

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 18th October, 1923.

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

QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAY MATTERS.

Murchison Stock Trains.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Railways: 1, How many special stock trains were run from Meekatharra to Mingenew, Northam, Midland Junction, and Fremantle respectively during year ended 30th September, 1923? 2, What was the average time occupied in transit to each place during the same period? 3, How many trucks of stock were attached to "mixed," including passenger trains, from Meekatharra to Northam, Midland Junction, and Fremantle respectively during same period?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, To Mingenew, nil; to Northam, 2; to Midland Junction, 5; to Fremantle, 5. 2, To Northam, 37½ hours; to Midland Junction, 41½ hours; to Fremantle, 43½ hours. 3, To Northam, equal 108 4-wheeled wagons; to Midland Junction, equal 394 4-wheeled wagons; to Fremantle, equal 42 4-wheeled wagons.

Collie Coal Contract.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it a fact that the Government have recently made a contract with the Amalgamated Collieries Company of W.A. for supplies of coal to the Railway Department? 2, If so, what are the terms, conditions, and date of such contract?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Copy of agreement is available for the hon. member's perusal.

QUESTION—MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Mr. J. THOMSON (without notice) asked the Premier: Will he, before deciding upon a site for the mental hospital, submit the different proposals to the House? If not, will he provide time on a Government business day for the matter to be discussed?

The PREMIER replied: The House will be asked to pass a vote on the Estimates for this work and that will afford the opportunity the hon. member desires.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1923-24.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 16th October; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Votes—Education, £571,802; Minister for Justice, £86,677—agreed to.

The Department of North-West (Hon. J. Ewing, Minister); the Minister for Agriculture (Hon. H. K. Maley) in charge of the votes.

Vote—Department of the North-West, £24,915.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.35]: I think some information should be given as to how the Government intend to develop the North-West.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. K. Maley—Greenough) [4.36]: One of the most important industries of the North-West will be considered under a separate vote—I refer to the Wyndham Meat Works—and therefore I shall not deal with it now. Members should know what is being done regarding an industry that we hope will play an important part in the development of the North-West, namely cotton growing. I regret that a better exhibit of locally grown cotton was not made at the recent show. Special provision had been made in the agricultural hall to stage examples of cotton grown in the North-West last season, but unfortunately the exhibits we had collected did not arrive at Fremantle until after the conclusion of the show. We have received a parcel of approximately 3 tons of cotton, and it will be sent Home to be properly ginned and then displayed at the Empire Exhibition. Through the good offices of the Director of Agriculture in Queensland, we have engaged a tropical agricultural adviser (Mr. Wise), whose duty it will be to advise growers upon all questions of cultivation. When he arrived we arranged for him to meet members representing the North-West in order that they might discuss North-West conditions with him, and the Director of Agriculture took him to the experimental farm at Merredin in order that he might get a grip of the methods of agriculture adopted in this State. The new officer has been placed under the Director of Agriculture and not under the Department of the North-West, because we do not want a repetition of the experience of last year. In essentials there is no difference between the growing of cotton and the growing of wheat. I was one that helped to demonstrate wheat could be grown at Bruce Rock, and Bruce Rock is now one of our best wheat districts. To successfully produce wheat or cotton, proper methods of cultivation must be adopted. Therefore Mr. Wise is beginning his work by obtaining a thorough appreciation of our methods of cultivation and of the conditions prevailing in the North-West. Then, if it is possible to locate a sufficient

area of land near to one of the existing ports—and it should be possible—we propose to definitely establish growing on a scale that will warrant the installation of a ginning plant. We must secure an area capable of producing sufficient cotton to keep a mill fully occupied. The position in this respect will be just the same as when starting a butter factory in the South-West; it is of no use starting the factory until there are sufficient cows to keep the factory supplied with cream. It would be useless to start growing cotton at widely separated spots. It has been suggested cotton should be grown at Millstream. Violet Valley and other places not provided with facilities to convey the product to a port. Our object is to secure a sufficient area for a definite settlement that will justify the installation of the necessary machinery and thus enable the industry to be put on a commercial basis. Thus, a definite attempt is being made to establish cotton growing in the North-West. It would be a fine thing for the State if a sufficient area of suitable land could be obtained at Wyndham, because the cotton growers would be able to furnish sufficient ordinary labour to operate the meat works during the killing season. I confidently predict that after the tropical agricultural expert has settled down and has had his plans reviewed by the Director of Agriculture, we shall be able to put on surveyors to definitely map out a suitable area of land, near to a port I hope, and start cotton growing on a commercial scale. We have had a remarkably good season all through the North-West and the State generally. In the main, the vote for this department is materially the same as it was last year. I submit the vote to the Committee, hoping that my explanation concerning our attempt to definitely start the cotton industry on proper lines will be accepted. Members may perhaps overlook the fact that we did not make a better display in our cotton exhibit at the Royal Show, concerning which some local comment has been made.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [4.46]: I have nothing new to say concerning this vote. We are a very peaceful community in the North. We have very few grievances, and have not given the Government much trouble since the Estimates were last before Parliament. There are one or two matters upon which members representing northern constituencies might comment. Although the member for Guildford (Mr. Davies) had rather a short sojourn in the North-West he made certain serious reflections upon the State Shipping Service. I take exception to them. He reflected upon the cattle accommodation on these boats. On the "Bambra" and the "Kangaroo" we have as good cattle accommodation as is afforded on any other boat on the coast. We have had very few losses in comparison with other lines, and have a very fair record. On every trip the greatest care and attention are paid to the comfort of the cattle, when the exigencies of the trip

will allow of this. The trips are rather rough at times, and the cattle as well as the passengers have to take their chance of this. The management of these boats do their best to secure comfort for both passengers and cattle. Members representing the North heard a good deal from their electors concerning the suggestion to take the boats off the coast. We also know of the startling telegrams that were sent when it was thought this would be done. At the risk of offending some of my constituents I must say I think it would be better if they showed their names more often on the passenger lists of the State steamers instead of continually criticising these boats. If they want their members to fight for the retention of these vessels, let them back up their wishes by travelling on the steamers occasionally. People may get a little more attention on the other boats and have a little more deck space. When, however, we consider the importance of retaining these boats on the coast, people should be prepared to put up with a little discomfort in order to secure this.

Mr. Marshall: Which boat are you speaking of?

Mr. TEESDALE: The "Bambra."

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will have an opportunity of dealing with State steamers when we come to the State trading concerns.

