by the department. If the railway was to be extended he could promise to undertake the extension of the telephone line.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The promise that if the construction of the railway was agreed to the telephone line would be extended was satisfactory. But notwithstanding the fact that a large number of people had undertaken to pay for the construction of the line, the department should extend the telephone as far as the railway was built. If an accident occurred the telephone was the only means of getting speedy relief.

Item, Salaries, allowances, and gratuities to officers retired or reduced on account of retrenchment; also arrears of salaries of cadets, etcetera, £100.

Mr. JOHNSON: Seeing that a distinct promise had been made by Sir Newton Moore that the £10 increment, which had been withheld from the junior officers, would be paid, would the Minister promise that that would be attended to? Although he had been unable to find in *Hansard* the remarks made by the ex-Premier on the subject, a definite promise was distinctly remembered by several members of the Chamber, in addition to which the member for Murray had stated that Sir Newton Moore admitted having made the promise and thought that it had been carried out.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Sir Newton Moore had been asked if he had made the promise and had replied that he could not remember what he might have said outside the Chamber. He (the Minister) was exceedingly sorry that the promise could not be traced, because nothing would have given him greater pleasure than the payment of the money. Any action taken in that respect would affect other officers as well as the juniors, and he intended to make the new regulations providing for more liberal increments date from 1st July last instead of from 1st December. Without making any definite promise, he would ask the hon. member to take the assurance that the greatest consideration would be given. The reason why he did not like to give a definite promise was that it looked as if

he had omitted to carry out an official promise made in the House. He did not admit that. But if a promise had been made outside he would carry it out.

Mr. SWAN: When retrenchment had been necessary some time ago certain officers had been reduced, and the department had been somewhat tardy in recognising that the increased prosperity of the service justified the reinstatement of some of the officers in their old positions.

The Minister for Railways: We might have been glad to get rid of some of them.

Mr. SWAN: The Minister would not be expected to reinstate men whom he considered should have been got rid of, but there were officers who had been retrenched and who had always been satisfactory workers. Seeing that the system was now in a prosperous condition, more prosperous than before the retrenchment had been rendered necessary, the cases of the former officers should be given consideration.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: With the expanding business of the railways the staff would have to be increased. Some of the retrenched officers were men whom the department had been glad to get rid of, but any good officers who had been retrenched would have every consideration.

Vote put and passed.

Lands Department (Hon. J. Mitchell, Minister).

Vote—*Lands and Surveys*, £80,789:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In introducing my Estimates I would remind members that a fortnight ago I told them something about the work of the departments, and therefore it is not necessary to repeat the figures I then used. I would like to point out for the information of members that the work of the department is divided into two branches. There is first the Survey Department under the control of the Surveyor General. We have adopted the system of survey before selection, which means that the Survey Department prepares the land, which is subsequently to be dealt with by the officers under the more direct control of the Under Secretary. We found it necessary, in order that the surveys before selection might be carried out satisfactorily, to decentral-

ise so far as the Survey Department was concerned, and since the last Estimates were presented we have introduced a system of having six district surveyors under the Surveyor General, whose duty it is to control the survey work in the districts allotted to them. The surveyors, when dealing with land to be surveyed before selection, seek out the best portions of the land, subdivide and classify it, and send on the plans to the head office, where they are finally prepared before being placed before the public. By the new system we hope that delays will be obviated. A great deal of the trouble in connection with land settlement in the past was due to the delays in the service, and that was inevitable when we had the Surveyor General responsible for surveying such an enormous area of country. Under the new system the Surveyor General will get through the work, we hope, with very much better results. Under the system of survey before selection a great deal of information that was not originally required of the surveyors, has now to be obtained. The classification is much closer than it ever was before, and it is to these district surveyors that we look for accurate information in connection with lands to be offered to new selectors. I might point out that during the past year we surveyed 2,664,000 acres of land, which constitutes a record for Western Australia; indeed, this total has only once been exceeded in Australia, and that, I believe, was in New South Wales some 20 years ago. The previous records as far as Western Australia was concerned was 1,779,000 acres in 1908, so that last year we surveyed nearly one million acres more than in the preceding year. In addition, I might point out that this work was carried out most economically; as a matter of fact, the increase in the cost of the department last year was only about £947 over that of the previous year. In the year 1907 we turned out 914,000 acres in surveys, while 1908 showed an increase on this of 865,000 acres, the total increased expense to the department being £50,000. I mention this because I wish the Committee to realise that so far as we possibly can we are keeping down the cost of administration in regard to this de-

partment. The amount owing to the department on the 30th September 1910, was £3,622,000 as against £3,722,000 owing to the department on the 30th June, 1909, for land sold. These figures show we are receiving a good deal more from our lands now than ever before. As a matter of fact land that is now very readily taken up was classified 12 months ago at 10s. per acre. This serves to show that a change has come over the position of affairs in Western Australia and that these broad acres are now being eagerly sought.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Sought in vain by many.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think not.

