

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 7th September, 1931.

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

QUESTION—AGENT GENERAL'S OFFICE, STAFF.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Premier: 1, What is the number of officers employed at the Agent General's office and in connection therewith? 2, The duties and salary of each? 3, The period of residence in Western Australia (if any)?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Premier) replied: 1, 2, and 3. The information required is supplied on return herewith.

OFFICERS EMPLOYED IN AGENT GENERAL'S OFFICE.

Name.	Salary.	Cost of Living Allowance.	Duties.	Res. in W.A.
	£	£ s. d.		Yrs.
Rushton, C. B. ...	636	181 18 8	Secretary ...	24
Sadler, J. C. ...	432	133 6 8	Accountant ...	Over 20
Armitage, A. ...	276	106 6 8	Senior Clerk ...	Nil
Wade, J. C. ...	276*	103 12 8	Indent Clerk ...	Nil
Bond, E. T. ...	276	106 6 8	Shipping Clerk ...	Nil
Durkin, C. ...	228	95 10 8	Record Clerk ...	Nil
Shaw, C. R. ...	180	85 18 8	Clerk Asselt. ...	Nil
Dicker, Miss E. M. ...	156	75 2 8	Typist ...	Nil
Brinc, Miss M. ...	156	75 2 8	do. ...	Nil
Bydwell, Miss H. ...	156	75 2 8	do. ...	Nil
Berttelot, V. V. ...	132	64 6 8	Accounts Clerk ...	Nil
McKay, S. ...	132	64 6 8	do. ...	Nil
Sice, J. ...	144	71 10 8	Hall Porter ...	Nil
Timms, E. ...	96	...	Telephone Attendant ...	Nil

* £100 Special Allowance.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Stubbs (for Mr. A. Thomson) leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. C. C. Maley (Irwin) on the ground of ill-health.

On motion by Mr. Willecock, leave of absence for one week granted to Mr. Troy (Mt. Magnet) on the ground of urgent private business.

On motion by Mr. Willecock, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Lutey (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) on the ground of ill-health.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1. Electoral Act Amendment.
2. Architects.
3. Constitution Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Mines, for the Premier.

RETURN—WHEAT ACQUIRED.

On motion by Hon. W. C. ANGWIN ordered:

That a return showing the number of bags of wheat acquired by the agent at each railway siding for year 1918-19 and for year 1919-20, also the number of bags of wheat returned and delivered to the Wheat Board from each siding during the years 1918-19 and 1919-20 be placed on the Table of the House.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Adoption of Children Act Amendment.
 2. Fisheries Act Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—WYNDHAM MEAT WORKS

To inquire by Select Committee.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [4.43]: I move—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the Wyndham Meat Works and to report upon—(a) Cost of all works in connection therewith; (b) Cost of maintenance; (c) Staff: its emoluments and allowances; (d) Management; (e) Business transactions; (f) And to make any recommendations it may see fit in the interests of the State.

The meat industry is of such vast importance to the State that I think it necessary to read several quotations from "The World's Meat Future" by Mr. A. W. Pearse, because I do not pretend to have that infinite knowledge of the industry which perhaps I should have to fully discuss the question. However, I have done my best to acquire the necessary knowledge in order to place it before hon. members with the view that they may agree with me in the desirability of appointing a select committee to inquire into the question. In "The World's Meat Future" written by A. W. Pearse, the editor of the "Pastoralists' Review," he refers to re-

marks made by Lord Harcourt who recently sat in the House of Lords, as follows:—

Lord Harcourt recently said in the House of Lords that while he was acting as President of the Board of Trade in 1916, he acquired information which caused him the greatest anxiety in regard to the meat supply, and added, "After the war there will be a scarcity of meat—almost a war famine. Germany, Belgium, and Holland are faced with a post-war deficit of 8,000,000 head of cattle and Denmark, Austria, Serbia and Roumania another 8,000,000. Europe, therefore, will seek to import from sixteen million to twenty million head of cattle. Britain produces only 60 per cent. of the meat consumed. I am so impressed with the seriousness of the position last year that I have sought to arrange a scheme for securing a supply of chilled meat, which will be ample for Britain for several years after the war."

That was a very important statement emanating as it did from an authority like Lord Harcourt. The writer of this book in dealing with the question states—

At the outset, I may say that I fear the information given to Lord Harcourt must have been of a hasty character. Granted that the shortage in the seven European countries named would amount to sixteen million head of cattle, that does not mean that a similar number or more would have to be imported to make up the shortage. First of all there will be probably sixteen million to twenty million adults less to eat meat, and the children, or those of them left alive, will not by any means require so much meat for a few years after the war.

When we take the position of Great Britain, we find that the total number of cattle at the end of 1916 was 12,451,450 and the total number of sheep 28,849,655, which was in excess of the numbers in Australia, although Great Britain had two million more cattle than was found in all Australia. The number of countries in the world which are developing the meat industry comprise 32. They are chiefly contained within Australasia, the United States, Canada, South America, North Africa, and Manchuria. The prospects concerning the world's meat supply are as follows:—

The opinion is held almost universally that after the war there will be a scramble amongst all the big consuming countries of the world and some of the smaller nations which have not previously been importers of meat, for a share in the world's exportable surplus. High prices are anticipated as a consequence of the keen competition to be looked for under such circumstances; and fears are freely expressed that the available supplies will fall far short of the requirements of a Continent which for some years has been reduced to very modest rations under the stress of war. The outlook for supplies is, however, more than hopeful; plenty is almost assured. The

producing countries of the world in Australasia, South America, North America and also South Africa are being favoured with good seasons as a rule, and they are all well supplied with refrigerating plant, and stock is nowhere scarce. The only problem remaining to be solved is transport, and even that is not by any means unsatisfactory. The tonnage of refrigerated steamers now in existence under the British flag is as large as at the outbreak of war.

I am giving these particulars because I do not want hon. members to think I am advocating the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the freezing works with a view necessarily to their sale or abolition. I want to bring home to them the vital importance of the development of this industry by any legitimate means, so long as they are sound ones. The latest census shows that there are in Australia 10,500,000 cattle and 80,000,000 sheep. In 1891 the figures were 11,522,000 cattle and 103,260,000 sheep. Drought, tick, red water and harassing legislation have, however, brought the numbers down to the lower level. Mr. Pearce goes on:—

It may be taken, however, for granted that, given the State politicians do not persist in their antagonism to the stock owners, the number of stock in Australia can easily be increased very largely. In the case of cattle this is particularly so, because not many men are required to handle a cattle station, whereas the amount of labour required on a sheep property is large. Great developments should take place in Western Australia in regard to cattle supply. There is an enormous area of excellent cattle country, and with freezing works at Wyndham and other ports, a big supply of frozen beef may be depended upon. This supply will be a fortnight nearer the world's markets than that of the Eastern seaboard, and necessarily the freight should be lower. The whole issue depends on the Government; with just legislation, security of tenure, and decent labour there is nothing to prevent Western Australia rivalling, and even beating Queensland in her beef output.

So far as the Kimberleys are concerned, the writer says—

Kimberley is the cattle end of the country, as will be shown by the following table:—East Kimberley, cattle at 31st December, 1917, 265,694; West Kimberley, 408,366; North-West, 61,917; Gascoyne, 49,890; Murchison and Goldfield, 73,349; Agricultural areas, 99,358; total, 958,484. The figures show that East and West Kimberley now possess 673,970 cattle or more than two-thirds of the herds of the State. The growth in Kimberley has been rapid, as at the end of 1907 the totals were 463,735 for the two Kimberleys, so that the increase in the ten-year period has been roughly 50 per

cent. Kimberley has been one of the most neglected centres of the earth. Blest with magnificent soil and noble rivers, it has been cursed by misgovernment and neglect. When freezing works and canning plants years ago might have given the country a market, cleaned up all the aged cattle, and encouraged the lessees to open out the country, the Kimberley squatters have only been able to market some 25,000 cattle annually, by shipment to Fremantle, six days' steam southwards, or to occasionally get rid of a few thousand store bullocks to Queensland. The absence of markets has been pronounced and has for many years induced a condition of things closely akin to stagnation. Owners have kept down their breeding, as it was no use going to the expense of improving the back country and carrying more cattle till the runs earned more money than a bare subsistence from the infrequent sales. And consequently the country has never really been used, developed or stocked. All that the lessees have done up to the present, is to run the frontages of the rivers and leave development till later on. The cattle seldom work back more than seven miles from the rivers and all the rest of the occupied runs is really waste. There are still considerable areas which have never been taken up; some of it on account of the blacks, who are troublesome in the back country. But all accounts agree that there is any amount of room for a big increase in the Kimberley lands when the back country is opened out and provided with water. The Western Australian Government has now erected treatment works at Wyndham, and although they are largely a failure in that they have cost a ruinous price to build, and that they can only offer the East Kimberley pastoralist 2½d. per lb. for his beef instead of its value on the Queensland coast, still they will open out some sort of a market for the country; and, with the dawn of better days the Government may perchance write off the £350,000 to £400,000 of waste due to departmentalism and day labour, and hand the concern over to the growers to run for themselves. In any case the Wyndham Works represent the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Kimberley, which will be progressive in exact proportion to the removal of the Government blight upon its marketing facilities, and prosperous as that consummation is effected.

That shows that the development in this country has been very slow indeed. If we follow up the articles written in this capital work and note the countries in which this cattle business is in progress, it will be found that Australia alone is lagging behind in regard to the institution of a proper method for carrying on the business of meat production. In Canada and the Argentine the develop-

ment is simply astounding. I will quote some remarks concerning Canada as illustrative of what the Government of that Dominion are doing for their cattle growers:—

Canadian farmers are making strenuous efforts to augment their meat supplies, the number of cattle in 1917 being about eight million against 6,600,000 in 1916—an increase of 20 per cent. Sheep also increased from 2,022,941 in 1916 to 2,369,358 in 1917. The Government is assisting the farmers in every way to increase their live stock. The Hon. Martin Burrell (Minister of Agriculture), in a statement issued recently, outlines a co-operative plan reached between the department and the Canadian railways. The aim of the scheme is to prevent depletion of Canadian breeding and feeding stock, insure the feeding of live stock in Canada, and to secure the return of feeding and breeding stock to the farms. It comprises: a redistribution policy, which will provide for the movement of stock from areas where feed is light to areas where feed is plentiful; free freight policy in connection with the transportation of breeding cattle and breeding sheep; 50 per cent. rebate of the freight rate on car-load shipments of feeding cattle from Winnipeg to country points in the eastern provinces; free shipments of car-loads of breeding sheep and lambs from Toronto and Montreal to the West. Just imagine a proposal such as this on the State-owned railways of Australia, where stud stock are more heavily freighted than fat stock when being conveyed. The "democratic" population of the big cities would at once raise a cry that the farmers were being favoured, instead of having brains to understand that the more the producer is assisted, the better it must be for the consumer.

This should illustrate to members that the question in all other parts of the world is looked upon as one of vital importance. I hope they will take into consideration the position of our own industry and the position of the Wyndham Meat Works. I want to deal briefly with the motion as it stands on the Notice Paper, and firstly with the question of the cost of our works. I have made every possible inquiry with a desire to find out what the works have really cost. The amounts have been variously stated as being anything from £600,000 to £900,000. I am inclined to the opinion that in all probability, when everything is taken into consideration, the latter amount will be found to be the correct one. My experience of any undertaking which has been carried out by the Government, is that it has been established at a cost in excess of the amount estimated.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You know that the Darwin works cost a similar amount.

Mr. Underwood: According to the estimates.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The estimate appears to be found in the report of the Select Committee of the 5th March, 1915. This report quotes the tender of Mr. Nevanas at £155,150.

Mr. Underwood: What was the Public Works estimate?

Mr. PICKERING: I do not know. The total amount I have arrived at from that report is £180,000; £30,000 for water, £30,000 for a jetty and £120,000 for the works.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They never took on the jetty.

Mr. PICKERING: This is, at all events, the only way in which I could arrive at the figures.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They did not give a price for the jetty.

Mr. PICKERING: For what purpose was this £180,000?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They said it could not be done for the money.

Mr. PICKERING: It was a broad and sweeping statement, and one on which no business community could undertake the erection of such large works. It is estimated that Vestey Bros. works cost a somewhat similar amount to that mentioned in connection with the Wyndham Meat Works.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: When Vestey's started they expected to spend £100,000.

Mr. PICKERING: When the Wyndham Meat Works are brought up to a similar condition to Vestey Bros. works they will have cost that much. It must be borne in mind that the Wyndham Meat Works are by no means yet completed.

Mr. Underwood: Are the Darwin works completed?

Mr. PICKERING: I am not prepared to say. After these works were allegedly built, I understand that Mr. Allen, an expert in this business, was brought from Queensland. He made a report upon the works, and I believe the amount he estimated as being necessary to complete them was simply astounding. I understand however that the amount approximates within the neighbourhood of £200,000. That will bring the total cost of these buildings, taking into consideration the accumulated interest and sinking fund, up to the amount that Vestey's cost. Vestey's works, however, have this advantage, that they are in the position that they can deal with the business with which they operate.

Mr. Underwood: Then why don't they?

Mr. PICKERING: The hon. member will probably have an opportunity later of telling us why they do not. I am not here to tell him that. I am talking about the Wyndham Works. We know that the Wyndham Works are not operating, and that whilst they are idle, they are costing the State something like £70,000 per annum. It would be useless for the Wyndham Meat Works to attempt to work to their full capacity because we know they have not the storage, and therefore they would need to have regular steamship service, say every three weeks.

Mr. Underwood: Nonsense.

Mr. PICKERING: The hon. member is at liberty to prove to the contrary. The question is what prospect is there for increased shipping along the North-West coast or the

far North. So far as one can see that prospect is very remote. We must remember that the shipping question cannot be confined to the service between Fremantle and the far North, but we must take into consideration the overseas shipping, and the difficulty becomes greater on account of the increased tariff lately imposed by the Federal Government. The effect of this tariff will be that there will be a decrease in the imports to Australia, which will mean a diminution in the shipping, and reduced space for works such as those at Wyndham. If the space is available it will be at an enhanced value, and as there will be absence of freight to Australia we shall be expected to pay both ways. I contend that the Wyndham Meat Works have, through various causes, been highly over-capitalised. That seems to be very evident especially in view of what I have just read in regard to the world's meat future.

Hon. T. Walker: That is nothing new.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Have you seen Vestey's Works?

Mr. PICKERING: It is estimated that in order to make the Wyndham Works a payable proposition we shall have to write off a considerable sum of money. I am prepared to put this amount down at the neighbourhood of £400,000. There has not been one State undertaking which has not been in a similar position.

Hon. P. Collier: That is nonsense.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Quote one that has been in a similar position.

Mr. PICKERING: The State Implement Works, and the State Steamship Service is going to be one of the worst.

Hon. P. Collier: Going to be; we cannot argue about the future; we can argue about the past.