Mr. TEESDALE: Have we not the same license on this vote as other members have on other votes?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, when there is no other method of dealing with items that members are bringing forward. The proper time to deal with State steamers is upon the State Trading Concerns Estimates.

Mr. TEESDALE: The Singapore boats have a certain claim upon the trade along the coast. They opened it up in the first place, and gave the people certain facilities for trade with Eastern markets. They also did a lot towards opening up the wool industry.

Mr. Marshall: You do not suggest they did this from a philanthropic point of view.

Mr. TEESDALE: They got fair payment for their services. I do ask a little consideration for the State steamers, because these are required on the coast just as well as the Singapore boats. There is quite sufficient trade for both lines. It would, however, be better if some of the local residents divided their custom between the two lines, and placed their names on the passenger lists of the State steamers more often than they do. One member representing a North-West constituency is particularly hostile towards the State steamers. At one time he was instrumental in practically ousting the manager, who was doing his best to make the service a success. It is rather bad taste on his part to adopt this attitude towards the service. I do not know the cause of his antagonism. The Government are rather inconsistent in respect to their tourist trips to the North-West. If they can give reduced fares for this purpose, they can also give them to the residents of

the North. When a man takes one of these trips, it is a good indication that he is in fair financial circumstances, and that he would be well able to pay the full fare. If the Government are able to give cheap fares in this way, they should be able to give them to the station hands and their wives, who would be only too glad to take a trip south at the rates that are now granted to tourists. I know there is a 25 per cent. reduction for married women. No section of the community is more grateful to the Mitchell ministry than the North-West people who have been able to take advantage of this fine reduction. It has enabled numbers of women to come south for a few weeks; they would otherwise have been unable to make the trip. There are also many single men in the north who have not had a trip south for many years. It would be a fine thing if the Government could give them reduced fares. If any consideration of this kind is to be given by the Government it should be given to those people who are not in a position to pay the full fare. The tourists should be made to pay in full. They do not intend to settle in the north, and their trips are made merely out of curiosity. They do very little good either to the trade or the interests of the North.

Mr. Marshall: The trips do harm, because when people see the North they will not go near it again.

Mr. TEESDALE: I was much struck by the splendid concessions given to fruit-growers. This serves as a remarkable illustration of the way the North is left in the cold. A man may send a case of fruit from Fremantle to Leonora by rail for 1s. 6d. If he wants to send a case up North, to the fruit starved kiddies there, he has to pay 5s.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is a reduction of 100 per cent.

Mr. TEESDALE: There is a big difference between 1s. 6d. and 5s. The Government could well have gone out of their way to consider the needs of these children for a mouthful of fruit and a change of diet, and could have made the rate 1s. 6d. for the North-West instead of giving it on the railways.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are not grateful enough for the 100 per cent. reduction.

Mr. TEESDALE: It is a 50 per cent. reduction. I congratulate the Government on their work upon the Beadon Point jetty. This constitutes one of the finest memorials to the Mitchell Government. Should they ever have to retire from office—and I hope that day is a long way off—they will at all events leave something behind them to which the people of the North can look with gratitude. This jetty is possibly the finest work of its kind in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Munsie: The town of Onslow will have to be shifted round.

Mr. TEESDALE: The people from the East who have been over here cannot find anything in their States equal to this. I am proud that the Mitchell Government

have carried out this work, and that I had something to do with it. For the next 10 or 15 years it will save a tremendous expense to the country, inasmuch as the cost of maintaining the jetty will be practically nil. We all know the tremendous cost of keeping up the jetties in the North, and the loss that has occurred every year in this direction. The teredo, which has been causing all this expense, will find it difficult to tackle the concrete piers of the Beadon Point jetty.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What kind of decking has it?

Mr. TEESDALE: It is all concrete with the exception that from the 96th bay the decking will be of wood and there will be wooden carriers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There will be something to burn.

Mr. TEESDALE: It would not cost much to replace it.

The Premier: It is not in Fremantle.

Mr. TEESDALE: If there is any burning done in the North it is due to an act of God.

Mr. Munsie: There will be an extra expense in the upkeep of the tramline.

Mr. TEESDALE: There will be a depth of 24ft. of water alongside the jetty at low springs. This means that a vessel will be able to come alongside and load wool direct for London. This will be a fine thing. I congratulate the Mines Department on having sent a prospecting party to make an investigation of the country between Roebourne and Onslow, where very little money has been spent since I have been in the House. There has been a good deal of talk, both here and in the Press, regarding the tremendous trade that could be done between the North-West and Eastern countries. I am not too sure about that trade. As long as 20 years ago I tackled the horse export trade to Singapore and took over a shipment. I was in good circumstances at the time, and had splendid facilities for catering for the market. However, I was forced to the conclusion that a very small shipment amply supplied the wants of the market, and I found the financial results not very satisfactory. Then it occurred to me that the Java market might prove more satisfactory, and I took a shipment of cows there. Unfortunately I ran up against cattle importations from the Eastern States, and our class of cow scarcely stood the test when put alongside milker calves that were hand-fed for a few months before shipment. The Eastern States shippers had a plan for keeping the calves away from the cows for about two days before sending them to auction. My little heifers did not show up very satisfactorily. I do not believe the markets of those Eastern countries are likely to prove of much value except to a dealer who takes up not more than 20 or 30 head of cows per month. During my stay in Singapore I was interested to read in the local Press of a discussion in the Straits Settlements Parliament as to the success of stock shipments from Western Australia. It

was rather a surprise to me to gather that during the last year in which the shipments had operated, there had been a loss of 50,000 dollars to the Singapore Government. Certainly, the Minister concerned claimed to have saved the Singapore consumers 300,000 dollars. Still, the Government were not too well satisfied with the results of the venture, and the local Parliament was discussing a motion which recommended the Government to stop the business altogether as soon as ever they were clear of their obligations to the Western Australian Government. Very little honour and glory has resulted from the operations of our Government in that connection. I think we would be well advised to leave that trade to those who previously attended to it so satisfactorily. I am quite aware that what our Government did was to facilitate the purchase of stock here for the Straits Settlements, and that they simply acted as agents for the Government of that country. However, there are agents on the coast able to do the work satisfactorily without any Government assistance.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is a very difficult business to handle.

Mr. TEESDALE: That is so. The whole subject of trade with the East has been considerably exaggerated. Still, I am sure the Straits Settlements Government thoroughly appreciate the help given by our Government.

The Minister for Agriculture: The motion you refer to was put up by interested parties.