Mr. Underwood: The land jobbers are pretty thick around Northam—they have a few acres up there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member also has a few up there. However, in 1909 we sold under conditional purchase conditions 848,807 acres while for the 11 months just passed we sold 1,574,185 acres or 725,378 more than we did during the whole of last year. This I am sure hon. members will consider satisfactory, and it is an answer to the statement that many are unable to secure farms. The area surveyed before selection has been increased tremendously. In 1908-9 we had surveyed 506 blocks comprising 362,726 acres while in 1909-10 we had 2,072 blocks comprising 1,676,753 acres. This I consider very important, because under this system of survey before selection our applicants know exactly what they are to get. And the reports of the land should be prepared in this way for more reasons than one. It is important, because we can tell a man the class of land he is going to get and the amount the Agricultural Bank will lend on it. In free farms we have given away 1,487,738 acres, and these farms, each consisting of 160 acres, have been distributed among 9,300 people.

Mr. Underwood: How many have been resold?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They cannot be resold unless converted to freehold.

Mr. Underwood: I know of a dozen myself.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A great many have matured.

Mr. Underwood: But I know of their being sold before maturity.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Act permits the holder to convert them into freehold.

Mr. Underwood: But I know where the Act has not been carried out.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If this is so I shall be very pleased to hear the particulars from the hon. member. We have reserved for subdivision 17 million acres. I do not mean that this 17 million acres are all first-class land, but we have reserved that area, while 18 million acres have been alienated and 70 million acres in the South-West and Eucla divisions are still open to free selection. It is necessary to mention this because the idea is abroad that the whole country is shut up against free selection. Something has been said about the improvement conditions. So far as I know the improvement conditions were never more satisfactorily performed than they are to-day. I believe there was never any more genuine selection of land than there is to-day. The people who select it get to work on the improvements much more readily than ever before. The result is we have to-day cleared or partially cleared over five million acres as against something over two million acres four years ago. Inspectors have been doing their duty during these last two or three years. I do not propose to do any man an injury, if a man has a good excuse we are always ready to listen to him, and in the multiplicity of selection one is bound occasionally to find genuine cases of trouble which the department is always willing to relieve so far as may be. Quite apart from the inspection done by our officers the demand for land is so keen that private people send in reports to the department showing where improvements are not being kept up. In connection with the improvement conditions we propose to add a section to the Act which will enable all to ascertain just the amount of im-

provements to be made on each block, and to add a list to the rent list which will show the date of approval and the improvements needed. We are also determined that the land adjacent to the railway lines shall be brought into use so far as the Act permits.

Mr. O'Loughlen: By resumption?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: By resumption in the case of new lines, but by improvements in respect to older lines.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will you do this in regard to the Bolgart line?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, we have had an inspection made of the line to Bolgart and the report will presently be before me. I may say in connection with the Bolgart line that the drafting of the section gives us power to resume only the land to the right or left of the line and not beyond the terminus. This omission was discovered some months ago and the later railway Bills presented to the House give us power to resume beyond the terminus of the several lines. During the year we had not had the usual land guides, for we found they were not satisfactory and were scarcely earning the £5,000 a year they were costing us. With that money we are determined to go in for a system of road clearing and water supply. We have cleared 577 miles of roads in the agricultural districts and have put in water supplies at a great many places, something like 100 tanks having been put down or set in course of construction. These roads and water supplies are absolutely necessary. Probably in Western Australia there is no investment of a better value than conservation of water, whether in agricultural or gold-fields districts. I am endeavouring to open up country by putting down dams and wells in order that people who are on the land may be able to stay there. In the South-West, where water is plentiful, roads are of the utmost importance, and we are now engaged in clearing a track from Denmark which will extend to Bridgetown and on to Busselton. The season has not been quite all that we expected. The crops are, however, fairly good in the inner districts and remarkably good in the newer districts beyond Northam and the older settled portions of the

