

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 24th July, 1907.

Urgency Motion : Camels Importation, Serious	
Danger from Tick : division (negative)	417
Questions : Commonwealth Bankers Bill	469
Hospital Subscriptions, Perth	469
Newspaper State Subsidy	439
Shop Assistants, Drapery Hours	469
Federal Transferred Properties	469
Mining on Private Property	470

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

URGENCY MOTION—CAMELS IMPORTATION AND TICK.

Serious Danger Alleged.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following notice of motion from the member for Pilbarra:—

With a view to calling attention to a matter of urgency, namely the serious danger menacing this State through the spread of camel tick and other diseases in the Pilbarra district, owing to the course taken by the Stock Department in the matter of quarantining, and the action of the Resident Magistrate, Dr. Burton, in allowing the camels to land, I desire to move the adjournment of the House.

It will therefore be necessary for a certain number of members to rise, in accordance with the resolution passed last session, to decide whether leave shall be given to the hon. member to move this motion.

Sufficient members having risen—

Mr. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Pilbarra) said: My reason for bringing this matter under notice in this manner is because I have utterly failed to have anything done to it in any other way; and as I wish to lay stress on the absolute incompetence of the Stock Department, I am using this method of doing so. In my speech on the Address-in-Reply I made some clear and distinct statements regarding this matter. The Government have seen fit to deliberately ignore them, though in my opinion they were deserv-

ing of an answer; and seeing that I could not get an answer in the language I used then, perhaps I am justified in making my language a little stronger to-day. Before going into this matter I would like to say, as I have already said, that I have no confidence whatever in the Stock Department, and without going into this camel question it is fully borne out by other things that have happened. We have seen the Agricultural Department attempt to drive their Minister along a two-chain road in a motor car and fail.

Mr. Gordon: The motion before the House is in reference to tick at Pilbarra. The hon. member now digresses and talks about a Ministerial trip in a motor car.

[Numerous interjections from Opposition members.]

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Pilbarra must confine his remarks to the question before the House. I hope he will do that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The motion, according to my notice, relates to the Stock Department. However, I will get down to the tick as soon as possible and touch on this other matter later. The subject of tick camels has been before the House for some considerable time, even before I was a member of this House. We find that the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) on the 1st November last asked a question in regard to the importation of these camels, and from that question and from the reply that was then given by the Premier, it was very clear that on the 1st November a concession to bring these camels into Western Australia had been granted and accepted, and that every arrangement, so far as the Government were concerned, was made. It was known then that these camels were coming. I mention this because from the 1st November to the 20th March is somewhere about six months. I wish to point this out because I am going to show that this department, which the member for Canning seems to desire to prevent me discussing, had six months in which to make arrangements for quarantining these dirty camels that the Premier had allowed to

come into the State. The first intimation we had about this matter was on the 21st March. The steamer "Century" arrived at Port Hedland with the camels on the 20th March, and on the 21st I received the following telegram:—

"Protest strongly camels now landing tick infested; general public and stock owners indignant.—*F. Thelemann.*"

On receipt of that telegram I went to the telephone and rang up the Agricultural Department, and the Under Secretary (Mr. Despeissis) answered me. I stated my case and he informed me through the telephone that one man was at Albany and another at Geraldton—I forget the names he gave me—and that he would attend to the matter when they came back. They were two important under-officers of Mr. Despeissis'. Needless to say, on receipt of that reply I was somewhat astounded, and I rang the telephone off with the idea of giving Mr. Despeissis my opinion of his department at short range, but the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) who happened to be with me persuaded me from that method and went to the telephone himself, and with a good deal of judicious use of Mr. Bath's name he was successful in getting what appeared at the time a somewhat satisfactory reply. We found out then that there were three other telegrams in Perth that morning besides mine; the Premier had one and two were received by the Stock Department; yet in the face of these the Under Secretary for Agriculture told me that he was going to wait in a matter of this importance until a man came back from Albany or Geraldton; and that is the system that has been adopted right throughout the whole of this affair. The last I heard of it was that the Under Secretary had seen the Premier and that the Premier had despatched a telegram to Port Hedland to the resident magistrate (Dr. Burton) instructing him to stop the landing of these camels pending the arrival of a stock inspector at Port Hedland. I spoke of that in the Address-in-Reply, and I stated that the telegram was shown in Port Hedland a day after it should

have arrived, and that I knew special arrangements were made in the post office for it to be sent there immediately. As a matter of fact, that telegram should have been, and perhaps was, in Port Hedland when the Under Secretary of the Agricultural Department rang me up and told me what had been done. As to the Under Secretary, I will speak of that matter again. Another matter the Under Secretary told me through the telephone was that they were stopping the rest of the camels, and that those camels which had been landed were to be thoroughly isolated and quarantined. However, the result was that the telegram was not shown in Port Hedland until the last camel was ashore and they were spread over a very great part of that district. The next thing was a telegram appearing in the *Morning Herald* on the 23rd March headed, "Tick-infested Camels land at Port Hedland—No quarantine," which reads:—

"Consternation was caused here and among stock-owners generally owing to the neglect of the Stock Department regarding the landing of camels from the steamer "Century." The Government knew on the 1st inst. that the steamer had left India, and was due in Hedland on the 20th, yet absolutely no provision was made for inspection or quarantine. On landing the first three camels yesterday the police discovered each animal to be covered with tick, similar to the cattle tick. These ticks have eight legs, three on each side and two in front, while some are half-an-inch long. The police ordered the unloading to cease, and are awaiting orders from the Stock Department and the Commissioner of Police. Dr. Burton, R.M., then ordered the ship to proceed with the unloading, adding that he would take the responsibility of the unloading continuing, and the camels were kept in the open space always occupied by the local camels when loaded for Marble Bar. The jetty is literally covered with tick, and where the camels camped last night is also strewn with tick. The camel and stock owners fear that the pest will spread, unless something is

done to-day. Some 500 camels are already engaged in trade from Hedland inland, and cannot come in for loading, and the port is temporarily ruined. Fears are entertained locally by the inland people that the port will be declared tick-infested, which will mean the suspension of all inland trade and the transference of business to Condon. The tick infested camels will be sent to-day to the only camping ground available for traders' stock, seven miles on the Bay road. The police now decline to take any further action. Dr. Burton's action in suspending the police orders is much criticised locally. The police say it is hard to know here who governs a concern of this kind, whether it is the Stock Department, police, or local R.M. Experienced stock-owners declare this is true tick, of which many residents procured bottles of samples."

The Minister for Mines: What telegram is that?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was in the *Morning Herald* of the 23rd March last. I went to Port Hedland very shortly after the telegram was published, leaving here on the 26th; and from inquiries I made from fully a dozen people in Port Hedland, as well as from the man who sent the telegram, whom I know as a stock-owner and a mail contractor, I find the *Herald* report is substantially correct; it is not overdrawn in one item. I saw those bottled ticks. The Minister for Mines says people in the North-West are "ratty"; and it does seem rather ratty to start bottling tick. But they were bottled right enough, and I saw them. On the 25th March, two days later, the Government came out with a reply to that telegram. This apology appeared in the *West Australian*, the great apologist for this splendid Stock Department, and was headed, "Port Hedland. Tick on the quarantine ground. An exaggerated telegram." There is a twang of the general election about that heading. The paragraph proceeds:—

"A telegram published in a contemporary on Saturday, regarding the

landing of tick-infested cattle at Port Hedland and the consequent consternation among local stock-owners, was the subject of a Ministerial inquiry yesterday. The Premier, Mr. Moore, stated that he had been in close touch with Dr. Burton, the resident magistrate of Port Hedland, by telegram on the subject; and the replies received indicated that there was strong opposition locally against the landing of the camels. These animals commanded at present a very high price, and it was alleged that at Port Hedland and Marble Bar the cost of carrying goods from the jetty to the new fields was almost exorbitant; indeed, the ramifications of vested interests were widespread, and pressure was being brought to bear at the various centres to prevent the landing of fresh camels. When the s.s. 'Century' arrived from Kurrachi with 516 camels, it appeared that fresh interest was lent to this matter. The camels were subjected to closer scrutiny, with the result that a few ticks were found on some of them. The police officers who were superintending the landing of these animals were thereupon pressed to suspend the landing operations, and a wire was sent along asking that the unloading should be suspended pending farther investigation. In the meantime the resident magistrate, who is a medical man, and who, being on the spot, had a good opportunity of gauging the value of the objection raised, allowed the unloading to proceed. From information wired by Dr. Burton it appeared that the sensational telegram published from Port Hedland was greatly exaggerated. A few ticks were present on the camels, and after the animals had left on their journey to the quarantine ground the doctor made a careful inspection of the jetty and the land where they had camped. In his telegram yesterday morning Dr. Burton stated that the inspection had not disclosed the presence of one single tick. The camels were under the supervision of the police, who were keeping them away from the ordin-

any camel tracks, and all precautions were being taken to prevent any stock from intermixing with them. The shippers of the camels had presented a certificate signed by the veterinary surgeon in charge at Kurraehi, declaring the animals to be sound and healthy. 'It was possible,' the telegram added, 'that they caught the tick, admitting that the insect was tick, from hay shipped for fodder on the voyage. Many bales were landed, and steps were being taken to clean the jetty and quarantine the hay. Mr. Weir, the chief inspector of stock, was of opinion that if the insects described were tick at all, they were certainly not the tick known in East Kimberley and Queensland, a parasite which was said to have been introduced by buffaloes from India. Mr. Ranford, the stock inspector, was now on his way to Port Hedland to take charge of the cleansing operations, and an ample supply of disinfectant was being forwarded. The Premier added that he had asked the resident magistrate to arrange to secure slides of tick blood with the object of forwarding them to Dr. Cleland, the Government Bacteriologist, for examination. He farther stated that the island proposed as a quarantine ground was originally reported on by the resident magistrate as being unsuitable, owing to the difficulty of landing and the deficient water supply. The camels, therefore, had to be taken under police supervision to McGregor's country, some 35 miles from Port Hedland. 'It would appear,' he added, 'that the officer responsible for not taking the necessary steps to secure quarantine ground prior to the arrival of the steamer was guilty of grave neglect of duty, and an inquiry would be immediately held with a view to determining upon whose shoulders this responsibility rested.'

I wish to make a few remarks on the statements contained in that extract. The first point that strikes me is, the Premier was in close touch with Dr. Burton; and if we are looking for an explanation of why the unloading was

not stopped, why that telegram never came to hand in Port Hedland until the last camel was on shore, we must remember that the Premier was in close touch with Dr. Burton.

The Premier: You will have every wire that was sent. I will read them all.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes. There appears to have been a very considerable difference between sending a wire and acting upon it.

The Premier: Say exactly what you mean.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: "The camels were subjected to the closest scrutiny, and a few ticks were found on some of them." Witnesses there have informed me they could feel those ticks with a forty-foot pole. You could see the tick as far away as from here to the other side of the Chamber. The camels were reeking with tick. The very fact that it was possible to collect in bottles the tick which had fallen off the camels shows that no close scrutiny was needed to see the tick. The very fact, stated in the extract I have read, that Dr. Burton ordered the jetty to be cleaned, shows that the tick did not need much looking for. As to the wire which was sent, I should like to say that four different persons in Port Hedland wired to Perth. At that time the land wire was broken between Perth and Port Hedland, and those messages had to be sent by cable. They were not ordinary wires; it cost something to wire at that time. And the fact that four respectable people in Port Hedland protested against the landing of those camels should have been sufficient to induce the Government to stop the landing. To suspend it pending inquiry was all that was asked. But no; they ran every camel ashore; they made no mistake; they got the camels ashore and sent them out. I will point out the great precautions that are taken on other occasions against the spread of tick. I would mention the most inhuman conduct with respect to the wrecked "Mildura," on board of which cattle were allowed to die of slow starvation, and the stock inspector sent a peremptory message that not one of them was to be allowed to land at Onslow or in the Ashburton country. When it was a matter of our own cattle,

or cattle from our own tick-infested country, the Stock Department could get off the mark very rapidly ; but when it comes to introducing tick and other diseases from Asia, recommend me to the present Government. As to that "exaggerated telegram," I have some more here that fully endorse every word of it. I would point out that when a clear case was put before the Government, when four responsible residents of Port Hedland pointed out the grave danger of this scourge spreading throughout the best pastoral country in the State, the Government smothered up their action by ridiculing those who had asked for protection. Ministers spoke of "exaggerated telegrams." I have heard the people of Port Hedland ridiculed for their futile attempt to work up an agitation. This is the protection which the Government gave to people who asked for it. As to the apology in the *West Australian*, it says, "The camels are under the supervision of the police." For Dr. Burton to pretend that these camels were under police supervision is ridiculous in the extreme. There were three policemen at Port Hedland when these camels arrived. There were 507 camels landed, with 48 new-chum Afghans, who had never before been in the bush, who had never before set foot in Australia. There was about one policeman at a time to look after 500 camels and 48 new-chum Afghans, and Dr. Burton contends that the camels were under the supervision of the police, and would not be allowed to intermix with any other stock or camels. He says, "They will be kept away from the ordinary camel tracks." Now those who have been at Port Hedland know it is impossible to get out of the town except by one road. For the first seven miles from Port Hedland there is only one possible road ; and unless the camels were taken by boat it was impossible to keep them off the track leading into the area beyond Port Hedland. Again, after those camels were landed, they were necessarily put in the Government yard. They were necessarily put into the Government stock-yard when they were taken out of the race on the wharf, into the yard through which every beast shipped at Port Hedland has to

pass. There was nowhere else for them to be put, once they were brought on the wharf. And now we find Dr. Burton wires that they were under police supervision, and that every care was being taken to keep them away from the ordinary camel tracks, and to see that they did not intermix with other stock. Again, he tells us the shippers had presented a certificate of health from Kurraichi, India. I think any Australian judge or magistrate should and does know the value of an Indian certificate, knows what the value of an Indian oath is ; and we know perfectly well that no one believes the oath of those Afghans when they go before our courts, and we know positively that in India you can buy anything you require, you can pretty well buy the life of a man there. As for the small matter of a certificate for a lot of dirty camels, the Afghans can swallow that easily. Dr. Burton goes on :—

"Steps are being taken to clean the jetty and quarantine the hay."

A large quantity of hay, an Indian grass which had been cut into hay and put into bales, was brought on the ship, and this was stacked in the Port Hedland Government yard, and most likely it is still there. The rest of it was carted a mile and a half out of Port Hedland to the ordinary camel camp on the Marble Bar road, and was left there. It was still there when I arrived at Port Hedland. It was then decided to quarantine the hay, and when I was there they were bringing this tick-infested hay back along the regular camel track and stacking it—above all places in the Government stock-yards, through which every hoof of cattle being shipped at Port Hedland has to pass. Dr. Burton also says :—

"Mr. Ranford is on his way to Port Hedland."

That is five days after the camels had landed. I read just now a question asked by the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman), and pointed out that the Government had fully six months in which to make arrangements for receiving these camels and to have an inspector there, as they should have had to see that the camels were clean when they arrived. And what did the Gov-

ernment do? Five days after the landing of the camels at Port Hedland, after every camel had left the ship and spread over that great pastoral district, they sent an inspector from Perth—and it takes six days to arrive there. There is just one other statement I wish to refer to regarding this apology by Dr. Burton :

“Camels now on their way to the quarantine ground, McGregor’s country, 35 miles on the Marble Bar road.”

Even in this matter Dr. Burton makes a misstatement of 15 miles. McGregor’s country is 50 miles from Port Hedland; the 49-mile well on the Port Hedland-Marble Bar road is in the centre of McGregor’s country. So even in that there is a misstatement of 15 miles. I wish to say farther that McGregor’s country extends across the Marble Bar road; it is unfenced, and there are 500 camels on it—all these regularly on the track to Marble Bar. The 500 or 600 camels already carting on that track have to go through McGregor’s country when going to Marble Bar or anywhere out of Port Hedland, except to Wodgina.

The Minister for Mines: There is no reason why they should keep to the track.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : I will tell you all about that. I wish to say farther that when those camels landed, the only thing that might be expected happened. They had, as I have said, half a hundred new-chum Afghans and 500 camels. As soon as those camels got over the causeway—they spread all over the island on which Port Hedland stands, to begin with—when they were collected and got over the causeway they spread all over the country. A number had been found dead in different places when I was there. I saw Mr. Ranford at Port Hedland, and he assured me then that he had not yet found the whole of them; he had about 490, he thought, and they expected to pick up the remaining few in a few days.

The Treasurer: Only seven died, I think.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The next thing we hear about this matter is when we

come again to the *West Australian* report, with these head-lines —

“Diseased Camels—No Cause for Alarm—Interview with Dr. Cleland.” This is dated July 12th, that is, two days after I delivered a speech in this House in which I referred to this matter. I spoke on the 10th July, and this appeared two days later:—

“For over three months some 500 camels have been in quarantine at Port Hedland. From blood slides taken from a number of these animals a bacteriological examination has just been made, with the result that a new danger has been revealed. The camels in question it will be remembered were brought to the State three months ago from India by Ibrahim Mahomet, and have ever since been the subject of litigation. Consequently they have remained confined to a limited area. Recent developments have put the Stock Department on their guard, and instructions have been issued that the quarantine regulations shall be rigidly enforced. Dr. Cleland was interviewed yesterday by one of our representatives, and he made the following interesting statement concerning the disease.”

Then follows a little disquisition about several things, and the doctor states that recently they have found out by investigation that trypanosome infections caused sleeping sickness in man.

Mr. Taylor: That’s what’s the matter with the Government.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He says a lot about the treatment of blood slides in Hedland, and then says this:—

“At last two slides were found in which trypanosomes were fairly numerous.”

Then he buries his head again in the sand of verbiage, and goes on to say:—

“The question arises whether the camels which were brought over from India or other parts during the last 10 or 20 years are affected with the trypanosomes. Such an examination, as far as we know, has never been made in Australia. It is a matter that affects the whole of the Commonwealth, and the other States which

have camels should ascertain whether trypanosomes exist in them. It may be that a small percentage of those contain the parasite, but as far as is known no ill effects have followed. As far as investigations have gone, it is impossible to say whether the trypanosomes which are at present in those camels are the trypanosomes which cause surra, and so would be a source of danger to other animals."

That is to say, in effect, he does not know yet whether they are poisonous or not; and he puts me in mind of a man who would allow a snake to bite him, to find out whether it is poisonous. We bring these camels to Western Australia, for what reason I cannot say, nor why the concession was granted; but the concession was granted, and we bring the camels to Western Australia and then attempt to find out whether they are poisonous. A man might as well set fire to his hay-stack to see whether it was asbestos. The article proceeds:—

"This is a matter which is being investigated. In the meantime every precaution is being taken to prevent the possibility of the spread of the disease.—Is there any occasion for alarm?' the doctor was asked.—'Not the slightest,' was the answer. In all probability some of the other camels which have been previously imported have been so infected; yet it is a matter that requires thorough investigation. This investigation will also include the collection and the examination of the biting flies, which are responsible for the transmission of the disease. It may be found that these flies do not exist in sufficient numbers in this State."

I next come to another extract from the *West Australian*. You will mark that it is put away in a corner, and contains also accounts of the Afghans and camels, a rich strike of tin at Wodgina, and a paragraph about neglect to proclaim blocks for residence in Port Hedland—the whole in this small space. The other extract I have quoted from has these large headings: "Diseased Camels"—"No cause for alarm."

This extract is merely headed "Port Hedland":—

"All the hitherto clean camels on the Hedland-Bar track are afflicted with tick, seriously menacing the carrying capacity. A troublesome fly has also appeared, and is driving horses, cattle, and camels mad. Bullocks coming to the port have, after going inland, been found to possess tick, and it is reasonable to assume that cattle passing through the local shipping-yards for southern ports may also possess tick."

