

people whose legal rights he has to adjust, he creates far more business than the business he absorbs. For the little business he absorbs in his own person he creates tenfold for others who are in the profession and are doing business on proper lines. And no man in the profession, or no man who simply confines his view to his own interest, would really object to our throwing open the profession to every person who chose to announce that he was prepared to practise as a solicitor. But to give that indulgence would be a grave injustice to the public; and from that point of view I look at the Bill and ask the House to look at it. It would be just as foolish to allow anyone to start as a medical practitioner without taking every possible precaution to ground himself up slowly in the rudiments of his profession, and to be fully possessed of the necessary qualifications for carrying out his professional duties. I do not know that I can at any farther length elaborate this subject. This is a simple Bill, which is meant to give what has been for a long time promised to a certain section in our midst which deserves consideration at our hands; and I trust this is the light in which the Bill will be received by the House.

On the motion by MR. BATH, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.40 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 18th July, 1906.

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

PRAYERS.

ELECTION RETURN—GUILDFORD.

MR. SPEAKER announced the return of writ for the election extraordinary of a member for Guildford district, in place of Mr. C. H. Rason resigned; showing that Mr. William Dartnell Johnson had been duly elected.

MR. JOHNSON took the oath and subscribed the roll.

QUESTION—RACECOURSES LICENSING BILL.

MR. A. J. WILSON asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce this session a Racecourse Licensing Bill, as promised last session by the Rason Government?

THE PREMIER replied: Yes.

QUESTION—WAGIN-DUMBLEYUNG RAILWAY DEVIATION.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Premier: 1, Have operations been suspended on the

Wagin-Dumbleyung Railway construction work? 2, Do the Government propose to alter the route as decided upon and set out in the specifications? 3, If so, will the alteration or deviation involve any increased length and increased cost?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2 and 3, Yes; the deviation is adopted because the Engineer-in-Chief recommends this route as preferable from an engineering point of view. It is three-quarters of a mile shorter than the other route, and the present proposed grading of 1 in 40 could be reduced, if necessary, to 1 in 60, which could not be accomplished on the other route without considerable alteration and deviation. The route is also recommended by the Surveyor General from a Lands Department point of view. No increased cost will be involved.

QUESTION—ABATTOIRS AT KALGOORLIE, SUNDAY WORK.

MR. WALKER asked the Premier: 1, When is the Government likely to fulfil its promise in connection with the erection of abattoirs on the gold-fields? 2, Will the Government take any immediate steps to prevent slaughtermen working at the Kalgoorlie slaughter yards on Sunday as at present?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Provision will be made on the Estimates for the work, which will be commenced as soon as Parliamentary approval is obtained. 2, The matter will be inquired into. I may say for the information of the hon. member that this is the first intimation we have had in regard to the Sunday work referred to.

QUESTION IRREGULAR, HOW MODIFIED.

Referring to a question (now postponed on the Minister's request) relating to a Prospecting Expedition to the North-West—

MR. HOLMAN said: I gave notice of an additional pertinent question on that subject, though it does not appear on the Notice Paper. If necessary, I must give further notice of it.

MR. SPEAKER: In reference to the remarks of the hon. member relating to an additional question, I desire to draw attention to a passage in *May*, and the hon. member will understand from it

why his question has been somewhat modified. I am sure the answer to the third part of his question should be sufficient. The passage in *May* reads:—

As the Notice Paper is published by authority of the House, a notice of a motion or of a question to be put to a member, containing unbecoming expressions, infringing its rules, or otherwise irregular, may, under the Speaker's authority, be corrected by the clerks at the table.

I may also remark that it is within the province of any Minister to refuse to answer any question.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I will bring the papers to-morrow.

QUESTION—FIREWOOD RATES, KALGOORLIE AND BOULDER.

MR. COLLIER asked the Premier: 1, Has he forgotten his promise made on the 21st December, 1905, to see that the rates charged by the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company are of an equitable nature? 2, If not, why has no action been taken?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Regulations were being framed dealing with the whole question of freights, sidings, cutting of timber, etc. I am sorry that I cannot give more detailed information, but the file containing the recommendations has been forwarded to the forest ranger at Coolgardie with a view to his perusing it before the recommendations are gazetted.

PLANS, Etc.—METROPOLITAN SEWERAGE.

On motions by Mr. H. BROWN (Perth), ordered "That plans showing the reticulation of the Metropolitan Sewerage Scheme, as provided for in Mr. Davis's estimate of £112,641, be laid on the table;" also "That a Return showing the amount expended to date on surveys, reports, plans, and clerical work in connection with the Metropolitan Sewerage Scheme be laid on the table."

PAPERS—PIPES MANUFACTURE, FREMANTLE.

MR. H. BROWN (Perth) moved a motion standing in his name, namely—

That all telegrams and correspondence between the Government and the members for Fremantle, South and East Fremantle, with reference to closing down the pipe works

at Fremantle, or letting a contract for the making of pipes for the Metropolitan Water Scheme, be laid on the table.

THE PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) : Members when asking for returns of this nature should state reasons. The preparation of these returns would entail considerable expense, and it was due to the House that some reason should be given.

MR. H. BROWN (Perth) : There was no necessity for the compilation of a return. He asked that certain papers be laid on the table. There were rumours of a threat against the Government if the particular pipe works at Fremantle were not kept there. That was the reason why the papers were asked for.

Question put and passed.

MR. SPEAKER : It would be better, and following more closely the forms of the House, if members would read the motions when moving them.

RETURNS (2)—MINING DEVELOPMENT VOTE.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) moved :

That there be laid upon the table of the House a Return, showing—1, How much has been spent of the £100,000 voted by Parliament last session for the development of the mining industry. 2, How it has been spent. 3, How much has been spent in each electorate.

There was no opposition to the motion, he believed, but he would like to convey to the Minister that the £100,000 voted by Parliament last session was on the Loan Estimates.

Question put and passed.

SPECIAL GRANTS.

On motion by **MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret)**, ordered: That a Return be laid upon the table of the House, showing the persons to whom special grants have been made under the Mines Development Vote, during the last six months, as apart from subsidising crushing batteries.

RETURN—COPPER SMELTER, PARTICULARS.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) moved :

That there be laid upon the table of the House a Return, showing—1, The amount paid

to owners of copper ore at Ravensthorpe. 2, Cost of new plant sold for £5,000. 3, Cost of smelter from inception.

He wanted to know the cost of the smelter from its inception; to know exactly what the old smelter had cost, also the new one.

Question put and passed.

RETURN—CANNING RESERVOIR WATERSHED.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill) moved :

That a Return be laid upon the table of the House, showing—1, The names of persons holding land within the watershed of the proposed Canning reservoir, and the area held by each. 2, Particulars of companies or syndicates holding land, and the acreage held by each. 3, The names of persons holding power of attorney for such landholders.

The object in moving was partly as a protest against the practice in the past of purchasing areas of land secretly. From the experience Parliament had in regard to two previous purchases, he did not think it was a desirable procedure to adopt in the future. The State could get an infinitely better deal by the public generally knowing a purchase was to be made, and if there was any difference of opinion about the matter, the question could be submitted to arbitration, rather than the land be purchased secretly and not in the open light of day. It would be within the recollection of the House, in connection with the purchase of land in Phillimore Street, Fremantle, there were certain imputations cast on gentlemen of prominence in Perth that had not been answered. A promise had been made that a select committee would be appointed to inquire into the purchase, but the inquiry was not held, and the imputations still stood. He urged the present Government to take steps to see if some select committee could be appointed to inquire as promised in the past.

Question put and passed.

RETURN—RAILWAY FREIGHTS ON TIMBER.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison) moved :

That a Return be placed upon the table of the House, showing a comparative statement of the timber freights existing on the railways in the Eastern States and Western Australia.

There would not be any expense in

getting out the return, for when he was in office the return had already been prepared.

THE PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): Would not the member be satisfied with the return that was supplied to the Timber Inquiry Board? That body went into the question very exhaustively, and he thought the member would find all the information he required in that return.

Question put and passed.

**PAPERS—PUBLIC BATTERY,
MT. MORGANS.**

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison) moved:

That all papers in connection with the granting of a subsidy on public crushing to the Westralia Mt. Morgans battery at Mt. Morgans be placed upon the table of the House.

These papers were asked for on account of some remarks made by the Minister for Mines in reply to a statement made by himself (Mr. Holman) in connection with the subsidies to State batteries. The Minister stated that a subsidy of 1s. 6d. a ton was paid to the battery at Mt. Morgans. By the report of the Department for Mines, it was shown that an amount of 2s. a ton was paid during last year to the Westralia Mt. Morgans battery; that 2,595 tons were treated and subsidised to the extent of 2s. a ton. The Minister, in reply to some statements which he (Mr. Holman) made, stated that only 1s. 6d. a ton was paid to this battery. That statement was contradicted afterwards, but the Minister had not made clear the amount which was paid to the battery by way of a subsidy. He desired to move the motion to see whether the report which appeared in the Department of Mines was correct, or whether the statement of the Minister through the Press was correct.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory) said he had no objection to produce the papers. He might mention, however, in connection with the subsidy granted to this battery, that the amount paid was 2s. and not 1s. 6d. as previously stated by him. He was under the impression that this battery was receiving the same as all other batteries, and this one was given as an illustration of the subsidy granted upon the eastern fields.

He had given instructions that all these subsidies should be looked into with a view of a reduction. The department were making considerable reductions in regard to the amount of subsidy paid to batteries. The hon. member was very ready to twit him with a small mistake, but the hon. member himself spoke of this battery as being a 20-head battery; whereas it was simply a 10-head battery, so each of them made a mistake.

MR. HOLMAN based his statement upon the Minister's report.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The general subsidy was only 1s. 6d. He suggested that the motion should be withdrawn.

MR. HOLMAN: As the Minister announced that he had made a mistake when he replied to his (Mr. Holman's) statement through the Press, he asked leave to withdraw the motion, as it was not necessary.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

**RETURN—BATTERY PLATES,
HOW CLEANED.**

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison) moved:

That a Return be laid upon the table of the House, showing the amount of gold received from each of the State batteries by the Mines Department from the cleaning and scaling of copper plates, treatment of magnetings, and other residues.

He said: I move this motion because there is a big question involved. I think the public battery system in Western Australia was started in 1898, and it is a well-known fact that in all batteries when stone is crushed an enormous amount of gold is left on the copper plates and tables of the batteries, and there is also a fair amount of gold left behind in magnetings and other residues after treatment. I desire to know whether any steps have been taken to procure a return of this gold. Seeing that we have nearly 30 State batteries working, and a good deal of stone is being crushed, in all probability a large amount of gold is being retained from the prospectors, and if that be so it should go back to the State, and therefore be the means of farther decreasing the cost of crushing to all prospectors who use the batteries. I know that under the present conditions of working batteries a large

amount of gold is left on the plates, and also that of late years chemicals have been used in the cleaning of copper plates, thus taking away a large amount of that gold. The system of cleaning copper plates in the old days was by burning and scaling those plates that had been used for some time. It is a well-known fact that some hundreds of ounces are always recovered from the various copper plates which have been working. Under present conditions of working, like everything else in connection with mining, men have learned from experience and have made practical discoveries, and found that by the use of certain chemicals they can recover a great deal of the gold that used to be left on the plates in the old days. In travelling through the country and going through other States I have found that they do not burn their plates nearly so often now as they used to, but clean them more with chemicals. I have heard that in Western Australia prospectors have reason to believe that after the treatment of stone the plates have been cleaned with chemicals during the time some batteries have been hung up for, say, holidays or repairs. I think that all the gold recovered from those plates, if any, should be returned to the Mines Department and be added to the income from the batteries; and therefore when we have a larger income from the batteries it will be another means of reducing the cost of crushing throughout the State. Another matter is in connection with magnetings. Magnetings are pieces of old shoes, broken bits of drill, bits of steel or iron, that get into the boxes of the battery while crushing is going on; and seeing that we have 29 public batteries, the magnetings amount to a great deal. Whilst travelling through Victoria I found that people were purchasing these magnetings and making a large amount of money by the treatment. In some instances in Western Australia prospectors applied to take these magnetings to be treated, but the applications were refused, and one battery manager was sued for them. I have mentioned that case to the Minister, and he has sent a man out to inquire into that and other matters.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Instructions have been issued to hand them over.

MR. HOLMAN: Many tons of magnetings have been recovered from our State batteries during the time they have been working, in the last eight or nine years. The question of the cleaning of these plates by chemicals and retaining the magnetings is a very serious one. Around every battery we have in Western Australia there is a large amount of gold. A little must have dropped here and there on the floor, which is cleared, up time after time, or should be, by the managers of the various batteries, and we desire to know where the whole of these cleanings are going to. Another point is that in Western Australia very many batteries have been removed from place to place; and whenever so removed there should have been some amount of gold recovered from the residues left behind them. In regard to nearly every case I know of in connection with private batteries or batteries owned by companies, every time the batteries were removed the plates were cleaned. We have had State batteries removed time after time, and I would like to know whether any gold has been recovered from them. I do not think that the return I am asking for will cause any great expense; but I desire to bring this question more prominently before those directly interested, and I know that prospectors take a keen interest in the matter, not because they are so particular to recover the gold themselves, as they know that a certain amount is always left behind, but they desire that when any gold is left behind in the State batteries the State shall get hold of it, and not any individual. That is the reason I am calling for this return, and I do not think there will be any opposition to the motion. I intend to go farther into the question afterwards.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I second the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): I have no objection whatever to provide the return asked for by the hon. member; but I do not wish an idea to go abroad amongst the people out back who are using the State batteries that there is such a thing going on as the cleaning and scaling of the copper plates. I am sure the hon. member should know perfectly well, after the long experience he has had in this House, that the

department do not allow the plates of the various State batteries to be cleaned, more especially whilst those batteries are in use. The hon. member said the plates were cleaned with chemicals and that we all knew that a large quantity of gold was allowed to remain on the plates; so it might be believed that the department at the present time were trying to obtain extra profits by scaling the plates and thus robbing the customers of those batteries which are there for use, because we all know that if the plates are scaled or cleaned with chemicals, the next customer who brings stone to be crushed will lose a proportion of his gold. This we do not allow. In 1900, I believe, the department issued instructions to scale the plates. I think that this was done at only one battery—Leonora. All the other battery managers refused to comply, or if they did not absolutely refuse, they refrained from scaling the plates. Since then, whenever I have heard that plates were scaled, I have given instructions that it was never to be done again; and I do not think that my orders were countermanded by those who followed me: I feel quite certain that they were not. At the present time we do not permit the practice. If we thought that any of the battery managers had tried to remove any gold from the plates by the use of chemicals, that man would immediately be dismissed; and if anything of the sort were done it would be done absolutely without the knowledge of the department, and I should welcome any information on the subject. With regard to the magnetings, they are supposed to be the property of the customers. As the hon. member knows, at one battery the manager refused to hand them over to the customer, but was given prompt instructions from the department to do so, as soon as the matter came to my knowledge. Of course there are other residues, such as those in the crucibles, and from what may be termed the sweepings. These are supposed to be the property of the department. With careful management we anticipate getting a little gold occasionally from the sweepings and the broken crucibles. Such gold is not supposed to be the perquisite of the manager—it should be sent to the department; and a little while ago we received a fairly good return from

some old residues which had been obtained through collecting broken crucibles and similar material. I shall be pleased not only to furnish the return for which the hon. member asks, but to make it as clear as possible, so that members may know exactly the batteries from which the gold has been received. I should not like to do anything which would lead the public to believe that the department are taking so wrong a course as to allow the copper plates to be scaled.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) : I am pleased to hear the Minister's utterance. When the Government adopted cyaniding, they cyanided the first heap of tailings after putting up their cyanide plant. This at once allowed the battery managers to handle gold belonging to the State; and since the system was started I know of many prospectors whose stone did not come up to expectations, and who murmured a belief that the battery manager was perhaps withholding some gold secured in the manner indicated by the mover of this motion.

MR. GULL: How often does a prospector's stone come up to his expectations?