State. All along the salmon-gum country the crops are remarkably good and one hears of yields of over 20 bushels per acre on land which has never yet been ploughed. Notwithstanding our area under crop is now approaching a million acres, I am very hopeful that the average yield for the year will be quite up to that of last year, although this opinion is not shared in by some of my officers. However, I have had an opportunity of visiting much of the back country, and it seems to me we are going to have good crops in most localities. One of the principal lessons learned during the past year or two is the fact that wheat will grow on almost any land to the East of the Darling Ranges, not only in the rich forest country, but even on lighter scrub country and sand-plains, where we find good harvests growing. This is a very gratifying result, because as everyone knows, this country of ours is, unfortunately, patchy. However, I believe the good yields from this poorer class of country are largely due to the better farming and the use of fertilisers, and more particularly to the advice given to agriculturists by Professor Lowrie, namely, that they should make a more generous use of fertilisers. The result has been most gratifying. This discovery of good crops being produced from sand-plain is of the utmost importance to the State. I have nothing very much more to say about the Survey Department, but I should like to say a word or two in regard to the Forestry Department. My friend, the member for Forrest, was very anxious to know something of the 760,000 acres reserved for Government purposes. I find these areas were marked off by the Inspecting Forest Ranger, Mr. Brockman, from inspections made, not recently, but some time ago. However, I am sure this 760,000 acres we have reserved is the best that can now be done.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did Mr. Brockman make a report on the subject?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Only verbally. He has been over the whole of this area, not recently, but in the years that have gone since he has been forest ranger. He has visited the whole country from time to time. The hon. member will agree that Mr. Brockman marked the

land pretty accurately near to Wilgarrup, where an application was made for a small block of 40,000 acres out of the 760,000 acres. Mr. Brockman assures me he has been over the whole of this area and that it is of the best forest land.

Mr. O'Loughlen: In a report?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. I saw him about it. His word is quite equal to a written report. If the hon. member knows of any better forest country which I can set aside, I will be only too glad to set it aside. We have done the best possible at this late stage. We have 760,000 acres, and we believe it will be sufficient to meet all Government requirements. Reafforestation is a pet subject with the hon. member, and the hon. member had something to say, and said it very well indeed, as he always does when discussing forestry matters. I find again from the Chief Inspector, Mr. Brockman, who recently visited the old Collie mill, that there are mill logs there three feet through growing beside the old stumps that M. C. Davies treated probably 35 years ago. It is rightly supposed that the growth of jarrah is slow.

Mr. O'Loughlen: These trees have not sprung up since.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But they must have been very small trees 35 years ago. It is gratifying to know that the reafforestation goes on even at this pace.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What reason have you for supposing they were small trees then?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Mr. Brockman, who is an expert on timber, says it. Judging from the stumps of the other trees alongside this particular tree referred to, he estimates that it was a small tree 35 years ago, and it is a good milling log to-day. At any rate I think the jarrah forest does reinstate itself fairly satisfactorily. We have the case of jarrah forests cut out in the Darling Range where we get sleepers now, and we have sawmilling permits issued for areas which were cut out some years ago.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Where?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know the exact spot, but I will get the information for the hon. member. We

have also the experience our rangers have gained during the past years while they have been inspecting the timber in these jarrah areas, and apparently very little of the young stuff is killed by fire. A great deal of it is growing now into very fine timber. The other day at Worsley I noticed in country cut-out probably 20 years ago that the sticks of timber were of a fair size, and that reafforestation was going on satisfactorily. To clean up this country as suggested by the hon. member would cost an enormous amount of money. I do not suppose we could do it at under £2 an acre, that is, clean it up and cut out the crooked and useless trees. To spend £2 an acre and wait 40 or 50 years for a return would be altogether prohibitive, unless the value of the jarrah is to be very largely increased. If we compare this work with the growing of pines, and when we remember that a good jarrah forest gives 8 to 10 loads, we will see that a pine plantation is of much more value.

Mr. O'Loughlen: But we have got the jarrah.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, we have the jarrah, and we will always have the jarrah if our jarrah areas are properly protected. A pine plantation is said to be worth from £200 to £300 an acre in 20 years. Of course our experience in this State only dates back for 10 years. At Hamel 10 years ago we planted a fair area with pine trees which cost us something like £12 10s. an acre, and these trees are making satisfactory growth. I have no doubt that at the end of the 20 years they will be worth £200 to £300 per acre.