That is dated Friday last. So much for the apologist who, in great head lines, tells us there is nothing to fear, and that telegrams have been exaggerated. Without farther comment I will read a telegram I received yesterday from Port Hedland:—

"Teams bullocks, all trading camels, including those white men, affected tick, notwithstanding frequent changes. Woodroffe (agent Bullarra), Richardson (Pippingarra), Snell, and Tate-lock all witness dire effects imported fly driving all stock mad. Infected Indian camels regularly visiting Hedland, also wandering over both Bar roads. Fact large number lost, whereabouts unknown. Tate-lock others assert camels declared clean by inspector nearly all developed fresh crop young tick. See last week's dailies. Prohibited Indians will not leave Hedland unless forced, declaring will shoot and die; they want wages, now claiming from South British. Believed Government now feeding men whom South British refused feed or pay. If arrests attempted before wages paid, blood assuredly be spilled."

The Premier: Whom is the wire from?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is from Mr. Barker, the author of the wire in the *Morning Herald* which I have read. This information is fully borne out by the telegram which appeared in the Government apologist. There is one matter I would explain in regard to that. I told the House just now that the country is unfenced, that is on the Marble Bar

road. There are three roads, the first a direct track called the sand track, then there is one, which takes a curve, running to a point 15 miles out, and the other is the Lalla Rookh road. The whole of that is unfenced country. There are 500 camels being quarantined on this country, and there are some Afghan drivers, who have never been paid their wages, to look after them. Anyone who knows a bit about stock, and perhaps my friend the member for Mt. Margaret can bear me out in this, will realise that the task of keeping 500 camels at a camp is a very difficult one, and that it would take white stockmen all their time to do it. I am certain that unpaid and unfed Afghan camel drivers have no possible chance of keeping these camels on the country where the Government say they are quarantined. The proposition is ridiculous, as is the position of the Government and their officers who tell us that these camels are quarantined, notwithstanding the fact that the beasts are there in unfenced country with only Afghans to look after them. This is one of the most disgraceful things that has ever occurred in Australia. Dr. Burton, the resident magistrate, gave us the assurance that he would take all the responsibility, while Mr. Despeissis, who has the tired feeling, said that he would see about it in a day or two. Surely these people want dealing with. Again we have stock inspector Weir who says that they are not cattle tick. And he is the man who is appointed by this State to look after the stock and has some millions of pounds worth of cattle under his charge. All I can say is that I would not allow him to look after a kangaroo pup of mine. I would expect to see him, if he is like the rest of the department, come along two days after the pup had died of starvation with a tin of milk in hand and a weary look in his eye. Then there is the Premier—he promised they would not be allowed to land, and his action amounts to a breach of faith. [*The Premier: What promise was that?*] That you would stop the camels from landing. [*The Premier: They are in quarantine.*] Yes, in Pilbarra most of them. Then there is stock

inspector Ranford; his position is an impossible one. He is an old man and poorly paid; and with the ragging he is likely to get from his department, which cannot run a motor car without smashing it up in a wire fence, it is impossible to expect that he would have been able to do much else. In such circumstances there was no hope that he would be able to deal with the matter properly. He did the same as the rest of them, and no doubt was acting according to the instructions of the chief apologist and said that there was absolutely no danger. We have been told from beginning to end of the whole affair that there was no danger. Again we have Dr. Cleland, and he also assured us that there was no danger. These gentlemen certainly are not the people whom we can trust to control such a great industry as this. One word for the police. They appear to me to be the only men in the various Government departments who knew their duty. When they saw the camels landing they knew what the tick was and stopped them, and it is a lasting disgrace to this State that the resident magistrate should have been so un-Australian as to show his pro-Asiatic feelings to such an extent as to override the police in a matter of such serious consequences to the State. Farther, with regard to the policemen. I think the bush policemen of this State a body of men of whom, taking them as an average, the State might well be proud. In any action they have to take with regard to stock and matters of this sort these men always exhibit sound common sense, and the Government might well back up any decision they come to pending farther inquiries. There is another matter concerning these camels to which I should like to refer, and that is with regard to the landing of the Afghans and Dr. Burton's connection with that affair. Before going farther I would like to say that I do not desire to comment upon Ibrahim Mahomet's conduct, for he is now travelling North under arrest and I do not desire to prejudice his case; but I would point out that when he arrived he had permission for one month to land 48 Asiatics; of this num-

ber of men 47 failed to pass the education test, and the South British Company had to put up security that they would return in one month's time. These Indians had an agreement which was signed in India for an engagement of three years' work in Australia, but when they landed at Port Hedland they found that the agreement was no good whatever, and they got another one. The following is an extract from the *Hedland Advocate*, dated July 6th, 1907:—

"Mahomet's men struck work shortly after landing, as they had in India contracted to work in Australia for Mahomet for three years, and learned in Hedland that such contracts were useless. Mahomet got Dr. Burton, R.M., to intervene, and after fresh contracts (which Mahomet had brought with him printed in anticipation) were signed, the men were induced to go to work."

Dr. Burton, by his action in this matter, deliberately countenanced an agreement which was illegal; he, as a magistrate, must know the Commonwealth law with regard to prohibited immigrants. He knew of his own knowledge that the Afghans did not pass the education test, and therefore would not be allowed to remain in the State for more than a month; and yet, knowing this, he arranged an agreement for them to work for three years, and, I believe, witnessed the agreement. To allow Dr. Burton to remain one hour longer in his present position is a menace to the administration of justice in this State. This is the case I have to put before this House, and surely it requires no farther words of mine to emphasise the seriousness of the position. I contend that the position speaks for itself, and fairly howls for the punishment of those who have been guilty of introducing this scourge into our State. I move that the House do now adjourn.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) : I have not had an opportunity of perusing the various files of the newspapers to which the hon. member has referred during this discussion, but I will endeavour, as far as possible, to put the House

in possession of the facts of the case as revealed to me by the files of the department. During last year representations were made to the Government as to the advisability of allowing certain additional camels to be imported into the State. It was pointed out that, in view of the fact that the camels at present in the State were held practically by a small number of people, there was a possibility that those people trading to the inland gold-fields and who owned the limited number of camels would, by virtue of having practically a monopoly, charge very heavy rates for the carriage of goods from the coast. An application was made, by Ibrahim Mahomet who asked, through his solicitors, that 500 camels should be allowed to be introduced. [Mr. Johnson : Were his arguments solely that it would result in the public good ?] The question was discussed in Cabinet, and the matter was referred to the Minister for Agriculture to see if it would not be possible to adopt some scheme whereby additional camels might be brought into the State ; not necessarily from outside of Australia. It was pointed out that the Mines Department, when requiring camels, had to pay through the nose for them. After giving the matter consideration it was decided that permission should be given, and accordingly last year the existing regulations were amended so as to provide that certain camels might be introduced, so long as they were not brought below a certain degree of latitude—the 25th parallel—and a clean certificate was given at the port of embarkation. The regulation under which the camels were allowed to be introduced is as follows :—

"Whereas by a regulation made under 'The Stock Diseases Act, 1895,' and published in the *Government Gazette* on the 21st day of July, 1905, the importation of any stock from any country or place other than from the United Kingdom, the States of the Commonwealth, and the Colony of New Zealand was prohibited. And whereas by the said Act it is provided that the Governor may from time to time, by Order in Council, exempt such stock as he may think fit from

the operations of any of the provisions thereof, either by generic or particular description : Now therefore I, the said Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, do hereby exempt camels from the operations of the said Regulation as from the 1st day of October, 1906, provided that such camels shall not be landed or brought farther South than the 25th parallel of South latitude within the State of Western Australia; provided also that such camels shall be subject to the Regulations under 'The Stock Diseases Act, 1905,' made on the 24th day of September, 1902, and published in the *Government Gazette* on the 25th day of September, 1902; and for the purposes of the importation of camels hereunder Regulation No. 3 of the said Regulations made on the 24th day of September, 1902, shall be read as if the ports therein enumerated were Cossack and Port Hedland, and no others."

I would like to emphasise the fact that that regulation was altered to allow of any person importing camels, and not as the hon. member has said, that a concession was made to these people. On the 1st November last the member for Murchison asked certain questions in the House and I gave certain information, which is evidence that this alteration was not made for the purpose of any particular individual, but was a general regulation, and we had power under the Act to make the regulation. Due notification was given. The member asked the question, "Whether application has been made for permission to import 500 camels and 30 camel drivers (or any portion of same) into this State?" I replied, "Yes." The hon. member then asked, "If so (a) by whom; (b) from what place?" I replied, "(a) A. Mahomet, H. Nathan, and the Dastageers Syndicate per O. D. Sookhia; (b) Arabia India; not stated." The member also asked, "Whether permission has been granted?" And the reply was, "As the importation of camels is allowed, subject to the regulation under the Stock Act, duly referred to in the Order in Council pub-

lished in the *Government Gazette* of 22nd June, 1906, no specific permission is required or has been given. The permission to import drivers is a Commonwealth matter." The hon. member further asked, "If not, whether it was the intention of the Government to grant such permission?" And the reply was, "Answered by No. 3." I should like to draw the attention of members to the fact that this regulation was applicable to anyone desirous of importing camels.

Mr. Bath : What do the regulations prescribe at the port of disembarkation? What restrictions do they imply? What did the Stock Department have to carry out?

The PREMIER : The same regulations that prevail in any other port, that is to say the stock were not allowed to leave the quarantine ground. In regard to the question brought up as to the action taken by the police and the resident magistrate, I would like to read for the information of members some telegrams showing the action that was taken by me when the matter was brought under my notice. Mr. Underwood wrote a letter to me, at the same time—

Mr. Underwood : Forwarded this telegram.

The PREMIER : The member for Pilbarra wrote a letter to me, drawing my attention to the fact of the camels being quarantined at Port Hedland, at the same time that the startling newspaper paragraph was brought under my notice. It came out on the Saturday evening, and I saw it late on that evening. The next morning I went to the telegraph office and asked whether it was possible for me to get into direct communication with the authority at Port Hedland, as I was desirous of satisfying myself whether there was any truth in what had been brought under my notice in the newspaper. After some delay I was enabled to make arrangements for Dr. Burton to be in the telegraph office at the other end on Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. The hon. member has referred to the fact that some wires were withheld; but here are the pencil memos which I wrote for the telegraph clerk, and any member will have the opportunity if he is desirous of

seeing every word. I sent the following wire to Dr. Burton:—

"Wire last night's paper states camels sent to-day to only camping ground available for traders stock seven miles on Bar road; jetty literally covered with tick, and where camels camped last night strewn with tick. Is there any semblance truth this statement? What steps taken disinfect jetty?"

Mr. Scaddan: Did you expect him to plead guilty?

The PREMIER: He was not charged with anything. He replied:—

"After camels gone, carefully inspected jetty and camping ground; no one single tick found. Camels under care police, who are keeping them away from ordinary camel tracks. All precautions taken. Safely say not a single word of truth in statement."

I wired Dr. Burton the following:—

"Are you aware whether owner has clean certificate from Government veterinary officer at port shipment? Rely on you take every precaution secure complete segregation. This is your authority to incur any necessary expenditure. Newspaper report states that on landing first three camels yesterday (Friday) police discovered each animal to be covered with tick similar to cattle tick. These tick have eight legs, three on each side and two in front, while some are half an inch long."

He replied:—

"Shippers presented certificate signed by veterinary surgeon in charge at Kurrachi declaring camels sound and healthy."

A duly qualified surgeon, remember. The telegram goes on:—

"Feasible that they got tick, admitting that it is tick, from hay on voyage. Many bales landed. Taking steps to clean jetty and quarantine hay also."

Mr. Johnson: Why is he cleaning the jetty when he states in a previous wire that there was no tick?

The PREMIER: Because it was necessary to take every precaution.

Mr. Collier: He stated in a previous telegram it was not tick at all.

The PREMIER: I wired as follows:—

"Experienced stock-owners declare it to be true tick, of which many residents procured bottles of samples. Understand McGregor's country not gazetted a quarantine area. Forward information by wire necessary to locate ground and boundaries of area; will then have quarantine ground gazetted."

Dr. Burton replied:—

"First camels landed presented a few tick neighbourhood udders. Resident Afghans called me from deck ship and I inspected them; police inspected them later. I believed it right, shippers holding Government permission to land, that landing should not be delayed, and that proper segregation methods would be sufficient to confine disease."

Then in order that every precaution should be taken and that I might be satisfied as to what was being done, I wired to Dr. Burton as follows:—

"Arrange secure slides tick blood; forward Clelland, Government Bacteriologist, for examination. If you have no slides, will forward 'Burrumbet' Tuesday."

There is nothing farther in the wires of interest at this stage. Surely this is evidence that the Government realised that it was a very serious question, and it was absolutely essential that every precaution should be taken. I do not think any member can say that the Government, when the matter was brought under their notice, did not take every care, as far as any ordinary person could take, to see that proper precautions were taken. And the Resident Magistrate was given every opportunity, a free hand in regard to expense, to see that there was complete segregation. (Interjection.) He maintained, as he has done right through, that these tick which were on the camels were not what is known as the cattle tick. That is the reason I sent the slides up, so that we should have an opportunity of making a bacteriological examination. If the Government were not willing to find out the truth, they would not have taken the trouble to send up the slides.

We were as desirous as members opposite of seeing that the country was free from tick. We have our interests here, and if there is any negligence in the Stock Department the Government will not protect the officers. In the interview referred to by the hon. member, I said I considered an officer of the Stock Department guilty of gross negligence, and I telephoned to the Minister that I intended to have an inquiry held without delay. On the Monday following this Sunday that I had spent in sending wires to Pilbarra while there are officers in the department to look after these matters. I reported the matter to the Public Service Commissioner, and Mr. Weir was censured. Before the inquiry was held this officer had secured leave of absence; as a matter of fact he had got married, and was away before any action had been taken. We have not finished the inquiry in connection with the matter, but I want to get on to the important matter referred to by the hon. member. While this was going on I received a letter from a friend of mine in Natal, and he advised me to be very careful as to any importation of stock into Western Australia. [Mr. Johnson: I told you that last year.] This gentleman is experienced in this matter, and is speaking from experience gained in that particular colony, where every disease in stock in existence is prevalent. He stated it would be very necessary in the case of importing any stock, more especially from Aden or any ports in the neighbourhood of the Red Sea, to see that there was no likelihood of importing camels with the dreaded disease "surra." Quite recently, as the result of the examination made, and the examinations I may here say were delayed to some extent, that is the bacteriological examinations of the cultures were delayed owing to the outbreak of diphtheria in Perth claiming Dr. Cleland's attention; and when it came to examining the slides, after examining some 50 he found two of the slides that gave evidence apparently of some signs of trypanosomes. I believe that is a peculiar micro-organism, and one of the peculiar phases of this trypanosomes in camels

when they are affected with it, is that a certain disease known as surra breaks out. Immediately this was reported to the Government, Dr. Cleland stated that he was not satisfied that it was trypanosomiasis, but that under microscopic examination the appearance of these microbes somewhat resembled this particular disease. It was then decided by the Government, to make assurance doubly sure, to send Dr. Cleland without delay to Port Hedland, accompanied by Mr. Giles, an entomologist, one of the officials of the Zoological Gardens. We wired to the various States asking whether they had made any examinations in regard to this particular disease, and they said none had been made. I may say that prior to this, as a result of a discussion at the Premiers' Conference in Brisbane, when the whole matter was discussed by the Premiers, and it was decided we would all come to the one decision, namely to prohibit the importation of any stock whatever from outside Australia; and as a result of that decision the regulation then in force allowing the importation of stock was cancelled. [Mr. Johnson: Did you agree to the proposal at Brisbane?] I objected in the first instance, but after discussing the whole question I said that there was no reason why we should not fall into line.

Mr. Johnson: Then you committed an error of judgment previously in allowing these camels to come in.

The PREMIER: After making every examination and being assured by our authorities that there would be no danger, providing the quarantine regulations were enforced, that is the 40 days, it was simply a question of our considering that we were justified in introducing these camels, as we might be in introducing stock from the old country under the same regulations. There are objections to importing stock from the old country. Quite recently objection was taken by various States to some bulls imported just before the last agricultural show. They objected that our term of quarantine was too short. It is a matter of judgment between the officials of the various States as to whether

40 days or a few days longer are sufficient for quarantine. [Interjection by Mr. Bolton.] The camels are in quarantine at present. [Mr. Bolton : With no fence.] The member for Pilbarra spoke of how impossible it was for 50 men to cope with 500 camels, but from my own experience they should look after them without any trouble. We can only go on the reports of the officers as to what has been done. The hon. member referred to the fact that Mr. Ranford was an elderly man and possibly could not carry out his duties.

Mr. Underwood: I said he was not backed up by his department.

The PREMIER: He was supported by his department. Any member of a Government staff who cares to bring a matter before his Minister will be supported. What object have the Ministry in infesting this country with tick or any plague? [Interjections from Labour members.]

Mr. Speaker: I must ask the member for Mt. Margaret to be a little moderate in his interjections. It is most unfair to any speaker to have a dozen at a time interjecting, and it is unfair to other members who wish to hear what the hon. member speaking has to say.

Mr. Taylor: With all due respect, I am not a dozen.

Mr. Speaker: I am quite aware of that, but I ask the hon. member to be as moderate as possible, and to give the hon. member speaking an opportunity of making his speech.

The PREMIER: Mr. Ranford wired on the 23rd March:—

"All came's *ex s.s. 'Century'* in quarantine. No sign of any disease in stock. I have not seen any flies. There are some bot-flies in the country, but I have not seen them; only from reports."

Dr. Cleland in his report on this disease states that he had examined 50 of the slides with blood smears taken by Dr. Burton in March, and found two micro-organisms called trypanosomes, which, on scientific investigation are found to be connected with the disease called in India "surra." Dr. Cleland explained that these trypanosomes are common in

some countries among cattle and horses, and that they are often transmitted from sick or infected animals to others by biting flies. Dr. Cleland wired with a view of obtaining information in regard to these flies, and the telegram I have read he received in reply. I am not going to say that the official I referred to in the Stock Department carried out his duties as he should have done; but at the same time I do not see why the whole of the department should be blamed for the fact that one officer did not take the necessary steps to have his inspector there in time. As a matter of fact, if the inspector had been there it would not have made any difference. [Mr. Bolton: Not while Dr. Burton was there.] Mr. Ranford is supposed to be a man to be relied on, and he says the cattle are free from tick and disease. Whom are we to believe?

Mr. Bolton: Dr. Burton said that the first few had tick on them.

The PREMIER: But afterwards he diagnosed and found them not to be diseased. This officer was sent to make an examination, and Mr. Ranford confirmed Dr. Burton's statement. I do not know that we could take any action farther than we have done at present. I say that if that man had gone up there it did not matter what inspector went up he would not have been in a position to know whether these camels were infected. It was the precaution the Government took to obtain slides so that cultures could be made that enabled the department to ascertain whether there was a possibility of surra. Other camels in the State are to be examined, and there is a possibility that some of them may be affected in a similar way. What I really want to emphasise is the fact that even had the inspector been there, it would not have made any difference. The Chief Stock Inspector's neglect was in not having the quarantine ground prepared for the camels. [Mr. Underwood: Whose fault was that?] I say it was the fault of the professional head of the Stock Department, because the quarantine ground should have been in readiness prior to the arrival of the steamer, instead of making an endeavour to secure

that island which it was afterwards found was not suitable—for what reason I do not know; perhaps the hon. member can inform me?

Mr. Underwood : They could not get to it, and the water supply is not good.