MR. TAYLOR: On many occasions I have known stone which largely exceeded the prospector's expectations, and I have known other occasions on which it did not come up to expectations by a long way. At the same time I can quite understand the hon. member's thinking that the stone would not come up to expectation, because I remember that when the hon. member was prospecting he was not so skilful as other men who followed him; hence he was likely to overestimate the value of his stone. I will not say he would overestimate his own value; but a prospector naturally magnifies every spec of gold that he sees in the stone; and unless he is very skilful in dollying, he is likely to be led astray in either direction—may either overestimate or underestimate. Some stone we can appraise fairly well by looking at it; other stone which shows no gold may carry as much again as stone that looks very promising. I know that since cyaniding has been started by the Government, gold has been handled by the battery managers and sent to the department; and this in a large degree accounts for the difficulties pointed out by the mover.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The managers send it all down.

MR. TAYLOR: I know that; but the Minister will agree that when the manager handles gold for the State, customers are likely to think that their gold, or some of it, has been thrown in with the gold obtained from the sands, from the cyanide. The Minister knows a case in point, where a customer thinks his own estimate absolutely correct and the departmental figures show the contrary. I know that State battery managers do on all occasions try to give the greatest possible satisfaction to prospectors. I am pleased to see that the Minister offers no objection to the motion; and I hope that in future, when cyanide plants are erected at State batteries, the Government will not cyanide the first heap of tailings and take the gold for the State. If that is not done there will be no gold belonging to the State, or allegedly belonging to the State, handled by the battery managers; consequently there will be fewer opportunities for leakage, and still fewer opportunities for prospectors to think that they are being deprived of their own gold.

MR. HOLMAN (in reply): I wish to thank the Minister for his assurance that the battery plates will not be interfered with; because we all know the condition of the plates when they are cleaned. I took this action to prevent any interference with the plates, whereby the prospector may suffer. But there should be a certain quantity of gold returned to the department from the crucibles; and I desire to find out which battery manager has devoted most attention to his work.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—COLLIE COAL INDUSTRY, THE RECOMMENDATIONS.

MR. J. EWING (Collie) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the recommendations contained in Dr. Jack's report upon the Collie coal industry should be given effect to by the Government.

He said: It is with a considerable amount, I will not say of pleasure but of regret, that I find it necessary to place before the House my views on this very important and much vexed question of the coal-mining industry at Collie. It is well within the knowledge of members

what has been done for Collie and what has been the history of that industry; but the only apology I need make for again bringing this matter into prominence is that in my opinion we have in the report of the Royal Commissioner Dr. Jack, which I should like the House to adopt, the solution of the whole difficulty. If it is possible by adopting the report of Dr. Jack to do what is right, just, and fair to the State, and also to cement and strengthen that great industry, I think we shall do much good without in the slightest degree harming any taxpayer in the country. I have first of all to offer my thanks, not as the then member for Collie but as its present member, for the action taken by Mr. Daglish and his Government in securing the service of that very eminent man Dr. Jack, to inquire exhaustively into the coal-mining industry. I give them my most sincere thanks; for in their action they certainly did well. But in my remarks to-night I shall probably have to take exception to much that was done by them; and it is only fair that, as I feel in duty bound to take exception to some of their actions, I should give them every credit for such of their actions as were in my opinion praiseworthy. Mr. Daglish, speaking at Subiaco when first he took up the reins of Government on behalf of the Labour party, said that he had heard so much with reference to the coal-mining industry and was so much in sympathy with that industry that he had determined to settle once and for all this much-vexed question. The hon. member took the right course in appointing such a splendid man with so many high qualifications and such honesty of purpose, and without the slightest prejudice in his mind, as Dr. Jack.

MR. DAGLISH: I have a habit of taking the right course.

MR. EWING: Perhaps the hon. member may take exception to some of my remarks before I have finished, for they will tend to show that he did not always take the right course. This report occupied seven months of Dr. Jack's time, and cost the country some £2,500. Dr. Jack, I believe, received an honorarium of £1,000; there were exhaustive tests and trials of Newcastle coal and Collie coal; and an endeavour was made to

arrive at a fair value for Collie coal, to place it on such a basis as to make it a profitable fuel for use on our railways. One important point has been settled by Dr. Jack's assuring us that we have at Collie an immense area of coal available to this State. He reports that we have 50,000 square miles, which means that at the present rate of output we have sufficient coal to last us for 2,000 years. If we produced and sold a million tons of coal per annum, we should have enough coal to last the State for some 310 years. I am not here as member for Collie to tell members, whose intelligence is perhaps superior to my own, that Collie coal is equal to Newcastle coal; but I am here to tell them that the industry at Collie is very valuable, and one which deserves their most hearty support, which it will no doubt receive.

MR. TAYLOR: And always has received.

MR. EWING: It has received very little indeed. Dr. Jack, in paragraph 23 of his report, states the well-known fact that "If the coal were only two days old when used, there would be little 'deterioration' to complain of." But if the coal is exposed to the atmosphere, the deterioration is very rapid indeed. When I was previously member for Collie I asked the then Government to instruct I think the then General Manager of Railways to provide some coverings for Collie coal in places where it had to be stored for a considerable period. My request was refused. From time to time the question was brought before different Governments, who replied that the coverings would be far too costly. In my opinion such provision would involve a very small expenditure; and I hope that at any rate this portion of Dr. Jack's report will be given effect to. In paragraph 24 Dr. Jack deals with the great value of a coal-mining industry to any State, and points out that even now the Railway Department is using 79 per cent. of Collie coal. He says:—

The withdrawal of the railway order would therefore involve the immediate closing-down of the mines, unless the outside consumption had in the meantime assumed much larger proportions. It must not be forgotten that a considerable amount of capital has been sunk on the faith of the Government's policy being adhered to.

And there were no contracts in existence. I want to point out that the action taken by the Government at that time was in my opinion a wrong action indeed. They had this report before them; and in all conscience, when they had this the outcome of such an exhaustive inquiry and such a fair and reasonable report, they should have given it that due consideration which it was necessary for them to give in the position they occupied. If the hon. gentleman who has just been returned for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) had given the attention to this very important question that he gave to other important questions with a considerable amount of success, what happened at that particular time would never have occurred. The hon. gentleman was then Minister for Railways, having previously taken over that position in conjunction with the Mines Department. I am sure I am not very far wrong in saying that perhaps his duties were so onerous that he had not the time to properly peruse this report, and to come to a conclusion based on the facts contained therein that it was his bounden duty to do as Minister for Railways at that particular juncture; but instead, the hon. gentleman must have been carried away by the Commissioner of Railways, who stated that he only wanted to deal with one company on this field so as to expedite the work of his department and make it easier for his officers, and suggested that tenders should be called, and that at the same time it should be stated that the lowest tenderer would have the contract. That was done. Tenders were called and action was taken just prior to the Labour Government going out of office. I think it was the very day they left office. I was a private person at that time; I was not in a public position, and I was naturally interested in what was going on. I met the late Minister (Mr. Johnson) after the Labour Government had resigned, and asked him what conclusion the Government had come to; and he said, "We have given the whole of that contract to the Proprietary Company." I said it was a serious matter; and it was. It simply meant the confiscation of all the money placed in the coal industry except that put in by the particular company.

MR. DALGLISH: Confiscation? Nonsense!

MR. EWING: I will not use such a harsh word. At any rate money was placed in this industry by other companies on the distinct understanding that they would have a share of this particular trade.

MR. DAGLISH: That they should milk the State cow.

MR. EWING: No. Attached to the giving of this contract there was to be an industrial agreement by which the men were supposed to have a fair and equitable wage. From the hon. gentleman's standpoint that was a fair condition to attach to this contract.

MR. BOLTON: Not from your point of view?

MR. EWING: I am going to deal with that presently. I am going to point out particularly that in calling for tenders for coal in the way the Daglish Government did, it simply meant that the tenders were based on the whole of the coal being supplied by one company, and based on the wages fixed by an arbitration award given just previously. If the contract had been given to one company without the condition the hon. gentleman placed upon it, there must have been a reduction of wages.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford): You said just now that I let the contract to one company.

MR. EWING: No; conditionally on an industrial agreement being entered into between the company and the men for a fair and equitable rate of wages to be paid during the term of the contract.

MR. JOHNSON: They failed to comply with that.

MR. EWING: Yes. In my opinion an error was made. An hon. member is laughing, but I defy him, or any member of this House, to say that an error was not made when, within Dr. Jack's unbiased and unprejudiced report, the price and value of Collie coal was fixed. I ask those who were responsible for this contract, whether they wanted this particular coal to be supplied below its commercial value? I do not think they did. However, without dealing any farther with this matter, I say that this particular contract failed because the men and their employers could not come to an agreement on the matter. Subsequently, after the general election, the whole matter was again brought by me before

the Rason Government; and after a great deal of trouble and a great deal of work on my part in placing before them what I thought was a reasonable position, the Rason Government decided to divide the contract in certain proportions well known to members, and the price they gave was 8s. 9d. They also gave a refund of all royalties during the period of the contract. I want particularly to impress on members that this price of 8s. 9d. was based on the calorific value of the coal.

MR. DAGLISH: But one company tendered at 7s. 9d.

MR. EWING: Certainly; but that tender was based on supplying the whole of the coal and, I believe, also on the arbitration award being put into effect. That was not my desire. I want to point out what a disastrous thing it would have been to the industry —

MR. JOHNSON: There was nothing relating to the arbitration award at all.

MR. EWING: I know that their calculations as to the low price at which they could supply the coal were based on the arbitration award and on supplying the whole of the coal required throughout the State. I say they could not do it, or all the other collieries would have had to close down. The Rason Government adopted a certain amount of Dr. Jack's report, and based the price practically on the report, for which I give them my thanks; and Collie is progressing fairly well now; and we also have what the hon. gentleman (Mr. Johnson) then wished to make sure of—an industrial agreement between the employers and the employees covering the period of the contract. I should like, in passing, without hurting anybody's feelings, to refer to a matter which occurred during my absence from the House. In connection with this industry, it was stated that people working in certain mines at Collie were being dismissed so that aliens might be put on in their places. Under the present agreement the miners at Collie are fully safeguarded. Without the slightest fear of contradiction, I say that no worker has ever been dismissed from the coal mines at Collie to put on any aliens.

MR. HOLMAN: Old hands have had to go away.

MR. EWING: That may have happened long before my time.

MR. HOLMAN: It was referred to by a deputation about a week ago.

MR. EWING: It was not asserted that a single man had been put off so that one of these aliens might be put on.

MR. HOLMAN: Old hands were put off.

MR. EWING: What the deputation objected to was that these aliens should be employed at all. The secretary of the Miners' Association never asserted that hands were put off so that aliens should be put on. The agreements with the various companies are in existence, and members may peruse them. Their conditions are well worthy of perusal by members opposite, because they are more liberal than those of any other industrial agreement in the State. I take credit to myself for having been a party to bringing this about. Though coal is now being sold at a reasonable rate, the very best conditions exist so far as the workers at Collie are concerned, better conditions than exist in any part of Australia. My reason for bringing this matter before the House and asking for a determination and settlement of this very vexed question is that what has occurred in the past shall not occur again; and I direct members' attention to Dr. Jack's report, paragraph 28, in which he puts the whole thing in a nutshell:—

The price which the Railway Department should give for Collie coal depends upon the relative efficiency of Collie and imported coal, and upon the cost of carriage to the point where the coal has to be used.

That is a businesslike way to approach the question. It is simply asking the State to pay a fair and reasonable price for the coal. In paragraph 82 of the report, Dr. Jack comes to a conclusion on this matter, and says:—

I conclude that, although one and a-third to one of Newcastle is a proportion of efficiency which has not often been reached (in locomotive practice), it is obtainable at least with the best Collie coal, and that the relative values should be fixed accordingly as a factor in determining the fair price.

That is exactly what has been done, and as long as that is done I do not think any exception whatever can be taken to Dr. Jack's report being adopted. In paragraph 90 is the most important question that can be brought before this House, and one that is taking up a considerable amount of attention in this State now, that of freights; and the value of Collie

coal is, like other things, simply dependent on the freight charges for its carriage. The paragraph says:—

The effect of a uniform rate of 1d. per ton per mile will be seen from Tables 3 and 4. This is important, as, according to Mr. George's evidence, something like a "uniform" rate of 1d. per ton per mile on "coal," of whatever description, has been recommended by the Commissioners of Railways for all the States of the Commonwealth, although the exact amount is still only known to the Commissioners and the Cabinets.

I have no doubt exception has been taken with regard to my attitude towards our Commissioner of Railways; and there is no farther justification necessary than for me to say here, as I have said before, that in the action of the Commissioner of Railways in regard to this particular industry he has forfeited my confidence and the confidence of every right-thinking person. He knew full well that 1d. per ton per mile on Collie coal meant the annihilation of that industry. In his report Dr. Jack states, in paragraph 93:—

If the "uniform" rate of 1d. per ton per mile ever comes into force, the last word will have been spoken, and the extinction not only of the Collie coal industry but of all "local" coal industries throughout the Commonwealth, wherever the product is not equal to the best, will be assured.

In spite of the knowledge of this particular case, we find that the recommendation made by the Commissioner of Railways was for 1d. per ton per mile on this coal. Therefore, we cannot come to any other conclusion but that the Commissioner's endeavour was to annihilate this particular industry. I give credit to the Labour Government that they foresaw what was going to happen in the event of this being done, and would not allow the Commissioner to have his way. In paragraph 95 Dr. Jack sums up the whole position, and states that if it takes one and a third tons of Collie coal to do the same work as a ton of Newcastle coal, then one and a third tons of Collie coal should be carried at the same rate as one ton of Newcastle. That is the kernel of the question, and the point I want members to consider. Dr. Jack goes on to point out in connection with our rates at present that the same equitable basis of settlement is in existence; that ore of certain grades is carried at certain rates and ores of higher grades at higher rates, so that if the ores are not of equal quality

they have a chance of being utilised, not only for the benefit of those who put their money into the industry, but also for the benefit of the State itself. To sum the matter up, I would point out that Dr. Jack comes to a definite conclusion, that an assurance of 1s. per ton is a fair thing, all points considered, for having a coal industry in our State; and he comes to the conclusion that the value of Collie coal is the outcome entirely of the question of freights. Newcastle coal is being sold at 15s. 4d. in Fremantle to the Government; therefore, the equitable price of Collie coal is 8s. per ton. But we find Dr. Jack goes farther and states that if a freight of two-thirds of a penny per ton be charged for Newcastle coal and a halfpenny per ton be charged for Collie coal, the equitable price for the State to pay for Collie coal is 10s. per ton. The State is now getting Collie coal at 9s. per ton; therefore we are getting it below the price which Dr. Jack says is fair and equitable. Perhaps this is a matter for congratulation, but at the same time we want to be very sure that we do not pay more than the State can afford for this particular industry. Dr. Jack farther makes provision in the event of prices fluctuating. In the case of Newcastle coal being sold at any price above 15s. 4d. per ton on the freights of one penny per ton for Newcastle coal and three farthings per ton for Collie coal, then Collie coal would be worth as £522 to 1. On the basis of two-thirds of a penny per ton for Newcastle coal and a halfpenny per ton for Collie coal the proportion of increase in the payment would be as £52 to 1. Dr. Jack recommends the latter freight. Although Collie coal is less in efficiency by 33 per cent. to the Newcastle coal for locomotive purposes, yet it is only $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. less for stationary boilers, for which purpose it is used very largely in Western Australia.

MR. TAYLOR: When used fresh.

MR. EWING: People can get their supplies almost daily in Perth, and they can get coal within 48 hours on the goldfields.

MR. TAYLOR: But you do not advocate it for the goldfields localities.

MR. EWING: That is the very place where Dr. Jack says it will give the greatest efficiency. If members will look

through Dr. Jack's report they will see that, according to the trials, the greatest efficiency was on the goldfields lines.

MR. DAGLISH: But you cannot have preferential rates to the goldfields.

MR. EWING: Dr. Jack does not call it a preferential rate.

MR. DAGLISH: But the fact remains that the Constitution Act forbids it.

MR. EWING: It does not in Dr. Jack's opinion. We all know what preferential rates are; but Dr. Jack does not consider it a preferential rate because we carry an inferior article at a lesser price than we carry a superior article at. There is no preference rate at all in that.