Mr. Gill: Does that £10 include clearing?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes; we have distributed 82,000 odd trees, and we propose to plant 200 acres per annum. This I suppose will be sufficient to meet our requirements by the end of 20 years. The pine forests in the Kimberley district are, of course, altogether different from the *Pinus Insignis* that we are growing in the South-West; but even if the pine were the same, to make use of the Kimberley pine would be impossible, if not prohibitive.

Mr. O'Loughlin: But you will need timber in the 20 years while you are growing the other.

Mr. Gill: You bring it from America.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would probably be cheaper to bring it from America. At any rate the Kimberley pine is a different timber. It is much harder and much heavier than the *Pinus insignis*. The areas we have recently leased in the Kimberley district are of course inconveniently situated. They are about 12 miles from the coast, and it is a little bit difficult to work them. The holders are now engaged in making an inspection, and they have machinery on the way. I hope they will get the industry going, because if these pine forests will get cut out, as they will do in the next 10 years, they will very soon reassert themselves. I believe that these pines grow very rapidly, and that in 10 years' time trees now small will be fair milling logs.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Is the forest as good as reported on by Inspector Haly?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I hope it is.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Then if it is, do you think the Government were justified in giving away 170,000 acres without some protection for the State's requirements when you are hunting for timber areas?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think it is just as reasonable a proposition as giving sawmilling permits in the South-West. We have all we want in the South-West for Government purposes. The hon. member knows that in the Flora and Fauna reserve recently we granted 20,000 acres of timber. Much of it is matured timber, and ought to be cut, and it is no use hoarding it up there. At any rate we have provided for our own requirements in the South-West. If the timber in the Kimberleys can be economically handled we will still have enough there to meet our own requirements.

Mr. O'Loughlin: How do you know? Have you anything on which to make that statement?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have only a report from the stock inspector. We have had no forest ranger there,

but the stock inspector has travelled over the whole of the district; and although the greater portion of the timber near Mr. Young's lease has been taken up, we have still some available. We have no great use for the timber in the North-West; but we have no doubt that if the Government do require it, we will still have sufficient for our requirements. I believe there are 300,000 acres in this belt, not all heavily timbered but still carrying pine, and we have not granted 300,000 acres. I am fully alive to the timber industry of Western Australia. I, as well as the hon. member, know that some thousands of men are engaged in the industry, and that last year we exported nearly a million pounds' worth of hardwoods. I realise it is the duty of the Government to preserve this timber, and so far as we can we are doing out best to that end. My idea is—once a jarrah forest always a jarrah forest. So I have ordered that once a permit reverts to the Crown it is to be marked as a reserve for future use. I do not know that we can do more than is being done. Certainly no more can be done until we appoint a Conservator of Forests, and I hope this appointment will be made in the next few months. In the meantime I think hon. members can be perfectly satisfied that the jarrah is doing its duty, and that a very fair crop of young trees is coming on. I am aware that more can be done. There are other valuable timbers that have been allowed to be destroyed in this State, more valuable perhaps than jarrah. I refer to York gum, which has been almost altogether burnt out. This timber at one time could have been converted into a valuable industry. I realise what might have been done in this direction, because I live in that York gum belt, and I am very anxious that what happened to the York gum should not happen in connection with our jarrah and tuart forests. I have nothing more to say in connection with my Estimates. Hon. members will see that while there is a slight increase in the cost of the department this year, we propose to do a considerable amount of additional work, and they will see also that the additional

cost will be found to be more than justified.

(*Mr. Taylor resumed the Chair.*)

Mr. JOHNSON: The Minister's speech was disappointing. True, the Minister went into a fair amount of detail in connection with forestry, but in regard to general lands administration, the portion in which the people of the State were keenly interested, we had very little or no information. There were several matters occupying public attention on which we should have had a definite pronouncement from the Minister. One matter was in regard to the retirement of Mr. Bertoli from the Lands Department. There was a history in connection with this that should not be confined to the Lands Department. It was only fair to Mr. Bertoli and to others, Mr. Cooper who was suspended and others implicated, that the people should understand exactly what led up to this retirement, and how it all happened. Mr. Bertoli was one of the best officers of the department; and strange to relate, the best officer was the man who went out. Possibly he was indiscreet, and some arrangement was justifiable, but the punishment that was inflicted was absolutely unjustified. It was impossible to find officers in their departments time after time, but they could be found around the streets. However, if one desired to see Mr. Bertoli, that officer was always to be found in his chair; and if information on land matters that came under his scope was wanted, Mr. Bertoli was a fund of information. His replies on official business reflected great credit on him. Other officers seemed to have a happy-go-lucky style and could go into the department when they liked and go out when they liked.