Mr. PICKERING: In my opinion the financial aspect of the Wyndham Meat Works is appalling, and even though we decide to write off an amount like that which I have just quoted we shall not be getting rid of our liability. It will simply mean writing off that sum and transferring it to our funded deficit.

Hon. P. Collier: We are writing off £100,000 every year on account of fertilisers.

Mr. Chesson: Of course, that is nothing.

Mr. PICKERING: I consider therefore that a thorough investigation into these works is necessary with the view of ascertaining whether the money spent was spent wisely, and whether a saving can be effected even at this stage. With regard to Vestey's, I understand that in the course of their operations they found that it was impracticable to do their canning at their works at Darwin, and they decided to send the meat to Sydney to be treated there. This should have been known to those who designed the Wyndham Works and therefore the big expense incurred in connection with the canning portion of the works could have been cut out.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How could they possibly have known, when the Darwin works were not in existence.

Mr. PICKERING: They had the advantage of Vestey's experience.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Nothing of the kind. I have a letter from Vestey's where they point out this very fact.

Mr. PICKERING: I would also like to know what the position is in regard to the maintenance of the Wyndham Works. We know that they are situated north of the tropic of Capricorn. I have not lived in that climate but I can imagine that the climate would affect the buildings more in such a latitude than in the southern part of the State. It would be interesting to know what amount the Government have allowed for depreciation on the buildings. It would also be interesting to know what it has cost for the maintenance of these buildings. It would also be interesting to know what it is costing for the caretaking of these buildings whilst they are lying idle. These are all important matters, and the country should know something about the real position. I believe the cost of maintaining the works should be assessed at something like 7½ per cent. That I imagine would be a low amount to fix.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is not so much when your elevators will cost 3 per cent.

Mr. PICKERING: They are to be in a different situation. The hon. member, if he knows anything about buildings of the size of the meat works, must be aware that if allowed to remain idle, they must depreciate very quickly. Another matter that I would like investigated is the number of managers we have had since the works have been in operation. I should like to know what has been the result of the outlay consequent upon such changes of management.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There have only been two managers.

Mr. PICKERING: I suppose it will be difficult to get any information. I understand that there have been several structural alterations due to the change of management, and it would be interesting to know what expense the country has been put to in this respect. I would also like to know how the business has been conducted, whether contracts have been entered into, and with what results.

Hon. T. Walker: You do not require a select committee for that.

Mr. PICKERING: I think we do. We know that these works have not been able to pay as good a rate as the Queensland Works for the meat that they treat, yet we find that the Queensland works are continuing operations while our works have had to close down.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Premier told us the works were closed down for want of trade. When was that book printed that you have?

Mr. PICKERING: In 1920.

Mr. McCallum: I was in Queensland a few weeks ago and found that the meat works there, with a couple of exceptions, were closed down.

Mr. PICKERING: How many were working? Does the hon. member know?

Mr. McCallum: I know that most of them were closed down.

Mr. PICKERING: The Queensland Meat Exporting Works have a capacity of 330 cattle and the total storage is 2,000 tons. Those works closely approximate the works at Wyndham, and they were working until recently. There is another, the Ross River works at Townsville, which is in much the same position as the Queensland Meat Exporting Works. It will be interesting to know why the Wyndham Works, which appear to be very similar to those I have referred to, were not able to give as good a price for carcasses as the works in Queensland. I would also like to know what is the stock in trade at Wyndham, whether it has been judiciously purchased, whether it is likely to be of any value, and what is to become of it. It seems to me from the remarks the Premier made a short time back, that the value of the stock in trade of this undertaking is enormous. It is necessary in this respect to find out the true position. If an hon. member makes an inquiry from the Government by way of question, it seems to be the object of the Government to hide its tracks. Therefore in a case such as this, where so much money of the taxpayers is invested, there should be an investigation.

Hon. P. Collier: Do you mean to say that Ministers do not tell the truth when they reply to questions asked by members?

Mr. PICKERING: I make the assertion that the sole idea which seems to actuate Ministers is to throw dust in the eyes of the questioner.

Hon. T. Walker: That is a serious charge.

Mr. PICKERING: The labour conditions at Wyndham need to be investigated and while on this subject, the suggestion thrown out by the member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) that it might be possible for the Wyndham and the Carnarvon works to operate in unison, could be inquired into with the view of ascertaining whether an arrangement could be arrived at to use the Wyndham labour at Carnarvon when not required at Wyndham, or vice versa.

Hon. P. Collier: A simple matter, now that Brerley intends to operate up that way. He could take them backward and forwards on the one day.

Mr. PICKERING: I desire to have some information about the staff that has been engaged at the Wyndham works, as to how many have been retained, and how they are at present employed. I understand that some of the clerks are drawing £7 and £8 a week and that they are in receipt of a travelling or what is called a "waiting" allowance.

The Minister for Agriculture: You know where the staff are located.

Mr. PICKERING: The allowance granted is £1 and 25s. a day, and it is called a "waiting" allowance. Apparently they are tired of using the word "travelling." I understand this staff is not at Wyndham,

that it is in Perth and enjoying all the comforts of civilisation while it is drawing its "waiting" allowance. This is a serious matter and should also be investigated.

Hon. P. Collier: You are asking for an inquiry, and you are pronouncing judgment on all.

Mr. PICKERING: I am only giving hon. members the fringe of the knowledge I have regarding these works.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No wonder the meat works do not pay.

Mr. PICKERING: Who is responsible for this position? Is it the Minister for Agriculture or the manager of the Wyndham Meat Works?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You should have dealt with this matter at your conference.

Mr. PICKERING: I am content to deal with the matter in this Chamber without the conference. I prefer to deal with these matters in the proper place, in this Chamber. I understand that the Minister controlling the meat works is the Minister for Agriculture.

The Minister for Agriculture: Your understanding is wrong on that matter, just as is your opinion on the other matters you have quoted.

Mr. PICKERING: The Minister for Agriculture had a considerable amount to do with these works when Mr. Baxter was in that position.

Hon. P. Collier: He was a different man.

Mr. PICKERING: Perhaps the Government found that the present Minister for Agriculture is not capable of carrying out the duties.

The Minister for Agriculture: You do not know where the officers are or what department they are under. I return the compliment to you.

Mr. PICKERING: In dealing with these business transactions, I understand that there was a quantity of hides which could have been disposed of by the Wyndham Meat Works. I believe the amount involved was £54,000.

Hon. P. Collier: Have you a secret service at work?

Mr. PICKERING: When I undertake to find a thing I make it my business to find out as much as possible.

Hon. T. Walker: You do not require a select committee by any means.

Mr. McCallum: I can pick your source of information in one.

Mr. PICKERING: I bet you cannot.

Hon. P. Collier: Mr. Speaker will hold the stakes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, Order!

Mr. PICKERING: Some of the new members of this Chamber seem to think they are heaven-sent geniuses and know everything. I was dealing with the question of hides and the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) has a pretty thick one.

Hon. P. Collier: Modest men like yourself are ashamed.

Mr. PICKERING: The sum of £54,000 has been lost to the State by bad business meth-

ods. The works were offered 1s. 4d. per lb. for that quantity of hides. At that time the price ruling in Victoria was 1s. 6d. per lb. The management turned down the offer at 1s. 4d. and the next offer they could get was 9d. Ultimately the hides ran and they could not be sold at all, with the result that the State lost £54,000 through mal-administration. Whose fault was this?

Hon. P. Collier: That must have been the Minister's fault.

Mr. PICKERING: I want to allocate the blame to the person who is mainly responsible. The committee I am advocating would be able to go into this matter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin interjected.

Mr. PICKERING: It is astounding to me in view of the importance of the meat industry to Western Australia and to the world, that members of this Assembly only find this subject a matter for hilarity. Members of this Chamber are ready enough to rush into extravagant expenditure and this is the way they treat the results when they are outlined to them. The Wyndham Meat Works cost an astounding sum. The works are highly over-capitalised and in my opinion have been grossly mismanaged. A staff is in existence which is practically doing nothing. They are being paid large salaries and expenses and are doing nothing for them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You have to take your share of the responsibility.

Mr. PICKERING: I am not responsible in any way.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, you are.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am talking about the management.

Mr. PICKERING: I was not in Parliament when these works were started.

The Minister for Agriculture: The trouble is you were not consulted.

Mr. PICKERING: Had I been consulted the Wyndham Meat Works would not be in the serious position they are to-day. The question arises as to what we are to do with the works.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is the point. What are you going to do with them? Let us have your ideas.

Mr. PICKERING: It is admitted by one of the Ministers of the Crown, who is responsible with others for the meat works, that that is the point. I cannot allocate the blame to him, but I presume it must be to the Minister for State Trading Concerns, who is not present. In the absence of that Minister, who will shoulder the blame?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Mr. Colebatch is the Minister.

Mr. PICKERING: I forgot we had another department. There is the North-West Department, of course.

The Minister for Agriculture: Now make your apology.

Mr. PICKERING: To whom?

The Minister for Agriculture: To me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. PICKERING: The Minister for Agriculture represents the Minister for the North-West in this Chamber.

The Minister for Agriculture: I do not.

Mr. PICKERING: We must have a Minister here.

The Minister for Mines: You take it on. If you do, we won't have any grumbling.

Mr. PICKERING: We have not had any grumbling from the Minister for Mines, who walked into a portfolio.

Hon. P. Collier: He would storm if he were on this side of the House.

Mr. PICKERING: We had storms from him when he was over there.

The Minister for Mines: I let you down too lightly.

Mr. PICKERING: I think it is right that a select committee should be appointed by this Chamber.

Hon. P. Collier: Why not a Royal Commission?

Mr. PICKERING: I am afraid they would not be able to make the investigation as thoroughly as I should like. Members of Parliament should take the responsibility of making these investigations.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You should get the select committee to go to Wyndham and investigate the matter on the spot.

Hon. T. Walker: No, bring the works down here.

Mr. PICKERING: It might be of advantage if we could do that. We know a large amount has been expended on these works and that a further large amount is necessary before they can be put in a fit condition to operate. If it is true that in order to put these works in a better position it was necessary to write them down by between £400,000 and £500,000, is it wise for this House to assent to further expenditure to the extent of £200,000 before the disposal of these works is considered?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are not disposed of yet and they are not likely to be disposed of.

Mr. PICKERING: We should consider what we are going to do with these works. In my opinion, it should be the duty of the select committee to inquire into this matter and report to the House as to what should be done. Are we to continue the works as a State trading concern?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have scarcely started yet.

Mr. PICKERING: That is so, but the indications so far are that they will not be a paying proposition.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have not had a chance.

Mr. PICKERING: If we are not going to continue the meat works as a State trading concern, are we to submit them to public tender and sell them to the highest bidder. The meat business of Australia and of the world is threatened by a serious combination in America known, I understand, as the Armour Meat Trust. It would be a very sad thing

if the meat works were sold and bought by this combine. That aspect will have to be considered if we go into the question of selling these works. If we are not to operate the works or sell them, we must do something. Shall we write them down by such an amount that they can be operated as a payable concern by a co-operative company?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is your game, is it?

Mr. PICKERING: I always thought the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) was a man of wide vision, and that he was just in his approximation of others' intentions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am.

Mr. PICKERING: I never thought that the member for North-East Fremantle would attribute motives to other hon. members.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is that what you want them handed over for?

Mr. PICKERING: I am surprised that the member for North-East Fremantle should attribute a base motive to any hon. member who is simply putting his views before this Chamber. I thought much better of him. I want to know, however, whether we are to sell the meat works, continue them as a State trading concern, or write them down so that they may be conducted as a co-operative concern. There seems to be only the three alternatives. The difficulties of the position are great, and we want to take into consideration the enormous amount of money at stake in this business. It is the duty of the House to appreciate the responsibilities attached to the position of hon. members, and to take steps to have the matter thoroughly investigated. Outside the works, we have other difficulties such as the difficulty of shipping, the uncertainty of the market, the difficulties in connection with labour, and other difficulties which appear in every direction in connection with the meat works. Much of the difficulty could be overcome by the appointment of a select committee to thoroughly investigate the position and submit decisions to this Chamber. I do not want to take up any more time of the House, for others I presume will speak who are more familiar with the meat industry than I am myself. I have endeavoured to show the importance of the industry, and I have taken up an impartial attitude in connection therewith. I have not suggested that I am favourable to any one course more than to another, and I think that a committee such as could be appointed by this House to investigate this question, could reasonably be expected to submit to this Chamber some policy which would probably tend to relieve us of some of the difficulties with which these large meat works are confronted and which are overwhelming us.

The Minister for Agriculture: A select committee could not report during this session.

Mr. PICKERING: That is a matter for the House to consider.

On motion by the Minister for Agriculture, debate adjourned.

RETURN—PUBLIC SERVICE.

Cost of holiday and other leave.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.29]: I look upon this motion as a purely formal one, and in the circumstances I will not take up the time of the House in discussing it. I move—

That a return be laid upon the table of the House showing: (a) The total cost to the State for the year ended the 30th June, 1921, for annual holidays for State employees (exclusive of the Railway Department); (b) the cost for the same period for long service leave; (c) the cost for the same period for sick leave.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.30]: Though the wording of the motion indicates that the hon. member is merely asking for a return, I think he must have some reasons for seeking the information.

Mr. A. Thomson: I look upon it as purely a formal matter for the information of the public.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member may think that is so, but he must have some reasons for wishing to get the information, and he ought to put the House in possession of his reasons. The hon. member might let us know how it will be possible to compile an accurate return on the lines desired. I do not know whether his object is to secure information which will enable him to hold up to the public of this State—

Hon. T. Walker: In scorn.

Hon. P. COLLIER: —in scorn or in any other way, the public servants of this State, and to indicate that they are benefiting to the extent of perhaps hundreds of thousands of pounds a year by way of annual leave, long service leave, and sick leave. I want to tell the hon. member that it is not possible to compute the cost to the State of the leave as set out in this motion. Any return prepared would be misleading and calculated to present the Public Service in a false light before the people of the country. Take the first paragraph, the total cost to the State for the year ended the 30th June for annual holidays, how will that amount be calculated? The total number of members of the Public Service, the salary drawn by each and a fortnight's annual leave? Assume that there are 1,000 employees in the service who receive an average salary of £5 a week, a fortnight's annual leave would represent in money an amount of £10,000. There is no other way of calculating it; but to put it that way would be very misleading indeed. It might possibly not cost the State one penny. I know for a fact that while public servants are absent on annual leave, others are not employed to fill their places. It invariably follows that their fellow workers in the department perform the work for those who are absent on annual leave. In many cases where the work performed is of an important or special character, and requires

a professional man, it is allowed to accumulate and the officer performs it after he returns, in many cases by working overtime for which he receives no pay whatever.