The PREMIER : Then it was necessary for me to wire to Dr. Burton to make arrangements for the other quarantine station, and at the same time to wire and instruct him how to describe the quarantine station in order that the area could be gazetted. I say I recognise that the officer I have referred to was to blame, and I took the necessary steps provided under the Public Service Act to make charges against him, and an inquiry was held by the Public Service Commissioner. With regard to the last statement made by the hon. member in reference to what appeared in the papers a few days ago, which I have not seen but which he read, I can only say that we will make every investigation into them. Dr. Cleland has gone up there and he has been instructed to make every possible investigation. The private wire the hon. member read, I believe, was from a gentleman named Mr. Barker, who is, I understand, partner with a gentleman who is the owner of a considerable number of camels.

Mr. Underwood : I have no knowledge of that myself and I think the Premier is wrong.

The PREMIER : Do I understand the hon. member to say that Mr. Snell was not in partnership with Mr. Barker?

Mr. Underwood : Yes.

The PREMIER : I accept that assurance, but I understood that he was a camel proprietor and that, as a rival trader, it was to his interest to get the other camels out of the market. I have nothing farther to add except in conclusion to say that if hon. members look at the matter fairly they will recognise that the Government have done all they possibly can to prevent the spread of any disease. The camels, as far as we know, are in quarantine. We have the assurance of the officers that they are there now. They have been there for practically three months. We have also his assurance that there is no outbreak

of tick on the camels in the district at all. On the one hand we have that evidence from the stock inspector; and on the other hand, we have the evidence of interested parties that there is tick there, but the only man who can make a proper examination and report is the man we have sent up to Pilbarra, that is Dr. Cleland.

Mr. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill) : In regard to this matter, the Premier has not touched the spot in regard to the importation of these camels and also the question as to where the blame should be allotted. When one reads the particulars given by the member for Pilbarra, the proceedings taken right throughout in connection with the importation of these camels remind one rather of some comic opera performance more than of the performance of those charged with the duty of preventing our stock from the possibility of disease coming from abroad; and if it were not for the seriousness of the position and the menace to the stock-owners in that district, one could afford to laugh at the absurd precautions taken by the local representatives of the Government when the danger first faced the stock-owners there, and at the way in which they have carefully avoided any proper steps in order to protect the stock-owners in that district. The Premier has said that the permission to import these camels from India under certain regulations was given because the Government considered that the camels were held in the hands of a few monopolists in that district who were enabled to exact exorbitant charges for the carriage of goods and material; but the Premier most assuredly knew that in South Australia there was an opportunity of securing camels, that they have been brought over through Eucla, Norseman, and Dundas, and that many of those camels from South Australia have been taken to the very district about which the member for Pilbarra has spoken; and that if there was any desire to break up a monopoly, the Government could have insisted that camels

should be brought from South Australia, with the certain confidence that they would be free from disease. We all know that India and other Asiatic countries are not only the breeding-grounds of dangerous infectious diseases which affect human beings, but that from their disregard of the laws of health and of ordinary safeguards they are the breeding-grounds of serious stock diseases; and from the very time when it was proposed to introduce these camels, those charged with the administration of the law should have known and recognised this fact. While blame may be attachable to the officers of the departments, Ministers charged with the control of those departments cannot escape their share of the responsibility. The Honorary Minister has practically assumed control of the Department of Agriculture, which includes the Stock Department. The Minister takes credit here for what his supporters allege to be acts for the benefit of the agricultural industry, and he must also take the blame, if blame is attachable, for neglect which involves a menace to the stock-owners of this State. The Honorary Minister was a member of the Cabinet at that time, and he must have known that there was considerable risk in allowing those camels to be introduced. We are told that the importation was permitted subject to the Order-in-Council and to the regulations under the Stock Act. But the question arises, who was on the spot to see that these regulations were enforced? There was no professional member of the staff of the Stock Department; and it seems to me that the only person to administer the regulations and safeguard the people of Port Hedland against the importation of diseased stock was Dr. Burton, the resident magistrate. And if one peruses the records not only with regard to the stock but as to the manner in which the laws have been defied, by allowing Afghans to land and remain, one must conclude that Dr. Burton was not interested in seeing that the proper safeguards were enforced; for we have it clearly proved

that he went behind the Commonwealth Act, and permitted contracts to be signed which absolutely broke the Federal law. Therefore, in failing to see that proper steps were taken after permission was given to land those camels, not only are the Stock Department responsible but we must hold the Honorary Minister controlling the department equally responsible, and in common with him the members of the Cabinet; and I say, when we know that we can get camels from South Australia, feeling assured that they are clean—[*The Treasurer*: How?]
—by the knowledge we have of the administration of the Stock Act of South Australia—[*The Treasurer*: Such examinations are never made there]—and also the fact that camels have been brought through from South Australia, and are now in the Nor'-West, and that those camels were free from tick until these 500 camels were imported from India; and if that is not conclusive, I should like to know what would be. These camels are allowed to come in; and the police, desirous of seeing that the interests of the people are safeguarded, take action; but the resident magistrate deliberately steps in and orders that safeguards shall not be taken and that the stock must be allowed to land. I say there is sufficient evidence that Dr. Burton was not competent, and that he had not the interests of the people at heart; he had evidently some sympathy with those who were importing the camels—an Asiatic sympathy. And yet we are assured that there is no room for censure; there is no reason for the matter being brought up by the member for Pilbarra, because, whom were the Government to rely on? They had to rely on this Dr. Burton; and knowing from experience of his action in this matter, we should like to know what action he has taken in previous matters in the interests of the people. That the members of the Cabinet must have recognised there was some risk in importing these stock is shown by the fact that they say, "These camels must not be introduced farther south than the 25th parallel of south latitude." Evidently they were taking

care to safeguard the southern portion of the State; but on the other hand the camels were permitted to be landed in a district where the stock-owners have big interests, which interests should be protected as fully as the interests of those farther south should be protected and were protected under this Order-in-Council. The camels were brought into the State and allowed to range over what is called the quarantine ground, but where, evidently, from the information to hand, the possibility of infection is great; and after the damage was done, action was taken by the Government. There is no doubt, judging by the wires sent from Perth, an effort was made, but evidently too late, to ascertain what the trouble really was; but there can be no gainsaying the fact that these steps were taken after the possibility of infection had been incurred by the people in the Nor'-West. And when we read the latest information as to the manner in which stock are affected, the manner in which hitherto clean stock and camels have been infected with the tick, we can see how serious is the danger to the stock-owners in that district. And this is not the first time that the interests of agriculturists and pastoralists in this State have been menaced and seriously menaced by the negligence of the Stock Department. Through the dilatoriness shown in the construction of the rabbit-proof fence the rabbits got behind that fence.

Mr. Gordon : The hon. member is now talking about the rabbit-proof fence. This is a question of camel tick. We shall probably have him next on sheep tick. I think he is out of order. The question has reference to tick on camels at Pilbarra.

Mr. Bath : I am using an illustration to show the incapacity of the Stock Department, which controls these matters.

Mr. Speaker : I have paid great attention to the hon. member's speech, and I hold that he is justified in referring to the rabbit-proof fence.

Mr. BATH : I was only pointing out the necessity for stricter supervision, because by the neglect of the same department the State was previously involved in heavy expenditure on another rabbit-

proof fence. On that occasion an officer of the department, in the discharge of his duty, and with the knowledge of the risk we were running through the invasion of the rabbits—an officer who was to a large extent a rough bushman—expressed his feelings perhaps not quite so courteously as he might have done had he been schooled in town; and he was made the scapegoat for the Stock Department, and had to sever his connection with the Department of Agriculture, with the result that the country was involved in the expense of the second line of rabbit-proof fence. Here we are facing exactly a similar position on the question of tick in the Pilbarra district. Not only has there been neglect and incapacity on the part of the Stock Department, but neglect of the interests of the stock-owners on the part of the Honorary Minister who controls that department. There is ample evidence, not only in what the Premier said but in what the member for Pilbarra has brought forward, for strict inquiry into the conduct of Dr. Burton, the resident magistrate in that district, and I hope that enquiry will be set on foot at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison) : As the Honorary Minister does not rise to protect his department, it may be well for someone from the Opposition side to throw a little more light on the subject. For a number of years the introduction of camels to Western Australia has been a serious question. Seven years ago I took up the agitation against the introduction of camels; and the present member for West Perth (Mr. Illingworth), then member for Cue, will recollect the circumstances. I hold that the blame for the introduction of these camels rests not on the Stock Department but on the Government, for altering the regulations to allow the camels to be introduced at a time when it was not necessary to have a farther importation of camels to the State. I have a thorough knowledge of what I am talking about. I have in my possession letters from three or four large camel-owners in Western Australia, which prove beyond doubt that they could have supplied the Nor'-West with some

hundreds of camels had work been there for the camels to do ; and farther, I have also information from South Australia which leads me to believe that were it necessary some 400 or 500 camels could have been sent from that State to Western Australia if there was work for them to do. I brought this forward last session, when protesting against the introduction of the camels that have caused the present trouble. At that time the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) could only remark that if the people in question were not allowed to introduce those camels, the cost of bringing camels from South Australia would be too heavy. But I ask members, would it not have been better to pay more for camels than to flood the country with disease ? I maintain there is a possibility that this outbreak, if it is nearly so serious as the debate to-night would lead us to believe, may cost Western Australia some thousands and perhaps hundreds of thousands of pounds before the diseases are eradicated, if they can be eradicated at all. I should like to know how it was possible for Abraham Mahomet to get permission to land those camels. It has been said that the permission was made general ; but I know that when the permission was given Mr. Abraham Mahomet got a long start of all others who were applying for permission to introduce camels. The *Gazette* notice in question appears in June ; and I note that all these *Gazette* notices appear at a time when Parliament was not sitting.

The Treasurer : Parliament sat within a few weeks afterwards.

Mr. HOLMAN : Yes ; but it was for some time impossible to get any information as to the importation of these camels, until a man had left for India and was buying them in that country.

The Treasurer : At any time last session you could have elicited the information.

At 6.15, the *Speaker* left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Mr. HOLMAN (continuing) : It would be interesting to know what syndicate was backing up this gentleman who

obtained permission to have camels landed in the State. When I first heard that camels were to be introduced, I took the earliest steps I could to try and prevent it. With that object in view I asked the Premier on the 1st November of last year, certain questions, and we found at that time there were several applications for the introduction of camels. Following on that I dealt with the matter farther on the 28th November, when I moved for the production of papers in connection with the introduction of the camels. My reason for doing this was in the best interests of the people of Western Australia, for we had reason to regret permission being given to land camels previously. The person to whom permission was said to have been given was Faiz Mahomed, and the fact that permission was given has cost Western Australia a considerable sum of money. I would like to know why any movement was made to give farther permission for the introduction of camels when they were not required. Nine or ten months ago there may have been a lack of teams in the North-West to do the carrying, and that fact was brought about by a few new shows opening up in the North-West, but from information I have gained from people in that part of the country I find that several teams left that part of the country because there was no work for them to do. I could produce letters showing that there were plenty of camels to go to the North-West. The Government very wrongly gave permission because camels were not required, and the person who could land 500 camels in Western Australia was really given the right to make a profit of about £10,000. I brought the matter before the House last November when I showed plainly the grave danger of a dreaded scourge being introduced into Western Australia. We have to blame the introduction of Asiatics into Western Australia for the bubonic plague which we had here. At the time I spoke of the matter previously it was not the question of tick that troubled me much, because we had had tick camels in Western Australia for

the last 14 years, so it was said. Whether that is so or not I am not able to prove. But the tick question did not trouble me, it was the introduction of diseases which always follow upon the introduction of Asiatics into any country. When I spoke on the 28th November, the Minister of Mines made certain interjections as to the price of camels, but, as I stated then, I knew there was sufficient camels in the country without buying more. I pointed out that although the Government had decided that the cancellation of the regulation should not affect places south of latitude 25, that would allow camels to be landed at Carnarvon, and it would only mean a week or two for camels to come to the Murchison or any other part of the State. We have heard already that some of these camels are travelling to other portions of the State. The Minister for Mines at the time I am speaking of stated that camels were badly required, but the information I had told me that there were plenty of camels here. I said the same thing six or seven years ago when an attempt was made to introduce camels into the State. On November 28, 1906, when speaking on this question, I said :—

“ Camels were not required because we had sufficient in this State at that time. The introduction of camels from India might involve this State in considerable trouble, such as we had in the past, namely, an outbreak of bubonic plague.”

I went on to say :—

“ We knew Asiatic countries were overrun with plague, and there was more danger of introducing it from a country like that than from other places. When we introduced camels into the country they brought a certain amount of baggage, outfit, etc., and perhaps the plague germs were amongst it. And they brought provender to the country which brought the rats along. We had everything to do with fodder, with the quarantining of camels, with the examination of them when they landed, and

with not allowing them to come into the country until they were thoroughly clean. The question whether the Federal Government had to do with the examination of camels brought into the country was another matter altogether. Permission to introduce camels from abroad should not have been granted.”

I pointed that out strongly and the Premier in reply stated that there was a necessity for camels in the far North. This is what the Premier said :—

“ We went into the matter thoroughly, and he thought that if the hon. member perused the file he would be satisfied that every precaution was taken as regarded inspection before the camels left India, and provision was made that they should only be exported from clean ports.”

He farther said they would have to be quarantined, etcetera, but the Premier has not carried out that promise because Kurrachi has not been a clean port for a number of years, in fact it was the outbreak of bubonic plague in Kurrachi in 1900 which prevented the introduction of camels from that port at that time. When I knew of the introduction of camels into Western Australia under certain conditions. I at once saw that the person who had secured this advantage would make a profit of about £10,000. I think there should be some strict inquiry into the matter, and why permission was given to bring these camels in. Members who were in the House at the time I am going to speak of will know that when Mr. Moran sat in the Assembly and was in charge of one of the departments, he was offered a bribe of £1,000 to allow of the introduction of camels into Western Australia. At that time, or soon afterwards, permission was granted. It is all very fine for us to deal with a question like this from certain points of view, but we must deal with the question for the good of the country and not for the benefit of the individual. Grave error must have been committed by some member of the Government or by the Stock Department, and those responsible for the introduction of those camels into Western Aus-

tralia have a lot to answer for. So far as the reports in the Press are concerned it would seem that the camels have introduced into Western Australia a disease that may cost this country a considerable sum of money before it is wiped out. In the year 1900, Mr. Moran was in a certain position, and a gentleman offered him £1,000 to grant the permission which has now been granted by the present Government.

The Treasurer : Were not the camels landed on that occasion ?

Mr. HOLMAN : No, they were not.

The Treasurer : You will find that permission was given and then cancelled.

Mr. HOLMAN : No permit was given owing to the action taken by myself. I obtained some letters from Kurrachi sent to a person on the Murchison, and I sent these letters to Perth, and action was taken that prevented the camels leaving Kurrachi. Afterwards I sat on the select committee which inquired into the matter and we proved, in my opinion, that there was no written permission.

Mr. Gordon : The hon. member has stated—and I sat on that same committee—that it was proved to his own idea that a certain thing took place. If the hon. member wishes to quote the report of that select committee he must quote the decision as a whole.

Mr. HOLMAN : I am going to quote the opinions of the majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly at that time. We decided that Faiz Mahomed had no claims on the Government, and the majority of the members far and above the select committee decided that. Here the question which was fought to the very end ; an effort was made to secure some compensation for Mahomed but the Assembly refused. I have been informed since that some compensation was granted by the Government.

Mr. Gordon : I sat on that committee, and so far as I know, no Government during my experience gave compensation. The Government of the day and the Parliament of the day endorsed the recommendations of the select committee.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member is justified in quoting speeches made previously to this session. Although the

motion confines itself to camel tick and other diseases in the Pilbarra district, it is within the scope of the hon. member to refer to what has happened in the past in regard to tick cattle and what action was taken by the Administration.

Mr. Johnson : Is there no limit to the continued interruption of members ? The member for Canning has interrupted, I believe, twenty times to-day.

Mr. SPEAKER : I am sorry to say there is no fixed limit. I may also remark that the hon. member has himself very often interrupted.

Mr. HOLMAN : The interruptions of the hon. member do not affect me in the slightest. May I say, for the information of the hon. member, that a division was taken on the occasion I refer to. I was a member of the select committee which fought this question out. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher), who was also a member of the committee, was of the same opinion as myself. We brought the matter into the House and fought it out, and the result of the division was that our side of the question was carried by a majority of 10.

Mr. Gordon : A division on what—that there should be a select committee ?

Mr. HOLMAN : The division was on the question that the report of the select committee be adopted. It was decided by a majority of 10 votes in the House that the report should not be adopted, and the member for Carnarvon and I worked against the report of the select committee of which we were members. I am dealing with this old question, because had the camels been admitted, the result would have been exactly the same to this State as the entrance of the present batch of camels has been. In view of the past experience in the State, it was utter madness for any person or for any Government to think for one moment that it would be wise to allow these camels to be imported. The only person who would benefit by the introduction of the camels was the man who brought them here and he would have made a profit of about £10,000. In order to try and get a similar advantage to this in 1900 a gentleman made a

straight-out offer of a bribe to Mr. Moran of £1,000 for permission to land camels here.

The Treasurer: He did not make a straight-out bribe.

Mr. HOLMAN: I will read you his words to show that he did.

Mr. Gordon: Have the jacket with all the papers laid on the table.

Mr. HOLMAN:: In speaking in this House in 1902, Mr. Moran, referring to the question of this bribe, said:—

“One farther application for a permit was made by Mr. Sebastian de la George, a goldfields doctor. That gentleman applied for a permit, but was refused it. Then Mr. de la George came to see him personally, and said that the importation of camels was a matter of urgency to himself, and that he was prepared to contribute a thousand pounds to the revenue in return for a permit. The reply was that the revenue was not in absolute need of a contribution of one thousand pounds, and that the permit must be refused. Mr. de la George, however, returned to the charge, backed up by a public man. [*Mr. Monger:* Names should not be mentioned.] The hon. member had no reason to be afraid. The public man in question had no knowledge of Mr. de la George's underground engineering, and thought himself to be simply doing his duty as a public man. Mr. de la George thereupon came again to see him (Mr. Moran) privately, and said that so urgent and pressing was his need to import some camels that he was prepared to contribute the sum of one thousand pounds to any charity, at the same time mentioning the name of a Roman Catholic charity. Thereupon Mr. Clifton and Mr. Morton Craig were informed by him (Mr. Moran) of Mr. de la George's proposal, and were notified that he (Mr. Moran) would have nothing more to do with that gentleman. On the next Saturday night, happening to walk with the then Colonial Secretary (Mr. Kingsmill) and Mr. Hubble in Hay Street, he was called aside by Mr. de la George, who popped

up again. Then it came pretty straight, Mr. de la George saying that he was not particularly desirous of contributing one thousand pounds to a charity, but would give the amount to anything he (Mr. Moran) might like to nominate. The reply was, ‘Mr. de la George, I will thank you not to speak to me in the street any more.’ He (Mr. Moran) thereupon called Mr. Kingsmill up and said, ‘You see that gentleman there. Goodness knows what may happen in the future, and I ask you as a friend, though you are a political opponent, and I also ask Mr. Hubble, to note that that gentleman has offered me a bribe of one thousand pounds.’”