MR. SCADDAN: The report does not say that the various grades of Collie coal should be carried at various rates.

MR. EWING: Dr. Jack does say that, and I will read the paragraph. It is paragraph 95, which is as follows:—

If it takes one and a-third ton of Collie coal to do the work of one ton of Newcastle coal, a "uniform" charge of 1d. per ton per mile on Newcastle means a charge of one and a-third pence per equivalent of Collie, and the farther the coals are carried the greater becomes the premium on Newcastle. The principle of charging "coal" of whatever quality at the same rate could not be, and as a matter of fact is not, applied to other articles of commerce. If sugar and saccharine were classed together under the head of "sweeteners" and the same rate charged for the transport of both, the absurdity would be patent to everyone. An instance less extreme may be quoted from the "Classification Rates for the Conveyance of Merchandise on the Western Australian Government Railways," p. 48.

MR. SCADDAN: That is not a preferential rate.

MR. EWING: I say it is a preferential rate.

MR. SCADDAN: The other is.

MR. EWING: If the member will wait until I finish the paragraph he will see that there is an answer to the interjection by the member for Subiaco contained in this paragraph. The report goes on to say:—

The charges on "Ores and Concentrates not exceeding in value 100zs. of gold per ton" are defined as "Class M for the first 100 miles, and for distances exceeding 100 miles 4d. per ton per mile added to rate for 100 miles." While "Ores and Concentrates exceeding in value 100zs. of gold per ton" are charged "for every additional 100zs. or part of 100zs., one farthing per ton per mile added to the rate for ores not exceeding 100zs. of gold to the ton."

MR. SCADDAN: You know that exists.

MR. EWING: Dr. Jack farther states:—

This is an equitable principle depending on the values of the two articles. Coal may be regarded in this connection as an "ore" of heat or power, and the equitable basis of a charge for its transport is its value. A strictly "equitable" rate would be one which allowed one ton and a third of Collie coal to be carried for the same charge as one ton of Newcastle coal. Supposing the charge for three-thirds of a ton of Newcastle to be one penny, the equitable charge for four-thirds of a ton of Collie would also be one penny. In other words, the charge on Collie coal would be 3d. per ton as against 1d. per ton for Newcastle. The adoption of this principle would place equivalent quantities of each coal within the reach of the consumer strictly on their merits.

MR. DAGLISH: Would you apply the same principle to Victorian coal which is inferior to Newcastle coal?

MR. EWING: In this State?

MR. DAGLISH: Yes.

MR. EWING: If an inferior article, certainly. The basis of the report is in the paragraph which I have read. It is the most important paragraph ever contained in any report submitted to the House or the country. It is an equitable and fair contention. Dr. Jack says that the coal is of a certain value, that it is the product of Western Australia and it is our desire to use it, and that there should be a preferential rate according to its value. This is very just, and members cannot grumble. Not only will the constituencies, but the people of Western Australia one and all desire the development of the Collie coal industry.

MR. DAGLISH: Would you apply this to Victorian coal also?

MR. EWING: I would apply a preferential rate to anything in the State of Western Australia.

MR. DAGLISH: Then it is a preferential rate.

MR. EWING: It is not preferential. Is it unfair to carry low-grade ores at the same rate as ores of a higher value? If that is unfair then the other would be unfair. We should close down half the gold mines on the goldfields if a preference were not given. The member is selfish in this matter; he is very parochial. He states that on the goldfields of Western Australia there is a certain value of ore produced in Coolgardie which is of less value than the ore

produced at Kalgoorlie; both of these have to be carried to the same point to be treated, and it is impossible to carry one at the same freight as the other. The hon. member is willing to apply that principle to the goldfields, but he will not acknowledge that the Collie coal product as is described by Dr. Jack as an "ore" of heat or power should be treated similarly.

MR. BOLTON: You take it at its calorific value; if it has a higher calorific value it should pay the higher rate.

MR. EWING: The hon. member is grasping the point at last. The whole basis of the payment for Newcastle coal is on its calorific value. I point out to members that the calorific value of Newcastle coal is 14,000 units, and the calorific value of Collie coal varies in many instances and it is lower very much than the calorific value of Newcastle coal. Thus the calorific value is the generating power, the heat-producing power, and on that basis alone I say Dr. Jack is absolutely correct and sees the great importance of this matter. It has been acknowledged by members on the Opposition side that Collie coal is an "ore" of heat or power; then the recommendation of Dr. Jack should be carried into effect. The coal should be carried at a lower rate because of its lower calorific value. This is a very important question. I ask members to read the report, and having read it to make up their minds as to what they think it right to do. I venture to say any member reading the report will see it is unbiased, unprejudiced and fair. There is no desire to bolster the Collie coal industry as against Newcastle coal. At times great prominence has been given to what has been called the inferiority of the Newcastle coal, but we must remember that this is the Newcastle coal that comes to this State every day, and we have to take it as it comes. We do not get the best Newcastle coal here. There has been no desire to bolster the Collie coal industry. This report is the outcome of a great mind.

MR. DAGLISH: Under a great Government, too.

MR. EWING: Possibly. I cannot see how it was under a great Government, for it failed to grasp the situation and created considerable trouble in Collie when it had in this report the

solution of the whole difficulty. I do not know whether the hon. member has read this report; I would not like to suggest that he has not. I have given him credit for the best intentions and for being the author of this report.

MR. DAGLISH: I disclaim that.

MR. EWING: It was through the hon. member that we are in possession of Dr. Jack's report to-day. Dr. Jack in his report goes on to deal with the proposition that Newcastle coal may be sold here at such a rate as to make it unprofitable to work the mines in Collie. This state of affairs can be brought about by a combination and a desire to annihilate the industry, for the colliery owners in the Eastern States could dump their coal here and lose money. I believe there is a strike at Newcastle at the present time, and if we could get at the inner workings of the companies no doubt we should find that on every ton of coal produced they are losing money. They are doing that, I suppose, to endeavour to help on the coal industry. We have a House here willing to adopt that report, and if we adopt the report we shall place beyond any doubt the future of the coal industry of the Collie. I want members to understand that in moving this motion I am moving in a direction I believe to be in the best interests, not only of the people living in Collie, but of the people of Western Australia. I am not alluding to the interests of one particular company, but I am speaking as the member for Collie, and I believe fully and faithfully that the adoption of the recommendations contained in this report would settle for all time this, as I before termed it, vexed question. I know the attention members give to matters of great importance, and I know their desire is to overcome what has hitherto been a difficulty, namely the settlement of the Collie mining industry question. Adopt this report, and we shall then have no more trouble about the Collie coal question, for the simple reason that all the Government have to do when farther tenders are to be entertained or farther contracts made is to look at this fair and reasonable report and the price and the value to the State as herein contained. It is unique to think that this is the case, because the very basis of Dr. Jack's report is to give at all times the

true value of the Collie coal. There need never be any trouble; there need never be any calling for tenders. We can say always that the coal is worth so much here, as proved in this report, and I do not think it is possible to gainsay the figures which Dr. Jack has given, and if we can settle the question once and for all it will be a very happy state of affairs. It is not necessary for me as member for Collie to worry about the price of coal. It is my duty to take my part in promoting the welfare of the State. I want to get away from this trouble, and I want any Government coming into power not to have the responsibility of being charged by the member with having acted wrongly towards this particular industry. I believe that all along the Ministers did what they thought to be their duty, even if it did not quite fit in with my ideas of their duty.

MR. DAGLISH: You are prejudiced.

MR. EWING: The matter is a very serious one, and I feel that I have had the generous support of the member for Subiaco in regard to getting this very creditable report. When my predecessor occupied the position I now hold in this House, he was very much in favour of nationalising the coal-mining industry, and I believe it is the policy of gentlemen sitting on the opposite side of the House to a certain extent to nationalise industries as far as possible. [Interjection by MR. BOLTON.] It has been called monopoly, but I do not think it is monopoly, because there are four producers there, and we can go to them and buy the coal at the best price at which they can sell it. There is no monopoly. No exception is taken, so far as the owners are concerned, to the industry being nationalised, provided fair compensation is paid. We have to recognise the fact that we cannot nationalise industries of this importance without finding a very considerable amount of money to do it, and that money is not forthcoming.

MR. SCADDAN: Mr. Henshaw did not advocate that.

MR. EWING: No. I would not like to say what he advocated.

MR. SCADDAN: He advocated the State taking over a coal mine, to prevent the business from becoming a monopoly.

MR. EWING: In his evidence at this particular inquiry, he stated that he would not be a party to paying any compensation to anybody, but that the State should open a mine there and thereby close down all those who had previously invested their capital. This is what Dr. Jack stated in connection with that aspect of the question :—

Whether Parliament may see fit to resume the coal mines and work them as a Government monopoly is a question of the politics of the future which I do not venture to forecast. But it is certain that for the Government to work one mine for the supply of its own coal, as has been proposed—involving the ruin of all the others—would be a crying injustice. This is stated by Dr. Jack without any desire to do anybody any injury. This view simply appears to his mind as being fair and just.

MR. TAYLOR: Perhaps he does not believe in nationalisation.

MR. EWING: He does not certainly. We know that in New Zealand the State coal mine is closed down to-day.

MR. BATH: No.

MR. EWING: I very much doubt that. If it is not now, it was a short time ago.

MR. BATH: You look at the New Zealand Mines Record.

MR. EWING: It has not been the great success the hon. member would lead us to believe. Bear in mind what Dr. Jack states in connection with the nationalisation of the industry. This is what would have been the outcome of the action taken by the Daglish Government, if one company had got the whole of the contract; because others could not have existed without getting some portion of the Government order to enable them to build up their trade in the initial stages. However, this is all over-come. We have not that difficulty before us now, and we hope that in future this report will be used when the question is dealt with. As to the importance of Collie and the people who are living there, I would like to point out that the population is considerably over 2,000, and that means, so far as revenue is concerned, between £30,000 and £40,000 to the State. Then land has been sold to the value of £15,000, and rents and royalties have amounted to £23,000, roughly a total of £40,000 more as the outcome of the establishment of this

industry. The royalties on timber and pastoral leases and conditional purchases in this district amount to about £20,000 per annum. Collie is a very important place, a place that deserves the consideration of members of this House; and we want to make it ten times that size if we can, because we hope to be a manufacturing State. We hope certainly to employ our own people and to meet our own requirements. The State must have fuel for some time, and that is a very strong point made by Dr. Jack in this very admirable report. He states that this coal industry will be invaluable to Western Australia, and to-day I have had brought under my notice that Dr. Jack also spoke of its great value in relation to Mona power gas. Dr. Jack has stated that on this point alone the industry is worthy of the consideration of the people of this State. It may in time be a very much more valuable industry than we have any idea of at present. It has just been brought under my notice that on the Great Fingal mine they have a 12,000 horse-power gas engine. It has been proved in this report that the analysis of the coal shows that it is about the best, I was going to say in the world, but at any rate in Australia, for Mona power gas. I am going to ask if it is possible for greater encouragement to be given to this industry by the Government making some experiment at some of their State batteries, and I venture to say that the Collie coal owners will supply coal for nothing to see if it is possible to introduce this into gas engines for the advantage of this State. I would like to point out that in New Zealand there are 50 of these engines at work, and I understand they are using coal there. This very coal at Collie is of such a kind that it is possible to open up an enormous trade; and, in passing, I would like to remark, although it does not quite come in here, it will be a great question in relation to the supply of coal for the Murchison goldfields. It is more a question of freights. If a small amount of assistance is given to the industry, great results will be achieved. It is well known that the Great Fingal are prepared to use Collie coal, and that they are well satisfied with it if they can get a reasonable freight for it. If they can get the freight fixed at three-eighths of a

penny per ton per mile over the Government railways, they will use, I forget exactly the amount, but a very considerable quantity. The Midland Company have written to the different companies saying that they could not carry coal at a lower rate than three-eighths of a penny per ton per mile, but that they will be pleased to take at that rate all the coal that the companies can send. They state that the only reason they could not carry coal at a lower rate is that they have to pay running charges on the rolling-stock they use from the Railway Department. Here is an argument for the Collie coal industry, if we can get the freights reduced to those who are willing to afford a market for us, not only here but on the Murchison. Some of the larger mines up there are prepared to use this coal, if they can get this freight. The Midland Company are certainly not working their railways from a bare paying point of view; they are not working their railways to carry Collie coal or to help to develop that industry; but they are carrying the coal at that freight because it pays them to do so. I want to know how it is that our Railway Department cannot compete on lines like those of the Midland Company. Why cannot it be done? It should be done cheaper on the Government lines, but it is not. There is something wanting somewhere.

MR. HOLMAN: There is no comparison between the two systems.

MR. EWING: The hon. member says there is no comparison. There is a great deal more expenditure perhaps in the one case than is necessary, and there may be a very considerable amount of economy exercised in the other case which is not exercised on our lines. Here is the fact, that we can develop our industry if we can get a reasonable rate for this particular coal. Here is the market. We need not fear. I appeal to the Premier and the Government to see if it will not pay them to so reduce the freights that they will be able to see in a few years time ten times the population in the coal industry that I have pointed out. To show members the value of the industry and how it has from time to time increased in importance, I will read just a few figures in connection with the output. The particulars are very short, and will not weary members. Prior to 1899,

the output was 3,508 tons of coal; in 1899, 54,000; in 1900, 118,000; in 1901, 117,000; in 1902, 140,000; in 1903, 133,000; in 1904, 138,000; in 1905, 127,000; and this half-year, 71,000; a total output roughly speaking of 900,000 tons, of the value of about half-a-million.

MR. HOLMAN: How much was sold outside the State departments?

MR. EWING: The hon. member can easily arrive at that, because the sales to the Railway Department are about 100,000 tons per annum, which leaves about 40,000 or 50,000 tons sold outside.

MR. HOLMAN: Nearly 120,000.

MR. EWING: I am not worrying about that. That only goes to back up my argument. I say it is necessary for the railways to burn this coal at the price stated by Dr. Jack, the value being 10s. a ton under the existing conditions. I am not going to say that the companies have a large private trade, but they have a certain amount of private trade. We want the Railway Department to show their confidence in this State by burning the product of this State, giving employment to the people of Western Australia. This is all I am asking. I am not asking for any concession. I am only asking them to adopt this report, which will so greatly advance not only the interests of Collie, but the interests of Western Australia; and can it not be done? Are we to be at every twist and turn confronted with the argument that it does not pay? Does it pay for our men to be leaving the State? Does it pay for them to be out of employment? No. I say, reduce the freights, help the industry along, and we shall have a great and prosperous country; but we shall never have it if we continue to run the railways on commercial lines. I feel sure that the member for Mount Margaret agrees with me. [MR. TAYLOR: Then it will be the first time that we have agreed.] I feel sure that he does; and I look forward with pleasure to his support on this important question. I do not think that I have wearied the House; because many members, if they had had this question to deal with, this volume to go through and these figures to place before the House, might have thought it necessary to go into detail; but I take it for

granted that members will now read the report.

MR. SCADDAN: We have all read it.

MR. EWING: I am glad to hear that, and feel sure that if the hon. member has read it he cannot but agree with the opinions I express to-day. The freight question I would commend to his earnest consideration. It is absolutely the crux of the whole position. As to this report, I wish again to say that I, as representing the coal industry, would not for a moment ask any concession for that industry; and in asking for the adoption of the report I am not asking for any concession. We at Collie are asking only for fair play and justice; we are asking that this State, through the Railway Department, shall pay the price which has been fixed and recommended by Dr. Jack, after exhaustive trials and inquiries, as a fair and equitable charge for this product. It cannot be said that I am trying to bolster up the industry. It has been said in the House and throughout the State that people are tired of hearing about Collie coal. But now I am trying to relieve them of the necessity for hearing of it in future.

MR. TAYLOR: The farmers are tired of it.

MR. EWING: There are plenty of farming representatives here who are able to take care of themselves and to defend their constituents. I shall not go into the question of the fires. It has never yet been proved that Collie coal was responsible for them. I wish only to point out that the basis of payment for this article, which is of an inferior character to the imported article, is its true value based upon the carriage.