The Minister for Agriculture: This leave is for recuperation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is another aspect of the question. I want to remind the member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) and the House that it is not possible to compute the cost to the State with any degree of accuracy. It might not cost the State 25 per cent. of the amount that would be shown in this return, and in many of the smaller departments, for the reasons I have given, it would not cost the State anything at all. Therefore, it is not fair for the House to carry a motion requiring the compilation of a return which would be misleading not only to members of the House but to the general public as well. Now take the case of long service leave. The same arguments apply. After a certain number of years members of the Civil Service are entitled to six months' leave, but in my experience as a Minister, I have not known many cases where the department has had to employ casual labour to fill the places of those on annual or long service leave.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is granted only after 14 years' service.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Three months after seven years' service and six months after 14 years' service.

Hon. P. COLLIER: How is it possible to estimate the cost for sick leave? It is not possible. A man is off duty say for a week on sick leave. The person compiling a return on the lines desired by the member for Katanning would calculate that man's salary at £6 a week and say the cost to the State was £6. This, however, would be misleading because no one would be employed to do his work. His fellow workers in the office would perform some of the work and some of it would be allowed to accumulate until his return.

Mr. Mann: It would cost something to get this information out.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That would not be so bad if the information was reliable, but reliable information cannot be obtained. It is not possible for any officer of the department, not even the Public Service Commissioner, to obtain this information with any degree of accuracy. Information could be supplied only on the basis I have indicated, and that would be absolutely misleading to the country and would place the Public Service in a false light. It is easy to take the number of officers in the department and multiply it by the salary for the period of the leave, but the actual cost to the State might not be £5,000. Parliament ought not to be instrumental in presenting to the public information which can only be misleading and which would be unfair to a section of the community. Then there is the aspect indicated by the Minister for

Agriculture apart from the pounds shillings and pence point of view. The principle of annual leave is now acknowledged in directions where it was never acknowledged before. Until recent years the principle of the annual holiday on full pay was conceded in the case only of public servants or employees of the Government, but our Arbitration Courts have extended that principle practically throughout the whole of our industrial life. The Arbitration Court in this State of recent years has invariably awarded annual holidays on full pay to the men and women engaged in our various industries. It is recognised as necessary that men and women should have a cessation from their labours, at least for a fortnight once every year. Employers recognise that they get value from it; it really does not cost them anything.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Hon. T. Walker: The employers gain by it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, because the employees return recuperated in health and better able to perform their duties than when they continued year after year in a jaded state of health. So, in the long run, the cost to the State is very small. Having regard to all aspects, it will be found that the annual holidays of the public servants have not really cost the State anything at all. Therefore, the House ought not to authorise the preparation of this return. I hope the motion will be rejected. I would have no objection to the hon. member obtaining information with regard to the conduct of public affairs if it was possible to obtain reliable information, but Parliament ought to be very careful about ordering the preparation of a return which will be misleading to the people of this State. Some members might regard this motion as a formal one, but it should be recognised that it is a matter of considerable importance to a large section of the people, and it is not for this House to hold up to the scorn of the community the men and women who comprise the Public Service, or to present them in any false light to the people of the country. For these reasons I intend to vote against the motion and I ask the House to do likewise.

Mr. MANN (Perth) [5.42]: As an ex-Government servant, having served for some 24 years in an important department and having been for three years in charge of an important department, I am in a position to give the House first hand information with regard to leave. If an officer is granted long service leave, for some weeks prior to going on leave he brings his files up to date and makes the way clear. If during the time he is away something with which he is personally acquainted crops up, it is allowed to stand over until his return, unless he is to be absent for a lengthy period. During the whole of my

service no special men were employed while officers were on leave. The other officers always stood up to the work, and if there was a little extra work, they did it. When the officer returned from leave he, in his turn, shouldered a little extra work while others went away.

Hon. P. Collier: Yet this return would show the wages for the whole of the period those officers were away.

Mr. MANN: If that is so, such a return would be incorrect. I am speaking from the point of view of the Police Department and the Criminal Investigation Department.

Mr. Underwood: They must have spare time.

Mr. MANN: There is no spare time. The duty roster is arranged to provide against that. In the Criminal Investigation Branch, if it is necessary to work a little longer, the officers work longer. No special officers have ever been engaged in that branch to take the place of those on leave; and I believe this applies throughout the departments of our Government service.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, debate adjourned.

RETURN—RAILWAYS, PRIVILEGE AND FREE PASSES.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.47]: I move—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing (a) the cost to the Railway Department of privilege tickets for the year ended 30th June, 1921; (b) the cost of free passes issued to railway employees for the same period; (c) the cost of free passes over Interstate railways; (d) the cost to the Railway Department of annual holidays for the same period; (e) the cost of payment for sick leave; (f) the cost of free passes for members of Parliament.

I regret that I did not deal with my previous motion at length. The object I have in moving the present motion is the same as that which caused me to bring the previous one forward. I am animated by no desire whatever to hold up any public servant or Government employee to scorn or ridicule. I presume that the arguments advanced by the Leader of the Opposition against the previous motion will be used against this one also. However, the ordinary business man knows what is the annual cost to him of the holidays of his employees.

Hon. T. Walker: He does not know that, if he is just.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am an employer in a small way, and I know what it costs me per annum for the holidays of my employees. I know what I have to pay them during their holidays.

Hon. T. Walker: That is your standard.

Hon. P. Collier: That is your basis. You say, "I pay a man £6 a week, and I give him

a fortnight's holiday, and so that costs me £12." But that is wrong.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have no desire whatever to take away any of the rights and privileges of the public servants and the railway employees. However, in the Arbitration Court it was stated only recently that the privileges were of no importance, that they were a matter of indifference to the employees. But the astonishing thing is that if an attempt is made to abolish even a single privilege of any section of the State employees, at once there is a cry that an injury is being inflicted. I admit that in several awards the Arbitration Court has latterly granted holidays to various classes of employees. But in the metropolitan area, and indeed throughout this State, there are large numbers of men who lose their pay whenever they take a holiday. Various classes of workers, for instance, lose their pay on account of wet weather, during which they cannot carry on their employment. For the information of hon. members and of the country, I desire to obtain the particulars for which my motion asks. I believe the staff of the Railway Department will be astonished when they learn the enormous amount of money involved in the various privileges which they enjoy. I do not wish to discuss the matter purely from a pounds shillings and pence point of view.

Hon. P. Collier: But there is no other way of computing the information.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not say for a single moment that these men are not entitled to their holidays and privileges. Nevertheless, the return would be interesting as showing the cost to the State of Western Australia.

Hon. T. Walker: You cannot find out the cost.

Hon. P. Collier: The information cannot be obtained.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It would be a most astounding position if our Government departments were unable to furnish information such as this. Cannot the Railway Department give, for instance, the cost of privilege tickets for the year ended on the 30th June, 1921?

Hon. P. Collier: No.

Mr. A. THOMSON: During the recent arbitration case the Commissioner of Railways stated that the privilege tickets were being abused. Evidence was given that the privilege tickets represent a great advantage to the men fortunate enough to be employed in the Railway Department.

Hon. T. Walker: What are the privilege tickets?

Mr. A. THOMSON: They really represent the right to travel at reduced rates.

Hon. T. Walker: When?

Mr. A. THOMSON: At any time of the year.

The Minister for Mines: The privilege is given to the employee and his wife and children.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is so.

Mr. McCallum: Does not the farmer's wife get the same privilege?

Mr. A. THOMSON: No.

Mr. McCallum: Yes, she does.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The member for South Fremantle can claim to know a terrible lot, but he does not know everything. That privilege is given to the farming community only once a year.

Mr. McCallum: The farm labourer's wife and children do not get that privilege.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, they do. When the farming community avail themselves of that privilege, they have to travel second class. Moreover, the privilege has been instituted only recently.

Mr. McCallum: But you would not admit its existence.

Hon. T. Walker: The member for Katanning is only sorry that the farming community do not get more privileges.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have no desire to create any ill-feeling, but I do hold that the House is entitled to know the annual cost to the State of these privilege tickets, if only by way of contrasting the position of the railway employee with that of the working man outside. The member for South Fremantle interjected that the farm labourer does not receive the same concession as is granted to the farmer, but the fact is that the farm labourer does receive that concession once a year, exactly as the farmer does. The reason for granting cheap excursion fares to the farming community, especially once per annum, is that during the period when those rates are available to the community as a whole, namely at Christmas, harvesting operations compel the agriculturist to remain on his farm.

Mr. Underwood: I am glad you brought this matter up. The North-West will want the same concession.

Mr. A. THOMSON: For the reason I have stated, the Commissioner of Railways in his wisdom has seen fit to grant the people outback and in the farming districts generally, cheap excursion fares at other, more convenient, seasons of the year.

Hon. P. Collier: That has nothing to do with the motion.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Perhaps not, but it has a great deal to do with the interjection of the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum), to which I consider myself entitled to reply.

Mr. Underwood: One wants to be a railway employee and a farmer's wife; then one is right.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Pilbara is not addressing the Chair. I shall be glad if he will allow the member for Katanning to proceed without interruption.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Commissioner of Railways has shown a desire to cut out the privilege tickets altogether. Surely the return my motion asks for can be furnished.

Hon. T. Walker: No.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Then it is time the railways were under different management.

My motion also asks for the cost of free passes issued to railway employees for the 12 months ended on the 30th June last, the cost of free passes over Interstate railways for the same period, the cost to the Railway Department of annual holidays and of sick leave, and the cost of free passes for members of Parliament.

Hon. P. Collier: Ah! That is a bit of gallery play.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I bet it costs the department more for your free pass than for mine.

Mr. A. THOMSON: What a brilliant interjection from the member for North-East Fremantle! I represent a country constituency, and I have to travel backwards and forwards between my home and Perth every week. I am entitled to use my railway privilege for that purpose.

Hon. P. Collier: This is cheap gallery play.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am sorry that I should be hurting the Leader of the Opposition so much.

Hon. P. Collier: You are not hurting me a bit.

Hon. T. Walker: We appreciate the member for Katanning from our very hearts.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am sorry to reach the depths of the hon. member's heart. I am afraid his disposition towards myself is not very friendly.

Hon. T. Walker: If it is not, the fault is yours.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Probably it is my misfortune. I hope that as a result of the furnishing of this return the railway employees will realise the enormous advantages they enjoy as compared with the average outside artisan. The effect may be to make our railway employees, and also our public servants, a little more contented with their jobs than they have shown themselves in the past. Picking up the newspaper any morning, one sees appeal after appeal from the public servants. As Parliament has given them the right to appeal, I do not blame them for taking advantage of it to ask for higher pay.

Hon. P. Collier: But you are blaming them.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I say the public servant is fully entitled to avail himself of his right of appeal; but it is time the country realised the cost of the various privileges conferred on railway employees and public servants generally.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [5.59]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [6.0]: I move an amendment—

That the words "Till this day six months" be added.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Amendment put and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	..	21
Majority against					10

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Collier	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Heron	Mr. Simons
Mr. McCallum	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Boyland	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Broun	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Carter	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Durack	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Johnston	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Mann	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Money	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Motion (adjournment) put and passed.

RETURN—UNIMPROVED LAND.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [6.6]: I move—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing the area of unimproved land held privately or by the Government within seven miles of existing railways.

We are repeatedly told that we should settle the land, already alienated but lying unimproved, along the railways. We are also told that a tax should be imposed on unimproved land. It is with a desire to get reliable information that I move the motion. I believe I shall not incur the wrath of the Leader of the Opposition by moving this motion, but will actually have his support.

Hon. T. Walker: Do not be too sure.

The Minister for Mines: How are you going to get the information?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I understand that instructions have been issued by the department for the compilation of the aggregate area of unimproved land within an area of seven miles along the railways, and I am told that the Lands Department has that information to-day. It is with the object of securing the information that I move the motion.

The Minister for Mines: The information we asked for was in regard to Government lands. You cannot tax Government lands.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I admit that, but I am afraid we have not too much Government land left. Still, whatever there may be available, it is just as well that we should have a return showing the area. We are frequently told that we should not build more railways, but should utilise the vacant land along the

existing lines in order to make the railways pay. I should like to know whether there really are large areas of unimproved land along the railways.

Mr. Money: The information you ask for would be quite useless unless we got a classification as well.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am desirous of getting the information asked for. Probably an attempt will be made to impose an unimproved land tax, in which case this information should be available to members.

The Minister for Mines: You could not get it in the form in which you ask for it.

Hon. P. Collier: To get that information would require hundreds of surveyors at work for five years.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And when you got it it would be of no use.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Then it would show the value of the statement that there is such a large area of unimproved land along the railways.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We can all see that from any railway train.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the classification should be required we could get it subsequently.

Hon. P. Collier: Your object is to hold up the struggling farmers as not having improved their lands.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am afraid the Leader of the Opposition is not very well to-day; nothing seems to please him.

Hon. P. Collier: Well, why should you hold up the poor farmers who, in consequence of having passed through such trying times, have been unable to improve their lands?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Judging from the various statements made, I do not think it is the struggling farmers whom the Leader of the Opposition has been cavilling at.

Hon. P. Collier: I am more concerned for them than for the profiteering builders.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is people holding vast areas of unimproved land along miles and miles of railway, who are parasites living upon the public and waiting only until they can sell their land.

Hon. T. Walker: You have included the Government as a parasite.

Mr. Pickering: Most local authorities think so.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am desirous of getting this information so that when the question of unimproved land taxation comes before the House we shall be in a position to discuss it calmly and dispassionately.

On motion by the Minister of Mines, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

PAPERS—STRANDING OF S.S. "BAMBRA."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [7.30]: I move—

That all papers relating to the stranding of the s.s. "Bambra" on the Success bank,

near Fremantle, on or about Monday, 27th September, 1920, and all papers relating to the retirement of Captain Rodger, late of the s.s. "Bambra," be laid on the table of the House.

I move this motion so that I may take further action in connection with this case if I find it necessary to do so. Most hon. members are aware that the "Bambra" stranded on the Success bank in 1920. Unfortunately, during that trip, one or two slight accidents occurred, but I do not think the master of the ship could have been held blameable in respect to them. Before the "Bambra" arrived at Fremantle the captain received a wireless message to go to Robb's Jetty that night. He replied that it was too late for the ship to go there and too dangerous at that time of the night. The ship was therefore brought into the river. Instructions were then given by the officials in charge of the State Steamship service that it was imperative that he should go to Robb's Jetty that night, because the then Honorary Minister (Mr. Baxter) had some cattle on board and must catch the next morning's market as other cattle were arriving on the following day.

The Minister for Mines: That is not correct; there was an inquiry.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am assured, on the best of authority, it is correct.

The Minister for Mines: The best authority is the inquiry, which showed that it was not correct.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is only since the stranding of the "Bambra" that there could have been a proper court of inquiry under the Navigation Act to make an investigation into these matters, and it was only during last session or the session before that the Act was amended to permit of that being done. The ship went out against the wish of the captain. The captain, of course, should have refused to go, and committed an error of judgment in not disobeying those orders. Captain Rodger had been engaged in the service of the State almost since the commencement of the State Steamship service, and was recognised as the one man who knew how to set a course. He was a good and efficient officer.