We secured sufficient information from Faiz Mahomet's bookkeeper to prove that Faiz Mahomet would have made a profit of £17,000 if he had been given permission to introduce 500 camels to Western Australia. In my opinion the question at the present time has not been properly dealt with. The camels were not required, and what I should like to see is a thorough inquiry into the whole question in order to find out who the syndicate were who were backing up Abraham Mahomet and who were assisting him to bring the camels here. At the time Abraham Mahomet was away securing these camels, I received a letter from his wife, who is a white woman with two or three children, and she said that she was absolutely starving and required assistance to keep her going. It is nothing more nor less than a grave scandal that a man like he should be permitted to introduce the dreaded scourge which is now alleged to have been brought into Western Australia, and the whole question needs clearing up. If the Government are to blame, they should be called upon to resign at once. If the Stock Department are to blame the officials comprising that Department should be wiped out of existence, so far as the Government of Western Australia are concerned. Every possible step should be taken to see that the disease alleged to have been introduced is not allowed to spread. If it does spread, it will possibly result in many of the stock

owners of the State being ruined. Some members may think there is nothing in it, but I have always had a dread of the introduction of disease into Australia, and into Western Australia in particular, by allowing such free intercourse with Asiatic countries. I would even go farther than prohibiting camels and stock from being introduced, for I would prevent any people from coming into Western Australia. The action of the magistrate, if the allegation made by the member from Pilbarra is true, in witnessing the agreements made by these men is so serious a one that he should be removed from his position at once, so that he might not make any more such grave and serious mistakes. Not having a direct knowledge, and being unable to speak with absolute faith myself, I feel that I should hesitate before making an attack on anyone, therefore I will say no more just now; but I would like to see a searching inquiry made into the whole question, in order to find out who is to blame for the introduction of the camels. If we can find that out, it will clear up a great deal of trouble. I can say this, for I have letters in my possession proving it, that at the time the camels were introduced here there was no necessity to bring any into the country. There were hundred of camels that could be sent to the North-West, and one man has told me that he had 300 camels he could have despatched there had there been work for them to do. When we know that these camels could not have been landed into Western Australia under eight or nine months after the date when permission was given, it is hard to understand what benefit their introduction could have been. If the people were in need of carrying facilities in the North-West, they would not have sent to India to get camels, for plenty could have been obtained either in South Australia or from this State, and it would not have been a difficult matter in any event to have sent horse teams up there in order to meet the requirements of any new goldfields that might have broken out. These teams would easily have been able to cope with the traffic for a few months, and there was therefore no necessity for

sending all the way to India for camels, and waiting for them for a period of some nine months. With regard to the suggestion that camels might have been brought from South Australia, we know what a strong position the South Australian Government took up because our stock regulations were a little more lax than theirs were. They fought us on this question, and we all remember the fight that the Premier had to put up with the South Australian authorities with regard to the relaxation of the stock regulations. There have been hundreds of camels brought here and bred here which have since travelled from Western Australia to South Australia, and in all probability, had we allowed camels to be brought from that State we would only have been getting some of our own back again. Our camels were comparatively clean, and we are now breeding in this State almost as many as we have work for. When the railway is constructed to Norseman some 400 camels will be released from work and the extension of the railways in other directions will also place more camels at the disposal of those desiring to obtain them for carrying purposes. We should have taken much more care in considering the question before giving permission for the introduction of fresh camels from Asiatic countries to Western Australia. The Government have made a great mistake for which they should bear the responsibility, and they should not endeavour to throw that responsibility on the Stock Department.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) : It is somewhat difficult to understand where the urgency of this business comes in or why the hon. member could not have taken the usual course and tabled a motion. I do not know why he moved the adjournment of the House on a matter which has, according to his own showing, received his personal attention for the last two or three months. He can do no possible good by so moving as every precaution has been taken. Members may realise at once that if this motion is carried the Government will have seriously to consider their position,

and in such circumstances it would have been much better if the hon. member or the Leader of the Opposition had tabled a motion outright, so that all the members, including the members of the Cabinet, could have made themselves conversant with every aspect of the case. [Mr. Johnson: You would have put the notice of motion at the end of the Notice Paper.] Nothing of the sort; every opportunity would have been given for the full and early discussion of the motion. It is gratifying to think that the hon. member for Murchison does not care much about the question of tick. He says that camel tick has been in the State for 12 or 14 years.

Mr. Holman: I ask the Treasurer to withdraw that. I said that I had been informed that it had been here for the past 14 years. I was not speaking from my own knowledge, and I said I did not know if tick were such a dread scourge as some members seemed to think.

The TREASURER: I accept the hon. member's interpretation of what he said. Now he tells us he was informed that camel tick has existed for years, and he says farther that he did not care much about tick and did not take much notice of it; it was other diseases that he dreaded. [Mr. Holman: I said I did not understand ticks.] The gravamen of the charge is, according to this resolution, that we have admitted camels infested with ticks. [Mr. Bath: And flies.] There is no mention of flies. The motion refers to camel tick and other diseases. [Mr. Taylor: The fly is one of them.] I would point out that although ticks are evidently on the camels to some extent, up to the present no other diseases have been proved. Surely hon. members will bear me out in this, that we must not become alarmed before we have any occasion to, so long as we take every precaution. I admit that if this dread disease is introduced into our State it is a thing that requires most careful consideration and combating. This Government does not think it desirable even to have the camel tick, although all the evidence goes to prove that the camel tick are not the ordinary tick and do not hurt or injure cattle or horses.

That at least is the evidence I have gathered from the papers on the official files, which I have inspected during the dinner hour. [Member: What about the bullock teams?] I have already explained that the medical evidence goes to show that camel ticks do not injure cattle. We have had a lecture from the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) as to what took place some seven years ago in this House with regard to the question of the importation of camels. If I remember aright the danger feared at that time, the dread we all had, was bubonic plague. We were afraid of bubonic plague, which had been rampant in our State—at least it had been prevalent here to a considerable extent—and as these camels were coming from a plague-infested district it was feared that there was considerable danger.

Mr. Holman: It is the same place as these camels came from.

The TREASURER: But at the time these camels were shipped there was no plague there, and so far as we know that place was absolutely free from any other disease that we need fear. The hon. member says it was madness, in view of what took place some seven years ago, to permit any camels to come into Western Australia; and he went on to term them "disease-stricken camels." I would point out again that there is no proof that these camels are disease-stricken, no proof whatever. To-day we prevent the importation of certain fruit which a few years ago we allowed to come in because we thought it was then clean. Is it any reason, because camels were not permitted to be introduced seven years ago, that they are not to be permitted to enter this State now if they are required? I want to point out the inconsistency of the argument that because there was a bubonic plague-stricken district from which camels were prohibited from entering this State seven years ago we are to prohibit them for all time.

Mr. Johnson: Get on with the question.

Mr. Taylor: That is a very weak argument.

The TREASURER : I am trying to put my view before the House, and I venture to think that when I have done the House will agree with me and totally disagree with the hon. member. Before I go farther, let me say that hon. members can make their minds easy with regard to attacking the Minister for Agriculture (Hon. J. Mitchell). There is no man who has the interests of the State more at heart than he. [*Mr. Taylor* : We are tired of that ; we have heard it all before.] I do not care if the hon. member is tired of it, he has got to hear it once more, and will have to remain tired. Hon. members should know that when they attack the Government they must direct their attack against the Government as a whole. The Government stand or fall together on this as on any other matter, and it is not a bit of use members opposite trying to single out any particular Minister and blaming him as apart from his colleagues.

Member : Was that the attitude on the Education question ?

The TREASURER : On every question the Cabinet is a united family, I can assure members. We have no differences, and that is why we always back each other up in our doings, whether right or wrong according to the intelligence of members opposite.

Mr. Bath : If you are willing to take the blame for the others, well and good.

The TREASURER : I am always quite willing to do so. I wish now just to draw attention to the position as it appears to me, and as it appeared to the Government at the time. It must be at least 18 months since this question first cropped up. Representations were made at that time that the price of camels in Western Australia was excessive, and representations were also made through the department that there was a necessity for camels. [*Mr. Johnson* : Made by whom ?] The hon. member can answer that question for himself ; he will have plenty of time to speak when I have done. Let me put my case. Representations were made at that time that there was a shortage of camels, especially in the North-West. The matter was discussed department-

ally on several occasions ; and the fact that the Works Department when I was in charge some six months before had had great difficulty indeed in getting camels required in connection with the rabbit-proof fence went to prove, to my mind, that these representations were correct. Applications were made for permission to introduce camels into Western Australia. It was stated that camels were required for carting tin from the tinfields in the North to Port Hedland and for carrying out other work of that description on the North-West goldfields. Bearing in mind the representations brought under our notice, we came to the conclusion that no harm could be done by permitting clean camels, under proper restrictions, being imported into our State. On the other hand we came to the conclusion—which I submit was a legitimate conclusion—that we would be advancing the interests of the State and advancing the interests of those people in the North, especially the miners and workers on the North-West goldfields if we permitted some camels to come in. We absolutely at that time refused to have anything to do with the question of attendants, Asiatics. We pointed out that was a matter entirely in the hands of the Federal Government, and that any application regarding Asiatic attendants would have to be made direct to the Federal authorities, who refused, if I remember aright, the request to introduce Asiatics into Western Australia. On that ground, in the first instance, a refusal was also given by the Government—I believe it was the Rason Government—to the request for the importation of these camels. Subsequently it was stated that the people who wished to import the camels were prepared to find all the necessary labour locally ; and on that understanding only—and that the importation of the camels should be under proper supervision, should come from a clean district and be subject to proper regulations as to quarantine—were they permitted then to bring the camels in. We have been twitted by the member for Murchison that we took

some exceptional course, which would bring some exceptional profit to some exceptional person; that we did this in the interests of some individual. [*Member* : Who said that ?] The member for Murchison by interjection.

Mr. Holman : I said that the Government in giving permission to bring in the camels had given someone a chance of making a profit of between £5,000 and £10,000.

The TREASURER : The hon. member interjected I think that the object of the Government was to give some special condition to someone. I am glad, however, that he now withdraws that.

Mr. Holman : I withdraw nothing I have said.

The TREASURER : I desire to point out that the Government took special precautions to prevent anything of the sort occurring. So suspicious were we of these men getting an advantage of this sort—that is, the first applicants—that we said, “No; if it is right that camels should come into the North-West country for the benefit of the country, we will throw it open to all comers.” We passed a resolution, I think it was on the 20th June, through Executive Council, altering the regulations, and stating that the new regulations as thereby altered would come into force on the 1st October following.

Mr. Bath : And then had no one there to enforce the regulations.

The TREASURER : It was time enough to send someone when the camels were coming.

Mr. Holman : And all this time those men in the North were waiting to have their food supplies sent on to those tinfields.

The TREASURER : The hon. member insinuated that the Government had some ulterior motive, and were trying to give special conditions to some particular person. I am proving that no such thing could possibly have been in the mind of the Government. We gazetted our regulations on the 20th June, and we took care that those regulations should not come into force until the 1st October following, nearly four months

later, in order that the field might be open to anyone who desired to make application; or rather, not to make application, for there was no need, but to import camels, so long as they conformed to the regulations. As a matter of fact, two applications were made prior to the first person, three altogether—I think the Premier read them out to-day—were received. The last two applicants were replied to, pointing out that no special permits were necessary, that when the regulations came into force on the 1st October the North-West part of the country, so far as Port Hedland and Onslow were concerned, were free to the importation of camels under certain regulations and restrictions. Could anyone take a more straightforward course? [*Mr. Underwood* : Not to introduce tick.] The hon. member has got tick on the brain. He evidently does not agree with the member for Murchison who says he does not attach much importance to the tick question.

Mr. Holman : I ask that the Treasurer withdraw that remark. I did not say anything of the kind. I said I did not know the danger of tick and was not going to speak on a question which I did not know much of.

The TREASURER : You said you did not attach much importance to it.

Mr. Holman : I said I did not know anything about it.

The TREASURER : Exactly. I wish the hon. member would take the same view with regard to many questions on which he speaks. I wish to point out that his complaint that he had no opportunity of drawing attention to this matter is also incorrect. He said this was done during recess. We brought in our regulations on the 20th June, and the House met on the 21st June; the hon. member had any amount of opportunity. If he was so wise, and knew this was going to bring disaster on Western Australia, he had ample opportunity during the six months the House was in session to draw the attention of the House to the matter.

Mr. Holman : I did draw attention to it.

The TREASURER: You did, in November, I know.

Mr. Bath: Before November.

The TREASURER: In November he asked for certain information, and he got replies containing the information, just the same as I am putting before the House to-night.

Mr. Taylor: The motion was on the Notice-paper for a month or six weeks before you allowed us to reach it.

The TREASURER: If the motion remained on the paper for six weeks without being reached, that was due to the pressure of the business of the House. The hon. member knows full well that members kept on talking to such an extent that we had to sit all night on two nights running to get through the business.

Mr. Holman: I did not know all the Cabinet secrets; did not know that you had arranged to bring them in or to allow them to be brought in.

The TREASURER: So far as the Government are concerned, their action was perfectly above-board. It was done in broad daylight, and members had ample opportunity to take any steps they thought necessary. We accept the responsibility of the action we took, rightly or wrongly, in the interests, as we thought, of those who populate the North-West districts; in their interests we permitted these camels to come in. Let me say again that I cannot understand why the member for the district himself, if he thought there was so much danger, did not take some action as soon as the House met. Why did he not move the adjournment of the House weeks ago? The hon. member—and I commend him for it—took the trouble of going to Port Hedland, and he tells us—

Mr. Underwood: I said nothing of the sort.

The TREASURER: I wish to goodness members would learn to express their views in decent English, so that we can understand it. The hon. member said, in speaking, that he went up to Port Hedland after getting a certain telegram.

Mr. Underwood: I made no such statement. I said I went to Port Hedland

after that; but I did not say I went on that business at all.

[Several interjections.]

The TREASURER: I would like to make a few observations, when these gentlemen have finished interjecting.

Mr. Underwood: You interjected when I was speaking.

The TREASURER: No.

Mr. Underwood: Well, the Premier did.

The TREASURER: I seldom interject. The hon. member admits that after reading a telegram about these cattle, he went to Port Hedland. I accept his explanation that he did not go on account of these camels.

Mr. Taylor: You know full well that he did not.

The TREASURER: No.

Mr. Taylor: How did you know anything when you were in Japan? If you had stayed here and done the work you are paid for, it would have been better.

The TREASURER: Mr. Speaker, am I to be allowed to make my few remarks?

As to Interruptions.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope I shall not have to rise again in regard to this question of interruptions. I had to do so before the tea adjournment. It must be apparent to hon. members that where there is cause for interruption by one person there can be no objection; but where two, or three, or four interject it must be unfair to the speaker. No one realises more than the member addressing the House the difficulty of listening to several interjections made at the same time. I listen attentively to speakers, but at times I cannot understand what the sentences are on account of the number of interjections; and I wonder how at times *Hansard* can do the work that is required of them.

Debate.

The TREASURER: As I was remarking, the member for Pilbarra went to Port Hedland; he happened to arrive there at the time when these cattle were either being landed or had just been landed. He looked into the question. I presume he satisfied himself

that there was something wrong, or something dangerous, and he came back again to meet this House; but in glancing through the papers I cannot see any brilliant suggestion from the hon. member as to what course the Government should take in the peculiar circumstances. It was stated that we were doing something, or had done something which was dangerous to the herds of the North-West, that was likely to spread a dangerous disease throughout the North-West country, though we had taken every precaution so far as our knowledge went by way of quarantining these camels, yet the hon. member waits for nearly three weeks before he moves the adjournment of the House to call the attention of the House to this subject. And what is the good of calling the attention of the House to this subject? What is the good at the present juncture? Everything that could possibly be done has been done. We have it by interjection from the member for Guildford: Why should the resident medical officer instruct the police officers to clean up the jetty if there were no tick about? The hon. member advances as an argument that the doctor's statement that he did not see any tick was false, no doubt; but I wish to point out that it is customary to clear up your jetty after you have handled stock, whether there be tick or not; and even if the doctor did clear up the place he would be justified in doing it on the off-chance of discovering tick. [Interjection by *Mr. Underwood*.] If the hon. member had some sickness in his house would he not clean the house afterwards? I have mentioned before that in one of the reports it says that there were a few ticks. That is in one of the telegrams the Premier read. What is the good of arguing that these cattle were diseased? I say there has been no proof of the presence of this dread disease "surra."

Mr. Bath: Did you read Mr. Edgar's remarks in the Press?

The TREASURER: No.

Mr. Bath: Well you ought to.

The TREASURER: I have no doubt Mr. Edgar is a good authority on all questions of stock, but surely I cannot

rake round the Press for information. I am taking the information from our files, the official information. [*Mr. Underwood*: A most unreliable source.] The hon. member may think so, and and he is welcome to his opinion; but as long as we have these responsible officers, as hon. members know who have filled these positions before us, we must take their reports, and if they are found to be wrong—[*Member*: Censure them]—yes, censure them if they are found to be wrong, but we must deal with them; and if the Government are found to be incapable of dealing with men who require dealing with, hon. members should deal with the Government and not attack any individual Minister. With regard to this disease which may or may not be up there, let me point out that although there is some indication that there may be this disease among the camels, or one or two of them, the fact remains that from the information we have from South Australia they have never, with all the camels imported into that State, troubled to examine the blood of those camels for these micro-organisms as they are called; so there may be a disease of this sort among those camels. The member for Mt. Margaret shakes his head; I presume he believes that if the disease was there it would have shown itself before this.

Mr. Taylor: It would have shown itself within twenty years.

The TREASURER: Then I am of opinion that if the disease were among these camels at Pilbarra, it would have shown itself in four months.

Mr. Taylor: They are in a different climate from that of South Australia. The North is the home of that kind of disease.

The TREASURER: All the more reason why it should have made its appearance among these camels. As far as the Afghans are concerned, I understand—I may be wrong—that the Government were accused of being a party to these Afghans being there.

Mr. Underwood: Who made that accusation?

The TREASURER: Let the hon. member ask his colleague in front of him,

and he will find out. These Afghans were landed under permission from the Federal Government. The term was extended owing to certain legal action taken against the owners of the camels with regard to wages, and at the present time these Afghans are in that district by permission of the Federal Government and not by permission of the State Government. We have no control over it : and as soon as the permit ends, I presume these Afghans will be escorted on board a steamer and sent back whence they came. That is the position as far as they are concerned. I want to make this point, that so far we have no information as to any spread of tick from these camels. On the contrary we have a pretty full intimation from those who ought to know something about it that this camel tick does not infest cattle. That may be so or it may not, but up to the present it is our official information also that there is nothing to fear from it. We have so far no proof that any other disease has been introduced by these camels. On the contrary we have evidence from the reports of our officers up there that the camels are particularly healthy and free from any disease.

Mr. Collier : Then why are they remaining in quarantine ?

The TREASURER : They remain in quarantine because they have been retained for the costs and expenses which have not been paid. They are being retained until the costs are paid, if the hon. member wants to know. For open country like that every care has been taken to quarantine these animals and keep them away from those that are travelling through this district. Of course it is difficult to quarantine 500 camels, and I say we must have some special ground with proper facilities to do it. [*Mr. Taylor :* Which you have not there.] We have the best available. We have a ground with a permanent water hole ten miles from the main track ; that is where the camels are quarantined. I ask any member could any Government have taken better precautions than these ? True, seven of these camels got adrift at the first, but the report now states that they are all quarantined, and that all

that have strayed have been recovered. Inspector Ranford on the 29th April reported :—

“The camels now in quarantine are improving daily ; only one showing mange ; ticks now all clean. It has been difficult to keep the camels, as all the country is open, and a poor lot of shepherds, which necessitates mustering and counting daily. Camels in hand 493, died 7, four strayed Wodgina, men gone for them. These seven had strayed when I got to them. Three we found a week after, but could not hear or find traces of them until a few days ago. The camels will all be fit to release within a few days of the quarantine time.”

Since then the department has been advised that the camels which strayed have been recovered ; so that so far as we know at present the whole of the camels landed from that steamer are accounted for, with the exception of course of the seven that died ; and is it unreasonable to have seven camels die out of a mob of 500 after a journey from Bombay to our country ? I should think it was not. It seems to me that a little over one per cent. of deaths in a mob of camels like that is not unreasonable. So we must conclude that our officers are correct and honest in their statements that the camels are a particularly healthy lot and in a sound condition. In proof of that let me read a telegram received yesterday by the Department of Agriculture from their inspector :—

“All camels *ex s.s. “Century”* in quarantine. No sign of any disease in stock. I have not seen any flies. There are some bot-flies in the country, but I have not seen them ; only from reports.”