MR. SCADDAN: If you advocate a preferential rate, I cannot agree with you at all.

MR. EWING: That is the basis—its efficiency, after giving due consideration to its carriage, owing to its being an inferior article. I recommend the perusal of this report to the serious consideration of members, and venture the opinion that it is not possible for any fair-minded man to say—and I do not believe it will be said—that any concession is asked by me for the industry. I ask only for the commercial value of this coal; I ask the Government to see that the products of the State are used for the benefit of its

people. If that is done we shall have not only a successful coal industry, but hundreds of successful industries throughout the State.

MR. TAYLOR: We wish to know what the coal has cost this State up to date.

MR. EWING: That interjection may or may not be pertinent; but it is beside the question. [MR. TAYLOR: No.] You cannot recall the past. If you consider that it has cost the State too much, how are you to recover the money? Now you have a successful industry and a large amount of people employed. Think of the future and bury the past.

MR. TAYLOR: We cannot remain ignorant in spite of experience.

MR. EWING: I do not think it possible to accuse the hon. member of ignorance. He has certain facts on which he arrives at certain conclusions. Possibly I may be able to refute his arguments, and to prove that there has been no loss from the use of Collie coal. Is not the fact that we have a large population and an industry established in our midst some compensation for what the hon. member may consider a loss?

MR. TAYLOR: I do not know what the coal has cost this State; so I cannot say.

MR. EWING: It may in the hon. member's opinion have cost a good deal; but even if it has cost the State something, is it not necessary for the State to establish an industry and to make a certain sacrifice in securing that establishment?

MR. TAYLOR: The coal has had a ten-years trial.

MR. SCADDAN: The Government are the largest consumers. Why do they not produce the coal themselves? They spent money in building workshops at Midland Junction to produce rolling-stock. Why not produce the coal?

MR. EWING: That is a different aspect of the question, and does not prevent the hon. member's giving due consideration to the present position. If the hon. member or the party he represents should be in power, and say that is the proper policy, they can carry it out. When they were in power, they did not carry it out. I read paragraph 127 of the report, giving Dr. Jack's opinion on this very question that justice would not be done to those who have been induced to put their capital into the

industry if such a course were pursued, unless full compensation were paid. As I pointed out, it is not possible for the State to find money to compensate those engaged in this or any other industry. Therefore we have to face the present position, and to see whether we can evolve some scheme such as I have placed before members as clearly as I am able, and which I commend to their serious consideration. I thank members for their attention, and I believe that the outcome of this motion will settle once and for all the Collie coal-mining industry; and if I do that, I shall at any rate have done something to prove myself worthy of being the member for Collie.

On motion by MR. HOLMAN, debate adjourned.

MOTION—FISHING INDUSTRY, TO INQUIRE.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco) moved:

That a select committee, consisting of three members, be appointed to inquire into the condition of the fishing industry, with a view to determining—1, The circumstances that prevent the supply of fish to the public at a reasonable price; 2, The causes which debar persons of British origin from engaging in that industry.

He said: I have been requested by members in another place to submit a proposal which may be transmitted to the Legislative Council, in order that this may become a joint select committee; and as there are two members of another place who have a considerable knowledge of this matter, it seems to me desirable to gain the benefit of their wisdom and experience. My motion does not need lengthy support. The position in Western Australia is that at all times of the year, no matter how plentiful fish may be, it is difficult if not impossible for the ordinary householder to obtain any fish food except at exorbitant prices. Every member here who is a householder has personal knowledge of the difficulty of obtaining fish even when fish are most plentiful. We know that when the catches are very large, the practice has been time after time to destroy any unduly large number of fish caught, solely to keep prices as high as possible to the consumer. We know also that for some years past in Western

Australia, as in other States and other countries, the fishing industry, whether in regard to the capture of fish or to their disposal to the public afterwards, has fallen almost entirely into the hands of persons of two foreign races, many of whom, unfortunately, as they handle foodstuffs, are not of altogether cleanly habits. It is unnecessary for me to give particulars; but I could cite discoveries in individual fish shops that would cause the hair of members almost to stand on end, if they have any. But I have personal knowledge of Britishers who have entered this industry, of men who have opened fish shops and have endeavoured to cater for the wants of the public, and have been absolutely unable to carry on business, first because they could not purchase fish, seeing that the large number of boats sent out from Fremantle were the actual property of some of the big men running shops in Perth and Fremantle; secondly, because of the fact that the fish sold in Perth were invariably offered to the aliens engaged in the trade; and thirdly, that in a large number of cases the sales were conducted in a foreign language. I have known two persons who have had to retire, after attempting to carry on this business, simply because they could not purchase fish from members of the foreign fish ring. This ring has prevailed for some years past. I am aware that efforts have from time to time been directed by municipal authorities towards dealing with the question; but these efforts have not so far been successful. Since I gave notice of this motion I learn that the Fremantle municipal authorities are again trying to deal with the matter, and intend shortly to establish public fish-markets; but we have fish caught in the Swan and fish sold at Perth as well as at Fremantle. We have also in this part of the State the base to which the fish are brought to supply the greater portion of the population of Western Australia. Therefore we should deal with this question, not in the interest either of Fremantle or of Perth alone, but in the interests of these places and of the rest of the State in which the fish are consumed. Albany and Geraldton will of course receive their fair share of consideration. I think I have said enough, coupled with what hon. members know

of their own knowledge, to justify my request that the House shall authorise the appointment of a select committee; and I shall not at the present stage attempt to indicate my opinion of the direction in which the remedy lies, but I trust that the House will agree to my motion.

Mr. W. B. GORDON (Canning): I second the motion.

Question put and passed.

SELECT COMMITTEE TO BE JOINT.

Mr. SPEAKER: It would be necessary to ballot for two members.

Mr. HARDWICK: Was it too late to suggest that the number should be increased to five, because we recognised that the interests of Perth, Fremantle, and Albany were at stake in this question?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not make a speech. It was at the request of the member for Subiaco that the motion was amended with the object of having the Upper House also joined in a joint select committee. Standing Order 330 said:—

Select committees shall, unless the House shall otherwise direct, consist of five members, whereof one shall be the mover.

The hon. member was too late now. It would be necessary in this case to only put down two names. The mover of course stood in in the ordinary way.

Ballot taken and a select committee appointed, consisting of Mr. Bolton and Mr. Gordon, also Mr. Daglish as mover; with power to call for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of the House; to report on the 15th August.

On motion by Mr. DAGLISH, the resolution was transmitted to the Legislative Council, also requesting the Council to appoint a similar committee with power to confer with the committee of the Assembly.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS.

At 6-30, Mr. SPEAKER said: Before leaving the Chair I desire to draw the attention of the House to Standing Order 214, which says:—

If all motions shall not have been disposed of two hours after the time fixed for the meeting of the House, the debate thereon shall be adjourned unless otherwise ordered, and the

Orders of the Day taken in rotation; but if there should be no Order of the Day, the discussion may be continued. The debate on motions may be resumed after the Orders of the Day are disposed of, on motion to that effect being put and passed.

It will therefore be necessary when we reassemble at 7-30 for some motion to be made.

The PREMIER: Let it be done now. I move "That notices of motion be continued after the adjournment."

Question passed.

At 6-30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MOTION—RAILWAY FREIGHTS AND LOCAL INDUSTRIES.

Mr. A. J. WILSON (Forrest) moved;

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable to revise the existing railway freights, with a view to promoting the welfare of local industries.

He said: In rising to address myself to the motion standing in my name, I recognise that I have in this motion brought before the House in specific form one of the most important questions that is likely to engage the attention of the House during the present session of Parliament. We have involved in this question, in my opinion, one of the most important issues affecting the ultimate condition of the industrial workers in Western Australia to-day. The position of our Railway Department, as I understand it and as the instructions have been given by the present Commissioner of Railways, is that the department exists primarily not for the purpose of encouraging or fostering or promoting the well-being of the local industries of this State, but primarily, for the purpose of earning profits along commercial lines. One can readily understand, under ordinary circumstances, that the desire of the general manager of a big spending department like this, who has practically the sole control of this important department, would be, to a very large extent, to maintain his reputation along the lines of successful working; and his main care therefore would not be, as I think it ought to be, to promote the well-being of the industries of the State, which are so closely allied to the well-being and prosperity of the people of the State. I am afraid that as things stand

in Western Australia to-day in connection with the Railway Department, owing to the freights which are levied by the department for carrying commodities over the railways, the cost of living, so far as the bulk of our State are concerned, is very materially affected indeed. In this connection I want to appeal to every member representing every interest in this Chamber to endeavour to bring to bear on this question a consideration for the best interests of the whole State in common. If we take our great gold-mining industry, for instance, I think it will be agreed by those members who represent gold-mining centres, that the railway freights exercise a very important bearing upon the industrial and social conditions of the people living on our goldfields. We are frequently and repeatedly told that if it were not for the earnings of the railways which directly serve the great gold-mining portions of this State, instead of the railways being a profit-earning institution they would be run at an all-round loss. This may or may not be true, for unfortunately we have no means at present of discriminating between the earning capacity of any one particular section of our Railway Department and any other particular section. What I want to emphasise, so far as our Railway Department is concerned, is that it has a most material bearing on the cost of living, and consequently a most material bearing on the question of the abundance of employment in this State. We cannot dissociate the two facts, that the high cost of wages is largely determined by the high cost of living. At all events, it has been generally admitted to be so; therefore, if the high cost of wages is brought about by the high cost of living, it necessarily follows that a high cost of production is chargeable to the industries of the State, and these industries have to labour under heavier imposts and charges than would otherwise be the case. It strikes me that it is not very material, after all, whether wages are high or low; the main consideration is the bearing or relation of wages when they are earned to the commodities of existence. If, for instance, we can, by economising in our cost of production, reduce the cost of living, if we can increase the purchasing power of the

sovereign to say 25s., then in these circumstances, even if we have to suffer for the time-being a slight reduction of wages, that would not in any degree depreciate the value of the reward paid for services rendered, but it would in many cases materially appreciate the ability of the industries to carry on upon profitable lines, which is not the case to-day. No one wants to see any interference with the existing rate of wages, if we can so alter the economic conditions of our State as that it will be possible to distribute per medium of the wage-earners the greatest amount possible in the shape of wages, salaries, and so on. In order to do this, we do not want merely to distribute wages, but we want an amount of employment at the same time that will be calculated to provide ample opportunity for the extension of industries, which will mean the employment of our population along lines advantageous and profitable to the State. I do not propose personally to deal with more than one aspect of this question, which, I take it, is one which can be dealt with very exhaustively and intelligently from an agricultural standpoint by those members who represent that industry, and it can be dealt with equally so by those who represent mining constituencies. And I have no doubt these members will be in a position to satisfy the House and the country that a reduction of railway charges can be made with advantage to both these industries. Personally I have endeavoured to confine my inquiries particularly and almost exclusively to that industry which I have the honour to represent in this House; and it is with that aspect of the question that I shall deal almost exclusively, leaving it to the other members representing other industries to give the benefit of their opinions to this House with regard to the industries which they represent. Dealing with the timber industry, I want right at the outset to ask members to disabuse their minds of opinions that have naturally, or otherwise, occupied a very considerable portion of public opinion, in arriving at a conclusion in regard to this very important matter. We cannot disguise the fact that, rightly or wrongly, the fair, legitimate and equitable consideration of this question as it affects the timber industry

has to an alarming extent been perverted by the fact that there happens to be a combination of companies practically controlling the timber industry in Western Australia to-day. There can be no doubt about it that the set which has been made on the Combine, as a Combine, has to a very large extent prevented the possibility of that free, intelligent and equitable consideration being devoted to this question which it deserves if considered on its merits entirely. It has for a long time been thought that this is a question which affected only the principal producing company engaged in the timber industry. That is not so, as members who read the report of the deputation which waited on the Premier on Friday morning last, and which was reported at considerable length in the public Press on Saturday, will recognise. At all events, if the conception may have been justified that it was purely, wholly and solely a Combine question, at once and for all the deputation which waited on the Premier last Friday removes this question from the arena of being merely a Combine question. There can be no gainsaying that fact, when we find the representatives of 20 saw-milling firms of this State all outside the purview of the Combine are prepared to approach the Premier of the State and present a case to which there could be one answer and one answer only, a case that bears out in the fullest detail every statement that has been made by the principal company, and every statement that has been made by myself in regard to this matter. This is no new question with me. I recognised nearly 18 months ago the seriousness and gravity of the position. I took a certain stand then, having one object to serve primarily, to maintain in the State an industry that it already had, and secondly to maintain that trade and industry on such terms and conditions as would prevent the necessity for a reduction or any interference with the industrial conditions of the workers engaged in it. Anyone who has been as closely associated with that industry as I have cannot come to any other conclusion than that so far as the rate of wages paid and the industrial conditions ruling in the timber industry are concerned, it is absolutely out of the question and beyond the bounds of reasonableness to expect the

workers in that industry to make any additional sacrifices for the purpose of assisting to carry on the industry in the State. It is generally stated that a minimum wage of 8s. per day is a fair and reasonable minimum to be applied to most of the industrial concerns of this State; but we find that in the timber industry a very large proportion of the workers have to accept a minimum wage of 6d. a day less than what is ordinarily conceived to be a fair wage. Many of the workers in the timber industry are to-day working 50½ hours per week for a remuneration of 7s. 6d. per day. The cost of living—this being to a very large extent attributable to the isolation of these works—is higher in my opinion than in most portions of this State. Therefore, having regard to these circumstances, having regard to the isolation, to the cost of living, and to the already low minimum which is now ruling in that industry, I think we can without any farther consideration or argument dismiss once and for all from our minds the proposal that it is for one moment possible to give any relief to this industry along the line of interfering with the industrial workers in the industry. What is the position so far as the industry is concerned? Prior to 1902, when a review of the railway tariff took place, certain imposts and certain increases were added to railway freights and wharfage charges, and since then several other incidental smaller charges have also been added as an additional impost upon this industry. The effect has been that an annual charge has been added to this productive industry of approximately £63,000. Perhaps had the industry continued as there was a reasonable probability at that time of its continuing and had we been free from the competition which has since assailed us in the markets of the world, to a large extent it might have been possible for the industry to carry on and bear that charge, and I do not for a moment hesitate to say that if the profitable nature of the industry were such as would secure to the workers engaged in it reasonable living conditions, and at the same time procure to those people who have invested their capital in the business a fair and reasonable return upon their money, I think we should be perfectly right in asking that industry to bear as

large a charge as possible for those railway services, so long as we were not by so doing prejudicing the vast interests of that industry. But what has been the effect? Almost simultaneously with the adding of the extra charges which took place in 1902, after the people engaged in the business had spent large sums of money for the purpose of popularising the merits of our Western Australian timber upon the markets of the world, attention was directed to the merits of timbers in the Eastern States of Australia, not because of any demonstration of special merits or advantages as against our local timbers, but mainly and primarily because of the special inducement in the matter of price which was thrown out by the possibilities of developing the Eastern States trade. I believe this is a perfectly sound statement to make, that had there been no increase in the imposts of May, 1902, it would not have been possible for the Eastern States people to take advantage of the markets which we had at considerable expense in the matter of time and considerable expense in money built up for ourselves, reaching the high standard of to-day, a trade worth practically three-quarters of a million of money every year. One of the strongest features of our ability to maintain and carry on our trade in the past has to a very large extent been in cases where time was perhaps more important to the completion of the contract than was the matter of price, and in cases of that kind of course with the magnificent development and the magnificent plant, also the great number of employees we had in the industry and the high state generally of efficiency which existed in regard to our industry here, it was possible for us to supply our timbers to the markets of the world for big contracts in a lesser space of time than was possible for it to be done so far as the Eastern States were concerned. But every order of that kind they got in the Eastern States when they were fighting their way for extending their trade was providing them with the means of eventually developing their business on conditions which would enable them to overtake whatever advantages we had gained in the matter of the expenditure of money and in the matter of the development of our industry and