Mr. TEESDALE: The European residents of Singapore are few in number and particularly critical in their tastes. I do not think we shall do any considerable trade with that market except as regards fruit, meat, flour, and timber. I may add biscuits and jam. Outside those articles we are not likely to do much. Our people here should make a point of supplying those commodities to the Singapore market in good condition and with regularity. Moreover, our exporters should defer to the particular wants and peculiar conditions of the Singapore market. There has been a good deal of complaint as to slipshod packing, and even as to labelling. The Singapore people buy the stuff, and it should be supplied to them put up as they want it. I come now to a matter I have very much at heart—cotton growing. It is generally believed that as regards Western Australia cotton growing has died a violent death. I assert that it was never more alive than it is now. Never since cotton growing was first mooted here, has the position been more satisfactory than it is to-day. As mentioned by the Minister for Agriculture, we have a very good man in Mr. Wise, who comes from Queensland, the country that knows something about the business of cotton growing, the country where cotton is grown successfully. I feel sure that Mr. Wise will make a good job of his investigations in the North. He has gone there to classify the

country. I feel sure also that Mr. Wise would agree with a report made in 1906 by an officer of the Education Department, a Mr. Cowper, a fine report on the possibilities of growing cotton in Western Australia. The report is especially remarkable as showing that so far back as 1906 great interest was taken in cotton growing and tropical agriculture in the North. In this connection the map which I now hold in my hand was compiled in 1908 by Mr. W. E. Fitzgerald, F.S.Sc., London. On the top of the map Mr. Fitzgerald placed a statement that in our North there are 1,020,000 acres of land suitable for raising cotton and other tropical products. The Agricultural Department sent Mr. Fitzgerald to the North, and the areas coloured green on this map were ear-marked as far back as 1908 for cotton growing. I may add that I was very much struck with the exhaustive way in which Mr. Fitzgerald did his work. He travelled throughout the North, doing two-thirds of the distance on foot owing to his horses failing him. Mr. Cowper's report states—

The farmer would find no greater expenditure in time, labour, and cost in cotton growing than in wheat growing, and much better assurance of a profitable return for his outlay. In the face of these facts, together with a favourable climatic condition we possess in the North-West, it is simply absurd to proclaim cotton growing an impossibility without cheap coloured labour.

I want that last remark particularly noted.

I myself would more readily pick an acre of cotton than lift a quarter-acre of potatoes, and for women and children the former occupation is no more laborious than hop picking in Kent. For more than three years I carried out experiments in the neighbourhood of Geraldton, where I cropped a few acres of virgin land with seed chiefly from the Sea Islands and West Indies. Climate, soil, and other natural advantages were desirable, but unexpected accidents destroyed the financial success of my efforts. The first season's plantation was swept bare by a dry tempest of three days' duration. Another season a very unusual rainfall, with cold winds, occurred, several inches being compressed within three weeks. The sum total of my experiments rested in the first few surviving plants I had nourished. From them I obtained a beautiful sample of fine, long-stapled, silky lint—a sufficient proof that cotton can be profitably cultivated in many parts of this State which are not liable to accidents such as the strong southerly winds which begin in the region of Champion Bay in September and last till April. A settler in Carnarvon was more successful, and obtained good results from a five-acre plantation.

This will be interesting to the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo).

The country par excellence in this great State for establishing cotton plantations

and tobacco growing is the North-West and the Kimberleys, and that long stretch of land on the Ninety Mile Beach.

Some members will recollect that upon first entering this House I advocated that the Government should try a small experimental plot of cotton on the Ninety Mile Beach. I sought the approval of the Aborigines Department at that time for the utilising of the services of a number of natives of the class termed indigent, who were being supplied with rations by the Government. I asked the department to permit the employment of those old chaps in carrying half a kerosene tin full of water twice a day to the experimental plot. Unfortunately I was blocked by the department on the ground that what I proposed would amount to working indigent natives. I consider that it would have been a very good thing for these natives to take a little exercise instead of loafing in the camp all day, getting all sorts of stomach troubles that involve the Government in medical expense. I may add that the Ninety Mile Beach is practically a desert as regards cropping. However, the Aborigines Department ruled me out of order. So far back as 1906 Mr. Cowper agreed that that country is par excellence the country for growing cotton. His report concludes—

There is, indeed, no limit to the vast possibilities in wealth production which we possess in the great wastes of the tropical North if we can only once begin the real task of their natural development.

I would be very pleased to meet Mr. Cowper; it was a calamity when he left the Agricultural Department. I suppose he was retired because he had reached the age limit, but he must have been a first-class man. I wish we had some other officials who would go into matters as did Mr. Cowper, who walked hundreds of miles to carry out his inspection, wrote a splendid, interesting report, and made statements he was prepared to stand by, seeing that they could be easily proved or disproved. Apparently in writing his report he knew he had nothing to fear. With every reason, I ask: What has the Agricultural Department done during the 15 years since Mr. Cowper reported on this matter, compared with what Mr. Cowper himself did in those days? I am pleased to know that the department is doing something now. I never say in this Chamber what I do not say outside, for I endeavour never to hide myself behind the license afforded members of Parliament. I say definitely that I am sorry the Agricultural Department has taken charge of cotton growing in the North-West. While I recognise that in the Director of Agriculture, Mr. Sutton, we have a splendid officer, who, possibly, is in the first rank regarding wheat production, he has no experience regarding cotton cultivation, nor does he lay claim to possess it.

The Minister for Agriculture: He has more experience in the underlying principles of cultivation, which is the essential factor at the moment, than anyone else in the State. In

addition, the Agricultural Department has not taken charge of it, and cotton growing will be conducted on its own basis.

Mr. TEESDALE: I am sorry it is necessary for a man to discuss soil values relating to the North-West, without going North. No one can sit in his office and discuss North-West soil values unless he goes there.

The Minister for Agriculture: He is going there.

Mr. TEESDALE: I hope, when Mr. Sutton goes there, we will find him a little more enthusiastic than he is at the present time. Perhaps I cannot expect anything else in the circumstances.

The Minister for Agriculture: All he will do will be to supervise cultivation methods. He will not worry about anything else.

Mr. TEESDALE: Mr. Sutton's experience and qualifications relate to the growing of wheat, and not cotton. I cannot look for his enthusiastic support of, and sympathy with, failures in the North, for he has not the interests of the cotton crop at heart.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is nonsense to say that.