Mr. Underwood: He is not the only man.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, there are others outside the service.

Mr. Underwood: There are one or two in the service also.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: At all events he was recognised as one who thoroughly understood the North-West coast and as being very suitable for the position he held. After the ship had run on the Success bank he took her to Sydney to be overhauled and put into proper condition. On his return to Fremantle he made another trip to the North-West, and on his return from that trip was handed a letter of dismissal, after nine years of service. Although he was dismissed from the service the manager of the State Steamship Department did not say that he was not qualified to look after a ship, because the captain was immediately asked to take the ship to Carnar-

von to permit of another master taking control of her there. This showed that the department was not afraid to trust him with a ship, and also proved that the officer had carried out his work as a captain in a satisfactory way. The least that could have been done to a man who had given nine years of faithful service to the department, and had looked after the interests of the State in every possible way, would have been to ask him to resign. Once a man is dismissed from the service—

The Minister for Mines: He was not dismissed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have not seen the letter, neither have I spoken to the captain on the matter, but I have it on reliable authority that such a letter of dismissal was written to him. Certain action has been reported to me as having occurred, leading to his dismissal from the service. There are other matters which might require investigation, and that is one of the reasons why I want the papers laid on the table of the House. In my opinion the man has been dealt with unjustly and unfairly. It is the duty of Parliament to see that officers in the service are dealt with properly, fairly and justly. I want the papers to see what the result of the inquiry was. If the inquiry was not satisfactory it is my intention to ask the House to appoint a select committee to investigate into the matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [7.37]: I have no objection to the papers being laid on the Table of the House. If the hon. member had consulted me about this motion I would have accepted it as formal in order that the papers might have been laid on the Table at once. I understand, however, he desired to explain why he wanted these papers, and the reasons he has given prompt me to say that it is desirable that these papers be presented to the House. I heard of these rumours at the time.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I heard of them a long time ago.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was alleged that definite instructions had been issued to the captain that, because the then Honorary Minister (Mr. Baxter) had cattle on board, the "Bambra" must at all costs take these cattle to Robbs Jetty and land them that night. The "Bambra" became stranded on the Success bank. As soon as I heard of these rumours I got into touch with Mr. Glyde, the manager of the service, and advised him accordingly. He produced, to my entire satisfaction, evidence to the effect that the rumours were absolutely groundless. He explained that he warned the captain that owing to the lateness of the hour it was undesirable for him to take any risk, but that if he could reach Robbs Jetty in safety at that time of night he could do so out of consideration for the cattle on board. Fortunately, Mr. Glyde gave the captain this advice in writing, as it came out at the inquiry, and told him he

was not to take any risk, and further that if he did not think he could get to Robbs Jetty in safety he was to anchor outside and wait for daylight. The captain, unfortunately, allowed his zeal for the service to over-ride his judgment. He attempted to get over the Success bank, and, according to the evidence, stranded there. I am glad the hon. member has mentioned the matter in order that the statements which have been made may be publicly denied. My memory does not generally play me false, and I have a distinct recollection of the fact that I received a report from the manager of the service, who advised me that he had fortunately given the captain definite instructions in writing regarding this matter. I am not aware that Captain Rodger was dismissed from the service. Indeed, I know of no ground upon which he could have been dismissed. The position was that owing to the loss of the "Kwinana" we had one captain too many in the service. It was a question of choosing between the present captain of the "Bambra," who was then captain of the "Kwinana," and Captain Rodger. In view of what might be termed the bad luck which had followed in the wake of the "Bambra" for some time, the choice of the management fell upon the captain of the "Kwinana."

Mr. Angelo: The youth of the other captain may have been taken into consideration.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know about that. The manager of the service took everything into consideration. He was full of regret at having to dispense with the services of Captain Rodger, but ships were not available for both captains. He was entitled to view the matter from the standpoint of the captain who, whether owing to bad luck or some other reason, had been up against difficulties in his skipperiship during the previous months, and to take on the man who had the better service from the point of view of navigation. I do not think the hon. member could object to that attitude. I am not aware that Captain Rodger received anything in the nature of a dismissal, but the papers will reveal that. I assure the hon. member that they will satisfy him to the full in regard to the stranding of the vessel, and also in regard to Captain Rodger himself. Mr. Glyde saw me in the office at the time he was considering the matter, and expressed regret that he had to dispense with the services of one of the captains.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How could he have put his instructions in writing as to taking extra care after the vessel had stranded?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I did not say that. I said that I drew Mr. Glyde's attention to the circulation of these rumours after the "Bambra" was stranded, and that he had told me there was no truth in them; that fortunately for him the in-

structions he had given to the captain of the "Bambra" were in writing.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You said he gave the instructions afterwards; I understood you to say that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I did not mean anything of the kind. I meant exactly what I am saying now, that Mr. Glyde advised me that fortunately for him he had handed instructions in writing to the captain that he was to take no risk in navigating his ship to Robbs Jetty in the darkness, and that if there was any danger involved in crossing the Success bank he was to anchor outside until daylight. Unfortunately the skipper, to use the very expression of the manager of the service, allowed his zeal for the service to over-ride his judgment.

Mr. Angelo: That was the finding of the court.

Mr. Underwood: There was no court.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There was no court in the terms of the Navigation Act, but an inquiry was held in exactly the same fashion as if it had been held under the Navigation Act. The finding of the court, which might be called an informal court, was just the same as if it had been delivered in the terms of the Act.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: With a resident magistrate and all that?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, by Capt. Winzar who inquired into all these matters.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And then the question goes on to a court of marine inquiry?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is as far as it went. I have no objection to the papers being laid on the Table of the House.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [7.45]: I do not know that there is much to be gained by discussing this matter. I count Captain Rodger as a very sincere friend. I have known him for many years as one of the best of navigators, and I have nothing to say against the man who took his place. He also is a very fine officer. In regard to the dismissal of Captain Rodger, however, I am of the opinion, with the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) that he was somewhat harshly dealt with. It was not only the stranding on the Success bank, but it will be borne in mind that he had a run of bad luck. He ran on to a bank at Port Hedland and he was neaped there for nearly a fortnight. Then coming down the coast he ran into the lugger "Moana" and finished up with this third disaster by running on to the Success bank. I saw Captain Rodger in Melbourne when I was over there and spoke to him about the matter. He told me that it was nobody's fault but his own, and that the passage was not sufficiently marked. He told me that he was desirous of getting the cattle off the ship. That would be a quite correct desire on the part of any man who was anxious to work his ship well. I have been through that passage; I was on the ship

with Captain Rodger on the first time any commercial ship went through it. There are only two or three little flags to show the passage and, with a choppy sea, it is quite impossible to detect those flags, particularly when darkness is approaching. Captain Rodger thought that he had got the correct turning, but it transpired that he turned about 100 yards too soon, and, of course, ran his ship on to the bank. I appreciate Captain Rodger's effort to get the cattle off the ship and I can say on the authority of Captain Rodger that there was no compulsion in connection with that effort and no instructions from Mr. Baxter to get the cattle off. It was a natural desire to do good work on the ship of which he was the commander. He told me that in Melbourne, and also that it was his own fault and that he should not have tried to do it. He tried to do, not altogether the impossible, but something which was likely to get him into trouble. It was more likely that he would run on the bank than that he would get through.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He got instructions to go there.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No, and if he had received instructions to go—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He should not have gone.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is it. He was the commander of the ship and neither owners nor agent can instruct a captain to do things which the captain considers are not safe. It was with a desire to do the best he could that he took the risk in a badly marked channel, in a choppy sea and with darkness approaching. He went on to the bank. I rather approve of Captain Rodger having made the effort. I do not think any fault can be found with anybody. You cannot find fault where there is no fault to be found, even with the Minister, or those who were over the captain. But what I do think was a bit hard was that, having had that run of very bad luck, the authorities should have got rid of him. As a matter of fact they sacked him, though he had done very good service. With regard to the "Moana," I think there was more in the running down of that lugger than there was in the grounding on the Success bank. There was a complaint from some cranky coot at Carnarvon and also one from Broome. In connection with the running down of the lugger, Captain Wyles was following in the "Kwinana" immediately behind Captain Rodger. Just about the point where he ran down the lugger, the "Kwinana" took a different course. The "Bambra" was going into Onslow. The other ship, having got through the passage, kept out wide. Captain Wyles said to me, "I was following on Jimmy's light, and there was not a light showing on the lugger, which was anchored right in the fairway of ships coming down the coast." Captain Wyles added that as soon as he heard the whistles, he came through blowing his whistle practically all the time. When he got his whistle go-

ing, lights on luggers appeared all around him. The running down of the "Moana" was counted against Captain Rodger. I am certain that there is nothing at all in the rumour that Captain Rodger was even asked to take the cattle to Robbs Jetty just because they belonged to the then Honorary Minister, Mr. Baxter. I am certain that Mr. Baxter had nothing to do with it. I am positive also that Captain Rodger had a very bad run of luck, and bearing that in mind, the manager of the State steamships might well have retained his services. In the three mishaps that occurred on that trip, not one, in my opinion, was the fault of the captain. But there it was, and trouble fell thickly upon him, and as the State steamers did not want to have any further trouble they got rid of Captain Rodger.

The Minister for Mines: He was a surplus skipper.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is not correct. The present captain of the "Bambra" was mate under Captain Rodger on that vessel. He was mate under Captain Saunders of the "Bambra" when Captain Rodger was master of the "Kwinana." When Captain Saunders went into the pilot service, Captain Rodger was promoted from the "Kwinana" to the "Bambra" and they took the mate of the "Bambra" and appointed him captain of the "Kwinana." Captain Rodger should still be in his position. I support the motion, and I am under the impression that a great deal will be learnt from the papers. I can only again express my regret that the State steamships have lost the services of Captain Rodger.

Resolved: That motions be continued.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [7.56]: I am pleased that the Minister has agreed to lay the papers in connection with this matter on the Table of the House. Captain Rodger was in the employ of the W.A. Steam Navigation Company, and, later, in that of the State Steamship Service, and I am voicing the opinion of everyone in the North-West who had dealings with him, when I say that he was always a most courteous and efficient officer, either as mate or as a captain. I trust he will not suffer through the action which has been taken by the State Steamship Service. During the few years he was in charge of the "Bambra" he had a very difficult proposition to handle; he was in charge of a most unsuitable ship trading on an exacting coast. He did his utmost for the people who travelled in that ship and also for those who sent stock by it. I sincerely hope that if the Government intend to build new ships at home, that Captain Rodger's services will be availed of as supervisor or adviser, because he knows the North-West coast thoroughly, and he knows the kind of ship that is required and all the little points which will make for success.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle—in reply) [7.58]: I am pleased to

have the assurance of the Minister and also the member for Pilbara that no instructions were issued to Captain Rodger. I have a letter here which rather contradicts the statements made by those hon. gentlemen. A radio message was sent to him to make for Robb's Jetty and he replied, "Impossible to make Robb's Jetty to-night." On arrival he received a letter.

Mr. Angelo: Was not a telegram sent to him to go direct to Robb's Jetty?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. A radio was sent to him before he reached port and he replied as I have stated. On arrival he got a letter instructing him to go to Robb's Jetty and anchor if he could not make the buoy. The captain protested saying, "Taking big risk; what is the reason for hurry?" The reply was, "Baxter, Minister's cattle on board. Anxious for good sale as 'Moir's' cattle due next day." I do not want to go into this question now, but it was one of my reasons for moving for the papers. The captain was not to be blamed. Captain Rodger had asked that the steering gear of the "Bambra" should be put in thorough order. Even when he went ashore at Porth Hedland, the indicator on the bridge showing how to steer was out of order and had been out of order for several trips. He could not get it put in order, no matter how often he asked for it. This is a serious matter. I remember, that some years ago, a four-masted ship went ashore at Geraldton. There was no blame on the captain. I said to the captain, "It may not affect you with the company." He said, "Then you do not know as much about these things as I do. Shipmasters are so numerous at Liverpool that pigs could almost be fed on them." The same thing might apply here. Captain Rodger, after nine years of good service, was handed his dismissal. And I have been told by another gentleman that there could be no other reason for it but the going on the bank, because just prior to that he had been told by the manager "You are the best man I have in the service." I am not satisfied, but my information is very plain and direct. He was to go. He protested, and the reason is there. That being so, I felt justified in moving for the papers in order to find out what the position really is.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—FEDERATION AND THE STATE.

To inquire by Select Committee.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [8.2]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable in view of the contemplated convention to review the Federal Constitution, that a joint select committee of both Houses of the Western Australian Parliament be appointed to inquire as to the effect the Federal compact has had

upon the finances and industries of Western Australia, and to advise as to what amendments of the Constitution are desirable in the interests of the State.

It was on the 1st January, 1901, that the people of the six colonies of Australia, and Tasmania, were united by a Royal Proclamation as the Commonwealth of Australia. Since then 20 years have elapsed, and it is time we inquired into the effect the Federal compact has had on Western Australia. I could speak for a couple of hours pointing out the great disadvantages Western Australia has suffered through Federation. However, nearly every member appears to hold the same views, and so I do not intend to take up time with a long speech. Still, for the enlightenment of new members I propose to quote a few extracts from speeches by party leaders. The Premier the other night said—

We have suffered great financial loss through Federation. I do think we have paid rather dearly for Federation. If we were not federated our position would be very different from what it is to-day.

The leader of the House in another place said a few days ago—

It is idle to deny that the Federal Government have frequently done things which are opposed to the spirit of the Constitution and, in many cases, opposed to the wording of the Constitution.

The Minister for Mines at a public meeting held in the Town Hall a few years ago moved the following motion—

That the citizens of Western Australia as represented at this public meeting feel considerable indignation at several acts perpetrated by the Commonwealth Government detrimental to the best interests of this State, and pledge themselves to obtain relief by every possible means.

The Minister for Works last year concluded a strong indictment as follows—

I want to see Western Australia take her proper place, which she will not do as long as she is shackled and bound to people who do not care a twopenny hang for her.

The Leader of the Opposition the other night said—

We have been drawn upon by the Commonwealth Authorities unduly. We got no consideration from the Federal Government during the five years I was in office, and no matter what party is in power, I do not think we can expect consideration from the Federal authorities.

The member for Kanowna the other night said—

It is impossible for this State to recover itself while the hands of the Commonwealth in a financial sense are upon the State. Every source of revenue is taken from us before we can get there.

Mr. Harrison, the Leader of this party, said—

The Federal Government have shown no friendship to Western Australia.

And the deputy Leader of this party said—

I think it is essential that Western Australia should be prepared to put its case before the convention.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member reading all this from "Hansard" of the present session?