of building up the magnificent plant we have in Western Australia to-day. These charges have been made, and I think they have had a most serious effect. Some members may say there has not been a very serious falling off in regard to the returns for the export of timber. When those members who rely upon that argument tell us that the exports of timber have greatly increased since the year 1900 and have reached their highest level in 1905, approximately £700,000 for export timber, I want them to ask themselves seriously whether we can cut this year such orders as were obtained in 1905 for the timber mills of our State. The Premier in reply to a deputation last Friday—he told us the figures are approximate—said, having regard to interstate exchanges, that they amounted last year to about £78,000 in value and the oversea export beyond the Commonwealth to nearly £620,000, giving us practically £700,000 worth of export. What is the position to-day? For the first six months of this year we find that the total exports of hardwood timbers have reached the value approximately of £244,000. But in the early portion of this year—for the first three months at all events—there was in process of completion one of the biggest contracts that ever came to the State of Western Australia, a contract to supply I think 25,000 loads of 9ft. 10in. by 5in. sleepers, involving something like 400,000 sleepers. This contract was not completed until after the expiration of the first three months of this year, and consequently a very considerable portion of the £244,000 worth of timber which has gone out of the State during the first six months of this year is due to the fact that there was the tail-end or completion of the final export regarding the contract received or secured during the previous year. We have also to bear in mind that since the close of last year, since the completion of the last big contract secured by Millars of 25,000 loads for India, there has practically not been a single order for export timber coming to the State of Western Australia. One or two small trivial orders no doubt for special kinds of timber have been received, and because they were for special kinds of timber we have a special advantage in the matter of price. I think this sufficiently serious

and alarming to justify every stand, every move, and every step I have taken, to justify every statement I have made in regard to the serious and critical position of the industry in Western Australia. I do not propose to weary myself or to weary the House with a disquisition whether, for the services rendered by the railway department, the charges now levied upon the timber industry of this State are or are not excessive. As I have already said, if the industry could bear those charges under the conditions I have enumerated, which I think are perfectly fair, namely, securing fair industrial conditions for the workers, and to the employers a fair and reasonable return for the capital invested in the business, if they could do that and pay the charges as they stand to-day, those charges would, I think, be perfectly legitimate and perfectly justifiable. But we must not consider this question from the position as to whether or not these charges now being levied are or are not reasonable. We have to consider the question from the standpoint of the existence of one of the most important industries in this State. We have to consider the importance of it to our railway department, because it represents practically 20 per cent. of the goods carried on our railways, and this traffic is the third highest in tonnage carried over the whole of our railway system. The second highest is I understand firewood and "other minerals," I think it is so classified, which include stone, lime, and articles like that. We should recognise the volume of this business to our railway department, and recognise also the fact that it is not an industry in which the people of the State are living on one another, but an industry which is responsible for bringing every year into this State, if it is wisely catered for and fostered, three-quarters of a million of foreign capital to be circulated—amongst whom? To be circulated in fostering other industries in the State. From £350,000 to £360,000 of that sum is circulated directly in wages amongst the workers, and I think it is safe to say that at the present time from £110,000 to £120,000 is circulated in the State per medium of the railway department, and a very considerable portion is circulated through the State per medium of the

agricultural industry in the way of providing fodder and foodstuffs for the cattle engaged in the industry, and in the way of providing food for the workers engaged in the industry. One can readily realise that with an industry involving such important considerations as these and responsible for the distribution of so large an amount of money, the real question at issue for consideration is, can we afford in the interests of our State to sacrifice a portion of our railway revenue for the purpose of enabling us to carry on this industry; or shall we, rather than sacrifice a small portion of our railway receipts, sacrifice the industry and allow the whole trade to go to the Eastern States of Australia? That is really the crux of the whole question. Of course, for the time being, I leave out of consideration, because I do not think it calls for consideration, the possibility of granting relief to this important industry by interfering with the industrial conditions of the workers in the State. Whilst I recognise that we have not necessarily much need to consider whether the existing rates are high or low, yet I shall deem it necessary, just by way of comparison, to refer members to the position taken up by Governments in the Eastern States with regard to this industry, where it depends to a greater or less extent on railway facilities. But before doing that, I wish to say, farthermore, that at my instigation an inquiry was held into this business. It will be remembered that some 15 or 18 months ago the workers in the timber industry were threatened with a serious reduction in wages. Being seized of the gravity of the position and desirous of averting such a calamity, I called a conference of representatives of the workers, and we met the employers' representatives at Bunbury in May, 1905. I held that the gravity of the position warranted some investigation, and subsequently that if the question were referred to the Court of Arbitration there was only one means by which that court could give relief to the industry—by throwing the whole of the burden on the workers' shoulders. I desired to avoid that possibility, and to have an investigation into the general question, with a view to arriving at some decision as to whether we could afford to make cer-

tain sacrifices of our State revenue for the purpose of keeping this industry afloat. Unfortunately, I did not succeed in keeping this dispute from the Arbitration Court; but I did eventually succeed in getting an inquiry, and the result of that inquiry proves conclusively—although there are one or two rather contradictory paragraphs in the report—that some assistance must be given to the industry if it is to be carried on. What do the inquiry board propose? A reduction in railway freights, which reduction, as the Premier has been good enough to tell us in his policy speech at Bunbury, will involve a loss of £17,000 to the Railway Department; and in addition they farther recommend a reduction of the wharfage charges which will involve another sacrifice of public revenue to the extent of £6,000. On these two items alone I understand that the reduction will amount to £23,000. That is not all. Not only are the board prepared to recommend the Government to sacrifice £23,000 of public revenue; but they recommend the Government to build special railways for the purpose of fostering the industry. And if we add a reasonable allowance for the capital cost of railways to open up our timber areas and fresh avenues for the industry, we can safely say that the sacrifice to the country will be much nearer £30,000 than £23,000 per year. I mention this because some people seem to think that I, as a representative of the workers, have in this matter taken a rather peculiar stand. The stand I have taken may by some be deemed peculiar; but the only consideration that concerns me personally is whether the stand is calculated to serve the best interests of the people. And if it will do that, I shall not concern myself at all with the nauseous criticism that has been hurled against me for taking this particular stand. But I cannot help feeling a certain pride in recognising that I have been prepared to take this stand not to-day, not yesterday or the day before, but fifteen months ago, recognising the only manner in which the rights of the workers in the timber industry could be conserved. I took that stand when it was unpopular to do so; and it is encouraging to know that all the investigations that are being and that are likely to be made only go to prove that the

position I took up fifteen months ago was the absolutely right and true position to take. I do not wish to drag in any personal matters at this stage. When it becomes necessary for me to deal with them on the hustings in my own electorate I shall be ready. But what is the position to-day? Having regard to all the inquiries made, to all the reports, to the indisputable evidence placed before the country by those directly interested, do not these all prove conclusively that a need does exist for some relief to be given to the industry? That the people in the Eastern States can sell their timber at lower rates than we can sell ours is, I think, also indisputable; and it does not matter whether workers in the East are getting more or less for their labour than the workers in Western Australia. If, for instance, the hewing rate in Queensland for a 9 feet by 10-inch by 5-inch sleeper were 5s. instead of 1s. 6d., and if it is possible for the people in Queensland to do as they have done—as is proved by the returns printed in the report of the Timber Inquiry Board—sell their timber at 76s. 8d. a load c.i.f. India, and we cannot pay our way at less than about 95s., what is the position? Does it matter whether the Queensland hewer is or is not getting 5s. a sleeper? The fundamental fact is not how much the individual worker is getting for his labour, but what is the price at which timber exporters are prepared to sell their product in the markets of the world. If their timber is admittedly as good as ours—not to say it is any better—and if it can be procured so much cheaper, how can we possibly hope to induce the buyer of timber in the world's markets to pay us a higher price for our timber, merely because our railway freights are higher, because our wages are higher, and cost of living higher? The average man who wishes to buy a commodity never stops for a moment to consider that aspect of the case; and if you asked him to consider it he would quickly tell you it was no business of his; that he had, say, £500,000 which he wished to exchange for Australian hardwoods, and that he was striving to get the most he could for his money. If there are in Queensland, New South Wales, and Tasmania, people prepared to supply timber much cheaper

than the timber of Western Australia can be supplied, then it follows as the night the day that orders will necessarily be placed in the Eastern States. We know that some time ago a little trouble arose in the timber industry. The timber-hewers were led out on strike, on the 1st March; and they are to-day no nearer the realisation of the object for which they struck than they were on the day they went out. And obviously it is impossible for them to be any nearer, because of the circumstances at the base of the whole business. We may do what we like in the way of coercion, or strikes, or lock-outs; but we cannot coerce the buyer of timber to pay us a higher price than the price at which exporters in the Eastern States are willing to sell. And so long as he can get timber at the prices for which the Timber Inquiry Board admit it can be procured, so long will he continue to buy timber from the East. I am quoting from a return sent to the board from our Agent General's office. Attached to the Agent General's letter is a list of tenders opened on the 6th November for the supply of 400,000 sleepers for India; and the average quotes by the different States were: New South Wales, 91s. 9d.; Tasmania, 80s.; and Western Australia, 98s. 9d. per load, c.i.f., delivered free of all charges. Farther particulars are given as to other contracts accepted during 1905. Only two refer to India, which for the time being is the most important market for Australian hardwoods; and the return shows that New South Wales exporters accepted a contract, c.i.f. Calcutta, at 80s. 8d. per load, whilst the Queensland people accepted a contract for the same-sized sleepers, same kind of timber, delivered under the same conditions in Bombay, for 76s. 8d. per load. The Tasmanian tender was as low as 72s. 8d. In face of these facts it is needless to go farther for the fundamental reason for the falling-off in the export timber trade during the first six months of the present year. For a moment I should like to direct the attention of the House to the report of the Commissioner of Railways till the 30th June, 1905. Attached to the report is Appendix M, which shows the number of passengers booked at each station, the revenue from passenger traffic, the local timber freight, the total goods freight,

the goods revenue, the total revenue for each station for the previous year, the total revenue for the current year with which it deals, and columns showing the increase and the decrease respectively. I gather from a perusal of that return that during the year 1904-5 there was a falling off in revenue to the extent of £28,556, as compared with 1903-4, from nine timber stations on the South-Western Railway. There may be some reason for this. The probabilities are that the Minister for Railways will be able to find some excuse for this huge decrease in the revenue from these particular stations; but the report unquestionably discloses that there has been a falling off in revenue from these nine principal timber stations on the South-Western Railway, amounting to no less a sum than £28,556. So far as our present railway charges are concerned, it will be interesting to members to know that the increases in rates in 1902 were somewhat stupendous. For instance, if we take the principal stations we will see some interesting figures. Yarloop, which is perhaps the biggest timber-producing centre in the State, is distant 37 miles from Bunbury, and the present rate per ton is 6s. 1d., while prior to the increase in 1902 the rate was 3s. 11d. per ton, a difference of 2s. 2d. per ton, or an increase of 55 per cent. From Wokalup to Bunbury the distance is 26 miles, and the increase was equivalent to 3s. per ton, or 72 per cent. From Worsley, another big timber station, to Bunbury the increase was 62 per cent. The increase from Dardanup to Bunbury was 69 per cent. When we bear in mind that the freight paid by Millars from these stations amounted in 1905 to £90,000, we can appreciate at a glance the effect the increases have had on that particular part of the industry. A still more interesting comparison is that which deals with the position so far as the railway rates in the Eastern States and Western Australia are concerned. I will take again the same stations to which I have referred. We start with Dardanup, nine miles from Bunbury. In this return for the purpose of more effectual comparison I have included the existing wharfage rate of Western Australia so as to bring concretely before members the whole charge in Western Australia as

compared with the complete charge in Queensland and New South Wales.

THE PREMIER: What is the minimum mileage?

MR. A. J. WILSON: The minimum is 25 miles. The local rate for 25 miles is a penny per mile plus ls. 11d. Taking Dardanup, which is one of the most important milling centres of this State, nine miles from Bunbury, the Western Australian rate for freight and wharfage inclusive would be 6s. 8d. per load. According to the New South Wales and Queensland rates now existing, the rate for precisely the same service would be 2s. 6d. per load, or 4s. 2d. lower. In this case our rate is approximately 166 per cent. higher.

THE PREMIER: Take a distance of 20 miles.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I am taking them in order to show the direct effect of comparison as it applies to the mills we have already in Western Australia. I have started with Dardanup because it happens to be nearest to a port. From Wokalup, 26 miles to Bunbury, the Western Australian rate of freight and wharfage is 10s. 8d., as compared with 4s. 7d. in Queensland, a difference of 6s. 1d. per load, or 133 per cent. higher, and as compared with 5s. 2d. per load in New South Wales, a difference of 5s. 6d., or our rate is 105 per cent. higher. At Mornington, for which Wokalup is the siding, there are two of the finest mills engaged in the hardwood trade south of the line. I do not think there can be any doubt but that paying 6s. 1d. higher than the Queensland rate and 5s. 6d. higher than the New South Wales rate for the same distance, on the enormous quantity of timber despatched from that locality, must be a serious impost on the timber industry in that locality. From Worsley to Bunbury the rate of freight and wharfage is 11s. 3d. as against 5s. 2d. in Queensland and 5s. 8d. in New South Wales, a difference of 116 per cent. and 100 per cent. respectively. Take Yarloop on the one branch and Kirrup on the other, the Donnybrook-Bridgetown line, a distance of 37 miles to Bunbury, the local rate inclusive of wharfage is 12s. 3d. per load, as against 6s. 1d. in Queensland and 6s. 8d. in New South Wales, a difference of 6s. 2d. in the one case and 5s. 7d. in the other.

THE PREMIER: When you compare our timber rates with the Queensland rates you must bear in mind they do not send timber under a distance of 60 miles.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Yes; they send timber over a distance considerably less than 60 miles; but the average distance would be about 65 miles. Of course in some parts of Queensland they take timber over the railways for 200 miles. That timber is in the round, and is not timber that competes with us in the ordinary export trade, being used principally for the building trade and scantlings.

THE TREASURER: How far do they carry sleepers in Queensland?

MR. A. J. WILSON: The average distance would be about 65 or 70 miles, I should say. Of course I am only taking these comparisons that deal with actualities. From Greenbushes to Bunbury, a distance of 52 miles, the local rate of freight and wharfage is 14s. 4d., whereas in Queensland it is 8s. 4d., or 6s. less, and in New South Wales 8s. 9d., or 5s. 7d. less. In addition to this increase in connection with freight and wharfage, we have to add also the charge of 3d. per ton, equivalent to 5d. per load, for bush haulage, for the privilege the companies enjoy of hauling Government trucks over their own lines. There are also other charges for chains, tarpaulins and things like that; and storage charges have been recently added. For instance, on the Donnybrook-Bridgetown Railway, if a contractor were completing a back order for sleepers and wanted to get in sufficient to enable him to load probably a whole train or four or five trucks, instead of loading them out of the dray into the truck right away he would require to stack the sleepers until he had sufficient accumulated to load as many trucks as would be convenient for him; but while he is doing this, the Railway Department charge him an impost for the right of placing the timber there where it has no possible chance in the world of interfering with traffic from any other source, in spite of the fact that the timber is stacked there not only for the convenience of the contractor but also for the convenience of the Railway Department, because it must be apparent that if the department can

load a complete train and can run out empty trucks to-day and an engine and brake-van to-morrow to take back the loaded trucks, the work must be done more economically and cheaply than if the department had to pick up two or three trucks to-day, a few to-morrow, and four or five the next day. I only show that disparity in order to emphasise that the Governments in the Eastern States are doing something of a very practical and tangible nature to encourage what has already started, the appropriation or steal of the Western Australian timber trade. Some people may say that if we are going to spoon-feed this industry—it has been said already—we have no guarantee that in a certain period of time we will not have another demand along the same lines for still farther concessions. I quite recognise the possibility of that demand, but I also recognise that when the demand comes along we shall be prepared to deal with it on its merits, just as we are prepared now to deal with this demand on its merits as put before the country to-day. It is time to consider what attitude we shall adopt in regard to any farther proposals on these lines when the demand is made. I am quite satisfied there must be some limit to which we can go in this connection; but to say that we are already at the extremity in this matter to-day is something I am not prepared to admit and with which I am prepared to seriously contend. Let us look for a moment at what this industry means. Unfortunately one cannot get anything like complete figures in regard to the whole of the industry; but as far as the available figures that can be procured go, we find that, during 1905, Millars' business alone was responsible for the expenditure on stores of £54,236, the amount paid by the company for the purpose of purchasing stores to be retailed in their own stores. Then their bill for cattle and sheep for butchering purposes was £14,372; in oils and mill stores they spent £22,527; and in forage, a very important agricultural item, they spent £30,051; in railway freights, £90,000; in wharfage, £13,473; on fire insurance, £10,496; in workmen's compensation, £5,848, and in lease rents, £12,396; the total expenditure in this connection for 1905 being £318,045.