Mr. TEESDALE: Mr. Sutton's time is fully occupied at the Agricultural Department in Perth. I do not want him to send some cinder up North who will be armed with a little brief authority and who, after ten minutes' acquaintance with that part of the State and cotton growing, will condemn, alter and upset matters. We already have a capable man in the North. I would like the Agricultural Department to leave the responsibility in his hands for 12 months or a couple of years and let him stand or fall by the results. If he makes a suggestion that certain areas are suitable for cotton growing and then the land proves unsuitable, he must expect to go back to Queensland, because in those circumstances we shall have to admit failure. I am delighted to know that that officer is there, and I await the presentation of his report with great interest. Much has been said regarding the impossibility of growing cotton south of Broome, without irrigation. Would it be a very serious matter if we were to indulge in a little irrigation scheme south of Broome? Would it be such a very wonderful thing if we were to conduct some small, inexpensive experiments with water, to see what the land will do? The ryots of India and the heathen of Egypt, people from whom we do not expect to see signs of any particular enterprise or intelligence, have managed to make use of water and grow crops, the products of which are actively sought by the Old Country. If it is possible for those people to secure results, is it too much to suggest that in our great Australia we can do something along these lines?

The Minister for Agriculture: Why not try to grow crops where there is a natural summer rainfall, and experiment with irrigation in other parts later on?

Mr. TEESDALE: It is possible that experiments can be carried out with irrigation methods at the same time that we are trying

to grow cotton in parts where irrigation is not required. I have a few extracts to read relating to Mr. Jones, the Queensland cotton expert. The Government made no mistake when they asked Mr. Jones to come here and report upon the possibilities of cotton growing in Western Australia. In every instance, men who were with him when he made his statements, and when he examined the country, admit that every statement he made has been fully borne out by results. Mr. Jones had very little to do with the proposal to establish cotton growing in Derby. I have been asked frequently by people why I permitted returned soldiers to be settled on the land at Derby. I have been asked why, if I knew what was to be expected there, I allowed the cotton experiments to be started at that centre. I had nothing whatever to do with it. I did not know it was proposed to start the Derby scheme until I saw a reference to certain soldiers being selected to go North for that purpose. If I had had my way, I would not have selected returned soldiers to engage in the experiments. I would not send returned soldiers to the North unless they were accustomed to the tropics. That part of the State is no place for returned soldiers. There is too much isolation and loneliness associated with the life to admit of returned soldiers being sent there. Those men must be settled in communities where they will have some interests and some pleasures, such as we cannot expect to afford up North. If we are to try out these new industries, it must be recognised from the outset that those who participate must face isolation and realise that they will cut themselves off from their fellow creatures for months at a time. For that reason I would not dream of sending returned soldiers to participate in these experiments. Had we sent men North who had been accustomed to the hardships and isolation contingent upon life there, we might have had a different result at Derby.

The Minister for Agriculture: They could not get the best results under the worst conditions.

Mr. TEESDALE: In one of his statements Mr. Jones said:—

With the assistance of irrigation, your country will possibly rival even my own country in many forms of tropical culture, particularly in producing cotton of a high quality.

He has always recognised, because of certain samples I have sent him, that we can grow cotton in the North-West of a quality that cannot be beaten by the product of any of the Queensland cotton fields. It is interesting to know that those samples were grown without irrigation. Although that is so, I will not cease my advocacy of the application of irrigation to cotton-growing up North, because I believe inexpensive tests should be carried out to see what can be done with it. Mr. Jones further said:—

Here we have had much the same experience as the Derby settlers had. In our dry western districts we failed to start

a cotton crop, due to the absence of a spring rain. The ratooned cotton stood to us—not a crop failed. Those expert gentlemen, eminent in their own circle, are useless in connection with teaching Australians what their land will grow. I have to do the cotton judging at the Royal Show next week. I wanted the association to put on new experts to take some of the cotton judging, but they said they preferred me to do the whole of it.

That is a splendid testimony to the Mitchell Government's decision. If Mr. Jones could be selected as a judge in connection with the Royal Agricultural Show in Queensland, it shows that this man is indeed a prophet in his own country. That being so, I am glad he was the man we selected to visit Western Australia to start the industry here. Mr. Jones goes on to say—

The ratoon farmers are taking steps to erect their own co-operative ginners, and are taxing themselves with a fighting fund to elaborate the scheme and fight the opponents of ratooning.

It has just occurred to these growers that a huge monopoly has been granted in Queensland, that may re-act seriously, like a boomerang, upon the cotton growers!

Mr. Heron: Something like the sandalwood business here.

Mr. TEESDALE: It is far worse. The growers intend to take this action in their own interests so as to get out of the hands of the octopus. They intend to gin their own cotton, and to get the full value for their labour. As to returned soldier settlements, Mr. Jones had the following to say:—

Nearly all the soldier settlement schemes under the Repatriation Department are just "duds." All have ignominiously failed. Soldiers have left in scores and the homes are going to waste with the two exceptions of cotton and sugar ventures.

It is particularly interesting to us to know that two industries alone stand out in Queensland as having been successful—cotton and sugar. I do not know that we can grow sugar in the North, but I believe we shall be able to grow tobacco. Some years ago I brought back some of the finest seed I could procure in Ireland, and distributed a few packets throughout Western Australia. Subsequently I got some splendid reports from growers. It was a wonderful success, but the whole thing fizzled out. I do not know why it did so. In Western Australia we manage to arouse interest and enthusiasm to a certain point, but unless an earthquake or something else extraordinary is experienced, everything seems to fizzle out. Is it because the department does not encourage officials to go into these matters thoroughly, and get into touch with people who are growing tobacco and other crops? Is it because the officials are not encouraged to get into touch with people who will buy our tobacco leaf? Is it because they are without information regarding the curing of the leaf? What is it that kills our industries, no matter how successful they are up to a certain stage? These are problems