Mr. Scaddan : Perhaps the inspector was goggled.

The TREASURER : I want the House to treat this in a serious way. When we have a serious charge brought against the Government, which the hon. member knows is tantamount to a motion of no-confidence, it is up to hon. members to hear what the Government have to say in reply, and to consider it carefully. I maintain that from the evidence

I have brought forward to-night in the short time I have spoken, every precaution has been taken by the Government in connection with this matter. [Mr. Johnson : I do not think so.] Whether they rightly or wrongly introduced these camels 18 months ago, the Government did it with the best intention, with the intention of assisting those in the North-West who had to pay dearly for the means of transit; and every precaution has been taken to keep the country clear of any disease from the introduction of these camels. [Mr. Johnson : Many mistakes are perpetrated with the best of intentions.] I am not particular whether the hon. member takes any heed of our intention or not. I am simply putting forward the statement that the intention—and surely the intention has something to do with the actions of people—was pure and calculated to assist the North-West, which was badly in need of camels at that time. With regard to the statement of the member for Pilbarra that these camels were spread all over the country, I think hon. members will agree with me that his contention cannot be borne out. Here we have a direct statement that all those camels are now in quarantine, and that they are sound and healthy. Then what becomes of the statement that they are spreading all over the country, and infecting it with disease and with tick? The hon. member (Mr. Underwood) has just returned from that country, and he ought to know better than to make in the House statements which up to the present at any rate have not been proved or substantiated.

Mr. T. WALKER (Kanowna); I do not think the charge which has been brought, not upon assumption but on very substantial evidence, by the member for Pilbarra has been answered by a mere reliance on a telegram received from the stock inspector in the district; nor is it sufficient to say that all danger is at an end, or that no danger has ever existed because the stock is at present in quarantine. There are in this case associations that require farther explanation than that. Decidedly we have had no explanation yet,

excepting that there may have been in the Stock Department some mistake for which one officer has been censured; but there has been no explanation of the laxity of the Government in making preparation, with full knowledge beforehand of the arrival of those camels. That it is possible for an officer so to neglect his duty as to permit such a dangerous inroad on the regulations and on the safety and health of the State, is a revelation. It is still more surprising than an officer making such an egregious blunder, or guilty of such negligence, should be able to escape with a mere censure. It is still more astonishing, surely, that an officer who can defy the responsible Minister can escape being dealt with by that Minister, and must be the subject of inquiry, of independent investigation. That is to say, the Premier has to report the officer to Commissioner Jull; Mr. Jull has to hold an inquiry; after the inquiry there is a censure, and there is the end of the matter. I want to know how this State is to be protected from any dangerous inroads, from importations of this kind, if that is our only method of dealing with an officer so neglectful of his duty and the welfare of this State.

The Premier : The procedure was that laid down in the public Service Act.

Mr. WALKER : I do not care. Surely the Ministry will not screen themselves behind the Public Service Act in a case of this kind. Are we to allow red-tapeism to stand in the way of protecting stock-owners? If so, what is the use of our trying to run the country? Why not hand it over at once to the Afghans, and allow them to do as they like? For this is what appears to have been done by that wonderful character Ibrahim Mahomet, who was able to leave this country, go to Kurraichi, offer to bring camels, say he has a contract with the Western Australian Government, obtain money on that score at Kurraichi to buy camels, and to bring them here, perfectly confident of their safe arrival, to arrive with them safely, leave them

here, come to Perth, and quietly proceed about his business. Moreover, he brings with him men under contract. I know the State Government cannot take action as to contracts made abroad, that being a matter for the Federal Government; but the fact shows the extraordinary character of these Afghans, and shows their wonderful intimacy with the possibilities of Western Australia, shows what they can do and how far they can go. Surely no person could undertake the immense responsibility of bringing 500 camels to this country without knowing it was perfectly safe to do so, and that those camels would be landed as they were landed, despite the Stock Department officers; for it is clear that, owing to facilities granted by the department, or officers or agents of the department, or at all events owing to the winking by those persons at the transaction, the landing of the camels was permitted. But the Treasurer, who has just spoken, tells us practically that we may rest assured there is no danger, the stock is perfectly clean; there is only one animal that is afflicted with the mange; and when asked by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath) if he had read the newspaper reports on this matter, the Treasurer frankly confessed he had not—a matter of such importance to this country he had not noticed. Only in yesterday's issue of the *Perth Morning Herald* is a very long account of an interview with Mr. Edgar. I do not think we shall dispute Mr. Edgar's power of judgment. After describing the danger that may arise from tick, and the alarm existing among the pastoralists, the article proceeds:—

"Mr. A. W. Edgar, the well-known pastoralist of the DeGrey and Gingin, returned from the locality of Port Hedland a few days ago, where the 500 camels which are responsible for the whole of the trouble are in quarantine. Mr. Edgar is a member of the firm of Grant, Edgar & Co., owners of the DeGrey station; and as this property is quite adjacent to the quarantine area, his disquietude may be readily understood. In conversation

with one of our representatives yesterday Mr. Edgar stated that he had brought to Perth one of the troublesome flies, particulars of which were telegraphed to the *Morning Herald* by its Port Hedland correspondent last week. 'The fly is quite new to the North-West,' Mr. Edgar assured our representative, 'and it has been identified as belonging to the family of the tsetse fly, the curse of South Africa. I took it to Mr. Despeissis, Under Secretary for Agriculture, and the experts of the department had no difficulty in classifying it. This means that the fly is a source of the gravest danger, and if it gets among our herds devastation must follow.' Asked where the fly was found, Mr. Edgar replied that it was taken from a horse, and the man who discovered it, without being able positively to identify it, recognised it instantly as belonging to the species that transmits disease such as surra from beast to beast."

There is more of a similar character, but I wish to draw the Treasurer's attention to the fact that here we have this fly brought to the Agricultural Department, submitted to our principal expert, and he identifies it as that dangerpest of South Africa, and apparently Ministers to-night know nothing of the matter. Here we have their own Agricultural Department investigating this very subject, and we are told on the strength of telegrams from Port Hedland that there is nothing to fear. If it should turn out that this fly has been brought to the country by these camels, a danger the limits of which it is impossible to describe has been introduced; a danger we cannot possibly estimate; and through what? Through the carelessness of the Government. It is right enough now to lay the blame on the shoulders of their officer, his neglect, his forgetfulness, and to let him off with a slight censure. But is there no censure for the responsible Ministers who can allow this state of affairs to continue, or can allow officers of that kind in their departments at all? There is more than has been explained to-night

in the circumstances of the introduction of these camels. There is need at the present moment for the utmost activity, care and promptitude on the part of the Government; and the House are surely not yet satisfied with the explanations we have received. I am waiting anxiously to hear the Honorary Minister in charge of the Department of Agriculture explain how it is that they have one set of telegrams from Port Hedland, backed up by the personal knowledge of a man now in Perth, proving the existence in our State of the dangerous fly alleged to have been brought here by the camels introduced from India.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. Mitchell) : Many charges have been laid by my friends opposite, and I wish to say I am perfectly willing to take the full responsibility for all that is entrusted to my care ; but I do not think I should be expected to stand condemned simply because I am charged as I have been to-night. As we have been told through our inspector here, through the officer to whom we are to look, the camels are clean, they are a very healthy lot, the most healthy he has seen landed in this State. I wish to make it quite clear to members that if the men who now have charge of the camels on behalf of the owners are not capable of confining the camels to the quarantine area, it is quite within the duty of our inspector, Mr. Ranford, to employ men to perform that work. He is there to see that the camels are confined to the quarantine area, and it is his duty to see that they are kept there. I believe he has done his duty, and his telegrams to us are of the most reassuring character. Now will this country take the word of our inspector, or do we expect the country to depend on statements made without any personal knowledge by the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Underwood) ? He does not tell us that he knows of his own personal knowledge that certain things have happened ; he says he has had telegrams to say they have happened. [*Mr. Bath* : That is all you have.] Our telegrams are from responsible officers of the department ; from the men to whom we should look for information if the camels

were within half a-mile of the Perth office. I should like to point out that camels were landed here about twelve years ago, I think, and they were sent to Coolgardie. They were heavily tick-infested, and the tick dropped off along the road ; but no serious harm resulted. It is of course a fact that tick have been on camels in this State, and have done absolutely no harm. Members can, I think, rest assured that no harm will come to cattle from the presence of camel ticks in this State ; for if tick do temporarily attach themselves to camels, they do not stay there, they do not work any harm at all. That is the advice of our departmental officers ; and when we remember that 12 years ago tick were introduced on camels much as they come in now, and that they did no harm, perhaps members will perceive that there is no cause for alarm. Reference has been made to Mr. Edgar, who did bring to Perth a specimen of the fly. I may say the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) is not quite right when he says the fly is identical with the tsetse fly found in Africa. That is not the position, and it has yet to be proved that this fly will be harmful. Mr. Edgar, who was here to-night, assures me that no harm had been done by the fly up to the time he left Port Hedland on the 20th June. It had irritated cattle just as flies in the southern districts do irritate cattle ; but no harm had been done. The introduction if the fly may be a serious matter or it may not. Certainly no member is justified in saying that up to this moment there is serious danger to the stock of the State. It is true the disease surra is transmitted by the fly, but it is also quite true this trypanosome discovered may not be the trypanosome that produces surra. It may be a harmless trypanosome, for we are told that trypanosome is found in plenty of animals, birds and horses, and it may be that this trypanosome found in the camels is a perfectly harmless type. It is possible that camels brought into this country have trypanosome that is harmless, and it may not be the trypanosome of surra at all. I do not want to discount the seriousness of

the position at all, but I think it is right that members should wait until it is proved that we have introduced camels that have brought in the trypanosome that is likely to be a serious danger. The same thing may be said in regard to the fly. We have brought camels from Kurrachi before.

Hon. F. H. Piesse : I would like to know whether there is any direct information or proof that this fly has been introduced in connection with the recent importation of camels, or is there any information that it was there previously?

The HONORARY MINISTER : This is the first we have heard of the fly. Possibly it was introduced with the camel. It is not impossible it may have been here before and only now discovered. Of course I say right here it is more than likely that the fly came in with the camels, but that does not mean that it is a dangerous fly at all. Dr. Cleland has been sent up to satisfy himself that it is trypanosome of a dangerous type. We have sent him up there to protect the people of the district, and if these camels are diseased they will of course, under the regulations, have to be dealt with; either sent back or destroyed forthwith.

Mr. Holman : This is a well known disease in other countries.

The HONORARY MINISTER : What?

Mr. Holman : Trypanosome.

The HONORARY MINISTER : Trypanosome produces fever that is known as surra. Members ought to know from what I have said that there are many varieties of trypanosome, and it may be that the variety discovered on the camels is harmless, but it may be the trypanosome that produces surra. The steps that are possible to us are being taken to see if there is any danger, and if the danger does exist we shall take all steps to protect the people of the State from the disease. Unfortunately the inspector was not at Port Hedland when the camels arrived. Had Inspector Ranford been there he would not have regarded the tick as of any serious moment, but he would have considered that quarantining was all that was necessary to get rid of the disease, and he would not have taken

the action about the camels that was taken by Dr. Burton, who did it at the suggestion of the Premier, and it is fortunate that cultures were taken and sent down here. I do not wish to disguise the fact that the inspector should have been there to receive these cattle. He was not there; and as a result we have heard something for the first time in the State of trypanosomes. It has been said by the member for Pilbarra that he received scant courtesy at the hands of the Under Secretary for Agriculture. I do not understand how that can be so, because the Under Secretary is a most courteous man and attends to the requests made by members of the House and the public generally in a proper manner, and I am certain that some mistake has been made in regard to this matter. It may be that the member for Pilbarra rang the office up after the arrival of the inspector on the scene, and in that case the member could understand the request being made to wait for a couple of days.

Mr. Underwood : On the 22nd March when the camels were landed.

The HONORARY MINISTER : I do not know what happened as to the telephone message; this is the first I have heard of it. It is the duty of the stock inspector to visit various portions of the State. He is more useful in the field than in the office, and he ought to be in the field doing his duty; and if he is doing his duty in that regard he cannot be in the office each day. I can assure the member that the Under Secretary had no intention of treating him otherwise than courteously, and I am quite sure that when I speak to him about it to-morrow he will explain that that is the case.

Mr. Underwood : I do not accuse him of lack of courtesy, but lack of interest.

The HONORARY MINISTER : Certain reference has been made to South Australian camels being a different type of camel to those at Port Hedland. If the type at Port Hedland is suitable to the development of this disease, we ought to have known something of it sooner than this, for the camels have been here three months. There are camels in the north of South Australia which are prob-

ably as favourable to the disease as those at Port Hedland, so that there is nothing in the argument that if the disease had been introduced into South Australia it should be harmless, while that introduced into the northern part of this State is of serious consequence. Whilst I have been attacked for neglecting what members believe to be my duty, I give place to no man in my desire to act in the interests of the people of the State and especially the producers. Surely I have shown that I am interested in this work, and if a mistake has been made in this case it does not follow that it is because of want of interest on my part, it does not follow that it is because of want of ability. I do not claim to be a veterinary surgeon, and if members recognised the seriousness of the position, and knew much of the disease months ago, why did not members opposite warn me? But I did not hear from one of them; it follows that I could not because it was not known that the disease was likely to be brought from India.

Mr. C. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) : The motion before the House has been spoken of by the Treasurer as being without foundation, there is no necessity for it.

The Treasurer : I did not say a word about foundation.

Mr. TAYLOR : The Treasurer said there was no justification for this motion being moved.

The Treasurer : The adjournment of the House.

Mr. TAYLOR : The motion is for the adjournment of the House on a question of urgency, and the Treasurer pointed out there were no grounds for urgency. I want to commend the member for Pilbarra for moving this motion not alone in the interests of his electors, but in the interests of Western Australia generally. The stock raisers of Western Australia owe the hon. member a debt of gratitude. The stock raisers of this country should recognise that, especially those located north of the 25th parallel. What was in the mind of the Government when the Government said in the Executive Council order that these camels should be allowed

to land at Port Hedland, and not south of the 25th parallel of latitude? There must have been something resting in the minds of the Government as to danger, and what is the conclusion to be drawn? It is that there was a danger and the Government said, "We will not allow this danger to extend south; but we do not care how far north; we have no care for the people north of that parallel, but we have care for them south of it." That is the natural inference. I am not accusing the Honorary Minister who controls the Agricultural Department with having much knowledge about this Executive Council order. I do not say he knew anything about its passage, but I say it is up to him to know how it was to be administered as he controls the Agricultural Department. I do not say the Honorary Minister knew anything about the passage of this order. Perhaps the Premier might contradict that statement; perhaps the Treasurer will contradict it; perhaps the Minister for Works will not contradict it. I have too much proof. We know who was present when the Executive Council order was made.

The Honorary Minister : I signed the order.

Mr. TAYLOR : The Minister for Works was there. I know full well how these things pass through Executive Council. I want to know why, when this order passed through Executive Council, no precautions were taken by the Government or the heads of the department to make provision for the landing of these cattle. It has been pointed out beyond doubt by the member for Pilbarra that before the camels landed there was only one track to get them out of Port Hedland. I have never been to Port Hedland, but I think the House will believe the member for Pilbarra, who has lived in that country for eight or ten years; when he tells the House that there is only one track out of Port Hedland for about seven miles from the end of the causeway. It is fair to assume therefore that the seven miles from Port Hedland was affected with any disease these

camels may have had, whether it was tick, fly, or mange, or any disease prevalent in the country the camels came from, and that was not prevalent in the North-West. I sympathise with the people who are north of this parallel where these camels were allowed to land. We have men there with large herds, a large portion of the meat supply of this country comes from that area, and I think in justice to those people and to the country the Government should immediately quarantine a very large area in that territory to prevent the spread of the tick. The Government say they are taking every precaution. That is a precaution I think they should take in the interests of the State. The only arguments the Government have are telegrams, and telegrams are justifiable, but the member for Pilbarra visited the district, not especially in connection with the landing of these camels, but in the ordinary way of visiting his electorate, and he received information while there which has been amply confirmed by letters and telegrams since, even as late as within the last couple of days. He is also armed with telegraphic evidence equally as strong as that put forward by the Government. What are the telegrams of the Government? Those from Government officers in favour of the action they have taken; and we know that when a person makes a mistake he will try to back it up by some means. We know all about this magistrate who has played a prominent part in this debate, being quoted by the Premier and also largely quoted by the member for Pilbarra. He has not acted in accordance with instructions from the Government. The Premier admitted that the instructions were not carried out. Then I want to know what action the Government are going to take with reference to that officer who refused to carry out their instructions when there was so much at stake. [*The Honorary Minister*: It was not cattle tick.] There are other diseases and complications arising out of this shipment of camels that should not have been al-

lowed to land. We find a stockman, who is, I believe, a native of Western Australia, bringing down from that country a fly which he has never seen in Western Australia before. According to the interview with this man in the *Morning Herald* the fly has been proved by the agricultural experts to be a dangerous fly. [*Mr. H. Brown*: Why do you not give us some statistics?] I am not here armed with statistics from South Africa. I am not here to defend South Africa, I am here to defend this State, and I am not speaking from a party point of view. Take *Hansard* seven years back, since I have been in Parliament I have taken up the same stand as I take up to-night. We know that tick is not so dangerous in any part of Australia that is not a malarial district, we know that the red water which follows the tick has only been proved to exist in malarial country, but when we are dealing with the North-West we are dealing with country more or less malarial. I supported a Government numerically weak in this House when they blocked the landing of the camels on which the discussion of 1902 took place, and we have in the volumes of *Hansard* from an ex-Minister for the Crown where he was offered a bribe of £1,000 to allow stock to land in this country from a tick-infested country. That is in the 1902 volume of *Hansard*, and I supported the Government that blocked those camels from landing. I am now opposing this Government for allowing camels to land, but I would support the Government in preventing the landing of camels. There is no party question about the matter with me; it is a matter which should be dealt with in the House, and the House should give a decision without any party feeling. This motion has been moved by the member for Pilbarra because it affects his district and affects the State. It is not a party question. It is one which the hon. member should be commended for moving, and the House should give a decision on it irrespective of any parties in the House. It has come to a pretty pass if hon. members make a party question of something that

would ruin the herds of this State, if simply because it was made a party question they would allow the herds of the country to be ruined rather than go against their party. Politics have not come to that with me, no matter how much the people may say the Labour party are hedged by chains and shackles. I say the stock question should have fair consideration in this House. The Treasurer put up no defence. [*Mr. Bath*: He pleaded guilty.] I am sure the Premier's halting statement and his reading of wires were anything but a defence of the attitude of the Government; while as for the hon. gentleman who controls the Agricultural Department, I am sure he has not proved anything, except that there was lack of administration in his department; and he has practically asked for the clemency of the House. [*The Honorary Minister*: No; I have not.] The Honorary Minister said, "Why should I be crushed or dealt with severely if I have made a mistake?" The Treasurer said, "If we have done it, it was with the highest motives, and on these grounds you should be lenient." I wonder what the stock raisers of this country would say about leniency when their herds were being destroyed. There must have been some doubt in the minds of Ministers when they stipulated where these camels should land and how far they should travel, but they made no preparations for receiving them, not the slightest; no preparations for receiving 500 camels and 50 Afghans. [*Member*: They had Dr. Burton there.] I am reminded of that gentleman who allowed these people to go behind a Federal Act and make contracts with the Afghans. It has been shown that contracts were made with these Afghans, that they would get three years' employment in Western Australia, these people having full knowledge that the contracts would not hold good, but as soon as they were allowed to land I suppose the usual preparation was made and people went on board and fixed up agreements so that they could land and could work. It has also been argued that they have not received payment, and they will not