MR. HORAN: Where did you get those figures?

MR. A. J. WILSON: The hon. member need not worry where the figures come from. If the hon. member is in doubt about their reliability it is quite easy for him to contradict them.

MR. HOLMAN: They got a big return for the stores.

MR. A. J. WILSON: What the member says in regard to stores and meat is perfectly true, but we must also recognise this. If, for the sake of illustration, Millars were to make a profit of £25,000 as a result of supplying their employees through their stores and butchers' shop, whatever profit they make is deducted from the f.o.b. cost of producing the timber. As far as Millars' business is concerned that profit has the effect of reducing the f.o.b. cost of producing timber to as big an amount as 1s. 6d. per load. The position is this. If Millars were not running these stores, but if the hon. member or half a dozen hon. members were running stores in these camps, it is questionable whether the employees would reap much benefit at all. And even supposing they did, the position would be that instead of a profit of £25,000 or £30,000 being made by the company and employed in reducing the f.o.b. cost of timber, that £25,000 or £30,000 would go into the pockets of the people who would in no way apply it to reduce the cost of timber, and the result would be either the Railway Department, or the Government, or the wages of the workers would be compelled to make up the deficiency of 1s. 6d. in regard to the f.o.b. cost of timber. That undoubtedly is the position. Whatever profit is made, and I believe that profit is 10 per cent. on the whole of the store business, which I understand can be verified if any member likes to appoint an auditor to verify it, a profit of 10 per cent. on a grocery business I do not think anyone will admit is unduly extravagant or extortionate. The expenditure of Millars alone—and this evidence was placed before the Court of Arbitration, and no doubt was responsible for the strong remarks made by the president of the Court and the other members of the Arbitration Court when Millars obtained their decision on the 21st December last year—shows that the

railage contributed from 1897 to 1904 amounted to £580,350. The amount paid for stores, and for butchers' and bakers' supplies, runs into £465,000 for the same period; and if we take the expenditure, of which I have a copy here, for the year 1904, which includes over £350,000 contributed in wages and salaries alone, we find it amounts to a total of £753,182—money brought into the State very largely on account of the export of timber, and distributed in various departments throughout the State, assisting other industries both directly and indirectly. If we survey the whole position as far as the timber industry is concerned it reduces itself to this. Is it desirable that the industry shall be maintained? No one, I think, for a moment would dream of closing down an industry which provides such an abundance of employment to the workers of the State. We all, I think, agree that the industry shall be continued if it possibly can be. I do not say at any price, I do not adhere to that for a moment; but if we can, by making reasonable sacrifices, continue the industry and the circulation of the money which is circulated in consequence of the industry, we are perfectly justified in making a reasonable and moderate reduction. If it is desirable to maintain the industry and if we refuse to make some concessions on the part of the State to maintain the industry, and the industry is to be maintained, then it will necessarily mean that the only people who can bear the burden of carrying on the industry will be the workers. And there cannot possibly be any other alternative. I have gone into the matter very closely, and I cannot see the possibility of another alternative. Members when considering the question, if they are prepared to oppose the position I have taken up, I hope they will not merely be satisfied by making empty statements in regard to the position, but will be prepared to contest the position and supply us with some tangible and fundamental information. Although there has been an abundance of talk up to the present time, there has been no definite and tangible statement in contradiction of any of the statements I have made, and of any position I have taken up in regard to the whole business. The position is serious; the industry is in a critical stage of its existence, and I

am pleased to know as far as the Government are concerned they are prepared to see that justice is done to the industry. All I ask in the motion I submit to the House is, that while considering this question as to this industry, we shall grapple with the whole position, the serious question of railway freights generally, with a view of placing the Railway Department in its correct and proper relationship to the industries of the State. The Railway Department is not, or ought not to be, a department existing for the purpose of earning profits at the expense of the industries of the State, but a department that ought to exist for the purpose of fostering the industries of the State and providing abundant of employment on reasonable conditions for the workers engaged in the industries of the State. That is all I ask. As far as the agricultural aspect of the case is concerned, and so far as the rates affecting the gold-mining industry are concerned, I leave these to members who represent those industries to deal with and point out the matter as it affects themselves. I only wish to point out one matter which appeared the other day in the Press. The mayor of York, in giving an interview to the *Morning Herald*, pointed out one very striking fact, that it cost more by about 1s. or 1s. 6d. a ton to carry produce over our railways from York to Fremantle or Perth, a distance of less than 100 miles, than it takes to carry similar produce from the Eastern States to Fremantle. I repeat that it costs 1s. 3d. or 1s. 6d. more to carry produce from York to Fremantle than it costs to bring it from Adelaide or Melbourne to Fremantle. As far as the agricultural industry is concerned, that is one item alone that leads me to the conclusion that there must be a very serious impost as far as the agricultural industry is concerned, and detrimental to the well being of the industry. The time has come in this State when the policy of the Government in controlling the Railway Department of the State should be, not to run our railways merely for profit-making, not to run our railways merely and solely on a commercial basis, but to run our railways with the primary object of fostering the industries of the country, and promoting the general well-being of the

State. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. T. W. EDDY (Coolgardie): I beg to second the motion, and to support it on a much wider scale than that submitted by the member for Forrest. I maintain that on the question of reduction of the railway tariff, although it has been advocated in the public Press and from the floor of this House from year to year up to the present, it stands to the discredit of all past Governments that they have not reduced that discreditable tariff. I think a little open discussion at this time will be wise, and after considering the matter to see whether we cannot come to some concrete form of business, and whether it would be wise for a select committee to be appointed to go into the whole matter. The discrepancies in our railway tariff are altogether disgraceful. They have been pointed out from time to time, and I may just mention one or two matters by way of showing members how bad that tariff is. For instance, the timber that affects the district represented by the member for Forrest is taken to the goldfields at about £1 per ton. That is all right. The goldfields people do not think that an exorbitant rate; but what the people on the fields submit is that sandalwood should not cost £3 to be carried from the fields to Fremantle. It is understood and acknowledged that in carrying timber or stuff from the fields, when the trains run back generally empty, the rate should be cheaper; and here is an instance where the goldfields people have to pay three times the amount of money that it costs to carry timber from the coast to the fields. Then again, another discrepancy, and I have mentioned this before. One pound of tea costs 1s. 11d. or 2s. to be taken to Kalgoorlie. That seems an extraordinary thing, and I think very bad business. It simply means that that for an extra pound of tea on a consignment 2s. has to be added. That is not creditable to any business. Then we pay one rate for pearl barley, and another for tapioca. We pay one rate for rice, and another rate for sago. We pay one rate for soda, and another rate for cream of tartar. There is something wrong in a tariff where differences such as these exist. In reference to the parcels tariff at present, I can prove to the House

that one cwt. cut in two can be sent cheaper than by sending one cwt. alone. As an illustration again, I as a commercial and business man, if I want to send a case of stuff to Menzies from Coolgardie, find it is cheaper to send the stuff first to Kalgoorlie, and then from Kalgoorlie reconsign it to Menzies. That seems extraordinary business, nevertheless it is true. In reference to the high rates again affecting the goldfields, it costs 3s. 9d. to take a case of kerosene to Kalgoorlie from Fremantle, notwithstanding that this is by the truck load to Kalgoorlie of 112 or 120 cases. I think that an exorbitant price for people on the goldfields to pay where they have the electric light in existence—to make people pay a railway rate of 3s. 9d. for a case of kerosene. Then, again, it is only a fair thing that mining people should ask why they should be charged for mining machinery at a higher rate than people in the agricultural districts are charged for agricultural machinery. We must acknowledge, and we know it is true, that the goldfields railways in the past have been the greatest revenue producers, whereas the railways in the other parts of the State have been run at a loss. It is advocated, of course, by the Ministers and the Commissioner of Railways that the railways must pay. Quite so. It is alleged that if we reduce the tariff we shall have to reduce the workers' wages. Rather than reduce the workers' wages we are, I submit, prepared to maintain the railway tariff; but by going into it fully one finds that what is really wanted is revision and reduction of the tariff so that these discrepancies may be righted, and we would soon be able to have a tariff on more equitable lines than at present.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (West Perth): I think the House has rarely listened to a subject of greater importance than that which has been introduced by the member for Forrest (Mr. A. J. Wilson). It seems to me it is one of those subjects requiring a great deal of care in its consideration. I only wish to address myself to one point, and to call the attention of members, and especially of the Government, to this phase of the subject. We have ten millions of money invested in our railways, and we have to provide interest at 3½ per cent., amounting to £350,000 a year. We have also

to provide one per cent. for a sinking fund, which means another hundred thousand pounds. This money has to be found every year. We shall, therefore, have to consider the question as to how we can regulate the tariff without affecting the general revenue of the State. We have a deficit now of £120,000. I want members to look again at the figures I quoted the other evening. In 1902-3 the net profits of the railways, after paying interest expenses, was £30,887. That meant that for that year in order to make up the sinking fund £70,000 had to be taken out of revenue. In 1903-4 the net profits showed £111,784. That year, taking off £100,000 for sinking fund, gave a profit which went into the general revenue of £11,784. In 1904-5 the return was £10,957, leaving a profit after providing for sinking fund of £957. I understand, and I think I am correct in my information, that this year's railway revenue will show something like 5.19 per cent. of the general revenue. The position, if this is so, is that after paying sinking fund on the £10,000,000 invested in the railways, we shall have £69,000 to go into general revenue. Supposing that this can be maintained, which is somewhat doubtful, £69,000 is the total sum with which we have to deal. I want to impress upon this House that if we interfere with the railway rates, if we dissipate the £69,000 or more or less, we shall then carry a charge for the railways upon the general revenue. Whilst I agree with the member for Forrest that the railways do not exist for the purpose of providing special revenue, we must maintain the position that the railways, in the interest of the State generally, must be made to pay their own way. They must not become a charge upon the general revenue of the State; we cannot afford it. If that be so, how do we propose to make those adjustments which have been spoken of? We must do so either by such an alteration of the railway tariff as will produce a higher revenue in some quarters in order to make reductions in others, or else we must make a loss to fall upon the general revenue. That such adjustments as have been spoken of by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Eddy) could be made, I can quite easily understand. Discrepancies of this character are always

creeping into any railway rate-book, and have of course to be adjusted, but we have to-night to face the question whether we can allow the railways to still continue doing the work and to earn £23,000 less to go into general revenue. In that case, supposing in years to come the average were not maintained at the same figure as I have mentioned, that would mean an actual loss, an actual charge upon the general revenue for the Railway Department. Can we stand this, is the question we have to consider, and, if so, how do we propose to make it good? We are now proposing fresh taxation for the purpose of making good taxation we have had to remit in years past. But the question that has been urged by the member for Forrest is of the most vital character, because it is possible to insist upon the rate and to kill the industry.

MR. HORAN: Do not forget that the reduction of the rates will mean an increase in revenue all the same.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A reduction of the rates will not lead to an increase of carriage at all. The continuance of the present rates may mean a reduction, but a reduction of the rates will not increase the quantity of export. [MEMBER: Yes, if they get more orders]. No; with all due deference to the hon. member. The export at present is falling off, according to the member for Forrest. To prevent that falling off, he suggest a reduction of rates and other reductions. That would only balance things; that would not effect an increase. The same question arises with regard to the member for Collie, who makes suggestions which involve a certain amount of loss to the Railway Department. [MEMBER: No.] With all due deference, it does. I do not want to discuss that phase of the subject at all. I simply want the House, when considering this subject which is of great importance, to bear in mind the fact that we shall have to be careful in dealing with this question. We have come to a point in our railway expenditure and railway revenue when we have not much margin, and it is a question whether this margin which we now have of say £69,000 will continue. I doubt it. But then we have to face the other side of the subject, which has been very earnestly pointed out by the member for Forrest. Apart from the

question of the employment of labour we have a very large traffic, and that traffic is not only timber, but it also means products and other goods for the railway; for instance, fodder and other things which have been mentioned. If we actually destroy this trade, we shall lose not only the trade from the timber but also the freight from the goods supplied to people in those districts; so that the question is really one of great importance, one that requires earnest and grave consideration from this House. And I want that at the same time, when they are considering this question, particularly the Government, they shall bear in mind the fact that whilst, as the hon. member suggests, it may not be desirable to run the railways simply as a commercial institution, simply for the purpose of making a profit, that all our industries shall be considered in our freight book, yet at the same time we must be careful so to adjust our freights that they shall at least cover the cost of our railways. We cannot afford to go in the direction of raising taxation, for instance upon land, for the purpose of making good losses on the railways. That is a principle which will not do, and it simply means that if we are to make a reduction in the interests of certain industries such as the timber industry, we shall have to adjust our tariff on other portions of the traffic in order to equalise things, because we cannot afford to make an absolute loss on this question. I hope members who are thinking over this subject will bear in mind the fact that we are close to the margin which the railway returns must produce. I hold the principle, and have maintained it in this House constantly, that our railways must pay expenses, must pay interest, and must pay sinking fund. If they fail in any of those points, they cause an extra cost and charge upon our revenue which will have to be met from other sources.

MR. A. J. WILSON: The railways have been maintained up to a certain standard out of revenue.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am aware of it.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Would that have a bearing upon the question?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The railways must be maintained. Does the hon. member suggest that we should starve

our railways for the purpose of reducing freights? If so, I am not with him.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Would not the fact that our railways are maintained at a high standard do away with the necessity for a sinking fund?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A member said we were starving our railways and had made £69,000. That may be true, or may not be so. I am assuming this profit has been properly made, and it may continue. I say that if it does continue, this is the margin we have to deal with, £69,000, and I think I am safe in asserting that the railways will not yield continuously a £69,000 margin; consequently any alterations of the freight and tariff will have to be very carefully adjusted. I only want to impress this point upon the House and not to discuss the main question.

MR. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet): I move the adjournment of the debate until next Wednesday.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I hope we shall not wait so long as that. The position will be that if the hon. member moves for next Wednesday there will be a whole host of private members' business coming on beforehand, and it may be a long time before this subject will again be reached.

MR. TROY: I move formally the adjournment of the debate.

Question (adjournment) passed, the debate adjourned.

RETURN—MINING REVENUE, YALGOO.

MR. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet) moved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a Return, showing in detail—1, The amount of revenue received on behalf of the State by the late Mining Registrar and Clerk of Courts at Yalgoo for the twelve months ending 30th April, 1906, such return to specify to which item of revenue such moneys were credited. 2, The expenditure of the Yalgoo office and details of same.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): If the hon. member pressed for details, the motion must be opposed. The request was absurd.

MR. TROY: The return should be as full as possible. The closing of the registrar's office at Yalgoo had resulted in great inconvenience, and in an application to reinstate the officer. On the

understanding that the Minister would give as much information as was practicable, he asked leave to amend the motion by striking out the words "showing in detail" and "details of same."

Leave given to amend.

MR. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) seconded the motion.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—BOYA QUARRY, LEASE.

MR. BATH (Brown Hill) moved—

That all papers relating to the leasing of the Boya quarry be laid upon the table of the House.

Much had been said at various times as to the circumstances of this lease, and the papers would be interesting to members.

MR. TROY (Mt. Magnet) seconded.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—PERTH WATER SUPPLY, MUNDARING.

MR. BATH moved—

That the special report obtained by the Works Department during 1904-6, relating to the supply of Perth with water from the Mundaring Reservoir, be laid upon the table of the House.

The motion was made out of consideration for the Treasurer, who in his speech on the Address emphasised the need for economy, and for keeping up-to-date records of departmental expenditure. If it were found possible to supply the metropolitan area with water from the Mundaring Reservoir, thus saving the large expenditure on the proposed new reservoir, the interests of the State generally as well as the metropolitan area would be conserved, and the country would not be saddled with the very large debt which the new reservoir would involve. The report might at least shed some light on the various proposals.