I cannot answer. The seed I procured was of a splendid quality. At the George IV. Mission to-day, tobacco is being grown, the leaf rolled, and the product given to the natives for smoking purposes, instead of the mission having to pay 7s. or 8s. for imported leaf. I have received a letter from the superintendent praising the quality of the tobacco leaf and saying that he wished they knew how to treat the tobacco plant for manufacture, as it would save them considerable expense. Why cannot the Agricultural Department establish small experimental plots at the different ports from Carnarvon to Wyndham to ascertain what can be done with cotton and tobacco? If one man were placed in charge of each of these plots, and the experiments were carried out, the cost would not be much. Would any hon. member take exception to the North-West Department spending a little money on tests such as I suggest? Those experiments would enable representatives of North and North-West constituencies to say whether or not the cultivation of these products will be successful. Instead of wearing this subject threadbare year after year, these tests could be conducted at a cost of £2,000 or £3,000 at the outside, and we would then, if failure resulted, be told that the experiments had been tried and had failed, and therefore we should confine ourselves to cattle and sheep for the future. Even if we reached that point, it would be something. North-West members will never be blocked in their advocacy of tropical agriculture until we have satisfactory proof regarding the capabilities of the country. Until we get that, we will not stop harassing the Government, who should agree to the expenditure of some money to finance these experiments. Mr. and Mrs. Sawdon selected some land at Udiella Springs on the Fitzroy River and induced three young fellows to go with them. Unfortunately they took up a block that was a good deal too large. I have always advocated small blocks for tests and so, too, has Mr. Jones. It would have been better if those people had taken up a couple of hundred acres instead of an area of 2,000 or 3,000 acres. However, they cleared and fenced 50 acres of land and, getting everything ready, waited for the seeding season. But the three young fellows, growing tired of the loneliness and monotony of the life, turned it down and left the poor old couple up there. That old couple, I am glad to say, are likely to make a success of it. They know the business, having had experience in Queensland. Judging by the result of their neighbour's experiments, I am sure they will make good. They now have the whole of the ground ready for seeding, and the department sent them 400 lbs. of seed by the last boat. When the couple last wrote to me they said the neighbour's bushes were loaded with bolls and flowers and looked well. They have also experimental plots of peanuts, rock melons and other vegetables growing in profusion. They say there is a splendid chance of success in growing peanuts.

Mr. Angelo: That is my job.

Mr. TEESDALE: Well, I hope the hon. member will write to that couple, telling them that he is interested in their experiments, and hoping that they may prove successful. It is satisfactory to know that we have people like them up North battling against a lot of disadvantages, with the determination to make good. I have to thank the Minister for Agriculture for the complimentary remarks he made during my absence, but I would have been better pleased if he had omitted those remarks and given the true position in respect of the germination of the different seeds that were planted last season. I am sure he was not intentionally guilty of misrepresentation. He may have been wrongfully advised, but he certainly made a grave mistake in respect of the seed planted in the North. He also mentioned that the department had established experimental plots in the South-West division from Northampton to Albany, and said he was sorry that all except one were failures. I must take exception to that statement. It may not be within the knowledge of the department, but I know of several very satisfactory cotton plots in that division.

The Minister for Agriculture: I was referring to the department's experiments.

Mr. TEESDALE: Certainly I take exception to the treatment of the test plot at the Merredin farm. I cannot imagine what they were thinking about to put cotton into heavy chocolate soil with a lot of stable manure, and water it regularly. We do not want any pot-plant crops, for they afford no criterion as to the commercial growing of cotton.

The Minister for Agriculture: But that was not done.

Mr. TEESDALE: I do not want for the cotton any watering or any stable manure, because it will grow without those aids. The Minister also said that a satisfactory lot of cotton grown at Coolgardie had been grown under the department's supervision.

The Minister for Agriculture: Where did you get that? We had nothing to do with the Coolgardie plot.

Mr. TEESDALE: I am quoting the Minister correctly. Being very much surprised to learn that this cotton had been grown under the supervision of the department, I wired to Mr. Glasson, at Coolgardie, asking if it were so. In reply I got this telegram—

Department of Agriculture absolutely nothing to do with it. Letter following.

The Minister for Agriculture: And that is quite correct.

Mr. TEESDALE: I am glad to hear that, but certainly the Minister is reported in "Hansard" as having said the crop was grown under the supervision of the department. I should like to read a letter from the secretary of the "Cotton Farmer," a publication with a big circulation in Queensland, for it bears out my statement regarding certain imported experts that put a blight on the cotton industry in this State for a time, but only for a time. This is the letter:—

An article from your pen which appeared in the Perth "Sunday Times" has been

reproduced in the "Morning Bulletin" here, and it occurs to us that some of the views expressed by the "Cotton Farmer" on the subject of imported experts may be of interest to you. We are therefore forwarding to you under separate cover the third and fourth issues of that paper, from which you will note that we fear the same fate for the cotton industry in Queensland as appears to have overtaken it in your State as the result of interference by imported know-alls who know nothing whatever about Australian conditions.

I am sorry to have to contradict the Minister for Agriculture in respect of Col. Evans's Indian experience. The Minister read many testimonials from certain institutions and Governments, extolling Col. Evans's experience. In point of fact, Col. Evans is a wheat and cereal man. He has had no cotton experience in India, indeed, none at all with the exception of what he had for a month or two in the Old Country prior to taking up the position in Queensland.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yet he was appointed to that Queensland position!

Mr. TEESDALE: There is not a single word about cotton in any of the testimonials read out by the Minister. Col. Evans's special services in Mesopotamia were rendered when he was in charge of the Labour Corps. If he be a specialist at all, he is a specialist in potatoes. In India he was known as "Potato Evans." By that name is he known to hundreds of military men who were in the same district with him. I do not wish to detract from his qualifications, apart from cotton. It is a fine thing to be a good judge of potatoes, but I will not have Col. Evans as a cotton expert.

Mr. Lambert: He was never in the cotton areas in India.

Mr. TEESDALE: Certainly he has had no practical experience of cotton. The reference to his being placed on the staff of the Cotton Growers' Association in England carries no weight whatever; for at that time, so urgent was the call for men alleged to know anything at all about cotton, that any man who had lived in a cotton district, could talk cotton at all, and had any sort of appearance, stood an excellent chance of being put on. Had I been in England at that time, I should certainly have tried to secure an appointment.

Mr. Lambert: In Northampton once you were mistaken for an expert.

Mr. TEESDALE: Numbers of the Cotton Growers' Association's officials sent out had no experience whatever of cotton culture. Their experience was confined entirely to mill treatment, buying and classing.

The Minister for Agriculture: Then what recommendation had Col. Evans, that the Queensland Government should have engaged him?

Mr. TEESDALE: There was nothing whatever to justify Col. Evans in the sensational statements he made, resulting in a drastic setback to the cotton industry in this State. Within 24 hours after his report came down

here, scare headlines were published in the English Press quoting this great Lancashire expert, whose report had utterly damned an excellent chance of forming two important companies to grow cotton on a large scale in the North-West. I am sure all hon. members deplore that very unwise statement made by Col. Evans. Probably he thought he had to do something striking to justify his trip up North. Whatever his idea may have been, unfortunately his sensational statement was cabled to London, and so brought about the collapse of the cotton industry in Western Australia for a time at least.

The Minister for Agriculture: Evans is a capable man; I don't care what you say.