leave the State because they have not received payment. In confirmation of this statement the Treasurer has said that the camels are in quarantine to-day because they have not paid their way. They are not tick infested, but they are quarantined because there are fees due to the Government. [*The Treasurer*: That is right—the quarantine charges.] The men who have been shepherding them and who brought them on the boats have not been paid, and we are paying an officer of the State who has helped, aided and abetted in surreptitiously getting these men on shore. If a magistrate has a sheaf of agreements before him showing where men were hoodwinked through not knowing our language and brought to our shores, when he would aid and abet in getting another set of agreements that would bind them hand and foot to people who would not pay or keep them and would not pay their quarantine fees to the Government, I say the Government out of their own mouths stand condemned and that this magistrate deserves no quarter. He deserves being dealt with by the House generally; and I hope there will be something done this session to deal with gentlemen holding these positions. I have been in Parliament seven years and have never in such a short space of time heard so many accusations hurled at our magisterial benches. No matter whether Port Hedland is far removed from Perth or not, the people there should receive justice, and I want to know why the necessity for this concession being granted to these people, why the carrying capacity of the teams and camels in the North-West was not equal to the requirements of the district, and why that has all happened within the last few months. We find that though this concession was made in June, 13 months ago, these camels have not carried an ounce of loading of any description since they have landed, nor has the congested condition of the loading in that district been altered by this regulation. Why, the argument that the order had to be made in the interests of the traders in the North-West, that the rates were going up, and there was not sufficient

stock to carry the goods into the interior is all fudge; because there is nothing in the argument, else it would hold good to-day. But we do not find to-day any difficulty arising there from the want of carriers, no difficulty at all. All we find is the carriers in that country wiring to their member and cabling to him when the lines were broken, urging him to bestir himself in Parliament to see that they got justice and to see that their herds were devastated by the menace of this consignment of camels. That is what they are doing. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, there was ample opportunity to supply the traders of the North-West with camels from South Australia. If there were an urgent need of camels they could have been supplied from South Australia. We know full well that about eight or nine years ago, after the railway reached Menzies, camels were at a discount and one could buy a camel for £12 or £14 for which four years before one would have to pay £60. What did the camel proprietors do? They sent their camels back to South Australia where there was work for them to do, and they would send them back here if they were required. I think the argument of the Treasurer about helping the North-West people is simply without foundation, and I am quite sure the North-West people will not ask for any more of that kind of sympathy. [*The Treasurer*: They do not want any railway, do they?] They do not want any sympathy by which their herds and flocks are endangered, by which the whole of their life earnings may be ruined in a short space of time if this disease is as bad as is anticipated. If it plays the same havoc in this country as it has played in its own country, God help the North-West and the South-West of this State and every portion of it. It will leave the Kimberleys without a hoof. [*Mr. H. Brown*: Why don't you give us some statistics?] I am not here primed with statistics. The member for Perth wants every hole in his armour stopped with statistics, but his ignorance of those very statistics makes him speak as he does. [I know something about this subject, and

if he knew as much as I do, and if he desired to protect the people who are raising stock here he would, irrespective of the side of the House on which he sits, raise his voice against any Government cancelling regulations which had for their object the protection of the herds of the State. I want to point out that the Treasurer has been very careful this evening to try and place words in the mouth of the member for Murchison which he did not utter. That hon. member does not know the Treasurer as well as I do and that a principal feature in his system of debate is to jam a statement down the throat of a man although he had never used it; that has been a characteristic of the Treasurer for many years. [*The Treasurer*: You make statements you are not aware of having used; that is the trouble.] I make statements that perhaps the Treasurer and his colleagues do not want me to make. As far as the member for the Murchison is concerned this question was dealt with by him before ever he came into Parliament, and the country can thank him for that. When he was a private citizen at Cue he used his best endeavours to stop that consignment of camels, with regard to which allegations of bribery have been made, from coming to Western Australia. He had occasion to wire to the then member for Cue, who is now the member for West Perth, and Mr. Illingworth took a stand on that occasion for which I commend him. Mr. Holman has always had an eye on these attempts to get camels into this State from places where the animals are affected with disease. The members on the Government side of the House will have gathered from the Ministerial statements to-night that the member for Murchison has tried to make this question purely a party one. That is not so. Mr. Holman was sitting in opposition to the Government when the report of the select committee which sat on the question of Faiz Mahomet's camels was brought in, and his action on that occasion is well known. He has never made this a party question any more than I have, and it is about time the Government allowed questions affecting the State to be dealt with

in the House on non-party lines. As soon as ever any question arises which affects the administration of the Government it is made a party cry and the whips are set to work in case a resolution is carried that will embarrass the Government or force them into the position of considering seriously their position. I am not going to urge that the member for Pilbarra should withdraw his resolution; on the contrary, I would urge that the feeling of the House should be tested on it and, if the Government desire to take it as a question of want of confidence, that is their look out. The Government cannot by any stretch of imagination say that this is a move by the Opposition Party or a party question. There is no necessity for any member on this side to vote for the resolution of the hon. member for Pilbarra. I will vote for it, because I recognise that it has revealed a great lack of administration on the part of the Government and that the Government have been guilty of great carelessness in cancelling the regulations that have been in existence for years without first taking the necessary precautions of protecting the people and the herds of the State. I hope every member from the agricultural and pastoral areas will give their opinion on the question when voting. Hon. members are free and I hope they will vote as they think right. This is not a party question or one of an individual, but it is one for protecting the country against the possible introduction of a very serious disease. [*Hon. F. H. Piesse* : Are the hot fly and the tsetse fly the same ?] This fly is to me an absolute stranger; I do not know it, and that is why I am so afraid in this matter. It is a fly from a country where certain flies have devastated their herds. Experts in the Agricultural Department say that they do not know the fly. What I am speaking of is a fly that has been brought down from the North-West by Mr. Edgar, an interview with whom appeared in the newspapers. I have no reason to believe that the Press have done anything but faithfully report what that gentleman said. Mr. Edgar says that the fly is dangerous, and that

the agricultural expert had pointed that out. If I knew that the fly was not dangerous I would not be so alarmed. I know of States where some hundreds of thousands of cattle have been destroyed by the ravages of tick. If the people in the South-West knew what ticks are capable of accomplishing when they reach the herds, they would appreciate the necessity for preventing them from being brought down from the North-West. I know of many cases in the Eastern States where people of great affluence, and whose parents were also very rich have been brought down to absolute poverty in two or three years owing to the ravages of tick. I have lived in that country and seen many such instances as I have related. [*Mr. H. Brown* : You have never been familiar with these rich gentlemen, have you ?] I am prepared to do anything I can to protect this country from all sorts of pests, and if I could succeed in getting rid of the hon. member for Perth I would be only too pleased. I have, however, enough to do at the present time to combat the position taken up by the Government in connection with the introduction of these camels to the North-West.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE (Katanning) : It was not my intention to have risen to make remarks upon this question, had it not been for the references which have been made by the hon. member who has just sat down to this being turned into a party question. We have heard a good deal of the party question from time to time, but I am quite confident that hon. members on this side of the House recognise the seriousness of the question, and therefore are prepared, in the circumstances, to exercise their votes without any member challenging them with being confined to what may be termed a party question. We have heard this referred to so frequently, and by hon. members opposite who have often charged us with being influenced by party motives. I do not intend to say more about the party question, but will confine myself to a few remarks on the subject under discussion. I am sure none recognise more than the Government the seriousness of the intro-

duction of pests into this country. The hon. member for Pilbarra, in bringing forward this motion to-night, has no doubt done a good service to that part of the country in which he has resided and which he represents. Good service has also been done to other parts of the country, where such a scourge as this fly is said to be might become disastrous, decimating, as it might, the herds in the southern parts of the State. At the same time there seems to me to have been a fault committed by the officers who were entrusted with the carrying out of the work in connection with landing these camels. I am not going into the question of why the camels were brought here. A good deal has been said on this and in imputing motives in certain directions. That is a matter which could be touched upon by a definite resolution later on. I think we should give the member for Pilbarra credit for good intentions in bringing forward this subject, and he was evidently desirous of drawing the attention of members to the seriousness of the matter. The Government, through three of its members, have given an explanation, putting forward their side of the case. We have heard the side of the hon. member for Pilbarra, and I do not for one moment wish to defend the official or officials who were responsible for the carrying out of this work, but who appear not to have done it in that way which would have been best in the interests of the country. They deserve to be dealt with if all be true that has been said of them as to their recklessness and negligence. I take it that such an important question may safely be left in the hands of the Government to deal with. That the Government did not deal with it earlier perhaps provides a justification for some of the remarks made by Mr. Underwood, and the telegrams which he read seem to show that immediate steps should have been taken to deal with the question. It appears, however, that some action was taken by the Government, and that they communicated with their officials, giving instructions which were expected to be obeyed. If the officials did not

obey the instructions there are means of dealing with them. If the Government do not deal with them, such allegations being correct and the charges of negligence proved, then they are deserving of censure. We are at present, however, speaking of the matter rather late in the day. The introduction of such pests are a menace to the country, and all will admit that we should do our very best to prevent it. We are spending hundreds of pounds in trying to deal with the pests in the horticultural industry, and we also recognise how serious it would be if we had tick introduced into the southern parts of the State, as well as in those northern parts which are at present free from the trouble. I am sure that any body of men holding the responsible positions of members of a Ministry must fully recognise the importance and seriousness of the question, and are ready to do their best to protect the country and its interests; and it is unlikely that any Government would be so careless, as hon. members have suggested that the present Government have been in connection with this matter. [Mr. Bath : They made no preparations for the reception of the camels.] That is, of course, an error of judgment. They may have been negligent in failing to take the matter up earlier, and I think that prompt measures should have been taken when the camels were first imported. It seems, however, that they did advise their officers, and if those officers did not carry out the work, the course I have suggested should be taken, and I feel that the Government recognise this. We have heard the statements of the Premier and the Treasurer, backed up by that of the Minister (Hon. J. Mitchell), more particularly concerned with the administration of the department. [Mr. Taylor : The Executive Council order should be cancelled.] Well, the attention of the House has been drawn to it; there has been a long discussion, too long in some respects, though not too long, considering the seriousness of the question. It is most necessary for the purity of

our herds and the protection of the people engaged in our rural industries that we should do everything possible to prevent the introduction of disease. Fruit-growers are well aware of how their industry has been thus affected. We have only to look back some six or seven years to see how by the action of a previous Government the codlin moth was introduced to the country. To prevent its spread has cost us thousands of pounds. Such facts draw our attention to the menace we are now considering ; so I wish the hon. member (Mr. Underwood) and other members to recognise that I for one feel that this matter is most serious. I do not find fault with the hon. member for bringing forward this question, though I think, as it has been left so long, it might have been left till a later stage, and dealt with on a special motion, when it would have received the same attention as has been given it to-night. But I think the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) is perhaps going beyond fair discussion in taunting members on this (Government) side of the House with voting on party lines when so serious a matter as this comes before us. As the attention of the House has been drawn to the subject, as the matter has been so thoroughly ventilated, as the member responsible for the motion has made a full statement, as the House fully recognise the seriousness of the position, and the Government have promised to do and are doing all they can to deal promptly with the evil, as is shown by the telegrams received so late as yesterday, I feel this is not a question which should go to a vote. It is a question on which I feel enough has been said to ensure prompt action and close attention from the Government ; and in the circumstances the discussion has done good, and need not go any farther. If I found that utter negligence, utter disregard of the interests of the country, had been exhibited, then I for one, notwithstanding my desire to support the Government, would have joined with members opposite in placing the responsibility on the Government and of censuring them for their action ; but in the

circumstances, I feel that the Government recognise what is required, and are doing their best to meet the necessities of the case. We who have heard the discussion to-night must admit it was fully justified ; the question was brought forward in the best interests of the districts and the community generally, and the Ministerial explanations given are a justification of the action of the Government.

Mr. T. L. BROWN (Geraldton) : I do not intend to labour the question, but it is one on which I feel strongly, and, with all due respect for the member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse), I cannot view the matter as he views it when he says the Government have realised the seriousness of the position and are taking action. To my mind that is altogether contrary to fact. If the Ministry had realised the seriousness of the position, then, when one of their number was in the North-West while this question was before the public, why did they not instruct that Minister to inquire when on the spot whether the camels were diseased ?

Hon. F. H. PIESSE (in explanation) : That is a point on which I omitted to touch. When the member for Pilbarra found that he was not obtaining that attention which he expected as a member of the House, I take it his duty was to approach the Minister controlling the department, and to place the matter before him.

Mr. Underwood : He did it in the House on the 9th July.

Mr. T. L. BROWN : I understand that the member for Pilbarra takes his present stand because he could get no satisfaction from the Government.

Hon. F. H. Piesse : He inquired of the officials only.

Mr. T. L. BROWN : He approached the department from time to time, but did not get the satisfaction to which he considered himself entitled ; hence the necessity for moving to-night. The Treasurer tells us there is no need to fear, nothing to be alarmed at. To my mind this is a serious matter, and I am sure the Treasurer's action does not bear out

the statement of the member for Kataning that the Government have realised the seriousness of the position. The explanations given or attempted to be given to-night from the Treasury bench only show that someone has to suffer for this mistake, and the whole onus is to be thrown on the officials who are to be made the scapegoats. That is rather cruel, and I am sure that the officials are not altogether to blame. I trust that the person who is really to blame for the landing of those camels—the doctor and resident magistrate at Port Hedland, will be called upon to state why he allowed those camels to land, and why he interfered with the police, who were doing their duty. The magistrate should certainly be taken to task and made to suffer. The question has been asked, and I think rightly, How is it that no preparation was made for the landing of those camels? The Honorary Minister controlling the Agricultural Department must have had some knowledge of the fact that the boat containing those camels was approaching our shores : and he should have taken all reasonable precautions. [The Honorary Minister : He did.] That is not on record ; and if he had taken all necessary precautions, would not his officers have been there, would he not have had men there to see if those camels were fit to be landed? Farther, Ministers tell us that the reason the camels had to travel over a certain track was that Port Hedland did not lend itself to quarantine conditions. Is not that another reflection on the department controlling the landing of the camels? If Port Hedland was not a suitable place for them to land, surely the department should have seen that a proper place was chosen and prepared for their reception. We are also told from the Ministerial bench that not only the camels but their fodder were in quarantine. I do not think that one man in this House to-night will question the word of Mr. Edgar, who is well known to all of us as a gentleman of repute. We are told by the Ministerial heads that they have not read the article in yesterday's *Morning Herald*, though this is a serious matter, affecting the flocks of our pastoralists in the great

North-West of which we have recently heard so much ; yet Ministers have not been sufficiently interested in that country to read the newspapers, or to notice what has taken place in this department. I much regret that other members representing the North-West have not to-night stood side by side with the member for Pilbarra in his honest endeavour to protect the interests of his district. Those members have sat silent to-night on the Government side of the House and allowed the hon. member to stand alone and fight the battle of the pastoralists. I can endorse the remarks of the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) that the member for Pilbarra deserves every credit we can give him for bringing this matter before the House and the public. The member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) discontinued the reading of the interview with Mr. Edgar just as he reached the interesting stage. I will take up the article where he left off, and will show in what manner the fodder imported with the camels has been quarantined :—

“ Mr. Edgar's authority informed him that it was of very recent importation—[he refers to the fly handed over to the Department of Agriculture]—and could only have been brought to the State in the form of eggs deposited in the hair of camels. Mr. Edgar blames the authorities for their laxity in permitting the camels to be landed without inspection. There was no stock inspector at Port Hedland when the camels arrived there, and all that Dr. Burton could do was to make the examination that might have been carried out by any layman. Ever since then the animals have been allowed to roam all over the place, and they have been almost in contact with the teams that work along the road between Port Hedland and Marble Bar. Mr. Edgar asks now that the Government should permit to be published the report on the fly that was prepared by their experts.”

I trust that the Government will carry out Mr. Edgar's wishes by publishing that report. Why did they not to-night produce the report, if it exists?

The Treasurer : There is no report.

Mr. T. L. BROWN : The interview continues :—

"He claims that, as the pastoralists of the North are so interested, the Government should not demur about informing them of the threatened danger, in order that they might in their own way take any steps that might be considered necessary to protect their herds."

Mr. Foulkes : Did Mr. Edgar telegraph to the Government acquainting them with the position at Port Hedland, or did he wait till he came to Perth?

Mr. T. L. BROWN : Perhaps the hon. member will give the member for Pilbarra notice of that question. The interview continues:—

"Mr. Edgar farther mentioned that a quantity of fodder—about 100 tons—was landed at Port Hedland for the camels, and had been lying near the jetty ever since they arrived. He had heard that it had been seized for the non-payment of debt, but he could not say from his own personal knowledge. 'We are afraid,' he concluded, 'that there may be all sorts of germs in this fodder, and possibly the fly of the tsetse disease or surra is there. This fodder is exposed to stock passing there, and the matter is certainly one to be looked into.'"

We are told to-night by the Premier that this fodder was quarantined. But it is exposed to stock passing to and from the jetty at Port Hedland; and I am sure that as the information given by the Government is so far from the mark in one respect, we must take the rest of their explanation in the same spirit as we accept that. Before sitting down I should like to refer to one remark of the Premier, and I think the Treasurer made the same observation—that men were in charge of those camels. It has been pointed out that the men imported with them practically would not leave the State, because they were not paid their wages, and were virtually without food. And we were told it was common rumour there that the Government of

the State were keeping the men in food. That was not denied. I think it should be made clear whether it is true or false. As to the men looking after the camels, stress was laid on the fact that the camels could not stray because these men were looking after them. Who was in charge of the camels when these men were taken to the boat side to be reshipped? Of course the camels were left to themselves and could stray at will. I think the Ministry should indeed take this matter far more seriously than the member for Katanning gives them credit for. One thing I regret more than another during the whole debate is the frivolous manner in which several members on the Government side have taken this position to-day. And Ministers have not treated this matter in a manner they should have done.

The Premier : How would we have known anything about it if we had not instructed cultures to be taken?

Mr. Bath : By the condition of the stock as stated in the wires.

The Premier : What is the condition?

Mr. Johnson : I will read it for you in a few minutes. I was not going to speak, but I will now.

Mr. T. L. BROWN : The member for Pilbarra made it clear that stock were going mad, not only horses but cattle, driven mad by this fly. I do not pretend to be an expert about this fly, but this is mentioned in the wires, and people did not send those wires for the mere sake of sending them. The importation of the camels was brought under my notice a few months ago when the Premier and the Colonial Secretary were visiting Geraldton, and I brought the matter under the notice of the Treasurer. At the time I admit I did not take a great deal of notice of it because the gentleman who brought it under my notice was interested in camels in the North-West, and I thought he had brought this matter forward to protect his own interests. I regret very much that I did not take the matter up more forcibly than I did because I see the man had grounds for his suspicion,

and I believe if a few members had taken the matter up seriously the position would not have occurred, and if the trouble had taken place it would have been under conditions more favourable to Western Australia; and the pastoralists would have been protected to a greater degree. As the member for Guildford has expressed a wish to speak to-night I shall not labour the question, but I will content myself by saying again that I regret members for the North-West have not supported the member for Pilbarra as they should have done, and if by my speaking to-night I can bring these members to their feet my mission will have been accomplished. These members have sat silently and allowed the matter to go by the board, and if they do not deal with the matter their constituents no doubt will call them to account and ask why they have not backed up the action taken by the member for Pilbarra. I ask why did not the Government wire the Minister for Mines when he was at Port Hedland to see whether the report was true or otherwise.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford): In spite of the apology made by the member for Katanning on behalf of the Government, and in spite of the assurance of the good intentions of the Premier, I am satisfied the Government have not given sufficient evidence to-night that they intend to grapple with this subject, as will justify the member for Pilbarra in withdrawing the motion. He must get more from the Ministerial benches than he has. The motion should not be withdrawn on the slight notice taken on this great question by the Ministry. If the motion is withdrawn by us it will be an endorsement of the want of attitude on the part of the Government. We must get something more from the Government in spite of the assurance of the member for Katanning, and I may say we are getting used to these assurances. The hon. member is continually apologising for Ministers and continually assuring us of their good intentions.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: I did not offer any apology for them at all.