THE TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson): The motion was unobjectionable; but how it could affect departmental expenditure was not clear. The water scheme which he forecast last year would not be a burden on the State, but on the ratepayers of the places supplied.

MR. BATH: If several local authorities were borrowing at the same time, the result might be awkward.

THE TREASURER: True. He welcomed the motion, so that members might examine the papers to see whether a permanent and adequate supply of water could be given to Perth and Fremantle, without the large expenditure already forecast. All possible information should be given the House before it finally decided on a work of this magnitude.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—RAILWAY STATION AND GOODS SHEDS, FREMANTLE.

MR. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) moved—

That all papers in connection with the construction of the railway station and goods sheds at Fremantle be laid upon the table of the House.

The construction of these buildings had been the subject of some controversy, even at elections; and accusations had been laid against the Labour Government. If the tabling of any of these papers hampered the work now proceeding, such papers might be removed by permission of Mr. Speaker. He wanted the papers showing the negotiations between different departments and different Ministers. The work had passed through the hands of two or three Governments.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. Gregory) would not oppose the motion, so long as he had not to bring here papers the lack of which would hamper the work.

MR. BATH (Brown Hill) seconded.

Question put and passed.

RETURN--MINISTERS' TRAVELLING EXPENSES.

MR. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) moved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return, showing the travelling expenses of Ministers while on tour paid by the Treasury, for the last financial year ending 30th June.

The return would be inexpensive and interesting.

MR. LYNCH (Mount Leonora) seconded.

THE PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) appreciated the hon. member's desire for

publicity, and to assist him moved an amendment—

That the words "the two" be inserted after "for," and that "year" be struck out, and "years" inserted in lieu.

MR. TAYLOR accepted the amendment.

Question as amended agreed to.

PAPERS—BEAGLE BAY MISSION.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) moved—

That all papers relating to the Beagle Bay mission be laid on the table.

He believed that this mission was controlled by the Colonial Secretary.

THE TREASURER: No; by the Treasurer.

MR. TAYLOR: If the Minister was not going to oppose the motion, it was not necessary to delay the House by speaking to it.

THE PREMIER: The motion was not specific enough, as the papers dealt with the Aborigines Department and with the Lands Department.

MR. TAYLOR would amend the motion to relate only to the Aborigines Department. He had intended to deal with a certain increase alleged to be given to the mission for the maintenance and upkeep of the aborigine children.

THE TREASURER: The Aborigines Department was controlled by the Treasurer, but the Treasurer did not control the mission.

By leave, the motion was amended to read—

That all papers relating to the Beagle Bay Mission, as affecting the Aborigines Department, be laid on the table.

MR. BATH seconded.

Question passed.

THE PREMIER laid the papers on the table.

PAPERS—BOILERS INSPECTION, SONS OF GWALIA MINE.

MR. P. J. LYNCH (Mount Leonora) moved—

That all papers in connection with the inspection of boilers on the Sons of Gwalia mine, and all papers in connection with the boiler explosion that occurred there, be laid on the table.

MR. T. H. BATH seconded.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The papers would be brought down tomorrow.

Question passed.

PAPERS—PIPES MANUFACTURE, THE REPORT.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill) moved—

That the report of the Board of Inquiry into the Manufacture of Pipes be laid on the table.

It should not have been necessary to move in this direction, because the papers should have been laid on the table when Parliament assembled, this being a matter of public interest. He had been somewhat delayed by the non-production of the report, because he had been desirous of using the information on the Address-in-Reply, and he had not been able to find the report among the papers on the table. We had a report of the finding and also the minority report published, but there was no report of the evidence adduced at that inquiry supplied to the newspapers, and members had not the information available to them.

MR. P. J. LYNCH seconded the motion.

Question passed.

PAPERS—BUBONIC PLAGUE AT GERALDTON.

MR. P. STONE (Greenough) moved—

That all papers in connection with the outbreak of bubonic plague in Geraldton, including all correspondence between the Geraldton Local Board of Health and the Central Board of Health on the same subject, be laid upon the table.

The people at Geraldton considered that the president of the Central Board of Health had not acted as promptly and with the same energy as he should when several sudden deaths had occurred. When the local doctors reported the matter to the local board of health as being an outbreak of plague, the board then went to the trouble of getting into telegraphic communication with the central board asking for assistance, and the president of the Central Board of Health answered that he could not do anything then, that it was too late, and that he would attend to the matter on the following day. On the following day a telegram was sent from the local health officer to the Central Board of Health, pointing out how the town was reeking with plague, and asking the president to send nurses, tents, etc.; and the answer to that

telegram, he (Mr. Stone) understood, was that the president of the Central Board of Health could take no action until he had sent one of his officers to report. There were no qualified nurses to attend to the patients, who were allowed to die without any attention. There had been a considerable amount of friction ever since, and he (Mr. Stone) desired to see all the correspondence placed at the disposal of the public to show who was right and whether the Central Board of Health took the proper action or not. If there was friction between the central board and the local board, the sooner an end was put to it the better. The president of the Central Board of Health, on an outbreak of plague or any other disease, should be something like the head of a fire brigade, ready to act without delay and to be prompt in stamping out the disease.

MR. M. F. TROY seconded the motion. Question passed.

RETURN—POLICE TRANSFERS, HOW MADE.

MR. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) moved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return, showing—1. The number and names of police officers transferred for the two years ending 30th June, 1906. 2. The dates on which the transfers were made, together with the localities from which and to which such police were transferred. 3. The reasons for and on whose recommendation the transfers were made. 4. And the cost to the department of such transfers.

MR. P. J. LYNCH seconded.

THE PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) could not agree to the motion, because it would entail an enormous amount of work to get out the information required. He had suggested that the hon. member should modify his request, because the motion was a rather large order, and had told him that he would endeavour to get the required information on any particular case mentioned. It would take two officers some weeks to get out the information referred to in the motion, and the expense was not justified. The chief clerk of the Police Department, dealing with the question, had written to the effect that the work involved in the preparation of this report, if furnished, would be enormous and would occupy the sole attention of two officers to supply the information by the

required date; also that it would entail a tremendous amount of detail work to obtain the cost of the transfers, because it would mean every account, railway ticket order, and travelling sheet being examined for the two years and the various sums paid in connection with each transfer (for fares, transport of luggage, subsistence allowance, etc.) extracted; also for the year just closed there had been 180 transfers, which indicated the amount of work that would be involved in furnishing the return. Therefore, unless there were strong reasons given by the mover for requiring the information, it was intended to oppose the motion. He would be only too pleased to give information on any particular case the member desired. The third paragraph of the motion, more especially, went into a matter in regard to which it would be against all discipline if the information should be made public.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): The remarks of the Premier suggested that we should have a different system of dealing with such motions. For instance, if under the Standing Orders a committee were appointed to deal with suggested returns such as this, it would materially facilitate the business of the Chamber, and to a large extent prevent delays in discussing such a question.

MR. SPEAKER had intended to make a statement at the end of the sitting dealing with the question just raised.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): The motion seemed rather comprehensive. There would probably be no opposition to the hon. member seeing any file dealing with the promotion of any officer. The Police Department was somewhat different from other departments, because the police, as servants of the State, were different from other servants of the State. If the member were to delete the third paragraph asking for reasons and on whose recommendations the transfers were made, perhaps the Premier could agree to the motion. There could be no objection to the member perusing files dealing with any promotions that he had any interest in. When he (Mr. Taylor) was Colonial Secretary, and a member desired to obtain information, he allowed that member to see the files. He supported the motion, but it would be well to curtail the request.

MR. HORAN (Yilgarn): While supporting the motion, it was well for the member to consider some amendment. Apparently the member wished some information which did not concern many people employed in the police force. It would be better to accept the Premier's suggestion and put the motion in a more concrete form. The return would cost the country a great deal of money, and nine-tenths of the information supplied would be of no importance.

MR. TROY (in reply): It was to be regretted the Premier found it impossible to supply the information, for the matter under review not only affected one individual but a great number of members of the police force. It was the custom in the Police Department for officers to transfer subordinates for trivial offences, and these transfers caused a great deal of loss and inconvenience to the officers, who received short notice, and had to sell their furniture because they could not carry it to the new destination. There should be the fullest inquiry in the Police Department, and if a commission were appointed many things would be discovered and many grievances found out which should be remedied. There was room for great improvement. There were numerous instances where constables were transferred because their superior officers had been aggrieved for some slight offence. There was no possibility of appeal in the department, although, according to regulations officers had the right of appeal. In one case of which he was cognisant no appeal was allowed. A constable was transferred, and although he applied for an appeal he was not granted one, but an officer was sent to make inquiries. He visited the district, interviewed the superior officer, and received from that official information regarding the offence without questioning the person accused. A communication was sent to the department in Perth, and the officer was transferred to some other locality. The Premier had stated that if this information were supplied it would weaken the discipline of the department. But there was no reason why members of the police force should not have the same liberty as was enjoyed by other civil servants. If he (Mr. Troy) struck out paragraph 3 of the motion, would the Premier supply the remaining informa-

tion? He wanted to provide against transfers being made without proper inquiry.

THE PREMIER: It was impossible to say whether the deleting of the paragraph referred to would reduce the labour. The hon. member might give particular instances, or name particular files that he would like to see in regard to transfers. If so, the request could be met.

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

| | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Ayes | ... | ... | ... | 13 |
| Noes | ... | ... | ... | 19 |

Majority against ... 6

| AYES. | | NOES. | |
|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| Mr. Bath | | Mr. Barnett | |
| Mr. Collier | | Mr. Brubber | |
| Mr. Daglish | | Mr. Cowcher | |
| Mr. Holman | | Mr. Davies | |
| Mr. Horan | | Mr. Ewing | |
| Mr. Johnson | | Mr. Gordon | |
| Mr. Lyuch | | Mr. Gregory | |
| Mr. Stone | | Mr. Illingworth | |
| Mr. Taylor | | Mr. Keenan | |
| Mr. Troy | | Mr. Layman | |
| Mr. Walker | | Mr. McLarty | |
| Mr. Ware | | Mr. Male | |
| Mr. Heitmann (Teller). | | Mr. N. J. Moore | |
| | | Mr. Price | |
| | | Mr. Smith | |
| | | Mr. Varyard | |
| | | Mr. A. J. Wilson | |
| | | Mr. F. Wilson | |
| | | Mr. Hardwick (Teller). | |

Question thus negatived.

MOTION—LAND SELECTIONS, MR. SCOTT.

MR. C. H. LAYMAN (Nelson) moved—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the alleged unfair treatment by the Lands Department of Mr. James Scott, of Lauderdale, in connection with his land selections on the Tone River.

Mr. Scott arrived in this State some 20 years ago, with a view of settling on the land. In 1887 he purchased from the late Mr. Hugh McKenzie, of Albany, a pastoral lease of 5,000 acres, for which he paid £150. The value of the lease depended on its proximity to the Tone River and certain permanent pools thereon. He had the lease transferred to himself and took possession. After making certain improvements, such as fencing, erecting buildings, planting an orchard, and carrying out certain other necessary improvements, he remained on

the land for 12 months, when the Lands Department severed the frontage and these permanent pools of water from his lease, and attached them to a lease held in a similar way by his neighbour on the opposite side of the river. The department extended the boundaries of his neighbour's lease into his lease, and thus cut off his frontage and all permanent water supply. He protested very strongly against this, and the department thereupon declared it a reserve for public utility, and thus Mr. Scott became a trespasser, as he was living on land which he had no right to occupy. Thinking it the best way out of the difficulty, he applied to purchase 160 acres immediately surrounding his orchard and homestead. The department accepted his application and sent a surveyor out, but when that officer appeared on the scene he stated that he had instructions to survey 160 acres in a totally different position. Mr. Scott refused to accept that, and had to leave the lease altogether. Immediately afterwards the department cancelled the reserve, which had been in existence for only 12 months or so, and attaching 3,000 acres of the 5,000 acres to it, leased it to an employee of his neighbour on the opposite side of the river. Shortly after that it was transferred by the then holder to his employer, and Mr. Scott lost his lease entirely. He tried on several occasions to get the matter righted, but not getting any satisfaction from the Lands Department, some two years ago he approached the Daglish Government, by whom a select committee was promised, but pressure of business then prevented the appointment of a committee, and he therefore now asked the House to appoint a committee to go into the matter.

THE PREMIER said it was not the intention of the Government to oppose the appointment of a committee. Mr. Scott's grievance was an old-standing one, and doubtless, if appointed, a select committee would be able to sift the whole question, and he believed that the result would be satisfactory to Mr. Scott.

Question passed.

Ballot taken, and a committee appointed consisting of Mr. Ewing, Mr. Daglish, Mr. Horan, Mr. Stone, and the mover; to report 29th August.

[MR. ILLINGWORTH took the Chair.]

RETURN—RAILWAY CHARGES TO DEPARTMENTS.

MR. T. WALKER (Kanowna) moved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return, showing—1, The amounts charged by the railway, to other Government departments for services during the past five months. 2, The amount paid by each department. 3, The nature of services. 4, The actual cost of such services and the proportion to the amount charged.

The motion had reference to special charges authorised by Ministerial authority, and did not refer to goods traffic. One such journey might cost the Railway Department say £5 but the amount charged to the department served might be £30. The railways showed a large surplus; but possibly that surplus was secured by taking money out of one pocket and putting it in another.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) seconded.

THE PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): Presumably the hon. member referred to special charges for fire brigade excursions, etc., when £50 might be charged to the Treasury while the actual cost to the Railway Department was only £30.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. Gregory): In its present form the motion could not be accepted. Let the hon. member withdraw it now and amend it later to show his real intention. The return asked for must show the charge for freightage against the Works Department, and all similar charges. Such a return would be voluminous and useless.

MR. HOLMAN (Murchison): Add to paragraph 1 of the motion the words "under Ministerial authority."

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: All charges were made by Ministerial authority.

MR. HOLMAN: When fire brigades travelled, full fares were charged to the Treasury.

THE MINISTER: No.

MR. WALKER would withdraw the motion if he could get the information in answer to a question.

THE MINISTER: The information would be given in that form.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

RETURN—ADVERTISING IN PRESS, COST.

MR. HOLMAN (Murchison) moved—

That a return be laid upon the table of the House, showing—1, The price per inch paid by the Government for advertisements in the *Daily News*. 2, The total amount paid to the *Daily News* for the years 1904-5 and 1905-6.

The answer to a recent question by the member for Canning (Mr. Gordon) showed that the newspaper charges for Government advertisements were far too high. In the *West Australian* the average charge was 5s. per inch, and in the *Morning Herald* 3s. 6d. Probably private firms did not pay so much. The State should receive at least the same concession as large firms. He had intended to move this motion as an amendment to the motion on the Notice Paper appearing earlier in the name of the member for Canning, dealing with the cost of advertising in the *West Australian* and the *Morning Herald*, but that motion having lapsed, he now trusted that some member would move an amendment to include its substance in this motion.

MR. M. F. TROY seconded.

MR. TAYLOR moved an amendment that the following words be added:—

3, The total amount paid to the *West Australian* for the years 1904-5 and 1905-6; and 4, the total amount paid to the *Morning Herald* for the years 1904-5 and 1905-6.

MR. T. WALKER seconded the amendment.

Amendment passed.

Question as amended agreed to.

PAPERS—PUBLIC BATTERIES PURCHASE, PLANTS.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison) moved:—

That all papers in connection with the purchase of the State batteries at Twenty-Mile Sandy, Yarri, Yerilla, and Pig Well be laid on the table.

When speaking on the Address-in-Reply, he made certain statements in connection with the purchase of second-hand batteries, saying we had purchased some 11 or 12, for which the present Minister for Mines was responsible.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That the Minister had purchased the big majority of them.

MR. HOLMAN: Yes. He was then compelled to withdraw the statement, because it was denied. The Minister had said, "I think you will find there were seven purchased; and I had nothing to do with any of them." That was an absolute misstatement, because the present Minister was responsible for the purchase of second-hand batteries, in spite of the fact that he told the House he had nothing to do with any of them.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. F. Illingworth): The hon. member must not repeat now what had been previously withdrawn.