The Minister for Lands: Who are they?

Mr. JOHNSON: It was the duty of the Minister to find out.

The Minister for Lands: I say it is not so.

Mr. JOHNSON: It was the case. It seemed that the men in the department who worked got the least consideration. "There was one officer of the department

in the Chamber to-night. That officer was not getting the consideration that should be extended to him. Evidently there was a little scheme on that would eventually do a great injustice to officers who deserved promotion but who would be defeated for it. It was idle for the Minister to challenge a member to give names. It was the Minister's duty to find them out, and to see that the men who did their duty were not victimised in any sense of the term.

The Minister for Lands: But you make a statement.

Mr. JOHNSON: It was said on many occasions he made statements in connection with the Lands Department. He made a statement over the Wickiepin matter. What was the result of it? He made a statement over the Osborn and Raisbeck land transactions. What was the result of it? He wanted to know exactly from the Minister why Mr. Bertoli got into trouble, and how it all happened.

Mr. Gordon: That has to do with the Public Service Commissioner, and not with the Government.

Mr. JOHNSON: It was a matter concerning the general public, and the general public expected the Minister to give some explanation in regard to it. Some little time ago he ventilated a matter which he thought reflected discreditably on the Lands Department; he referred to the land acquired by the member for Roebourne, but there was no desire to go into details. If the Minister wanted to know all about the matter he could read the speech which was delivered by him on the no-confidence motion; and if reference was made to *Hansard* it would be found that the result of that discussion—and it was ridiculed and scouted by the Premier who replied—was that Mr. Bertoli was out of the Lands Department to-day. The main culprit, however, got off scot free, but, after all, it was not his (Mr. Johnson's) duty as a member of Parliament to deal with officers of the Lands Department, and there was no desire on his part to do so, but he did expect the Minister to do his duty as Minister for Lands, and if the Minister had done his duty in connection with the

Osborn-Raisbeck affair, Mr. Bertoli would not be in the position in which he found himself to-day. It was all very well for the Minister to neglect the administration of his department, and then to expect members to transfer their attention to the officers of the department. That was what happened in connection with the Johnson inquiry at Wickopin. There was no desire to injure any officer of the Lands Department, but there was a desire to ventilate matters in which the administration of a department was at fault. When he had done this he was called upon to attend an inquiry where the sole responsibility of the administration was placed upon an officer. Exactly the same thing had occurred in this matter and instead of the Minister taking the responsibility he transferred it to the officers of the department.

The Minister for Lands: That is not so; you know it very well.

Mr. JOHNSON: It was so, and he was not prepared to admit that Mr. Bertoli deserved the treatment he had received. Mr. Bertoli might have been indiscreet, but he (Mr. Johnson) knew him to be a good officer, and he knew also that others had been retained in the department who had not done the good work which Mr. Bertoli had to his credit in the Lands Department for many years past. Since the matter of the lands administration had been discussed in the Chamber, the questions of want of attention and maladministration had been scouted by the daily Press, but one would not take any great notice of the daily Press if there were some little opposition to it, so that the public might get both sides of the question. When, however, the public only got one view absolutely forced upon them morning after morning one was bound to realise that his duty then was greater in Parliament than it would be if there were two newspapers which would compete against each other, and see that a truthful statement of affairs was placed before the people. As far as the lands administration was concerned, if one read the daily newspaper one would be led to believe that no grave charges could be made, and if anything