Mr. ANGELO: No, I am quoting it from memory and from typewritten notes. Last year we had several other opinions worth quoting. One was from the late Attorney General as follows—

Every member will agree as to the bad treatment Western Australia has received from the hands of the Commonwealth. It should be made known to the people that this is the root of all our trouble. They should be informed of the manner in which the Federal authorities have treated us.

And the late Colonial Treasurer said—

I do not know of any State that has suffered more than Western Australia from Federation. I do not know of any other Parliament that is equal to the Commonwealth Parliament in the matter of disregarding obvious obligations. I want this Parliament to realise the responsibility resting on us to prepare our case.

Another ex-Cabinet Minister said—

If we are going to do any good with any convention or with the Federal Ministers as regards getting our dues, it will certainly not be by a general agitation. It can only be done by means of a proper logical statement carefully prepared with facts and well considered reasons.

During the last 12 months the Press also have been very emphatic on the point that we should do something to ameliorate the treatment we are getting from the Federal Government. Again, hon. members will have had this report by Mr. Owen, the Under Treasurer, one of the most important documents that has been prepared by an official in Western Australia. According to Mr. Owen we lost, from the 1st January, 1901, to the 30th June, 1919, as the result of Federation a little over £8,000,000. If the figures were brought up to the 30th June, 1921, it would be found that we have lost over £10,000,000 through our relationship to the Commonwealth. In a condensed form I have put together a few notes regarding the evils of Federation in respect of Western Australia. They are as follows: (1) There has been unjustifiable Federal encroachment on State rights by the imposition of Federal taxation. (2) The States voluntarily handed over to the Commonwealth their best form of revenue, namely, Customs and Excise, and retained large non-paying services such as Education, Justice, Medical and Health, Lunacy, and Water Supply. (3) Federation has imposed a loss of over ten million pounds on the State.

(4) The existence and development of secondary industries in this State are made almost impossible. (5) The establishment of the Commonwealth Savings Bank through the medium of the post offices was an unfair procedure, and an invasion of State rights, virtually commandeering the business and good-will worked up for many years by the State institution. (6) The establishment of the Commonwealth Bank with sole power to issue notes was a forcible creation of a monopoly, and unnecessary and unjust. (7) The principle that where the laws of the Commonwealth and of the State clash the Federal laws shall prevail, is inconsistent with the idea of the federation of sovereign States. (8) That whilst the expenditure of the Federal Government was estimated at less than one million pounds per annum before Federation, it amounted to over 50 millions last year. (9) There has been gross extravagance in Federal administration. (10) Western Australia is asked to develop her northern territory, at the same time being compelled to contribute to the development of the Federal northern territory. (11) That by passing the Surplus Revenue Act the Federal Government repudiate the Federal compact. (12) The Federal Government have practically ruined this State's base metal industry. (13) The injustice to the State caused by the War Precautions Act. That is not a bad little list to begin with. I notice by a report in the "West Australian" that some members of another place are interested in this matter. According to that report, Mr. Ewing said that the State Government had hardly a feather to fly with, owing to the grasping methods of the Federal Government. Whereupon the Minister for Education said that the Federal Government had a huge surplus for the past year, and that we were entitled to a portion of it. Mr. Ewing asked "Why don't you get it?" According to the report, the Minister in reply merely shrugged his shoulders, raised his eyebrows and spread out his hands in an attitude of despair.

Hon. P. Collier: He did not do that when he was criticising our Government. Then we were responsible for all that was amiss in the world.

Mr. ANGELO: I know that this newspaper report must be somewhat exaggerated, for I am positive that the Minister for Education is just as keen as any other member on seeing that better treatment shall be meted out to us. If the Press thinks that all the Ministers can do when remedies are required is to shrug their shoulders, it is a pity. In my opinion the best remedy for the bad treatment we are getting is that a joint select committee of both Houses should be appointed to go thoroughly into the question. If the House will agree to the appointment of the committee, I think something should be done immediately. The convention is now due. We are told that as soon as the Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes, returns from England he intends to introduce

a Bill in the Federal Parliament to authorise the assembling of this convention. We all know that Mr. Hughes is desirous of extending the powers of the Federal Government. It will be remembered that he put forward a referendum asking for increased powers. It is necessary, therefore, that we should do something immediately to check the cormorant-like attitude of the Federal Government, who desire to absorb some of the State rights we have enjoyed up to the present time. A member of the House suggested last year that one of the best methods to achieve the result I am aiming at, would be for the Ministers to prepare a case. I think members will agree that Ministers have as much as they can shoulder at the present time. For six Ministers to look after the interests and varied activities of the State and administer their different departments, is asking them to do as much as they can possibly undertake within the time at their disposal. It has also been suggested that the staff of the Civil Service should be called upon to provide the material for the case. We are not concerned only with the financial loss Western Australia has suffered through Federation, but we require to see how Federation has affected our industries and commercial life. That can only be done by a select committee empowered to take evidence and make full inquiries. When the convention has been agreed to there will be an election. We have had experience of such matters before, and I am certain that when the convention is agreed to, there will be a rush to get the election over; delegates will be elected and hurried away to attend the convention. They will not have time to prepare the case for Western Australia. In such circumstances they would go to the convention quite ignorant, presumably, as to how we have suffered in this State. The investigations of the select committee will take some time, because evidence will have to be called from people interested in all the different industries of the State and from every avenue of life. The select committee should prepare the case thoroughly in the same way as a firm of solicitors prepare a case for barristers to plead before a court. When the select committee has prepared the case, it can be handed over to the delegates when they are elected, and those delegates will act as our advocates at the convention. Other States are also moving in this direction. Some days ago the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. P. Collier) informed me that one of the members in the South Australian House of Assembly was moving along somewhat similar lines. I looked up this matter and I found in the "West Australian" the following paragraph:—

In the Assembly on the 28th September Mr. Young will submit a motion expressing the desirableness of the Government conferring with the other State Governments with a view to the appointment of a conference consisting of four members from each State Parliament to review the action

of the Federal Parliament as relating to State rights and suggesting the appointment of a Federal convention.

I wrote to Mr. Young and sent him a copy of the motion I have submitted to the House this evening. I also put before him the view I take of this matter. I informed him that I thought it would be better for each of the three smaller States—that is Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania—to hold separate inquiries as I am suggesting in Western Australia. When the separate inquiries have been completed, the three smaller States should meet in a preliminary conference to compare notes as to the treatment the several States have received from the Commonwealth and to arrive at a common policy with which they should go to the convention. I understand that the six States will have equal representation at the convention. If the three small States combine in a common policy, they will have such a voting power at the convention as will enable them to put forward what suggestions they require with some hope of success. I wrote to Mr. Young, who is the member for Murray, and later on I sent him the following telegram—

My motion probably Wednesday. What is your opinion of suggestion smaller States make independent inquiries followed by conference between themselves. How does your Premier view matter? Do you know any member would take action similar ours in Tasmania?

I received the following telegram in reply from Mr. Young under date the 29th August:—

Coincide views your letter and speech smaller States confer and then meet larger States. Premier bringing matter forward Premiers' conference. Writing friends in Tasmania.

I do not quite approve of the idea of bringing this matter before the Premier's conference. I think we should keep it to ourselves until we know exactly where we stand and until we formulate a policy for ourselves. On the 30th August I received the further telegram from Mr. Young—

Premier favours preliminary conference as suggested by you. My motion September 28.

If we can carry this motion through Parliament here, and the select committee is appointed and the case thoroughly inquired into, we will not be acting alone, for the other two smaller States will be pursuing the same course. I think we are well able to justify the object I have in submitting this motion. We should go to the convention with a carefully prepared case as to how we have fared under Federation. The inquiry should be one from all points of view covering all factors bearing on the development of our industries, besides the financial aspect, which, according to the Under Treasurer, Mr. Owen, has been most unsatisfactory to Western Australia. It has been said that the convention will not be able to accomplish much because

it can only make recommendations to the Federal Government. I am certain, however, that if the convention agrees to recommendations for alterations in the Constitution in order to make more equitable provisions for the smaller States, the Federal Government will be compelled to accept them. If not, the matter can be taken to a higher place still. I wish to conclude by saying that this is a matter of the utmost urgency. We are now approaching the middle of September. If the committee is to be appointed, it will have to start taking evidence immediately and not very many weeks will elapse before the Bill authorising the convention will be brought before the Federal Parliament. Should the committee be appointed we must get to work as quickly as possible, so as to enable us in due course to hold a conference with the smaller States. South Australia has apparently already agreed to the holding of such a conference. I hope the Government will allow this motion to be dealt with as speedily as possible. If it were possible to get a decision to-night, it would be advantageous to this State. People have said that the State is in a bog and it is impossible to get out of it. We know we are in a bad position, but we must not be pessimistic. We must be optimistic about this matter, and we must do our best to get out of our present difficult position. I am not advocating secession, but better treatment by the Federal Government and here is the opportunity to review the position. Twenty years of the Federal compact have gone by and probably there will not be another convention before another 20 years have elapsed. Now is the time if we have grievances to put them forward properly and the proper place will be the convention. To put our views properly before that convention we must prepare our case in a befitting manner, and to achieve that end I submit the motion for the consideration of the House.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [8.26]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.27] I rather regret the Government are not prepared to appoint the select committee straight away. I see the urgent necessity for it, and I will not labour the position. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) is to be congratulated upon his action in urging and stressing the importance of the appointment of this select committee. It is forecasted that the Federal Convention will meet in 1922. I agree with the hon. member's remarks when he urges that the Ministers will not be able to thoroughly prepare the case for Western Australia and suggest amendments to the Constitution because of the duties they have to carry out. There are a few alterations of the Constitution which are necessary. For instance, I consider that one very much needed

alteration is that in connection with the smaller States movement. Where there are people who are desirous of forming themselves into a smaller State, they should have that right by way of referendum, taken in that particular area. They should have the right to become a smaller State and have all the powers of self Government conferred upon them just as we have them under the Constitution for the State of Western Australia. I sincerely trust that the committee will be appointed and that it will be drawn from all sections of this House as well as from another place. The matter is of vital importance to the future and well-being of the State. I trust the motion moved by the member for Gascoyne will be agreed to.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [8.29]: I thought this matter would have been discussed by Ministers straight away. It is a matter of grave urgency. We have had it discussed on several occasions and the lines adopted were those indicated by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo). It is necessary that there should be amendments to the Commonwealth Constitution for the betterment of the States, more particularly with regard to the per capita amount returned to Western Australia. It is possible that this per capita amount may be reduced considerably very shortly and ultimately be finally extinguished. It is difficult to know what will then be the position of Western Australia financially. The most serious difficulties confront us in every possible direction, and we know that serious difficulties confront the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has a huge debt to meet; it has big expenditure with which in some respects we are not in accord. There is the question of the Federal capital. I venture to say there is a great divergence of opinion as to the advisability of proceeding with this, to my mind, extravagant work. After all, it does not matter to the people of Western Australia whether the Federal capital is in Melbourne or in Sydney. The completion of the Federal capital, if it is to be completed, might well be postponed for a considerable time. Then there is the very serious question of the tariff. Whether it will be possible for this convention to deal with the fiscal policy of the Commonwealth I cannot say, but I do say that the fiscal policy of the Commonwealth at present is most inimical to the interests of this State. Remote as we are from Melbourne, we get none of the advantages which accrue to the manufacturers of Victoria, and the position of this State is very difficult in consequence. When we realise that the tariff was recently increased to the extent of imposing an additional eleven millions of indirect taxation, we must admit that our Treasurer will find it very difficult to impose additional taxation by direct means. I hope that members will take a live interest in this debate.

Hon. T. Walker: Then put a bit of life into it.

Hon. P. Collier: It is strange that the Government should have no policy in the matter at all.

Mr. PICKERING: There does not seem to be much life in the House to-night. I do not know whether this is due to the oration I delivered this afternoon on the question of the Wyndham Meat Works.

Hon. P. Collier: You certainly made a long speech.

Mr. PICKERING: Nothing compared with the length of the speech I intend to make later on. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) has endeavoured to convince the House of the urgency of this matter. There are several very pertinent questions which need to be discussed before we approach the convention.

Hon. P. Collier: Let us carry the motion.

Mr. PICKERING: I think it would be advisable to follow the lines suggested by the member for Gascoyne, namely, for the committees representing the small States to confer before they meet with the larger States. The small States have interests in common, and if they can unite, it is possible that their interests may be safeguarded. I sincerely hope that the motion will be carried.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roeboourne) [8.33]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot accept the motion for adjournment because 15 minutes have not elapsed since a motion for adjournment was negatived.

Hon. T. Walker: Question!

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [8.34]: For some considerable time we have been complaining—

Hon. P. Collier: Why stonewall? We would have carried the motion.

Mr. MONEY: We have been complaining of the treatment we have received at the hands of the Federal Government.

Hon. P. Collier: Who have?

Mr. MONEY: Pretty well the whole of the people of Western Australia, including some members on the Opposition side of the House. It was very pleasing indeed to hear the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) the other night in agreement with me when he said that we had not had a fair deal at the hands of the Federal Government.

Hon. P. Collier: I am only trying to fill out the quarter of an hour for you.

Mr. MONEY: Some steps should be taken to represent the rights and interests of Western Australia at the convention. So far as I know, this is the first step taken by the House with that object in view. To sit down and do nothing when there is an opportunity to do something would not be creditable to us.

Hon. T. Walker: But we shall be at the mercy of the convention which will be convened by the Commonwealth, directed by them, arranged by them, and the questions to be decided will be dictated by them.

Mr. MONEY: If we are to be at the mercy of the convention and if we do not get our rights, we may have to take other steps to obtain them.

Hon. P. Collier: That sounds like a threat.

Mr. MONEY: There are other means apart from the convention by which to attain our objects.

Hon. T. Walker: Revolution?

Mr. MONEY: If the methods of the convention are to be a reflex of the attitude of the Federal Government towards Western Australia, we shall have an additional reason for seeking to obtain our rights even at a later date. It has been stated by a member in another place that we are suffering great disabilities at the hands of the Federal Government, and the Under Treasurer, Mr. Owen, has expressed a similar opinion. I regard the present as an opportunity to do something. If we do not make an attempt, we can never expect to accomplish anything.

Hon. T. Walker: Sit down! The quarter of an hour is up.

Mr. MONEY: We talk too much on these matters and do too little. Surely this is a first step towards attempting to do something.

Hon. T. Walker: No, it is only a preparation for more talk.

Mr. MONEY: I would like to know whether the Government are prepared to take any steps in contemplation of the meeting of the convention next year.

Hon. P. Collier: They cannot do anything.

Hon. T. Walker: No, we are at the mercy of the Commonwealth.

Mr. MONEY: Are the Government taking any steps with regard to the representation of Western Australia at the convention?

Hon. P. Collier: The Government have no power to take steps in that direction at this stage.

Mr. MONEY: It would be of assistance if the Government gave some lead or took some step to indicate how the claims of Western Australia might be represented at the convention.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the trouble; we get no lead from the Government.