MR. HOLMAN did not intend to repeat, but was pointing out that when a member made a statement, no matter how true it was, if another member was unscrupulous enough to get up and deny—

THE MINISTER FOR MINES asked that the statement be withdrawn.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw.

MR. HOLMAN was not referring to any member, but was speaking of an occasion when that might arise. If it were necessary to withdraw, he would do so certainly; but when a member made a statement in the House, no matter how true, if any member desired he could contradict the statement, and then it must be withdrawn in accordance with the rules of the House. That was why he previously withdrew the statement he had made.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must not discuss a matter previously withdrawn, and must confine himself to the motion before the House.

MR. HOLMAN: It had been expected that the report of the Battery Inquiry Board would be in the Chamber by now, as the Minister had promised a fortnight ago that the report would be ready in a week. The second-hand battery at Twenty-Mile Sandy had been promised by the James Government, and was practically supported by the Minister for Mines. Since the member for Ivanhoe had dealt with these matters on the Address-in-Reply, he (Mr. Holman) did not desire to delay the House by explaining them over again.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine himself to the motion before the House.

MR. HOLMAN was explaining his reasons in asking for papers in regard to this battery; and if he was not in order in doing so, he did not know exactly his position. The member for Ivanhoe had mentioned these batteries, and he (Mr. Holman) did not desire to delay the House by going into these questions again. Although the Minister for Mines said he had nothing to do with any of the second-hand batteries purchased, the Minister had given authority to purchase several, and had been responsible in a great way for the purchase of the four batteries referred to in the motion. When speaking to the Address-in-Reply, he referred to the Yarri battery which had been agreed to by the present Minister, as also the Pig Well and Yerilla batteries. On the Yerilla battery a large advance had been made by the present Minister, and an agreement had been drawn up in such manner that it was practically useless, so that when the question arose as to whether we were going to lose the money advanced, it was found to be more satisfactory and less expensive to purchase the battery. Therefore the present Minister had been directly responsible for the purchase of that battery. He (Mr. Holman) had stated that we had purchased 11 or 12 second-hand batteries. He did not know whether that was the correct number, but this motion only referred to four. Some had been purchased before the present Minister occupied the position, and some during the Labour Administration. He (Mr. Holman) desired to ascertain who were responsible for the purchase of these batteries which the Minister denied having anything to do with.

MR. G. TAYLOR seconded the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): The papers would be laid on the table to-morrow, and members would have an opportunity of judging in regard to the merits of the statements made by the hon. member. Members heard a lot of complaints about persons bandying insults about the Chamber, but it was hard to keep one's temper when statements were made such as those of the hon. member. In regard to this matter, he merely wished to move a small amendment, to insert the word "Randells."

MR. HOLMAN would admit Randells. It was the only one.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It would make up the five batteries purchased during the Labour Administration. He moved an amendment—

That the word "Randells" be inserted after "Sandy."

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): If the whip were sounded on the Government side of the House, the Opposition were in such a position that they would not be able to get any return at all laid on the table. The Government dared not take up that attitude, because the country would not stand it. It was idle for the leader of the House or any gentleman in the State, notwithstanding those who conducted the leading articles in the *West Australian* newspaper, to try and prevent members from raising their voices when they believed there was an injustice being perpetrated in any part of the State. He desired to tell the editor of the *West Australian* that notwithstanding his unfair attack on the Speaker of the Assembly in to-day's leading article, it was not going in any way to coerce him (Mr. Taylor). The mover of the motion when speaking was dealing with the Twenty-Mile Sandy battery, the Yarri, Yerilla, and Pig Well batteries, and the member had to make it clear that he was doing so. Whatever might appear in the columns of the Press, it was not going to influence his (Mr. Taylor's) attitude in this Chamber. The only thing that would control him beyond the Standing Orders and the precedents in *May* was his own manhood and honour. The day had gone by in this country when Dr. Hackett could get on to the ear of the Government and run the Government by the *West Australian* or the *Western Mail*. Thanks to the influx of population to this country, that state of affairs no longer existed. The fullest publicity should be given. He would not oppose the word "Randells" being inserted, but he took that opportunity of saying that the only way in which the Government could in some way frustrate the desire of the Opposition was by the amendment.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: In what way?

MR. TAYLOR: Members knew the Minister had not been accused by mem-

bers of the Opposition of the purchase of the Randells battery; no matter what sort of rattle-trap that battery might be, no matter under what conditions it was purchased, the hon. member had not been accused of its purchase. If he moved to insert the Darlôt or the Burtville battery——

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Who bought the Darlôt battery?

MR. TAYLOR: The papers were moved for six years ago, and were laid on the table of the House. It was a scandalous proposition when one read the names of the persons who recommended the purchase of the rattle-trap at Darlôt. The gentlemen who recommended the purchase appeared in writing in the papers, and those names would be there to-day if the papers had not been interfered with. Those men never saw the battery, never saw the country, and had no idea of the circumstances surrounding the place in any particular. He (Mr. Taylor) lived there from the opening of the rush until he came to Parliament to represent Mt. Margaret. [Interjection by MR. HOKAN.] The honourable and verbose member for Yilgarn should be a little more patient; he had to hear something of what transpired in the State before he came to the House. He (Mr. Taylor) had not singled out any one to accuse him, and if members did so by interjection he was not responsible for the interjection. The papers contained the recommendations of men who knew nothing about the battery or the district and had never seen it. He wanted these papers laid on the table.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: They could be laid on the table.

MR. TAYLOR: The hon. member included Randells, but there was no necessity for the papers in connection with that purchase. He wished to show the way in which the Government were dealing with their majority. The Government could stop the passing of this motion, if desired. When he (Mr. Taylor) moved for a return of expenditure covering a period of twelve months, the Premier moved an amendment to insert the preceding year. He (Mr. Taylor) knew full well why that amendment was moved, to show the expenses of the Premier of the day in attending the Conference of Premiers.

THE TREASURER: Was there any objection?

MR. TAYLOR: Parliament passed the item on the Estimates last year. The Government built up their Estimates with that expenditure, but the Government could not hoodwink him in these matters. The members on the Treasury bench, with all their cunningness, were not doing these things without the Opposition recognising the reason.

THE TREASURER: There was nothing cunning about it.

MR. TAYLOR: Privately the Treasurer thought it a very clever move. This was the attitude the Government were commencing to take early in the session, and that being so he desired to draw the attention of members on the Opposition side to the necessity of being absolutely alert to the power of a big majority.

THE PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): As one of the "big majority" the member had referred to, he could say that as far as the insertion of the two years was concerned, the member had given credit for a certain alertness which he had not displayed. He thought the member was desirous of obtaining information, and therefore he thought it desirable to give two years' information instead of one. As to the attitude taken by the Government, although they had a majority, members on the Opposition side must confess that throughout the Address-in-Reply every consideration was extended. The debate on the Address lasted considerably over three weeks, and members could not say that the Government made use of the "brutal majority" they were supposed to have.

MR. TAYLOR: Most of the speaking was from the Government side.

THE PREMIER: If the speeches were totted up it would be found that twice as much talking was done on the Opposition side as on the Government side. The member for Mount Margaret waxed rather wroth.

MR. TAYLOR: It was about time somebody did wax.

THE PREMIER: It was not the intention of the Government to take any unfair advantage of their numbers.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. HOLMAN (in reply as mover): The attitude of the Minister for Mines in inserting the word "Randells" was of

course on somewhat similar lines to some of his actions before. All admitted that the Labour Minister for Mines was responsible for the purchase of the Randells battery. On no occasion did the Minister for Mines of that day, Mr. Hastie, take the same course of action as the present Minister for Mines was doing in denying that he had anything to do with that. It was his (Mr. Holman's) intention to call for returns as soon as the battery report was produced, which would perhaps lead the Minister to admit that when he (Mr. Holman) was compelled to withdraw the statement he made, he had spoken the truth.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must not repeat what he had already withdrawn in the House. That had been ruled twice before.

MR. HOLMAN said he knew all about the papers. The Minister for Mines made personal representation to the then Minister for Mines, Mr. Hastie, with regard to the purchase of several of these batteries mentioned by him (Mr. Holman). And the Minister was ungenerous enough to try to get out of that by inserting into this motion a matter that had nothing whatever to do with it, namely the production of the Randells battery papers. He had no objection to the production of those papers. [**MINISTERIAL MEMBER:** Then what was the hon. member crying about?] It was enough to make a man cry when an hon. gentleman got up and compelled him to withdraw a statement which was absolutely true. It was unmanly and ungenerous.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: It had been ruled by him three times during this discussion that the hon. member must not practically repeat the statement he had already withdrawn. Now he must insist upon the hon. member's refraining from doing so, and he called upon the House to support him.

MR. HOLMAN said he was very sorry that when the Minister moved that the word "Randells" be inserted he did not add "Burtville" and two or three other places where there were batteries for which he was responsible.

THE DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. member could add that if he so desired.

MR. HOLMAN said he was now replying to the debate on the motion, and that stopped farther discussion. There

were several batteries which the Minister was responsible for, and he wished to point out that when he made a statement to this Chamber he did so with the intention of speaking the absolute truth, and he had personal ground for any statement he had made. He intended bringing the matter forward in relation to other batteries afterwards.

Question as amended put and passed.

[**THE SPEAKER** resumed the Chair.]

BILL--VACCINATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. A. J. WILSON, and read a first time.

PAPERS—PUBLIC BATTERY, MONTAGU RANGE.

MR. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) moved—

That all papers relating to the application for a Government battery at Montagu Range be laid upon the table of the House.

When speaking on the Address-in-Reply, he made certain statements which had since been contradicted by the Minister for Mines. He said the Minister had neglected the locality known as Montagu Range by not providing a battery there, and because of his neglect in that respect the prospectors were being starved out. Later on the Minister, in reply, told the House that Mr. Hastie when Minister for Mines was responsible for the refusal of a battery in that locality, and asserted moreover that he (Mr. Troy) must have known, when he made the assertion, that Mr. Hastie was responsible for that refusal. Later he questioned the Minister as to that battery, asking when it was that Mr. Hastie refused the battery, and would the Minister read a record of such refusal? The reply was:—

On the 25th April, 1905, by letter sent to Mr. E. W. Harper through Mr. Troy, M.L.A. The refusal reads as follows:—"Although the Minister is not prepared to erect a battery at 50-mile, he would consider the question of granting a subsidy if the owners of the mill there would be willing to crush on reasonable terms."

He (the mover) was not particular regarding the Minister's statement on that occasion, because often statements were made without justification. He was merely raising this question because he wanted to do justice to Mr. Hastie as Minister for Mines in the Labour Government. To that gentleman had been

dealt out most unfair and ungenerous treatment. He was made the scapegoat for every matter connected with public batteries, and it was the duty of members on the Opposition side of the House, if not on the other side, to see that although Mr. Hastie was not in the Chamber to protect himself, he should be given fair consideration and justice should be done to him. Mr. Hastie did not refuse the battery at Montagu Range, and the Minister was misleading the House in giving the reply he did to that question. He wanted the papers laid on the table so that members should know who was really responsible for the refusal of the battery there. He had been careful enough to keep a record of the application connected with that particular battery, and to keep the reply from various Ministers. Mr. Harper did not live at Montagu Range, and had never lived there, but he lived at Berrigrin, which was eight miles from Montagu Range. Mr. Harper never made application to have a battery at Montagu Range. The letter to Mr. Harper refusing a battery was in reply to an application for a battery at Berrigrin. The two places were not in one locality. In no sense were they in one locality, any more than Boogardie and Lennonville were in one locality. There was a public battery at Lennonville, and there was one at Boogardie, and the distance between these two localities was only four miles, whereas the distance between Berrigrin and Montagu Range was, as he had stated, eight miles.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It was in the same locality.

MR. TROY: The Minister could not have made a mistake, because the application for a battery at Montagu Range was made in the form of a petition. A petition was forwarded by him (Mr. Troy) to the then Minister for Mines, Mr. Johnson, on the 12th July, 1905. On the 31st July, 1905, the present member for Guildford and then Minister for Mines wrote that he had caused a report to be prepared as to whether a battery was necessary or otherwise; but immediately afterwards, owing to a change of Government, the member for Menzies (Hon. H. Gregory) became Minister for Mines. While seeking re-election that hon. member told the electors

of Menzies that the State Mining Engineer, Mr. Montgomery, instead of being in his office at Perth, should travel through the mining districts and report on the various properties, and that it was his (the Minister's) intention to send Mr. Montgomery to Montagu Range, the Black Range district, and Pingin. He (Mr. Troy) immediately wrote, on the 30th August, 1905, to the Minister asking that Mr. Montgomery should visit Montagu Range and report as to a public battery for that locality. On the 4th September the Minister replied, acceding to the request. Mr. Hastie was never approached for a public battery at Montagu Range, neither had he ever refused it. The application was made to Mr. Johnson, the present member for Guildford, who asked for a report, and then went out of office. The present Minister for Mines promised him (Mr. Troy) a report regarding the battery, but he had never since heard anything of either report or battery. Too much insult and injustice had been heaped on Mr. Hastie, who was made the scapegoat for every evil in the public battery system; and the House should do justice to that gentleman's character. The present Minister must admit Mr. Hastie's fairness and generosity, and that he (the Minister) had made a mistake, and was alone responsible for the fact that there was no battery at Montagu Range.

MR. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) seconded the motion.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

MOTIONS, WHEN FORMAL.

MR. SPEAKER: Before putting the motion for adjournment, I wish to intimate to members the desirableness of acquainting Ministers of any formal motions, so that such motions may be placed on the Notice Paper above the Orders of the Day. This procedure will be in better accord with the Standing Orders than that now followed. And farther, it will facilitate business, instead of keeping members sitting here at times for hours waiting for formal motions

which happen to have been set down after motions of a debatable character.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.45 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 19th July, 1906.

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

PRAYERS.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS (3).

MR. EWING.

MR. J. EWING (Collie): I desire to make a personal explanation in reference to a few remarks I made last night on the Collie coal question. I stated that the honorarium given to Dr. Jack for his investigations was £1,000, but I find I was in error. The honorarium was £650, of which amount £200 was paid to an assistant, leaving to that eminent scientist £450 for the work he did.

MR. JOHNSON.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford): I desire to draw attention to a statement made by the member for East Perth (Mr. Hardwick) to the House on the 12th July. The hon. member stated that my name appeared in connection with the lease of an hotel at Kalgoorlie. The

statement is absolutely incorrect. I think there are enough sins already recorded against me in *Hansard* which I shall have to answer for, without allowing this to pass. The statement is absolutely incorrect.

MR. HARDWICK.

MR. J. E. HARDWICK (East Perth): In explanation, what I said was only in connection with a pamphlet I had picked up, and it was not a definite statement on my part. It was only a reference made in a pamphlet authorised by C. G. Graves.

MR. BATH: Did you get it when you were canvassing?

MR. HARDWICK: I was not canvassing, so I could not. The hon. member has pointed out that the statement is perfectly incorrect. I pointed out at the time that I would not have referred to it—[MR. TAYLOR: Is the hon. member in order?].—I pointed out that I had no intention of doing the hon. gentleman who was contesting a seat any injury. However, as the hon. gentleman denies the statement, I withdraw it.

QUESTION—PROSPECTING EXPEDITION, NORTH-WEST.

MR. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, The names of the party or syndicate (of which Mr. Duff was one) that recently left for the North-West on a prospecting expedition? 2, What previous experience of prospecting, to the knowledge of the Minister, has each member of the party had? 3, The names of all those interested in the syndicate? 4, Has the Government granted financial or other assistance to the syndicate? 5, If so, to what amount or extent?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Application was made on June 1st to the Department by T. Duff, on on behalf of himself and H. Page, for the loan of two horses, harness, and spring dray, for the purpose of prospecting the Gascoyne and Ashburton districts, and on the 6th this was approved. On the 18th he applied to be allowed to alter his application to enable him to proceed to Derby in lieu of the Gascoyne. This was refused owing to the receipt of a wire from the local Resident Magistrate, stating that a fair