in the nature of criticism of the administration was brought forward and driven home one would be called upon to go before a Royal Commission and answer a charge of corruption. He (Mr. Johnson) was one who took part in the debate which brought about the appointment of the Royal Commission, but he never thought that a charge of corruption had been levelled against the Minister or the Lands Department. There were made, however, some grave charges of maladministration, but in order to try and avoid an inquiry into the general administration of the department, these charges were narrowed down to a question of corruption, so that a general inquiry might not be brought about, such as hon. members expected would be done. What was wanted was an inquiry similar to the Federal inquiry into the working of the Postal Department. There an inquiry of a broad nature was held, and it went into the whole administration of the department. Members desired an exactly similar thing in connection with the Lands Department. There was no question of corruption involved; nothing of the kind was ventilated in the Chamber; it was a question of maladministration, and members, after going exhaustively into the matter, were justified in bringing their charges forward. One matter that was ventilated during that discussion by the leader of the Opposition was with reference to the special consideration which was given to publicans in the matter of land transactions. That hon. member was charged with not having gone into details. "Why do you not give us instances?" he was asked, "or give us something that we can reply to." He (Mr. Johnson) intended to give some instances and the Minister would be asked to explain them.

The Minister for Lands: We will let you have the files.

Mr. JOHNSON: It was not always possible to get all one wanted from the files. There was Mr. Grenike, a publican, who took up a grazing lease, an area of 2,991 acres, which was held by him for two years, and he carried out no improvements at all. Then the transfer was ap-

proved by the Minister and it was forwarded to Mr. Leonard Lohrmann, solicitor, of Perth. There was another grazing lease of an area of 3,000 acres, selected by Thomas H. Cunningham, architect, Perth, well known as a particular friend of Mr. Grenike: this was held by him for two years, no improvements were effected, and the transfer was approved and it was forwarded again to Mr. Lohrmann, solicitor of Perth. Another one was a conditional purchase lease, selected by H. Greville, a publican, and a friend of Mr. Grenike; this was held by him for two years, no improvements were effected, and this block was transferred, and the transfer was again forwarded to Mr. Lohrmann, solicitor of Perth. There was a grazing lease of 3,460 acres, selected by Mr. Aitkin, gentleman of Perth, held by him for two years, no improvements effected, and then transferred, and the transfer forwarded again to Mr. Lohrmann. There was another grazing lease of 2,125 acres, selected by Mr. H. Greville, publican of Perth, held by him for two years, no improvements were effected, and transferred to Mr. Aubrey H. Richardson, and the transfer was again forwarded to Mr. Lohrmann. There was a conditional purchase area of 218 acres selected by Mr. Greville, publican, of Perth, held by him for about two years, no improvements effected, and then transferred to Mr. Richardson, and the transfer forwarded to Mr. Lohrmann. There was a conditional purchase block of 160 acres, selected by Mr. Greville, publican of Perth, held by him for two years, no improvements effected, and then transferred to Mr. Richardson, and the transfer again forwarded to Mr. Lohrmann. There was a conditional purchase of 300 acres, selected by Mr. Greville, publican of Perth, held for two years without improvements being effected, and the transfer again forwarded to Mr. Lohrmann. The next was a grazing lease of 3,300 acres, selected by Robert Newton, a saw-miller of Perth, held for two years without improvements being effected, and then was transferred to Mr. Lohrmann. Then there was a conditional purchase area of 1,000 acres, selected by Mr. Aitkin, held for two years, no improvements effected,

and then transferred and the transfer sent to Mr. Lohrmann. There was a grazing lease of 2,000 acres, selected by Mr. Aitkin, held for two years without improvements being effected, and transferred to Mr. Richardson, and the transfer forwarded to Mr. Lohrmann of Perth. On the face of these facts, it was clear that a syndicate had taken up a huge area of land in a good district, and it should have been conveyed directly to the Minister that it was purely a speculation. These men were chiefly publicans, they held the land for two years without doing anything at all, and in spite of the fact that the land had not been improved, and that the conditions had not been carried out, these people, it was found, could transfer the land, and what was more, if his (Mr. Johnson's) information was correct, in order to make it possible for them to transfer, the leases had to be resurrected and £120 paid in rent before the transfers could be completed. Reference was also made by the leader of the Opposition to other matters about which information was now desired. How was it in the face of definite instructions given to the Minister by means of the Land Act that these people could speculate in land, and get through as comfortably as they did in the illustration which had been given. Other instances could be given, but these were quite enough to go on with, and it was to be sincerely hoped that the Minister in his reply would explain why those transfers went through and what justification there was for passing them. Then the Minister might give some information with reference to the selection of land in that area by Mr. Patterson and his employees, land which was reserved at one time and was afterwards thrown open and which was on the route of the proposed Wongau Hills railway extension. It was a remarkable thing how 20,000 acres could be selected by Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Jacoby: Which Patterson?