Mr. MONEY: If it is left entirely to the people, they will be without a lead. The object of the motion really is to give the people a lead. I have heard it said that members who will represent this State at the convention must be free from all party politics. The object of the motion is to appoint a select committee to prepare our case and hand it over to our advocates at the convention. No member can offer any objection to the adoption of this course.

On motion by Mr. MacCallum Smith, debate adjourned.

RETURN—GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

Official Visits to Eastern States.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [8.40]: I move—

That a return be laid upon the Table showing:—(a) The names and official positions of Government officers of all departments who have visited other States of the Commonwealth or who have been absent from Western Australia on official inquiries or duties during the last financial year. (b) The salary attached to the position of each officer concerned. (c) The amount of salary paid to each covering the period of absence from the State. (d) The daily and total allowance or travelling expenses, apart from salary, paid to each officer whilst absent.

My object in moving for this return is to secure information on the questions indicated because I have noticed, since we have had the Trans-Australian railway and since the Press have published the names of the passengers who travel backwards and forwards on that line, that there appears to have been a considerable increase in the number of highly placed Government officers who have found it necessary, in connection with their official duties no doubt, to visit one or other of the Eastern States. During the first three months of the present year, there was not a train either backwards or forwards which did not convey one or more Government servants to or from the East. I am inclined to believe that highly placed Government officers are able to put up such a case to Ministers, or to some Ministers, regarding the necessity for their presence in Melbourne or Sydney to inquire into the working of this, that, or the other department, that the policy has increased unduly since the Trans-Australian railway was opened. Therefore, I think it would be well to have some information on this point. I do not wish to particularise, though I could do so, but in some departments practically every officer holding a responsible position has been to the Eastern States during the past 12 months on business or investigation or inquiry, no doubt in connection with the particular work or department with which he is associated. I do not contend for one moment that it might not be a good thing for officers holding responsible positions to journey East and even beyond the confines of Australia to other countries of the world in order to make themselves acquainted with the latest developments or methods in connection with similar industries or departments with which they are associated. We do not want our highly paid responsible officers to stagnate in Western Australia and perhaps to fall behind the times and become out of date. It is only by travelling and acquiring first hand knowledge on the spot and seeing what is being done elsewhere that our officers can be expected to keep our departments up to date. I believe that is a

good thing, but I am inclined to think there has been some abuse of this desire to learn what is going on in the Eastern States on the part of some of the officers of the department. When we receive this information we shall be able to judge whether all these journeys have been legitimate and justified, or whether there is a tendency to abuse the practice of going abroad to seek for information.

Mr. Underwood: Do you also include school teachers in the motion?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would include all officers in the Government service, in the Civil Service, the Railways, and under the Education Department, and so forth.

Mr. Money: And those on official business?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Only those who go away in connection with inquiries on official matters.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.47]: We have had an astounding somersault from the Leader of the Opposition to-night. When I had the temerity earlier in the evening to move a motion calling for a return, the Leader of the Opposition, with all the energy of which he is possessed, flagellated me because of my audacity in seeking to acquire what might be termed information.

Hon. T. Walker: One was a practical thing and the other an impossibility.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member should occasionally make a sensible interjection. The Leader of the Opposition poo-pooed my motion and ridiculed me, and said that even if I were given the information it would not be of any value and would mislead the House. A little later on he asks the House to give him exactly the same sort of information.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know that the hon. member is in order in discussing a previous motion.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I want to show how absurd are the arguments of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member lost his chance of doing that in replying on his own motion.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am not so much discussing my motion as that of the Leader of the Opposition. He has assured the House that if the information he is asking for is given, it will not be of any value. That is a most amazing statement to make. In reply to an interjection, he said he included all school teachers, railway officers and civil servants.

Mr. Underwood: He said, all Government employees.

Mr. A. THOMSON: In view of the statements the Leader of the Opposition made earlier in the evening, I do not think he can reasonably ask for the information.

Hon. P. Collier: You are only labouring in order to find some excuse—

Mr. A. THOMSON: I want to show the inconsistency of the Leader of the Opposi-

tion. He moved that my motion should be postponed for six months. The House was divided on the question.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss the action of the House. He had better confine himself to the motion before the Chair.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I take it that every official who travelled beyond the State did so with the knowledge and sanction of his official or Ministerial head. He would not do this work on his own account. It, therefore, ill becomes the Leader of the Opposition to endeavour to interfere with the administration of the various departments. He held that it was wrong to inquire as to the cost of free passes or privileges, and yet he is asking how much salary a public officer has drawn during the period of his absence from the State.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow the hon. member to reply to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition on a previous motion.

Hon. P. Collier: That is what he has been doing all along.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I trust the House will not agree to the motion. The hon. member is making a personal attack upon the officers who have merely carried out the instructions of their chiefs. I shall vote against the motion. It is a waste of time.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [8.55]: I intend to support the motion. If there is no ground for it the Government will have a splendid opportunity to prove that. If there is any ground for it I want to know about it. The dogs are barking about it in the streets and people are making charges against the Government. If the Government have nothing to hide, let us have this information. If we find there is anything in it, we shall try to rectify the position. If there is no ground for the motion we shall all be very pleased.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [8.56]: I intend to support the motion. If it is any consolation for the member for Katanning, I will tell him that I will support his motion. Both of these are matters upon which the House should have information. Some years ago a system had grown up in the service whereby many officers whose long service leave was due found something—it did not matter what—into which to inquire in some other part of the world, and the Government used to pay their passages and sometimes their travelling expenses. The Seaddan Government stopped that to a great extent, if they did not entirely abolish it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They did not pay full fares, but gave them something extra.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Many of the officers of the service received their full fares and travelling expenses in addition. I asked a question the other evening about a school teacher. I only went by a paragraph in the "Sunday Times," one of the most reliable papers in the world. I feel reasonably satisfied I did not get a correct reply.

Mr. Pickering: You never will.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am under the impression that the teacher's fare or some of her travelling expenses were paid by the State. Unless I am sadly misinformed it is a regular thing for teachers in the Education Department to travel not only to the Eastern States, but to America and parts of Europe while on their long leave. Sometimes they get leave without pay and have some of their travelling expenses paid. The return asked for by the Leader of the Opposition might throw some light upon what is happening. I wish he would amend the motion to cover a period of two years, which might possibly give us still more information. I have no objection to people taking their long leave, but I do object to their putting up what the member for Katanning would call a joke. This story about inquiring into something and having fares paid while on a holiday trip is a little bit over the odds. I should be pleased to see this return. If my suspicions are groundless I shall be glad, but if they are correct we should endeavour to do something to remedy the position.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [9.0]: I move an amendment—

That in the last line of paragraph (a) the word "last" be struck out, and the words "past two" be inserted.

Although my leader is going to oppose the motion I think it is in the best interests of the State that we should have all the information possible as to where the money belonging to the people is going, and in what degree it is being spent by officers on travelling expenses backwards and forwards in the way indicated.

Amendment put and passed.

Question, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION—FORESTS ACT AND MILLARS' COMPANY.

To inquire by Select Committee.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9.3]: I move—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into (1) the working of the Forests Act of 1918, generally; (2) the financial sections of the Act and their operation; and (3) the extensions of Millars' Timber and Trading Company's leases and concessions; and to report, with recommendations, to the House.

The subject of the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the forest policy of this State is of very great importance. I remember that in September of 1918 the then Attorney General, who was also Minister for Forests, made a lengthy speech in introducing the measure which embodies the forest policy of Western Australia, a speech which it would be well for all members of this Parliament to peruse, because it illustrates and describes the basis of the policy upon which our forests have been administered since. Many of the new

members of this Chamber will not, I think, have read the speech in question, and, seeing that it illustrates many matters of vital importance which are at present jeopardised by the probable extension of the concessions and leases of Millars' Timber and Trading Company, I feel that I must take the opportunity of reading a few extracts from that utterance. The first point to which the then Attorney General drew attention was the report of a Royal Commission appointed to go into the question of forestry. He quoted an extract from that Commission's report, as follows:—

Evidence afforded by the experience of other countries, as well as that of this State (as indicated by evidence given before the Commission), seems to prove most emphatically that no forest conservation worthy of the name is practicable until the forest lands shall have been placed by Statute under the control of a well-manned and properly equipped Forests Department The evidence attached hereto supplies much information on the questions raised in the second reference to the Commission, all of which has strengthened the opinion of the Commission as to the utter impossibility of making adequate provision for conserving the forest interests until they shall have been placed under the administration of an Inspector General qualified by experience and scientific training. . . . Realising, however, a possible delay in obtaining an officer qualified to fill the important position of Inspector General, the Commission is of opinion that no time should be lost in securing the legislation necessary to put the administration under the effective control of a board as suggested. Such a board would find ample occupation in establishing some degree of order out of the present destructive chaos, preparatory to the appointment of an Inspector General.

The then Attorney General's speech continues—

The Advisory Board was duly appointed, and this body carried out excellent work in connection with sawmilling. It introduced the system of sawmilling permits, instead of leases and concessions which had been in vogue up to that time Sir Newton Moore took the most active interest in forestry as a member of the Commission, and later as chairman of the Advisory Board to which I have referred. Unfortunately, however, for forestry, Sir Newton Moore was made Minister controlling the Lands and Forests Department, and when this was done the Forests Advisory Board perished To the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) and the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loghlen) the country owes the removal of the Forestry Department from the Lands Department, and, rapidly upon that, we have to thank the member for Boulder, the then Minister for Mines, for the appointment of a trained forester . . . Again we have to thank the member for Boulder for the arrangements which were

made for Mr. Hutchins, not only to see Western Australia, but to write a report on the forest problem . . . I have briefly outlined the history of the forest question in the State up to recent years. It is not a pleasant story, and is not one that Western Australia can look back upon with pride. We have done our best to destroy what is probably the most valuable heritage with which a bountiful Deity has endowed us. Fortunately the case is not yet beyond remedy. We have time in which to put matters right but the necessity of the measures which must be taken are of a serious, if not a drastic, character . . . Here we have a mine of wealth, but, unlike a gold mine, it is inexhaustible so long as it is worked properly. It is not so much a question of how much timber there is in a forest, and how quickly we can get it out and turn it into money—this, unhappily, has been the point of view of early Governments—but it is a question of how much we can take out without impairing the continuity of the supply . . . It is clear that if we treat our forests as gold mines we will get a great deal out of them in a short time, but once the timber is finished, there will be a long wait before any more is forthcoming. It is here that the forester steps in, and lays down the maximum amount of timber that can be cut as being so many loads a year, saying that if this be done, it will then be possible to go on cutting for ever. The advantage of this system over the other is, of course, obvious . . . The sawmiller working into the virgin forest cuts up the timber to the sizes that will readily find a market, and since the population of the State is so small as to be incapable of absorbing more than a fraction of the output, over 90 per cent. of the timber that he cuts is sent for export. The export trade demands timber of certain sizes and of certain quality. It requires no scantling, or small sizes, and no short lengths. All the timber must be of the highest quality. The result is that all timber which does not make up into export sizes goes into the fire chutes and is burnt . . . The sawmillers themselves estimate that what is burnt annually in the mills amounts to no less than half a million tons of timber.

Turning to the findings of the Royal Commission, the then Attorney General quotes therefrom as follows:—

Your Commission is of opinion that, in the interests of the State, it would be a wise policy to discourage any increase in the rate of timber cutting till the consumption of scantling is fairly apace with the output of larger sizes. State acquiescence in the destruction of good timber, only because the export trade demands it, is a crime against coming generations, and any attempts to increase the export in the interests of foreign companies, or with the object of inducing more men to join in timber getting at the expense of posterity, needs wise resistance.

The Attorney General's speech proceeds—

Ten years later, in 1913, the year before the war, this export had increased to 272,000 loads, valued at a little over one million pounds. It is quite impossible to estimate in pounds, shillings, and pence the loss of actual wealth that this exploitation of our timber has meant to the State. We cannot blame the sawmillers, for their action was sanctioned and encouraged by Government after Government, but when we hear them tell of the wonderful good they have done for Western Australia, of the large moneys they have spent, and the employment they have given, do not let us forget that their work has really resulted in the destruction of the State's wealth. And whilst we cannot interfere with the rights given by past Governments—indeed, it is our duty to safeguard the rights of existing sawmilling companies, and a special section of the Bill provides for this—no such rights must be granted in the future. . . . The Bill provides for a continuity of policy. In the first place let us consider what this policy is. The policy may be summarised under three heads. The first is the permanent reservation of all prime timber country; the second is the restriction of the cutting of timber to that quantity which the forest will reproduce naturally; and the third is to carry out sylvicultural operations in the cut-over areas in order to assure the regeneration of the best species for future use.

I regret that hon. members may not find very much of interest in this particular speech of a former Attorney General, but it all goes to show that there has been exploitation.

The Premier: It is the Conservator's speech that you have been quoting. That speech was read to the House by the then Attorney General.

Mr. PICKERING: It appears in "Hansard" as that Attorney General's speech. He quoted a further extract from the report of the Royal Commission on Forestry, as follows:—

In most countries the forest lands have two distinct bands of enemies: First the timber trader, whose only aim is to get all he can out of the forest, heedless of its future; the second enemy is the agriculturist, who is interested in the uprooting of the forest for the sake of the rich soil beneath. It is not surprising, therefore, that under the united strength of those two influences, the interests of posterity in timber supplies have been so long ignored in many lands.

The Attorney General's speech further states:—

It is generally recognised by statesmen and economists that the minimum area of forests required by a country to supply its own timber needs is 25 per cent. of the total area of that country. . . . Let us take a look amongst the countries of the world. New Zealand has a total forest

area—I am speaking in round figures—of 20,000 square miles, and that is 25 per cent. of her total area.

Now, Western Australia has about 5 per cent. of her total area under forest, so that the position of Western Australia as compared with most other countries is a very unfortunate one indeed. Towards the conclusion of his speech the then Attorney General used these words—

Everywhere this principle is being recognised, but how long will this trend of thought last? Are we to allow ourselves to fall back once more into that slough of apathy in which we have been engulfed for the last twenty years? This is what we have to guard against, and this is why the forest administration of Western Australia must be firmly secured under a legislative enactment. Given a secure forest administration consisting of a small number of professional foresters and a general staff of foresters—not tax collectors, such as we have had up to now, but foresters trained in the care and management of forests—and we need never again fear the blighting influence that has so wrecked our timber areas in the years that have gone.

In the course of the debate on the Address-in-reply this session, various members gave expression to a feeling of dissatisfaction regarding the State's forest policy. Like many members of the last Assembly, I knew very little indeed concerning the forestry of Western Australia or its forest policy when the Forests Act was introduced here. It has taken years to educate the Western Australian people up to an appreciation of the heritage that is theirs in the forests of this State. Objection has been taken to the Forests Act and its working, but I am prepared to maintain that in its broad principles it has operated for the general benefit of this country. One objection has been raised by the Premier, who has said that the financial aspect of our forestry legislation should be looked into. The hon. gentleman expressed the opinion that we could not afford to spend the amount of money set aside year by year upon the forests. He also said that this Chamber had no concern with the expenditure of money under the Forests Act. Further, the Premier gave it as his opinion that we should get timber for local requirements at more moderate prices than those which had ruled. He thinks the financial aspect of forest legislation should be looked into, although I do not think we can afford to spend the amount of money set aside year by year on the forests. Again he said—

The Chamber has no concern with the expenditure of money under the Forestry Act, once it has left the House.