Mr. TEESDALE: It was a positively rotten action at that time. There were two companies just on the point of deciding to put £50,000 into the industry in Western Australia when I received a cable to say that everything had been cancelled. You can imagine what I said about this Lancashire expert. I would like to have had five minutes with Col. Evans to ask him to justify the statement he had made. As he made a tremendous mouthful of this particular pest that he found up there, I shall read to the House what he said after he had returned to Queensland and had discussed the matter with experts there. He found then that he had to come off his perch somewhat; he had to adapt the scare headlines for which he was responsible to something a little more reasonable. I ask members to be a little lenient with me while I read this extract. It is not often that I worry the House with an harangue on things northern, but this is the life-blood of the North-West—settlement, and we cannot bring about the settlement we desire to have up there unless we can show that we can produce crops of tobacco, sugar, cotton, etc. I wish to show the construction that Col. Evans put on the boll weevil when he visited Darwin. His opinion of it was very different from what he had held when he came across this little pest in the North-West of our State. He says—

The boll weevil is confined to America and we have every hope of keeping him there. Cotton all over the world has its pests, and some of these are found in the Northern Territory, chief of which is the pink boll worm, a small pink-coloured grub which bores holes in the bolls. This pest occurs in the territory in Queensland and in most parts of the world, but is not considered a serious pest.

Damn him! Why did he say it was serious in Western Australia? Why did he say it was positive hell so far as this State was concerned and then go to Port Darwin and declare that it was not serious?

Mr. Marshall: He must have read the remarks made about him by the member for Pilbara.

Mr. TEESDALE: It was not fair; it was the positive finish of everything. There could have been no other result after the scare head-

ings in London. It was the end of the industry.

Mr. Durack: He did not say it was serious here.

Mr. TEESDALE: Oh, did he not? Let me repeat what he said in the Territory—

This pest occurs in the Territory, in Queensland and in most parts of the world, but is not considered a serious pest.

There is a lovely admission to make after saying what he did here. Then he goes on—

It was combated—

He not only says it was not serious in Darwin, but he gives the plain and simple method of combating it—

It was combated by uprooting the plants as soon after picking as possible, and burning them off.

There is the solution of this fearful visitation, if we had it, and I do not admit that we have it. We have an inoffensive little worm that has been in the hibiscus up there for donkey's years. It has also lived on lettuce and has never proved itself to be anything very serious. It certainly never poisoned the lettuce. When Mr. Dan Jones saw it in the cotton plants at Broome, he said, "It is only our old friend again; we have any number of them in Queensland." Mr. Jones did not go off his head and send telegrams all over the place to say that this was the finish. He declared that there would be plenty for the weevil and plenty for us. This little chap has what he wants from the plant and leaves the remainder for the grower. Mr. Jones could have said, "This is the end; I am sorry to see it." But what he did declare was that it was not serious. I am pleased to notice that Colonel Evans later on had some misgivings about his wonderful knowledge of cotton cultivation. He had a "big think" about it and when he got to Darwin had this to say—

Methods of cultivation are really a matter for experiment, and it is extremely hard for me, with my very superficial knowledge—

I wish he had admitted while in Western Australia that he had only a superficial knowledge of the business, for then the statements he made would have been considerably discounted. It was only at Darwin that he claimed to have a superficial knowledge of local conditions. He goes on—of local conditions to lay down any hard and fast recommendations on this point with regard to the Territory. I believe, however, that the experience we have gained in Queensland may prove of assistance to intending growers here.

That is very different from what he had to say after his visit to Western Australia. If he had only spoken like that on returning from the North, I would have been glad to meet him and to welcome him. But it was never his intention to let us down lightly. Some two months after his return to Queensland he must have discussed the matter with Mr. Dan Jones and the two or three American experts who were there, and they

must have said to him, "Don't you go nap on this, old fellow; just have a bit to come and go upon." Then when he got to Darwin he allowed himself something to come and go upon. He there told the people that he had only a superficial knowledge of local conditions and in consequence of that it was difficult for him to lay down hard and fast rules. The "Cotton Farmer," published in Queensland, said in its account of the Derby test—

The reported discovery by Mr. Evans of boll worm near Broome, appears to have caused consternation in certain quarters. The news was flashed everywhere. The Queensland people are solidly with us; there is nothing antagonistic on their part and they are only too willing to help us. They have given us advice and the Queensland Department of Agriculture went out of its way to secure for us the services of the best man it was possible to get. The reported discovery of the boll worm amused them very much. They were surprised in Queensland to find that we had tied ourselves in a knot merely because this wonderful discovery had been made. The "Cotton Farmer" goes on to say—

According to a Press report the discovery of the boll worm has led the Director of the British Cotton Association to urge the destruction of all cotton plants at Broome and the prohibition of cotton growing within 50 miles.

What impudence on his part! That association never helped Queensland to establish its cotton industry, but because these poor little boll worms were having a bit of a feed at the Derby plantation, the whols of the cotton plants were to be destroyed, and cotton growing prohibited within an area of 50 miles. The "Cotton Farmer" goes on to say—

The particular species of boll worm is not mentioned in the report, but it is probably the larva of the moth *celechia gossypiella* which is very destructive, but of little moment in the present case. This little worm is well known and established in both Queensland and the Northern Territory.

The name sounds like someone swearing. The Press of Queensland were jibing at our consternation. They were positively amused at it. They declare that it is very destructive, but of little moment, and also tell us that it is established in Queensland and in the Northern Territory. What then is the value of the marvellous discovery made by Colonel Evans? Later he had to justify his position for having said something sensational, and he made the statement attributed to him at Darwin. Now we have it emphasised that there is nothing to fear from this worm which exists in all the backyards of Queensland. The Queensland journal I have quoted ridicules our fears and tells the public that in spite of the worm they can still grow cotton. The position was positively dominated by the Cotton Association. That body caused

great agitation on the part of farmers who have ratooned for the last 40 years and obtained the best results. I was thunder-struck when I learned that the Director of Agriculture and the Minister for Agriculture thought so seriously about the boll worm, while they were at a conference in Melbourne, as to send a telegram to Western Australia advising that the growth of cotton at Derby be destroyed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Where are all your colleagues? They appear to have no interest in what you are saying about cotton.

Mr. TEESDALE: There is the solid Country Party for you! There is the spring onion crowd. The solitary representative on the cross benches is "Dad." I call attention to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and others of his party were in Broome at the particular time when that message came through. There was only one opinion held of the suggested drastic treatment which would have had the effect of turning a splendid crop of cotton into a state of complete destruction. It was as healthy and as good a crop as anyone could have wished to see.

Hon. P. Collier: You urged that we should form ourselves into a guard to defend that crop.