Mr. JOHNSON: Mr. Patterson of Fremantle. That gentleman could not hold such a large area of land, but it was found that all those around him, his typists and other employees, applied for land, with the result that there was no

question about it, and time would prove it, that that land would be worked and controlled by Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Troy: Glowrey also holds a large area there.

Mr. JOHNSON: Of course; and the Opposition had to ventilate such matters to let the country know that certain men could do certain things, and others were denied the opportunity.

The Minister for Lands: That is not so.

Mr. Troy: You cannot deny that Glowrey holds all that land up there.

The Minister for Lands: No man can hold more than the Act allows him to hold.

Mr. JOHNSON: When the Minister could see that this was an absolute fake in order to get hold of a big area of land, it was his duty to cause exhaustive inquiries to be made into the matter. There was no objection to Mr. Paterson's employees or Glowrey's employees holding land, provided that they were legitimate holders, but when their names were used simply for the purpose of evading the provisions of the Act, it was the duty of the Minister to take action to prevent that form of dummying.

Mr. Jacoby: How do you know that they are evading the Act?

Mr. JOHNSON: It was so patent to a man with an open mind that he did not need to go far for proof. The members representing the agricultural districts knew well that they dared not open their mouths; they could not criticise because they had to support the Government. They admitted that certain things were wrong, but when asked why they did not ventilate them they said that they were pledged to support the Government and could not criticise them.

Mr. Monger: Who told you that?

Mr. JOHNSON: The hon. member knew well that he was pledged to his constituents to support the Government, and that he would not criticise the Government because he claimed that that would be departing from the pledge to his electors. But the hens of the Ministerial members would come home to roost, because an election was approaching, and the people in the agricultural constituen-

cies would have an opportunity of seeing that they returned men who would look after the agricultural industry instead of merely prating about it at agricultural shows. There was another matter to which he would like the Minister to give attention, and that was the matter of the sale-yards. That was a burning question to-day. Those directly interested were holding meetings, and had gone to the extent of saying that the Minister was wrong.

Mr. Monger: Will you repeat to me what you said to me to-day at lunch?

Mr. JOHNSON: What had been said by him at lunch could be repeated, and it had been said in the presence of others, but he would be sorry to ask the hon. member to repeat what he had said. What he (Mr. Johnson) had stated had been couched in respectable language fit to be repeated in any company, but he was sorry that he could not say the same of the hon. member. In connection with the sale-yards—

The Minister for Lands: That question comes under the vote for agriculture.

Mr. JOHNSON: Public meetings were being held by those interested in the matter, and he sincerely trusted that the Minister would make some announcement upon the subject, which was being recognised as a burning question so far as the producer and the consumer were concerned. His desire was to see that the producer and the consumer got a fair deal, but so far as stock were concerned they did not get it. He did not desire to take up more time in dealing with the Lands Estimates. He had touched on one or two matters in regard to which the Minister should give some explanation. He wanted the Minister to give detailed information in regard to the trouble which had occurred over the Osborn-Raisbeck affair, the transfers put through in connection with publicans already referred to by other members, and some explanation of the reorganisation that had brought Mr. Rowley into such prominence in the Lands Department. Those were matters of burning interest, regarding which the Minister should give the Committee the fullest information.

Mr. JACOBY: While agreeing that the administration of the Lands Department was not all that it should be in the interests of that department, he could not understand why it was expected that Parliament should have to take up the function that rightly belonged to the Public Service Commissioner. When the Public Service Act was passed members had been told, as one of the arguments in favour of the measure, that the management of the detailed work of the officers, their appointment and dismissal, was to be left to the Commissioner; yet, ever since the Act had been in force, a tremendous amount of the time of Parliament had been occupied in discussing the individual grievances of officers of the departments. In this particular case, he regretted that certain changes had led to the retirement of Mr. Bertoli, but he was confident that what had been done was under the authority that Parliament had conferred upon the Commissioner. If he had any general complaint to make against the Lands Department, it was that the powers of the Public Service Commissioner were apparently not sufficient to enable him to get rid of those particular servants in that department who had been the cause of the whole of the trouble for years past. He referred to those servants who were addicted to intemperate habits. There was a group of officers, a very powerful group, who were responsible for a large amount of trouble in the department and who were known to be men of intemperate habits. Reference had been made to those individuals in the past and reference would no doubt be made again until a change was effected. He regretted that the powers of the Commissioner were not sufficient to enable him to get rid of men who, in private employment, would have lost their positions long ago. One point he desired to speak on more particularly concerned the Minister himself, and it was in reference to the settlement that was now taking place under the auspices of the department, and encouraged by the department, in areas of the State, concerning which there was a considerable doubt as to whether wheat-growing could be successfully carried on. There