Mr. JOHNSON: We are continually getting these assurances, and I refer to it to-night because it is about time the member for Katanning stopped lecturing the Opposition as to what we should do with the Government. I know if this question affected the herds of Katanning the member for Katanning would have taken a different attitude from what he has adopted to-night.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: I think that is an ungenerous remark.

Mr. JOHNSON: It may be. But because this matter is far away in the North-West members who know more about the question than members on this side have sat silently and have not spoken.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: If this had been my matter I should have gone straight to the Minister and not rung him up on the telephone.

Mr. JOHNSON: Does not the hon. member recollect that when the member for Pilbarra was speaking he stated that he went to the Minister, or to the departmental head, because possibly he could not get to the Minister.

Mr. Bath: He also brought the matter up on the Address-in-Reply.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes, does the hon. member forget that in speaking on the Address-in-Reply the member for Pilbarra brought the matter forcibly before the Government, and yet since that time nothing has been done.

The Premier: The hon. member is not correct, because Dr. Cleland and Mr. Giles have been sent up to make an inspection.

Mr. JOHNSON: The conditions prevailing on the 9th July prevail to-day. I withdraw that statement and say the conditions are worse to-day. We have a reference by the member for Katanning as to party voting. Why did the member for Mt. Margaret say it was not a party question? Because we had a statement by the Treasurer similar to this one when the Education question was before the House last session. The Treasurer got up and stated that the fate of the Government depended on the decision of this question, and to-night we find the same attitude. Feeling and knowing they are

guilty in allowing tick to get into the North-West the Government say that the fate of the Ministry depends on this question. Can we call that party ? The Government ask members to protect them against the motion of the member for Pilbarra, then we are told it is not a party question. If that is not bringing party into the debate I do not know what is. Why was the motion brought forward ? We have the Premier and later the Treasurer, and again the Honorary Minister getting up and stating that they realise the seriousness of the question. The Treasurer tells us the Government considered the question and feeling it was a dangerous question to tackle they delayed the matter and they are waiting. Then later the matter is dealt with in Cabinet and the Treasurer told us that in consequence of more camels being required in the North-West these camels were allowed to enter. There were too many teams of camels in the North-West at this particular time, for teams were being sold because there was not enough trade to keep the teams that were there going. How can the Government use the argument that there were not sufficient camels to deal with the traffic existing at that time ? Then again supposing it was not a fact that teams were being disposed of, are there not plenty of camels on our Eastern goldfields and on the Murchison fields that are not fully engaged to-day ?

The Minister for Mines : No.

Mr. JOHNSON : The member for Murchison assures us that there are.

Mr. Holman : There are 200 camels idle.

Mr. JOHNSON : There was no justification why the Government should allow these camels to be introduced. If there had been any desire to assist the people in the North-West the member for Pilbarra is a greater authority on the question than the Government, and he assures me that teams were sold at the time this matter was under consideration. The Government realised the seriousness of the question, they delayed it, and later on took the matter into Cabinet and dealt with it, and made certain regulations. I point this out because the Government realised the

seriousness of the question and immediately passed an Executive Council minute and framed certain special regulations to deal with the question. There they think their task finished. They forget they have to deal with a serious question, and their duty should have been to follow it up and see that this serious matter was controlled by the officers in such a way that the North-West would have been protected from the introduction of disease by these camels. That is the responsibility a Ministry has to take. Yet we have the member for Katanning, above anyone else, saying that if an officer erred in judgment the officer should be dealt with. Has the time arrived when we should shift the responsibility from Ministerial heads to departmental heads ? Repeatedly in the House Ministers have said that they take the responsibility of actions of their officers.

Hon. F. H. Piessé : You mean to say that if an officer committed himself in such a way and failed to recognise his duty you would not deal with that officer ?

Mr. JOHNSON : Of course ; but incapacity to deal with a matter, to follow it up and to see that diseased camels did not get in the State, because an officer failed to do that is no reason why the Minister for Agriculture did not do so. I wish to point out to the Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department that while I applaud him for the interest he has taken in the South-Western districts and the agricultural districts in and around the metropolitan area, while I applaud him for that and encourage him in his work, he must realise that he has to get out of that groove. Because we pat him on the back for doing something for one portion of the State we will not allow him to go free of criticism if he neglects other duties. It is all very well for the Minister to state, "I am doing my duty," but he must not forget that his duty does not start at Northam and end at Sussex, but that he has to deal with all the State, and if he neglects it he must put up with criticism of his action. Ministers state that there is no danger

now. That is the reason why I shall not agree to the withdrawal of the motion. This wire has already been read, but Ministers have asked me to read it once more. It proves there is danger to-day. The Government have had no reports, and they think that because there are no reports it is good news. The Government have an officer in the district, but he has not sent down reports that any serious danger exists, and the Government want us to take the assurance of this officer. But do we not find that one officer, Dr. Burton, has demonstrated his incapacity to deal with this question, and that he has erred much in his judgment? He stated at first that there was no tick at all, or that there were one or two ticks on the first one or two beasts which came off the boat, and he farther said there was no tick on the jetty. Then again he says that he had taken precautions to cleanse the jetty, and Ministers tell us that it is a common thing to clean a jetty if a jetty is not dirty. As a matter of fact we know that the jetty was dirty with tick, because we had a better authority there than Dr. Burton. The jetty was alive with tick, and the quarantine station was alive with tick. Consequently we find that there we have a responsible officer of the State absolutely contradicting himself in his two statements. And then the Government turn round and say that, despite the fact that one officer has erred in judgment, as demonstrated by his various statements that cannot be relied on, we should take the word of their officers in preference to the wires from that quarter. In order to again urge on members that this is a serious question, I shall read from the *West Australian* of Friday last, not a political wire, but one evidently coming from the correspondent of the *West Australian*, although it is put in a very obscure corner, and not with the flaring head lines that drew attention to the utterances of Dr. Cleland. That telegram appearing in the *West Australian* reads :—

"All the hitherto clean camels on the Hedland-Bar track are afflicted with tick, seriously menacing the carrying

capacity. A troublesome fly has also appeared, and is driving horses, cattle, and camels mad."

Yet we have a Minister stating that it is not serious at all; that it is purely tick that does not affect cattle and horses. Here we have the fact that if the tick is not doing it, the fly brought in by the selfsame camels is driving the cattle, horses, and camels mad. The telegram farther says :—

"Bullocks coming to the port have, after going inland, been found to possess tick, and it is reasonable to assume that cattle passing through the local shipping yards for southern ports may also possess ticks."

Again, we find a wire coming from Mr. Barker. The Minister for Mines evidently knows this gentleman, so I take it he is a reliable authority; he signs his name, and evidently is as good an authority as responsible officers we have in our North-West ports. What does he say ?—

"Teams bullocks, all trading camels, including those white men, affected tick, notwithstanding frequent cleanings Woodroffe (agent Bullarra), Richardson (Pippingarra), Snell, and Tatelock all witnessed dire effects; imported fly driving all stock mad." This absolutely endorses the wire received by the *West Australian*.

The Minister for Mines : Mr. Barker is correspondent for the *West Australian*.

Mr. JOHNSON: I take it Mr. Barker is a reliable authority. He has signed the wire. We should get more from responsible Ministers of the Crown than we have got to-night. We want a definite assurance from them that they will take every precaution to cleanse that country of the tick they have allowed to be imported into it. And I question very much whether those people who have cattle, horses and camels afflicted with this tick the Government have allowed to land in this country have not a claim for compensation against the Government. I know myself I would seriously consider taking action against the Government if I lost my stock through the importation of

camels, owing to the incapacity of the Government to administer a department as they have done in this matter. Mr. Barker's telegram continues:—

“ Infected Indian camels regularly visiting Hedland, also wandering over both Bar roads; fact large number lost, whereabouts unknown.”

Even if members question the reliability of this, we have the newspaper statement; and surely it is necessary for us to get more assurance than we have had to-night that the Government will take a little more definite action than they have taken since the 9th July, when the matter was forcibly brought under their notice by the member for Pilbarra. When the Government allowed these camels to come in, the very first thing they should have done was to appoint one of their special officers to go to the North-West to see that the special regulations they drafted were in force. To draw an illustration between the administrative capacity of one Minister as against another, let us take the action of the Federal authorities. They got word, evidently not so forcibly brought under their notice as the fact was brought under the notice of our Minister, and with that notice there was an intimation that there were men in charge of the camels who had no right to land under contract in this State. We find that before that vessel touched at Port Hedland the Federal officers sent an officer from Broome in order to see that the regulations were strictly enforced. Yet our Ministers who were allowing the camels to come in failed absolutely to see that the regulations they framed were enforced. In conclusion, I wish to endorse the remarks of the member for Geraldton (Mr. T. L. Brown) in so far as they apply to the member for Kimberley (Mr. Male). We found the member for Kimberley the other night eulogising the Government because the Minister for Mines had visited the North-West, and because in the Governor's Speech special reference was made to the Government's intention to develop that vast area; but when he finds that reference is made deprecating the attitude of the Government towards

stock-owners in that locality, he takes no notice of it. The member for Gascoyne has taken notes during the debate; probably he will enlighten the House on the possible effect of the importation of these tick on the stock to the North-West; but I am very much disappointed that the member for Kimberley has sat idly by, not raising his voice at all to protect the cattle-owners and stock-owners of the north-west portion of the State who must be deeply interested in this matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price) : I would not have spoken in this debate but for certain remarks that fell from the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. G. Taylor), who suggested that this alteration of regulations was put through Executive Council without the knowledge of the Ministry generally. He said that I was not present and that the Honorary Minister was not present, and that probably we knew nothing about the matter. The member for Mount Margaret knows perfectly well that so long as a quorum is in attendance at Executive Council it is not customary for Ministers to attend in full. This matter was fully discussed in Cabinet, and the Executive Council minute was signed by the member for Northam, the Honorary Minister. Let us go into the genesis, the origin of this alteration of the regulations. It did not emanate from any Minister at all. Suggestions were made to the Government by a certain firm that it was desirable that camels should be imported; and a responsible officer, the then Director of Agriculture, who I believe was appointed by my friends opposite, put this minute forward to his Minister. [Mr. Collier : Who made the suggestion ?] Abraham Mahomet, an Afghan, asked that he should be permitted to import these camels. There has been no covering up of that, no secrecy about it. The then Director of Agriculture, who was appointed by the Labour Government, about whose ability I have not the slightest doubt, inquiry was made showing he was fully qualified for the position, wrote this minute; and what does this

officer say about the importation of these cattle? I will read the minute he supplied on the question, as follows :—

“The exceptional circumstances surrounding the case of A. Mahomet warrants the exceptional measures proposed, namely the exemption from the regulations, as the applicant will, in my opinion, be conferring a great boon to that particular part of the State which, at the present time, is the worst provided with means of locomotion and transport. There is nothing to prevent any other applicant, who can adduce sufficiently good reasons, from being likewise exempted. I suggest, however, that permission be not given to bring camels farther south than the 25th parallel of latitude. This would obviate competition with horse teams on the lower goldfields.

Mr. Angwin : Is there any minute from Inspector Weir?

The MINISTER : I will go through all the minutes.

Mr. Butcher : Was it only a question of competition?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : I am giving the genesis of this business and I desire to explain why it was decided that these camels should not be allowed to come below the twenty-fifth parallel of latitude. It was thought that the camels should be allowed to be imported in the northern part of the country because it was believed that there was a necessity for farther camels in that district. I am not saying whether that idea was right or wrong; but it has been suggested that the reason why this line of demarcation was drawn was simply because the Government were absolutely careless as to what would happen in the North-West so long as the southern portion of the State would not be affected by the disease. Such an accusation as that is quite incorrect. [*Mr. Johnson* : What does Mahomet's letter say?] I have not read it and cannot tell you that. I want to give an account from the official point of view, and to detail to the House the representations made by the responsible officials, so that the House may know the advice upon

which the Government acted. The Government in this connection obtained the advice of their responsible officers, and I will ask the hon. member who interjected, and who always stood by his officers, whether he would not have acted in a similar way if similar circumstances had arisen while he was in office? Now we come to the minute of Mr. Weir of March 4th, 1907, directed to the Under Secretary, in which he states :—

“The manager (Mr. Hughes) of the South British Insurance Coy. advises that a shipment of 500 camels would leave Bombay on Thursday last and are due to arrive at Port Hedland on or about the 21st inst. It will be necessary for an inspector to meet the shipment on arrival and stay at the port until the animals are free from the quarantine period of 40 days.”

This minute came before the Honorary Minister and naturally led him to believe that the Chief Inspector of Stock had the matter well in hand at that time. Then about this date there is a minute to the Honorary Minister in connection with inspections, by the Under Secretary (Mr. Despeissis), and on March 8th the suggestion is made by the Honorary Minister that Mr. Ranford should be sent to Port Hedland as the inspector to receive the stock. I venture to say that my colleague took every reasonable precaution that a Minister should do. I see that the hon. member for Guildford smiles, but the files show that the Honorary Minister was quite satisfied by the minutes he had received that the matter was being thoroughly looked after by the departmental officials. He did as much as any Government or any member could expect him to do. [*Mr. Angwin* : When did Inspector Weir deal with the matter?] His minute is dated March 4th, it reached the Honorary Minister on March 8th, and it was then that he suggested Mr. Ranford should be sent to receive the stock. [*Mr. Angwin* : When did that minute get back to Mr. Weir?] On March 9th, the following day after the Minister received it.

I would ask hon. members who have held office, whether it is at all unusual for four days to elapse before the penning of a minute and its receipt by the Minister. The moment the Honorary Minister received this minute he sent for the chief inspector and discussed the whole question with him. These circumstances place quite a different complexion upon the case. The Honorary Minister was aware that the chief inspector had the matter thoroughly in hand. The camels arrived at Port Hedland on March 21st, which was a Thursday, and there was no inspector there to receive them. On March 9th the chief inspector had sent a minute to the Under Secretary stating he found that there was no steamer leaving for Port Hedland until the 22nd of the month, and this apparently was the reason why the inspector was not there to receive the cattle. It was a fortnight before the arrival of the camels that the Honorary Minister was advised that it would be necessary to make arrangements for an inspector to be there. [Mr. Taylor : You know that the boats do not run frequently to Port Hedland.] I know that one runs nearly every week. I am quite aware that these are an awkward set of facts to set before members opposite, but I want them to give due consideration to what I have said in justice to the hon. member who all the evening has been the object of their attack. The boat arrived at Port Hedland on March 21st, and there was no inspector there to meet the camels; that was on a Thursday. Between that day and the following Sunday, the Premier received information of a somewhat alarming nature in connection with the camels. The hon. member for Kanowna asks, in his inimitable style, who was there to take prompt action? But I will tell you what the Premier did in connection with this matter. When it was reported to him that there were certain disquieting features in connection with the camels he spent a considerable portion of Sunday the 24th March at the post office communicating by direct line with Port Hedland. He

wired to the responsible officer there (Dr. Burton) asking him to supervise the landing of these particular camels. He was so impressed with the position that he did not in any way limit Dr. Burton, and that officer was specifically instructed not to spare expense in order to secure the segregation of the beasts. Does that look like apathy on the part of the Government? [Mr. Taylor : It is apathy on the part of the inspector of stock.] It is the Ministers who are accused by the opposite side of apathy, and not the officers. That is the exact position of the case. [Mr. Hudson : Do you not take the responsibility of the actions of your officers?] Of course we do, but if I go to the hon. member for legal advice and he gives it, I take that advice—I expect I would fall in ; but that is by the way. [Mr. Hudson : I take the responsibility of any advice I give.] If you have a professional man whom you trust and in whom you have confidence, you must abide by the advice he gives you. Now let us take the position as we find it. The hon. member for Pilbarra has read certain telegrams, and has given to this House certain information which I admit is of a disquieting character, there is no getting away from that. On the other hand, all the telegrams the Government have received from responsible officers have had nothing of a disquieting nature in them; on the contrary they have been of a reassuring nature. The two accounts are diametrically opposed to one another. They do not tally; they do not fit in at all. For political purposes members immediately accept the accounts of those irresponsible persons who from time to time send communications to such members. Do I understand from the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) that it is the business of Ministers to be guided by every newspaper paragraph which they read, when the advice of their responsible officers, men whom they have no reason to doubt, is of a totally opposite character? The member for Guildford would be the first, were he in office, to disregard the newspaper paragraphs and to believe his officers. The Government recognise that a case for

inquiry has been made out. What have the Government done? Have they sat down and said, "Our men are right, these newspaper paragraphs are false and inaccurate?" No. They have not prejudged the case like the members opposite; they have not been so unjust to their officers. Members have been sitting in the House all the evening; they have heard the debate; they have heard the information given; but they wilfully close their ears to the facts of the case, because it suits them at the moment to do so. [Mr. Taylor: No, no. This is no party question.] The Government have been accused ineptitude, of bad administration; and if the Government are guilty, if that charge is proved, the Government should treat it as a vote of no confidence; and any Government who refused to treat it as such would be utterly unworthy of their position in the State. We have not prejudged this case against our officers, and I venture to say we have taken a right and proper course to arrive at the facts. Dr. Cleland and Mr. Giles, a well-known entomologist, have been despatched to Port Hedland to investigate. It may be that the case of the member for Pilbarra will be proved. On the other hand Doctor Cleland's report may fully bear out the telegrams received from our responsible officers; and I for one absolutely refuse to prejudge this case until Doctor Cleland's report is before us; and I venture to think the member for Pilbarra would have been well advised had he postponed his motion until that report came to hand. I think I have shown clearly and distinctly that the Government, and more particularly the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) have taken every reasonable precaution. It may be that the inspector of stock has been somewhat lightly and leniently treated, but it is better to err on the side of mercy than to be too severe. [Mr. Collier: Is that done in private business?] It is done by employers every day. The best of men at times make mistakes; and I venture to think that if the hon. member is to be condemned for every mistake he makes, his chances of perdition are pretty good. [Mr. T. L. Brown: This is more than a

mistake.] We have the statement of Mr. Edgar. Any statement coming from him I am prepared to treat with absolute respect. But let us remember he is now in Perth, and I presume made his statement to the Press some time this week. Farther we have a telegram read a minute or two ago by the member for Guildford, which states that this disease is rampant all over the place. I think it states that large numbers of the camels are lost, and that others are wandering all over the country. As against that we find our own inspector stating that all the camels but four are accounted for, and that they are mustered every day. Here is *prima facie* evidence that the gentleman whose telegram the member for Guildford read is not at all a reliable authority. And in parenthesis I may say, I myself have some knowledge of that gentleman. I was the subject of a very severe article, not many weeks ago, condemning me for not doing certain things promised to the people of Port Hedland. But let me say, it was a work which had never been brought before me, and which I knew absolutely nothing about; but that fact did not prevent my being severely condemned by the Port Hedland paper.

Mr. Foulkes: Did Mr. Edgar when at Port Hedland send you a telegram regarding this matter?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have carefully gone through the file and have not found any, and the Honorary Minister informs me that Mr. Edgar did not send such a telegram. What is the position? We have Dr. Cleland's report, every scrap of it that could be used was used against the Government, and perhaps rightly so. But on the other hand, we are surely entitled to expect members opposite to be generous enough to use those portions of the report which tell in our favour. Where a point can be picked out against the Government they use it; but when telling us that there is some danger of the disease known as surra being introduced to the State, they forget to read that portion of the report wherein Dr. Cleland says, "I have little doubt that amongst the camels imported in previous years a similar proportion of animals affected with trypanosomiasis

exists." [Mr. Underwood: I read that portion.] Then I beg the hon. member's pardon. I did not hear him. I think I have clearly shown that the Government have taken reasonable precautions. I will not, till we have Dr. Cleland's report, admit that the reports of our officers are not correct. On the other hand, I think that for the time being every man who desires to be just and fair should keep an open mind on this question, until he sees that report. If members, after the facts placed before them, like to be so unreasonable as to support the motion, I shall think that justice is absolutely dead in their minds. The position is clear, and the minutes which I have read endorse and establish the claim of the Government that this matter has received due and fair consideration at their hands, and that proper investigations are now afoot to establish the facts.