And he said—

We should get timber for our own requirements at a better price than we can get it to-day.

He said also that the Forests Act interferes with the policy of land settlement.

Hon. P. Collier: A characteristically reckless statement.

Mr. PICKERING: The Forests Act provides that all revenue of the department shall be paid into the Treasury; that three-fifths of the net revenue shall be certified by the Under Treasurer and be placed to a special account in the Treasury and form a fund for the improvement and reforestation of the forests, and that such fund may be expended by the Conservator with the approval of the Minister, but without any other authority than the Act, provided that the scheme for such expenditure shall be subject to the approval of Parliament. The question is whether we can afford to spend this money on the forests.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Perhaps on forests, but not on forest roads.

Mr. PICKERING: A forest policy involves road-making. There must be roads through the forests in order to do the business of the forests. The money at the disposal of the Conservator is voted by Parliament under the Act, and the amount he gets for expenditure is the net revenue after deducting all possible charges, including interest on loans expended on the forests, and interest on money expended on ringbarking—everything that can be levied against the forests' account is levied.

The Premier: It is not the Conservator's money; it is public money.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes, but the amount allocated by the Act is little enough for the purpose. The other day I asked certain questions, but was unable to get an answer. I was told I would have to move for a return. Those questions were with regard to the revenue and expenditure of the other States. I was not going to be put off like that, so I wired to the other States for the information.

The Premier: The Conservator could have told you.

Mr. PICKERING: Then why was the information refused me? At all events I have now got it. In New South Wales in 1920-21 the revenue was £119,742 and the expenditure £157,083. In Victoria the revenue was £138,582, and the expenditure £127,380. In Tasmania the revenue was £20,445 and the expenditure £2,709. In Queensland the revenue was £165,000 and the expenditure £111,000.

The Premier: What did they spend it on?

Mr. PICKERING: On the forest policy of the State. I am unable to get the South Australian figures for this year, but for the year 1919-20 the revenue was £22,202, and the expenditure £31,834. South Australia is probably the most advanced of all the States in respect of forestry. She had no large areas of indigenous forests, and so she set out and planted her own forests.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You have on the Notice Paper notice of a motion for a return giving this information.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, I think the hon. member is anticipating notice of motion No. 18 standing in his name. The hon. member cannot anticipate that motion.

Mr. PICKERING: I am not asking for particulars by this motion. I am merely giving the figures I have obtained for myself.

Mr. SPEAKER: The figures you are to ask for, you are now giving. The hon. member had better keep them until his motion No. 18 is under discussion.

Mr. PICKERING: Just now it is necessary that I should show that in the other States the proportion of expenditure to revenue is greater than it is in Western Australia. The 1920 figures for New Zealand are as follows:—revenue £6,058, from plantations £2,255; and the expenditure £66,819. In addition £260,000 was allocated from loan money. The Premier said this Chamber had no concern with the expenditure of the money on forests after it left this Chamber. What concern have we with the expenditure of any money after it is once granted by the Chamber? So there is nothing singular in the fact that the Chamber has no further interest in forestry expenditure. The Premier complains about the price of timber for local consumption, but he must be well aware that the State Sawmills are in the combine, and charge the same for their timber as do any other company.

Hon. P. Collier: That is only a coincidence.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have much higher railway rates to pay.

Mr. PICKERING: There is not much difference in the distances. It was interesting to read the other day of a deputation which waited on the Premier with a view to securing a reduction in royalty. The leaders of that deputation were Millars' combine.

Mr. Mann: No, the sawmillers' association.

Mr. PICKERING: Which is mainly controlled by Millars'.

Mr. Mann: That is not correct.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have not joined the Primary Producers' Party.

Hon. P. Collier: When they get wise they will join up with your executive. Then they will get their own way.

Mr. PICKERING: The Premier complained of the length of time it takes timber to grow. That is an argument why we should continue our policy, why there should be no interference with the policy formulated by the past Parliament. He also complained about having to refer applications for land selection to the Conservator. That is not justified. Everybody knows that a joint party representing the Forestry Department and the Lands Department carefully classified the whole of the forest country in the South-West and agreed upon the reservation of certain country for forest purposes, all other country to be open to settlement. How then can it be that the Premier has to refer applications for land to the Conservator, except in relation to the reserved areas set

apart by mutual consent for forestry purposes? The Premier also said that if there was one jarrah tree on a block the Conservator wanted to make of it a forest reserve. As a matter of fact four leads to the acre is the basis of such reserve.

The Premier: Who told you that? You have been well instructed.

Mr. PICKERING: There have been many objections to the forest policy of the State. The sawmillers object because it conflicts with their interest, which is the exploitation of the forests. Collie also objects to it. In Collie recently the question of the forest policy was referred to. Somebody said the Collie coalfields would last another hundred years. The member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) said they would last 500 years. It is generally known that the timber on those leases will be cut out within the next 15 years.

The Premier: They are destroying the young stuff now.

Mr. PICKERING: They are going to cut down the young stuff, as it is done in countries like Germany, in a faze. What is required for the mines at Collie is not big timber, but poles; and you get a greater growth of poles by cutting in a faze.

The Premier: Who told you that?

Mr. PICKERING: It does not matter. You can refute it if possible.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you think it fair that a public undertaking like the Fremantle tramways should have to get iron poles?

Mr. PICKERING: It may be very hard on some interests.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is very hard on the public.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. PICKERING: On the 19th August the following interesting letter appeared in the "Worker"—

At first glance it may not appear that the present controversy over the Forest Department has much interest for trades unionists. But this is not so. Apart from the interest they should take as citizens the case is one which should have a peculiar interest for the Labour Party. It is one of these all too common cases in which an upright and admittedly competent public servant is squeezed out because in the execution of his duty as a public servant and protector of public rights he finds himself up against the interests of the capitalistic exploiter. The money interest in this matter is in a peculiarly strong position. In the person of the Minister (Mr. Scaddan) there is a past master in the art of shuffling, and who by a plentiful use of sound and fury can hide a woeful lack of supporting data. They have a special representative in Parliament itself in the person of an old and experienced campaigner whose

speciality is lobbying his fellow members. Then there is the peculiar wording of the Act and the opportunity to drag in the war and all its associations. But the strongest card which the money interest hold is the fact that the Conservator of Forests in doing his duty as he sees it, has found himself at issue with the sleeper hewer, the sandalwood getter, and the settler in forest areas, with the result that many Labour men who would otherwise be keen critics of what the money power desired, will be indifferent to what happens to Mr. Lane-Poole and thereby assist money to repeat its time-honoured policy of squeezing a troublesome public servant out of the way. In all spheres of public activity a continuous policy is of value, but in no sphere is it so essential as in forestry where success depends absolutely upon a settled and continuous policy not merely for years, but for generations. For this reason, the suggestion of Mr. Angwin that the Forestry Act should be amended to make the forest policy again subject to the Minister, is a deplorable one. Should he endeavour to put it into execution, he can rely upon having the enthusiastic support of every timber exploiter in the State. Up to now the public are in ignorance of the forestry side of the question. We only have the Ministerial bluff. Mr. Lane-Poole, by a convention, the wisdom of which is very doubtful, is prevented from saying a word indicating in which direction he considers public interests lie. We must rely upon our representatives in Parliament, who have access to the papers, to examine the matter as keenly as it deserves. I would suggest they ask themselves: If this is merely a difference of opinion between the head of a department and his Minister, why is it that on every possible occasion the "West Australian" gives it the importance of scare headlines as the "Forestry Clash." I suggest that with the enormous rise in the price of timber that the value of cutting rights for any period is now enormously greater than the value of any equal period prior to, or during the war. If this is so, then to grant an extension on the same terms is to make a gift of many tens of thousands of public assets. The writer has no brief for Mr. Lane-Poole, neither has the "Worker," but I am convinced that a careful examination of the facts will prove that in this matter he stands for public right against the exploiter of a great public asset. As such he is deserving of every support which the "Worker" and the Labour members in Parliament can give him.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Who signed that letter?

Mr. PICKERING: It is signed "Red Gum."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You did not write it, did you?

Mr. PICKERING: I will give the member for North-East Fremantle a written letter to the editor of the "Worker," asking him to say whether I have ever written to the "Worker" in any circumstances under a nom-de-plume.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I will take your word for it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. member will please address the Chair.

Mr. PICKERING: I apologise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I will give this House an assurance that I have never written a letter to a newspaper, which I have been ashamed to sign.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I will take your word for it.

Mr. PICKERING: There is a question of whether this State is getting credit for the value of the timber we export. I wrote to the Customs Department, Excise Office, and asked what the declared value of the timber for export amounted to. I received the following reply—

In reply to your letter of the 27th August, I beg to inform you that under the Customs Act, 1901-1920, local timber must be entered for export not later than three days after shipment overseas, in accordance with the prescribed form. (Copy attached.) The quantities required, in respect of timber exported overseas, are superficial feet, and 600 superficial feet represent a load. From time to time inquiries are made with a view to verifying values of timber entered for export, overseas, and it has been found that these values vary from £4 10s. to £9 per load.

As a matter of fact timber has been sold at a higher value than that.

I might mention that with regard to local timber transferred to other States within the Commonwealth, this Department keeps no record.

I tried to get the amount of the timber exported, but it is difficult to get the information one desires. At any rate the contracts for South Africa ran between £7 10s. and £11 per load f.o.b. I am sorry to say I could not get the quantities exactly. I believe that in 1921 it was between 150,000 and 200,000 loads and the export value was between £1,000,000 and £1,200,000. That would run out at about £5 15s. per load. In the same year the revenue was about £70,000 or £75,000, which would mean an increase of from £25,000 to £30,000. That is as far as I can get to the information I require. The Premier has referred to his refusal to approve of the jarrah forests plan. It rests with the Premier to approve of the plan, and until such time as the forestry plan is approved, it will be impossible for any proper forestry policy to be given effect to in our forests. I have dealt roughly with the financial aspect of the question. The revenue accruing to the department is mainly due to the increase in royalties. Prior to 1914 a

royalty of 1s. per load was collected as a tax. To-day it is collected for the preservation of the forests. Therein is the difference.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You did not give us the royalties; you have given us the amounts.

Mr. PICKERING: I want to quote a few remarks by Professor Wilson, who dealt with the question of the Queensland forest policy. Professor Wilson is the Assistant-Director of the Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University, U.S.A.. When asked if he could suggest any steps for furthering Queensland's forest policy, he said:—

Your obvious need—and this is a matter in which Queensland is behind the whole of the Australian States—is a modern Forestry Act. Under this would be determined how much of the income from forests should be put back into forest revenue. In New Zealand the full 100 per cent is returned. Here the position is somewhat different; your Government is in the timber business. Personally, I do not think the State should be in this business at all. As I view forestry, its work should finish at the crop, which should go to the highest bidder. I do not see any more reason why a forestry department, or Government, should go into saw-milling and other such businesses, than I see why a farmer should go into a bakery business instead of selling his wheat. Altogether, I suppose Queensland gets a quarter of a million each year from her forests, and yet not a penny goes back into forestry. I certainly think that at least 33 per cent. of the money earned by the forests should revert to them to ensure future supplies.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That writer is speaking against the Labour policy and against the State Trading Concerns in this State. From that point of view alone his opinions are not worth much.

Mr. PICKERING: These are the views of that authority; although from the hon. member's point of view they may not be worth much.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: His writings are not so much a discussion of forestry as a criticism against the Labour policy.

Mr. Simons: You are putting up your case in a way that makes it difficult to support you, anxious as we may be to do so.

Mr. PICKERING: I come now to the question of Millars' extension. The extensions proposed to be made are set out in this clause. I am quoting from "Hansard" of November 5, 1918, page 966:—

Postponed Clause 5—Preservation of rights of pastoral lessees and holders of mining rights.

The Attorney General: I move an amendment:—

That the following paragraph be added to the clause:—“(3) The Governor may (a) extend the term of sawmill permits granted under the Land Act Amendment Act, 1904, so far as the operations thereunder have been temporarily discontinued in consequence of the present state of war; and (b) so far as the operations under any existing

timber concession or timber lease have been temporarily suspended in consequence of the present state of war (i) extend the term of such concession or lease subject to payment, during the period of such extension, in lieu of the rent thereby reserved, of a royalty on all timber acquired at the prescribed rate of royalty under this Act for timber acquired under permits, and to the regulations in force for the time being, subject to the proviso to section 41: Provided that the rent paid during the period of temporary suspension of operations shall be credited to the lessee and apportioned over the period of such extension; or (ii.) accept a surrender of any concession or lease, and issue, in lieu thereof, a permit under this Act of the same or other land at the prescribed royalty, the rent paid under the surrendered concession or lease during the period of temporary suspension of operations being credited to the permit holder and apportioned over the term of the permit.”

Later on he said:—

Now we say to the leaseholder, “We cannot extend your old obsolete tenancy or your concession on the terms on which you originally got it, because that would be unfair to the sawmiller, who is a permit holder, who is to-day paying 2s. royalty.”

Further on still he says:—

I hope hon. members appreciate the position between the concession holder, the leaseholder, and the permit holder. The concession holder pays a very small fee. In some instances it is £150 a year. It was fixed in the early days, 30 or 40 years ago. Most of these leases and concessions expire between the years 1924 and 1927. The leaseholder pays £20 per square mile per annum. It is not proposed to renew the concessions or leases on the same terms under which they have been held. It is proposed to renew them on the same terms as the permit holder. A concession expires, say, in 1924. It has not been used for two years owing to war conditions. The person who owns that concession will be entitled to come to the Government and the Government will be entitled to grant a further two years of that concession subject to the regulations and subject to a 2s. royalty in place of rent, or whatever the royalty is at that time.

Mr. Mann: Some of the permit holders are paying 6s. royalty at the present time.

Mr. PICKERING: I want to emphasise the point that the Minister said that it would be subject to regulations. The Leader of the Opposition, when speaking on this question, said:—

In the face of that we say to the leaseholder who has concessions, that could not be obtained anywhere in Australia during the past 20 years, we will give consideration to you for the £22,000. I am not prepared to go that far. It is a fair thing for Parliament to ask these people, if they sur-

render their leases, to continue during the period under review on the same terms and conditions as any other sawmill proprietor operating in the forest at the present time. Parliament proposes to give them an extended rate for four years, and we are justified in saying for those four years, "You come under the same conditions as other people operating in the forest." Even then, it would be a profitable contract for the people concerned. This is not a time for excessive generosity; it is a time for fair dealing.