Mr. TEESDALE: If it had not been for the Leader of the Opposition having had to pay heavily for talking about guns on one occasion, he and I would have made some reference to guns on that day. We sympathised with the growers and told them it would be a positive scandal if the department went on with their proposal. I was delighted to learn afterwards that the Minister for Agriculture on his way back to the State considered that the action he contemplated was a bit too strong, and that he had decided to give the crop a little more time to see what would happen. It was satisfactory to know that he countermanded the order. Eventually we had from that plantation a nice bale of cotton that the Leader and the deputy Leader of the Opposition inspected and passed.

Hon. P. Collier: They were actually about to march on that crop when we were there.

Mr. TEESDALE: I wish to deal with a statement made by the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) that Col. Evans declared that wrong seed had been used. Let me tell the House that no seed was ever selected with greater care than the particular seed that was brought here from Queensland. It was selected by Mr. Dan Jones who had every possible help from the Agricultural Department of that State. We were assured that if any bag of seed clean and free from pest ever left the department, it was the seed placed at our disposal. The seed was selected by the Secretary for Agriculture on the advice of Mr. Jones, late adviser under the Pest Diseases Act. It was guaranteed to have been treated by a most exhaustive chemical process, consisting of spreading the seed 4 in. deep on a floor and

subjecting it to very strong chemical treatment. I forget the name of the chemical used, but so potent is it that one cannot enter the building while the treatment is taking place. The department's seed, mentioned by the Minister for Agriculture, was never ordered by that department. It was sent over here from a public ginnery by the Cotton Growers' Association. A representative of the department waited upon me and asked if I was expecting any seed, because they had been advised of the arrival of a big parcel and had not ordered any. I was asked to take it over but I refused, not knowing whether the seed had been fumigated. I had troubles enough of my own. I bought my seed from the Queensland Department of Agriculture, but the seed received by our Department of Agriculture came from a public ginnery after having been collected from all parts of Queensland. It had not been subjected to any treatment because no importance was attached to any of the pest diseases. I hope the Minister will pardon me for directing special attention to this fact. I much regret his statement as to germination. I challenge any grower to deny that, out of the considerable quantity of seed I sent, a germination of 85 per cent. was obtained. We have had wonderful results; letters have been received stating that the germination was as high as 90 per cent. That was extremely satisfactory, and I take great exception to the statement of Colonel Evans that the proper seed was not used. What did that man know about the seed? It came from Queensland, a country he had never been in, and he knew nothing of the treatment to which it had been subjected. Yet he dared to say that the wrong seed had been used. That seed has produced some of the finest crops possible. The sample shown in the corridor of this House a fortnight ago was described by Mr. Jones as being as good as any he had seen in his career. It was exhibited at the recent Show, but I felt very cross when I found such a paltry display of cotton there. I have since discussed the matter with the Minister, and I fully believe that nothing further could have been done. It was unfortunate that the parcel despatched from the North-West for exhibition at the Show was not received in time. Had it arrived in time, it would have aroused a great deal of interest amongst visitors to the Show. I do not mind the loss of time. We in the North have waited many years, and we can wait yet another season in order to get this industry put on a first-class basis.

Mr. Munsie: See that you keep the experts away next year, particularly the imported experts.

Mr. TEESDALE: The Broome, Derby, and Wyndham plots supply the best answer to the Minister's charges of non-germination. The three tons of cotton grown at Wyndham is all from my seed, with the exception of about 4 cwt. grown from Durango seed supplied by the Queensland Government direct by Overhen and Co. May I mention that I supplied my seed at half price; I wanted to

see cotton grown, and we have had the satisfaction that it was grown under commercial conditions without artificial watering and with very little natural watering. We shall be able to do much better when we strike an average rainfall.

Mr. Lambert: It is 6ft. high at North Fremantle.

Mr. TEESDALE: Yes, very good results have been obtained at North Fremantle also. I must refer to the Derby experiments. The Leader of the Opposition, together with other members of his party, and I saw it for ourselves and were quite satisfied it was of good healthy growth. True it was a bit stunted but that was accounted for by the extraordinary season and the fact that the seed was sown late. The failure there was in a large measure due to the inexperience of the man in charge of the operations. I do not wish to reflect in any way upon the foreman. Mr. Mudge is a very good official, but he has any amount of work to do and could not be expected to run out seven or eight miles to attend to the many and varied wants of the returned soldiers. Some of the soldiers were a little unreasonable and hard to get on with, and Mr. Mudge had a lot of trouble with his own work. It was not fair to leave the soldiers in his charge. Restrictions of that kind must have a detrimental effect on any experiment. The department made a mistake in sending married men to Derby. I took great exception to married men being sent there to experiment in a new industry in the name of the State. A man undertaking such work should be free to devote the whole of his time to it; he should have no distractions as regards domestic matters. For a start he should not have to rush about to find accommodation for his wife and family. After getting a little refreshment, he wants to be able to hop on to his horse and get to work. He cannot reasonably expect to be able to visit the township two or three times a week to see how his wife is getting on. He ought to be there to give the bulk of his time to the job. When he has built up something solid, certain and satisfactory and can see his way clear to put up a nice comfortable shack, it is time enough to take the wife up there. It is no place for a woman while the house is being built, especially if there is any heavy rain. The country is pretty boggy, and to have to paddle through the muck is enough to break any woman's heart. If a woman were not too strong, she might easily get bogged 50 yards from the humpy. Of course no humpies had been provided, whereas accommodation should have been made available before the women and children were sent up. When the tests were pronounced a failure, expenses began to mount up. It meant £2 10s. or £3 a week by way of hotel expenses for the wife and family. All this tended to make the position unsatisfactory. I was surprised to find some of the men were not content with the knowledge that the Government had done their level best to establish them in a good industry, but were ungrateful enough to ask to