was a growing opinion amongst experienced men in this State that we were taking farmers into areas that were too dry over the average of years, and that, although they were safe in seasons such as that which had just been experienced, there was the ever-present danger that the time would come when the settlers, who had been pushed out into those districts, would be forced off the land. In this regard South Australia had had a bitter experience, and hon. members who came from that State would feel that nothing justified taking risks of that sort. He had in mind the case of a South Australian farmer who had settled in one of the dry districts in this State many years ago. Coming from a dry district in South Australia, that man was fully experienced in dry farming, and was a capable farmer in all respects, being, moreover, shrewd in matters of business and highly capable in the conduct of his own affairs. In addition to that this farmer had the advantage of unlimited credit, and was situated practically next door to a railway station. Furthermore he had been able to harvest his hay very early and had thus secured the advantage of being first on the market. Yet, it had taken him some ten years of careful and efficient farming by persistent and unremitting toil to get into a financial position which enabled him to say he was his own master. If that was the experience of a farmer so well qualified and situated, if it had taken him all these years to work into a sound financial position, what was going to happen to the average farmers put out on to small areas at distances ranging up to 15 miles from a railway station?

Mr. Osborn: What locality was he in?

Mr. JACOBY: That farmer had been situated in the 10-inch rainfall. A large number of men who had gone out into the 10-inch belt were possessed of no particular experience in farming, many of them had not been on the land before, while a large proportion had no knowledge of dry farming, which was absolutely necessary in these dry districts. He could not forbear to utter this note of warning, because it was the opinion of many people who had experience in this

particular class of work that nothing but extreme good fortune could preserve many farmers in the districts referred to from failure. It was extremely unwise to push out so far, because it only required a very small set back and a large number of the men concerned would be ruined. These dry areas should not have been cut up for any purpose other than grazing, and no areas of less than 5,000 acres should have been granted. The great majority of these small areas averaged little more than 1,000 acres, which, even with continued good seasons and other advantages, was not sufficient for the success of the men on them. He did not desire to do anything to discourage the men in these districts, but he thought a pause should be made and we should absolutely prove that the average man was able to make a success in that country before we encouraged others to settle upon it. In connection with the Forestry Department, he understood the Minister had issued instructions that before any areas now being applied for in the Darling Ranges close to Perth were granted for orchard purposes an inspection was to be made by an officer of the Forestry Department with a view of seeing if there was any marketable timber on the blocks, in which case the applications were not to be granted. In the areas in the Darling Ranges close to railway lines marketable timber had been cut out long ago, and although there might be some young stuff growing up, he considered the Minister would be wrong in refusing applications for orchard blocks. At any rate a forest per acre could not compare with an orchard as a commercial proposition, because once an orchard was brought into bearing the value of the annual product was not less than £30 per acre. He did not know where a forest could be found in the State which would give anything like a similar return. If it was a question between orchard and forest from an economic point of view, the orchard must have first consideration. Still, as we possessed a large area of forest country which was not, perhaps, particularly suited to orchard purposes, it would be wise to reserve that area from settlement; but so far as these suburban blocks in the

hills were concerned, it was unfortunate that any action of the Minister should be allowed to discourage people from selecting them for orchard purposes. He understood it was the intention of the Minister to deal with matters coming more particularly under the head of agriculture when that division was reached; consequently certain remarks he had to make under that heading would be reserved. In conclusion he wished to impress upon the Minister and the Government responsible for the settlement of these dry areas, that they should be guided by the advice of their expert officers and see that nothing was done calculated to lead to a disaster through the settling of country unsuitable for settlement from the point of view of rainfall.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.50 p.m.

Legislative Council,

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Fremantle Harbour Trust—Amendment to Regulation 118. 2, Plans of the following proposed railways:—(a) Wagin-Dumbleyung Extension; (b) Wongan Hills-Mullewa; (c) Bridgetown-Wilgarup Extension.