That is the position of Millars' regarding this matter. When the Bill was introduced there was no mention of the clause which I have read to the House. It was introduced during the later stages of the Bill and it was decided upon at the last moment. The then Attorney General, in my opinion, misled the House with regard to the operation of the regulations, as he also misled the House when he was dealing with the question of the pastoral leases. When the Bill dealing with the extension of pastoral leases was before the House, the then Attorney General, Mr. Robinson, said—

The two million acres was never discussed. That was accepted as a fair thing. Hon. members must know that there is more than one pastoralist in the North who has an area exceeding that. It would act hardly upon these pastoralists. I do not suggest any extension to these persons. They cannot hold on combination more than two million, and will therefore have to get rid of the remainder of their holdings or their leases will not be renewed.

That is what the Attorney General of the day said when speaking on an amendment submitted by the member for North-East Fremantle. The amendment was one for the reduction of the leases to one million acres. It was thought, on the representations made by the then Attorney General, that it would be impossible for pastoralists to take up a larger area under any combination, but it was ultimately demonstrated that they could take up any area they liked, as was evidenced by the forming of companies and the fact that one company hold more than three million acres in one district. I contend that the House was similarly misled in connection with this Bill. It was through this that the particular clause was passed in the form in which it now appears in the Act, and the position to-day is that unless some arrangement is made to prevent the extension of the leases under sub-paragraph (i) we might as well say goodbye to the forest policy of this State, until the expiration of the extended period. In my opinion the extension of those leases was a concession by this House—an absolute concession. A lot has been made of the difficulties experienced and the loss sustained by this particular firm during the period of the war. What firm did not suffer a loss during that time? Can any hon. member tell me of any business throughout

Australia that did not suffer a loss. Was there any individual who did not suffer a loss?

Mr. Wilson: The timber industry did not.

Mr. PICKERING: That interjection only tends to strengthen my case. If the timber industry did not suffer any loss during the war, then we are not warranted in making any concession. If we did make any concession, it was with the full knowledge that the word "may" governed the situation. It was not an obligation on the Government, but was entirely optional.

Mr. Mann: Did not they pay their rent during the war?

Mr. PICKERING: If they came under sub-paragraph (i) they had to pay; if they came under the other sub-paragraph they did not. The Government had the right to say under which sub-paragraph they would grant extension. The Government or the Minister has chosen a course which is inimical to the best interests of the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then your duty is to vote against the Government.

Mr. PICKERING: I must quote what Mr. Pilkington said.

Mr. Wilson: Oh! he is out of the country.

Mr. PICKERING: That does not matter. It is a very short extract. Mr. Pilkington said—

That is not sufficient reason for saying that the contract which has been made on behalf of Western Australia with certain millers should be disregarded. If there is any justification for passing a provision which affects an existing contract, it should be some overwhelming reason, and I submit that the principle that this Committee and the Government and the State should respect contracts made on behalf of Western Australia is a higher principle and one deserving of more consideration than even the protection of the forests.

The Government, in fact, say, "We think the losses suffered by Millars' during the period of the war warrant us in handing over to a company who have tried hard to destroy our forests the forests which belong to posterity." It must be recognised that the forests are not here for our use only. Legislators all over Australia do not hesitate to mortgage the rights of posterity. We mortgage them in respect to every conceivable thing. For one thing there is the national debt, and now we say we will mortgage our forests and hand them over to these exploiters, and let the future take care of itself. I will never contend for the interests of any combine or company which will jeopardise the future prosperity of this State of Western Australia. I regret that it has been necessary for me to speak in this strain. However, it is not a matter of personalities; there are some things which loom larger than mere personalities. This is a large and vital question. I believe that this country must have the advantage of the product of our forests for the various walks of life in which we are engaged. We

have had an exposition here quite recently by the Conservator of Forests which should have awakened in the minds of the most carelessly indifferent a lasting interest in the forest resources of this State. What has the Conservator of Forests done for Western Australia? Has not he done a great deal? Has not he helped to demonstrate the value of the kiln drying process for jarrah? That has been a great advantage.

The Premier: And Millars', too, have done a great deal.

Mr. PICKERING: The Conservator is mainly responsible for the introduction of the method.

The Premier: You are here in the interests of Lane-Poole.

Mr. PICKERING: The Premier is the advocate of Millars', and we expect him to speak in that vein.

Mr. McCallum: Why keep him in office?

Mr. PICKERING: Has not the Conservator developed that faith in our timber which has been of considerable value to the building industries of this State? The wonderful difference in the use of jarrah since the introduction of the kiln drying process is beyond compare.

The Premier: What is he paid for?

Mr. PICKERING: He is paid to do his duty and he is trying to do it. I contend that the Conservator recognises the responsibilities and obligations which rest upon him, and that he is doing his best so far as his lights guide him in that direction. It is not to be expected that he will please everyone. A man who sets out to do that will never succeed but will generally tread on the corns of everybody.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Everyone says he is a highly scientific man, but with a lack of business capacity.

Mr. PICKERING: Like the Labour Government.

Mr. Simons: Why, the Labour Government appointed Mr. Lane-Poole.

Mr. PICKERING: Then they showed considerable business acumen by that act.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is a very good man, but you want to consider the rights of the State.

Mr. PICKERING: Through the introduction of laboratory work, fresh avenues for getting profit and advantage from our forests have been demonstrated. By the introduction of the paper making machine, Western Australia has been able to demonstrate to the world that it can produce good and serviceable paper. I know of nothing which the Conservator has seriously taken in hand in the interests of forestry and has not made a success of it. I believe members are prepared to concede that he has done his duty faithfully and well. If he has one fault, it is perhaps his excess of ardour in carrying out his duties. However, there is no man perfect; everyone must recognise that. In the Conservator we have a man who is admitted throughout the whole Commonwealth to be one of the leading foresters at

least in Australia, and we should give him an opportunity to make good in this State. It has been asserted that there are faults in the Forests Act. Personally, I do not know of any. If there are any which a select committee could light upon and improve in the interests of the State, there can be no objection to the appointment of the select committee. I do not intend to disguise the fact that if a select committee is appointed and I am a member of it, my main object and idea will be to conserve the forest industries of this State.

Mr. Simons rose.

The Premier: I wanted to move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. SIMONS (East Perth) [9.55]: I think this is a matter of urgency. I support the motion. As one of the new members of the House, in common with other members, judging from the remarks which have been made during the debate on the Address-in-reply, there is considerable doubt as to the efficacy of the Forests Act of 1918. If a select committee is appointed to take evidence all over the State, the position must be presented in a much clearer way than we understand it at present. A great deal of space has been devoted by the Press to the question of forestry during the past two or three months.

The Premier: We cannot finish this tonight.

Mr. SIMONS: There are many rumours floating around the city; many accusations have been made and we know that there has been considerable tumult in the Forests Department, and I cannot conceive of the Government adopting an attitude of opposition to an inquiry which would clear up the position with which forestry in this State is faced to-day. The threatened resignation of the Conservator is a matter of very serious moment to Western Australia. I do not know of any activity of public work which is of greater importance than the guardianship of our forests.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is not the only man in the world. If he died to-morrow, we would have to get someone else.

Mr. SIMONS: That is all the more reason why we should have a select committee to inquire into this matter. I do not say that Mr. Lane-Poole is the only man who understands this business, but I do say that he is one of the foremost authorities in this particular line. I have heard forestry discussed in other parts of the world, and I was proud when in California to hear among the names mentioned there the name of a man employed in the State of Western Australia. I am not going to be one to state my opinions and ideas and set them up against those of a man who has such a reputation not only in this State, in Australia and the Empire, but internationally, and this House and this State, and the Government should hesitate before losing the services of a man of that calibre. This, however, is beside the question. I do not urge the appointment of a select com-

mittee on any personal grounds. I am not urging it from any feeling of warmth, but I urge it in order to give us more intelligence on the subject, and to give us information that we may be able to go about our forestry business with a better understanding of the position. We know that there has been a clash between the Conservator and a very big and wealthy combine in this State. After having observed public affairs for a number of years, I am convinced that it is very rarely one finds a man in any Government department, in this or any other State, who is game to stand up against a big and wealthy combine. Too often is it the custom of Government officers to take the easy and in some cases the more profitable course of yielding instead of standing four-square against the opposition that these combines apparently can bring into play. For many generations the Australian people have been heretics so far as forestry is concerned. The public mind has been so educated as to regard a tree as an enemy to be wiped out, and the destruction of the forests in Australia is one of the most criminal passages recorded in the history of any country in the world. Year after year, generation after generation, we have been carrying on this policy of forest destruction, and not until we got the services of Mr. Lane-Poole as Conservator did we bring in an apostle with a new thought and a new idea; a new light to teach us to save this wonderful heritage nature has given us. Mr. Lane-Poole has been spoken of as a heretic because he said the jarrah was too good to be used for railway sleepers. No other country in the world would have been so prodigal of its heritage as to use this wonderful timber for sleepers, for fencing rails, for posts etc. The hardwoods of the world have taken centuries to develop and the supply is diminishing all the time. In a few generations we shall have no virgin hardwoods left in Western Australia, at the present rate of progress. We should set about conserving something for posterity, preserving this timber until in a few years it will become much more valuable than it is to-day. We should not allow this policy of forest butchery to go unchecked. It remained unchecked until the advent of the present Conservator, cloaked as he was with the necessary authority to carry out a correct policy. From boyhood we all remember the destructive fires which consumed an integral part of every saw milling plant in the State. We have not had what may be termed forest exploitation, or any intelligent development of a forest policy. We have really been creating slaughter houses for our timber, forest butcheries in our sawmills. If we visit some of the agricultural areas we find that the first thing a man does on taking up a block is to slaughter every tree on the place, with the result that he wonders why the springs become salt and the country wears such an unattractive appearance. We have had this destruction of trees going on

in our municipal areas. Even the City Council is carrying out the same policy. When it commences to improve an area, it does so by cutting down all the trees. In other countries they save the trees. In Western Australia trees which have taken 400 years to mature have been cut down in a few minutes because of this vandalism in our forestry operations. It is said that there are special grievances down at Collic because of the policy of the Conservator. That is all the more reason for an inquiry. It is said that a road has been constructed at Mundaring by the Conservator and that this was an error of policy. That is also a reason for the inquiry. Every objection that has been raised with respect to the Conservator and the forest policy can be more intelligently handled in the light of the evidence which the select committee will be able to collect. We know that Mr. Lane-Poole comes to us as a man holding a very high position in the forestry affairs of the world. We know that he has had a clash with a big and wealthy combine. We know that certain fixed ideas are held in the public mind on the matter.

The Premier: You are wrong in saying that there has been a clash with a big and wealthy combine.

Mr. SIMONS: We know that every effort has been made to get the Conservator out of his position. He has set himself against this combine in carrying out his duties.

The Premier: You are not justified in saying that. I have heard nothing of it.

Mr. SIMONS: I am assured it is so. We know what is going on. In our Conservator we have an officer who has tried to do his duty, and it behoves every member to stand behind him. He is doing his best to safeguard the public well being. He has threatened the interests of a wealthy concern operating in this State. If that is not the position let us have a select committee to prove that I am wrong.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Premier: Do you think that Parliament or Mr. Lane-Poole ought to be obeyed?

Mr. SIMONS: The Premier suggests that Mr. Lane-Poole is disobeying the wishes of Parliament. A select committee can take evidence on that matter too. Every interjection strengthens our claim for an inquiry. I hope the Government will not burke an investigation. The more inquiry is burked the stronger suspicion will the public have that there is something which cannot stand the light of day. Every word that is uttered hostile to the appointment of a select committee points to the necessity of a full, open, and impartial inquiry such as a select committee can make. In Mr. Lane-Poole we have an apostle of a new thought. I do not say he has not made mistakes.

Mr. Angelo: No one can say that.

The Premier: Who objects to the fullest inquiry?

Mr. SIMONS: I hope the Premier will not object to the appointment of a select committee.

The Premier: You ought to bring down an amending Bill and submit that to a select committee.

Mr. SIMONS: Such a Bill could be more intelligently handled in the light of the evidence that would be taken at the inquiry.

Hon. P. Collier: The motion provides for that amongst other things.

Mr. SIMONS: The Conservator is an apostle of a new forestry religion, and like other men of his kind he is in danger of being crucified. I am anxious to press for the appointment of a select committee with power to take evidence in any part of the State where forestry interests are concerned. Let us get the rights and wrongs of what is called the forestry clash. I hope the Government will not prevent the collection of the necessary evidence so that we may have the whole position cleared up and a proper solution of the difficulty arrived at.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [10.7]: This matter has been introduced in consequence of the question having arisen as to the extension of the leases under the Forests Act of 1919. The Act was passed with the clear intention that those who paid rent for their leases would be allowed the opportunity afterwards of cutting during the period when the mills were closed in consequence of the war. The Leader of the Opposition was responsible for this particular amendment in the Bill. In lieu of rents the lessees of leases or concessions were to pay the full royalty during the period of the extension. In other words, if there had been no war, there would have been exactly the same cutting done as there will be under the extension, because the extensions only apply to leases or concessions on which operations were suspended during the war. The Government thus get the advantage of the full royalties in lieu of rents, and therefore obtain an advantage through the suspension.

Hon. P. Collier: That has to be deducted from the royalty.

The Minister for Mines: No, you struck that out.

Hon. P. Collier: That was my amendment.

Mr. MONEY: It was put in at the instance of the Leader of the Opposition. Not only have the Government been paid royalties on the timber but they have been paid rents for the period during which there was no cutting. It is clear from the Act that this was the intention of Parliament. Every member in the House understood the condition at the time. There is a section dealing with the matter which says that the Governor in Executive Council, that is the same as Cabinet, shall grant an extension.

The Premier: And not Mr. Lane-Poole.

Mr. MONEY: The matter of the extension of the leases or concessions is entirely one for Parliament and for Cabinet. No extension can be granted except in conformity with the Act, otherwise it would be granted contrary to the intentions of Parliament. On that point there can be no argument. I cannot understand why so much attention has been given to this question. I have the highest opinion of Mr. Lane-Poole, who is fully seized of the importance of our forests. Unfortunately, he is apt to see that and nothing else. He is evidently over zealous and over anxious to conserve our forests, and he has forgotten that part of the forest policy which concerns Parliament and Cabinet. He has been ill advised on this matter. I believe that he may still recognise that this particular question is one that should be left to Parliament and that Parliament must prevail.

On motion by Mr. Mullany debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.13 p.m.

Legislative Council,

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

QUESTION—VENEREAL DISEASE, TREATMENT.

Hon. J. E. DODD asked the Minister for Education: 1, How many times since last enactment of Section 256 of the amending Health Act has the Commissioner of Public Health had occasion to use the powers contained therein? 2, How many medical practitioners have notified the department of failure on part of their patients to continue treatment, and what action has been taken? 3, How