Mr. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne): Before proceeding with the question I should like to say I strongly resent the remarks of a few members sitting in Opposition, heaved at those members on the Government side who represent northern constituencies, to the effect that we have been sitting here quietly listening to the debate without taking any particular interest in it. Let me draw the attention of Oppositionists to the Standing Order which permits of only one member speaking at a time. The Opposition have disregarded that Standing Order during the whole evening, for no less than six of them have been speaking at one time while one member of this side was addressing the House. However, there is no doubt of the seriousness of the question before the House, as it presents itself at any rate to the pastoralist. But during the whole course of the debate to-night the most important part of the question appears to have entirely escaped the notice of everybody; and to my mind the Government have created the position in which they now find themselves. It is not fair at this juncture to throw any blame on the shoulders of departmental officers for not carrying out regulations, when the Government themselves are responsible for the position.

I fail to see how the Government or any body of men, claiming to represent the true interests of Western Australia, could rescind a regulation which had been on the statute book practically for 10 years, and there were wiser or equally wise men holding the reins of Government when the regulation was passed as we have to-day, and in their wisdom they decided that it was necessary that no more camels should be introduced into Western Australia, because it was found they brought diseases or were likely to bring disease into Western Australia, which would be dangerous to the pastoralists and the stock of the State. Without making any application to those interested in this particular industry to ascertain if there was any possibility or any reason for alarm in connection with the importation of these camels, the Government simply, on the application of one called Mahomet, who I understand is an Afghan, in fact I have no doubt he is an Afghan, allowed a consignment of 500 camels to be brought in without asking any pastoralists whether they were likely to be affected by the importation, or if there was any danger. That goes to show that the interests of an Afghan, whether he be a Britisher or not, is to be considered before the pastoral interests of Western Australia. I say that the pastoral industry of the State represents some millions of money—I will allow members on the Opposition side to contradict me if I am not correct—yet the interests of a Mahomedan, an Afghan, are to be considered before the interests of our own settlers.

Mr. Holman: I appealed to you for support last November when I moved a motion.

Mr. BUTCHER: I know what took place, I sat on the select committee of which the hon. member for Murchison was also a member, and I went through the matter when compensation was claimed for stopping the importation of camels.

Mr. Holman: I am speaking about the 28th November in connection with these camels.

Mr. BUTCHER : The matter of these camels was not brought under my notice until quite recently. The Government are not justified in throwing any responsibility on the shoulders of their officers for not carrying out the instructions. The question is whether instructions were given. There was no necessity to give instructions. The Government created the difficulty by allowing the camels to be imported, and I say there has been the grossest negligence of the interests of Western Australia by the Government taking the steps they did, and I regret that they did take those steps. It is only left to the Government now to do all they can to assist the pastoralists and see that the spread of this dreaded disease does not continue. The Government are running the greatest possible risk, for no man knows what is likely to happen from the importation of flies or ticks or anything of that sort from places like India. Another thing that struck me very forcibly was why the Government should be so particularly anxious not to allow camels to be imported below latitude 25. If they allowed them to be imported below latitude 25 I would not have thought much about it, but the climatic conditions of the North-West are more similar to the climatic conditions of India than the climate down south is, and any parasites or disease brought by these camels is more likely to flourish in the higher latitudes than down south. That goes to show again how reckless in regard to all the interests of Western Australia have the Government been while they wish to appear to be so mindful of them. There is one question I should have liked to ask the Honorary Minister, but I notice he is not here. When were these applications made which impressed him so much, that it was necessary to import these camels: at what date were the applications made?

Mr. Taylor : About 18 months ago.

Mr. BUTCHER : At that time representations had been made for the construction of the Marble Bar railway, which was to have the effect of carrying goods that the camels were imported

for. If the Government were desirous of assisting persons up North, then why should they not have gone on with the railway at once, and then there would have been no necessity at all for the importation of the camels? I only add now that I sincerely hope the Government will take every step to see that there is no spread of this disease in the North.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory) : I wish to say very little in regard to the question. I was recently at Port Hedland, and made a large number of inquiries from Dr. Burton, and from the people of the Port Hedland district, and I was assured by Dr. Burton that there was no danger in regard to these camels. I was told by Dr. Burton and by most of the responsible persons living in that place that the telegrams sent down here by Mr. Barker were gross exaggerations, and I have every belief to-day that the telegrams being sent down here are extremely exaggerated. That is why I, with the Minister for Works, urge members to await the report to be sent in by Dr. Cleland. Every effort is being made by the department to get the true facts of the case, and we shall give the facts to the public as soon as we are in possession of them. On the other hand I wish to impress on members my belief that these telegrams which are being sent down cannot be relied on, and that they are grossly exaggerated.

Mr. H. BROWN (Perth) : I think members in this debate have really been making a mountain out of a molehill. We have heard, I believe, the concentrated wisdom of the House about this matter in the brain of the member for Mount Margaret. It was refreshing indeed to-night to hear the hon. member go into heroics with reference to the protection of the unfortunate pastoralists and graziers.

Mr. Taylor : I did not get into the Perth sewers, the Wellington-street one especially.

Mr. H. BROWN : We have heard this fly referred to as the bot fly, and from the little knowledge I possess I may say for the information of members on the Opposition side that no one could point to a single case where one head of cattle has died through the effects of the bot fly. Not one member has given statistics as to the deaths that have occurred from the effects of this particular fly. From the speech of the member for Mt. Margaret one sees that the hon. member has no conception of what this fly is at all.

Mr. Heitmann : You are talking about the codlin moth.

Mr. H. BROWN : The hon. member might know something about mining, possibly. I think this has been an absolute waste of time. We have heard that the member for Pilbarra knew of these circumstances three weeks ago; and if it were a matter of urgency, why was it not brought before the House at the first sitting; and if it is a charge of neglect on the part of the Government, why should he not have brought it forward straight away instead of bringing it up now as a subterfuge?

Mr. P. STONE (Greenough) : As one who took an active part in the early days when camels were first introduced into this State in opposing their importation, I have watched with interest the camel question through all its stages. Twelve or 14 years ago shipload after shipload of camels was landed in Geraldton for the Murchison trade. It interfered with my interests and with the interests of the farmers and with those of most people in that part of the State. The white carriers and their teams found work for the wheelwrights and blacksmiths, and their money bought the produce of the farmers, while harness had to be made by the saddlers. As the camels interfered with these white carriers and with these industries, that was the principal objection on that occasion to the importation. I saw the camels landed time after time and inspected them and saw them covered with tick; and where they camped on the beach, after their removal the

inspector had the place swept up and the remains of the forage burned, and there were ticks on the ground; but I never learnt since that the tick introduced 14 years ago has spread and caused any serious damage to the stock in the State. I watched with some interest, being a little afraid at the time. The camels were also troubled with a disease known as mange, which has not been cleared from them. Each camel team I have seen has to be treated for mange to the present time, but I have not known it to affect other stock. I suppose the Government in giving their consent, which I did not approve of, meant to assist the miners in the North and not to interfere much with the people in the Southern districts. If this fly that is talked of is an importation with the camels, the position becomes much more serious. It is possible the fly may work havoc among the stock, but the bot fly has been known to exist for 30 years in the North-West, some years being bad and some years not being noticed. It is now throughout the whole of the State, and it is in horses particularly. Sometimes they die through it, and sometimes they get very bad but get better. When the Government 10 years ago thought fit to prevent the importation of camels, the object was on that occasion to assist the farmers, the wheelwrights, the blacksmiths, and the saddlers more than to prevent any damage to stock; but no one can tell me where the tick has done any harm to other stock than camels after being here some 12 or 14 years. So I cannot see why all this trouble should take place to-night. Of course if this fly is a new arrival, the matter is serious; but it has not been proved that it is an importation with the camels. I hear that some 20 or 30 tons of forage remained in the cattle-yards where these tick and fly-infested camels were landed. I think the Government would be wise in having that exported to where it came from, or burnt as soon as possible. I think that this has been almost a night wasted.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (mover in reply) : I will be as short as possible in my reply. I think it can be agreed without any

farther words of mine that my case has been fully upheld ; the Government have totally failed to refute the charges I have laid ; but I wish to make a few, what I may term, personal explanations in the matter. In speaking I suggested, and pretty deliberately too, that the Premier had been guilty of a breach of faith with myself, and I referred to his being in close touch with Dr. Burton as a possible explanation. The Honorary Minister said that I accused Mr. Despeissis of discourtesy. I did not accuse him of that, but I will tell the Honorary Minister what I am going to do ; I am going to accuse him of something worse. He told me on the telephone that the Premier had wired to Port Hedland to stop the landing of these camels, pending investigation. That wire was not sent, according to the file read to-night. I am willing at all times to withdraw and apologise for any reflection I cast on any man, and I certainly intended to cast a reflection on the Premier to-night. Seeing that he never sent the telegram, and most probably never said that to Mr. Despeissis, I must withdraw my remark. At the same time I can assure the House that it put me in a very peculiar position indeed. Mr. Despeissis told me the Premier had decided to stop the landing of these camels, and I immediately went to the post office and sent a telegram to my correspondent, Fred. Thelemann, telling him the action the Government were taking. When I got up there, he wanted to know why I had sent him false wires. The Treasurer has commented considerably on my action in this matter. He has stated that I should not have done it, that I should have brought in the matter again, that I should have brought it before the House previously and that I should have gone to the Minister with it. I went to the Agricultural Department and I went to the head of the Government, to the Premier, with it and failed to get satisfaction. Then I came to this House and on the first opportunity I had, immediately after the Leader of the Opposition had spoken, I spoke on the Address-in-Reply and made some very definite statements. I said I maintained that the explanation given by the Govern-

ment in an extract I read was an insult to the people of Port Hedland, and I handed it back on their behalf. I said farther that the Agricultural Department had been guilty of culpable neglect in regard to the matter. Another direct statement I made concerning it was that the whole matter smelt stronger than the ordinary camel train ; and if those are not strong enough words to get an explanation, if the Government saw fit—

The Premier : You had absolutely no justification for making such a statement.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : As I have said, I do not intend to be ignored in this House. I came to this House with a determination to act with all due courtesy to everybody.

The Premier : No member of that side of the House can ever accuse me of discourtesy.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : No charge can be made against me that during last session, I was ever guilty of using language which was not allowed by the forms of the House or which was discourteous. I found that this was construed by many into fear on my part. I heard it has been stated that Underwood could not speak, and that he was frightened to. I cannot speak, I know ; but when it is said I am frightened to speak, I can inform those who say such a thing that I never look for trouble and I avoid danger when I possibly can ; but at the same time I have never yet struck a circumstance that has prevented me from doing what I thought to be right. The position I take is this, that if I can get satisfaction from the Ministers or from the departments in a manly and straightforward way, I will obtain it ; but if I cannot do that without going down on my belly, then I will put my back against the wall and fight for my constituency. The Treasurer in the course of his remarks twitted me on my pronunciation. [*The Treasurer :* I did not twit the hon. member on his pronunciation.] He twitted me on my English. I do not pride myself on my eloquence, and I never had a gift that way. Perhaps I may not be able to express myself as many other members do ; but I was born

in the bush on this continent, have earned my living since I was ten years of age, and have never had the opportunity of attending a school in my life. I think therefore that instead of being twitted, I may rather be complimented on being able to speak as well as I do. Although I am prepared to go to the Treasurer for lessons in pronunciation, I am not prepared to go to him for lessons in manners or courtesy. I have come across most illiterate bullockdrivers who could give that Minister lessons in these matters. As to the question under discussion, I will not detain the House much longer, but will make one or two short statements. From eighteen months to two years ago, teams were being sold in Marble Bar and Port Hedland and Nullagine. There was at that time an excess of teams there. I am making this statement deliberately, and it can be contradicted if I am wrong.

The Premier: What were the camels sold for?

Mr. UNDERWOOD : They were sold for £50 a head, a month or two ago.

The Premier: But what was the price at the time you speak of?

Mr. UNDERWOOD : There was no price for them. Teams were then being sent to Perth for sale.

The Premier: We had to pay £56 a head for camels required for Mr. Canning's expedition.

Mr. Holman : Who was the buyer?

Mr. UNDERWOOD : When at Port Hedland I saw Mr. Ranford and spoke to him with regard to the fodder which has been referred to. I said I wanted to look at it, and we went over the yard, examined the fodder, and he promised me then he would burn it; but as a matter of fact, that fodder, according to the statements made by Mr. Edgar, is still there. The most severe censure possible is deserved owing to the action both of the Government and the department. In regard to the contumely thrown on Mr. Barker, I have no brief for him, but I contend that his first report which appeared in the *Morning Herald* was fully borne out by the facts I learnt on the spot. I did not go to Mr. Barker myself, but spoke to

the first man I met on the wharf, who happened to be a labourer I had known for a large number of years. I asked him about the tick, and he said the ticks were dropping off the cattle and falling all over the wharf; he said they were so thick in the timbers that one almost slipped on them. If Mr. Barker were right and Dr. Burton were wrong on this point, might not the former be right in connection with the whole difficulty and Dr. Burton and Mr. Ranford be wrong? Might not Mr. Edgar be right? Why should he come down and make these statements if they were altogether libellous? On the other hand, look at that telegram I have read, and which bears truth on the face of it. It was not merely the word of Mr. Barker, for the wire mentions names of a number of other public men, including Mr. Woodroffe, agent for the Adelaide S.S. Co.; Mr. Richardson, an ex-Minister of the Crown or his relative, the owner of Pippingarra station; Mr. Snell the late mayor of Leonora, who was a political candidate on behalf of the Government side against the present Senator Lynch for the Leonora electorate, also Mr. Tatelock, whom I have known personally for many years. When a man mentions names like these, we must give considerable credence to his statements. As to the party question, I intended to move this motion, and I informed my leader of it after I had the notice written out; I also informed the Acting Premier of it before noon on Tuesday; and the statement of the Premier that he had no time to get a reply ready is all very well, but it is not my fault, for he had a full day and several hours on the previous day to look into the matter. After the speeches made by the other side, I have determined to send this question to a division, and we will see who supports this administration which may result in the devastation of the best parts of our State.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	27

Majority against .. 12

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Bath	Mr. H. Brown
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Butcher
Mr. T. L. Brown	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Collier	Mr. Davies
Mr. Holman	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Gull
Mr. Stuart	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Underwood	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Walker	Mr. Layman
Mr. Ware	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Heitmann (Teller).	Mr. Male
	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. S. F. Moore
	Mr. Picse
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Stone
	Mr. Varyard
	Mr. A. J. Wilson
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Question (to adjourn) thus negatived.

QUESTION—COMMONWEALTH BANKING BILL.

Mr. BATH asked the Treasurer: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the proposal of the Federal Government to embody a provision for Government note issue in the proposed Commonwealth Banking Bill? 2, Will he make representations to the Federal Government to ensure that the right of the State of Western Australia to undertake this duty within the borders of the State, if thought advisable in the future, is amply protected?

The TREASURER replied: 1, My attention has been drawn to certain proposed Federal legislation, and this Government is in communication with the Commonwealth Government on the subject. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—HOSPITAL SUBSCRIPTIONS, PERTH.

Mr. BATH asked the Treasurer: 1, How much did the Perth Hospital Committee raise by public subscriptions during the 12 months ending December 31st, 1906? 2, How much did they raise during the six months ending June 30th, 1907?

The TREASURER replied: 1, £366 9s. 9d., including £275 raised by Hospital Ball. 2, £194 9s.

QUESTION—NEWSPAPER STATE SUBSIDY.

Mr. WALKER asked the Premier: Has the Government been approached by any person in this State or from elsewhere, with a view of obtaining a subsidy for the purpose of establishing an evening paper in Melbourne to be run in the interests of this State?

The PREMIER replied: No definite proposal has been made.

QUESTION—SHOP ASSISTANTS, DRAPERY HOURS.

Mr. WALKER asked the Premier: 1, Is it true that Brennan Bros., at Boulder and Kalgoorlie, by supplying lunch to their employees, secured their services during the remainder of the lunch hour in contravention of the Early Closing Act? 2, Did they receive permission to thus infringe Section 11 of the said Act from the Chief Inspector of Factories?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Chief Inspector of Factories has no knowledge of such being the case. 2, No.

QUESTION—FEDERAL TRANSFERRED PROPERTIES.

Mr. STONE asked the Premier: 1, Has the property used and occupied for Federal purposes by the Federal authorities in this State, namely, buildings and plant in connection with the postal, telegraph, coastal, lighting, and other services, been valued for the Federal authorities for transfer purposes? 2, If so, when were the valuations made, and by whom? 3, What was the value? 4, When do the Federal authorities propose to pay for the said properties? 5, Who is to bear the loss by depreciation in value since Federation? 6, When transferred, will the payment be made in cash or by book entry only?

The PREMIER replied: Lieutenant Colonel Owen, Inspector General of Works for the Commonwealth, has been appointed to value the transferred properties on behalf of the Commonwealth, and Mr. F. L. Stronach, the Under Secretary for Works, has been appointed

to act on behalf of the State. So far no valuations have been made, as the time for making same is to be mutually arranged between the officers concerned. No intimation has yet been received from Colonel Owen as to when he proposes visiting this State. The loss in depreciation on re-transferred properties has so far been borne by the State, but the Government is endeavouring to make arrangements with the Commonwealth that before any farther properties are re-transferred the allowance for depreciation and a proportion of rent for the time occupied will be made. The upkeep of buildings taken over by the Commonwealth is paid for by the Commonwealth and debited back to the State under the Constitution Act. No arrangement has yet been made as to how these properties are to be paid for.

QUESTION—MINING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY.

Mr. STONE asked the Minister for Mines: Will he consider the desirability of bringing the Northampton mining district under the Mining on Private Property Act this session, when the amendment to the Mining Act comes on?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, All lands in the State, with the exception of the Hampton Plains Estate, are subject to the provisions of "The Mining Act, 1904," as regards mining for gold, silver, and other precious metals. 2, All lands alienated after 1st January, 1899, are subject to the Mining on Private Property provisions of "The Mining Act, 1904," as regards mining for minerals. 3, Provision is made in "The Mining Act, 1904," for bringing lands alienated before 1st January, 1899 (the minerals contained in which were not reserved to the Crown), under the provisions relating to Mining on Private Property. 4, As, however, when the Act was framed, the fact was overlooked that certain lands in the State had been sold at a special price and under special regulations framed for the disposal of mineral lands, the Government has decided that until Parliament has had an

opportunity of farther considering the question, the provisions of Sections 155 and 156 of the Mining Act shall not be enforced in regard to such areas, especially in view of the fact that the Hampton Plains Estate was specially excluded by Parliament from the provisions of "The Mining Act, 1904," relating to Mining on Private Property. 5, Parliament will shortly have an opportunity of expressing its opinion on this subject.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Report of Conference between Representatives of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Australia, and New Zealand, on the subject of Merchant Shipping Legislation.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at nine minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 25th July, 1907.

	PAGE
Question: Old Men's Home, Nurses...	470
Leave of Absence ...	471
East Province, vacancy declared ...	471
Supply Bill, all stages ...	471
Bill: Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment, 2a. moved..	473

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

QUESTION—OLD MEN'S HOME, NURSES.

Hon. M. L. MOSS asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What are the number of