be brought back to Perth first-class in the steamer. I had quite a little altercation on the Derby jetty with a disappointed cotton grower because the Department wanted him to travel down second-class. He was a lucky man to have a Government to send him up there second-class and bring him down second-class, after having been given a good chance, at no expense to himself, to establish a home and make something for himself. There was no occasion for him to growl about being brought back second-class. When I first went up North, I was quite content to travel second-class and as a member of Parliament I have travelled second-class. I would just as soon travel second as first; the tucker is quite as good. Some of the men that were sent up were the wrong sort. They saw the North-West and had a nice holiday. Certain blocks showed that the holders of them had not done too much toil and that some of the men were unreasonable. I hope they will read the report of my remarks. Expensive transport and other things all tended to make the experiment more costly than it should have been. I do not wish to blame anyone for that; everybody did his best. The North-West Department got this crowd of men together, supplied the necessary tools and equipment, and arranged their passages North in a very expeditious manner, and I do not want the wrong man to be blamed. I do not know that blame is attachable to any particular individual. As a whole the experiment was muddled up. A man should have been put in charge of the party with authority to say, "You must do so and so; if not get back to the jetty. I am bossing this lot. It is not a question of what you like or dislike. You must turn up to work at 8 o'clock and do a fair day's yacker or get back to Perth." The unfortunate official in charge of the jetty could not adopt the air of a proprietor. The men would not have stood it. It should have been explained to them that they were going North in charge of a man authorised by the Department to take charge and that they must make up their minds to do a fair thing as directed by him, or stay in Perth. That was not done. Consequently a good deal of loss resulted. The unseemly rush back to Perth was unfortunate and exceedingly ill-advised. Had I been in the North at the time, I feel sure I could have induced some of these men to dodge about the country a bit in the hope of getting a job, to strap on "Matilda" and do a little per boot, send their wives to Perth, if they liked, but not to chuck the job because a little thing had gone wrong. When I humped my swag to Pilbara, I did not chuck the field because I did not get gold in the first week—

Mr. Marshall: You would not have been in Parliament.

Mr. TEESDALE: Oh, that is one of the failures of coming away from there.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. TEESDALE: Before tea I was dealing with certain experts who had lately come

from the Old Country to investigate the possibilities of cotton growing in the various States. I have here an extract from the "Evening News" of Rockhampton, which is in the centre of the principal cottonfields of Queensland. I shall not inflict all this extract upon the Committee, but I want to show I have some outside confirmation of the statements I have made. There are extraordinary discrepancies between the various statements that have been made in the Eastern States, and I want to convince members that I have the support of a paper like the "Evening News." This is an article published on 17th August last, and it is headed "Australia still an uncertain quantity." The article states:—

There is always a certain amount of amusement to be extracted from the ipse dixit of British cotton authorities on the cotton possibilities of Australia. They are all so very cautious and so careful to hang a string on to anything they may say regarding the future of cotton in the Commonwealth. They hail with delight the slightest increase in the production of countries such as Africa or Asia. They are always favourable to the expenditure of money in these cheap labour countries and each and all of them is quite convinced that the Empire will in the end be dependent on these countries for its supply of raw cotton.

That vindicates all I have said when I have practically charged them with trying to block the growing of cotton in Australia unless certain authorities or institutions have the sole control of it. Western Australia is the only State in the Commonwealth where the colossus, that, is getting hold of the country by the throat in Queensland and strangling it to death, does not operate. It may be impudent for an outsider like myself to make this remark, but I say the time will come when the Queensland Government will curse the day that they allowed this monopoly to get them by the throat as the association has got them to-day. Even the small men, who have great difficulty in finding the funds with which to fight their own battles, are coming forward splendidly with their subscriptions and are taxing themselves to their utmost capacity. They propose to erect their own ginneries, and treat their own cotton, and get the full product of their labour. They know that an unfair deduction is being made, and that profits have been taken from them unjustly. I recognise what the Theodore Government tried to do for the cotton industry in Queensland, but in their anxiety to give the growers every facility and to help the industry along at a rapid rate, and to grasp the opportunity of the present high prices of cotton, they were completely taken in by the plausible statements of an outed Labour Premier. This gentleman was nothing more than that. He was a man for whom his own Party had but little time. He had, however, brains enough to see that there was money in the cotton business. In company with a man who had been managing for a typewriter company he went to London and Lancashire and interviewed

financial magnates there. He told them such a plausible tale about the future of cotton growing in Australia that he got the backing he wanted. In the few weeks he spent in England he was able to acquire a small amount of experience, but sufficient to put up a splendid case to Mr. Theodore. If the Premier of Queensland could say what was in his inmost heart he would regret having given this man and his associate the standing they now have. They are taking the cotton seed from the growers and paying what they like for it. They are charging them a halfpenny a lb. for their own seed, and are keeping all the by-products. The association have erected two mills in Queensland for the extraction of oil from the seed, these mills running into £66,000. All credit is due to these people for investing their money in that State and giving employment there, but they ought to remember the men who provide them with the cotton seed, and should be fair to them. There is no country except Australia that can produce cotton for the second or third year from the one seed. I have taken a great interest in this matter, and have exhausted every means of obtaining information upon it. The association will make tremendous profits out of the by-products of the seed they are taking from the farmers, seed that they are only returning to them sparingly and grudgingly for a stated acreage, to be planted the next season. The association are making too much out of the linting. Not content with making a splendid profit out of the by-products, which has given them a magnificent interest upon their money in the first year, they are going still further. Whoever heard of a new industry giving such a rattling good profit in the first year? When the association get their oil extraction mills going, and several other by-products from the seed, what profits will they be getting? The unfortunate farmers are tied into knots. They are compelled to supply all their seed cotton to the monopoly.

Mr. Davies: Cannot they be freed by the Government?

Mr. TEESDALE: The agreement has been made to cover a certain period. The Government have a certain amount of diffidence in making a straight-out explanation of what has been done. The Agricultural Committee, an institution appointed by the Government, has already had £20,000 of Government money, but is now fully seized of the importance of the cotton growers attending to their own business. There is nothing extraordinary about this. Two years ago I told the House there was nothing wonderful about cotton linting and the extraction of oil from cotton seed. Any sensible man could get a good idea of this linting process after a couple of hours spent in any ginnery. A man without any practical experience of ginning cotton, and with very little commercial experience, was put in charge of the Rockhampton ginnery at a good salary. His brother-in-law was placed in charge of the operations in another State, and another one is in charge of the Brisbane head office. I do not want to throw mud at any-

body, but I say there is a nice little thing rigged up here. I do not want the Government of Western Australia, when the industry assumes some importance in this State and shows signs of solidity, to overlook the happenings in Queensland. They should watch the slightest attempt on the part of the monopoly to tolerate here. That monopoly has nobbled every other State but this one. Every other State is completely under its control. If we had shown more satisfactory results here in the first year, it would have been in this State by now. The association sent their representatives here to see how the land lay. They came to the conclusion that the Agricultural Department was not satisfied about things; they did not think the old galoot that went from here and returned with a lot of suggestions was any account in Western Australia, and they went away again satisfied that nothing would be done. If we make a success of the industry here they will endeavour to tie up the Government as they have done in the case of other Governments.

Mr. Lambert: A speech like that on the sandalwood monopoly would have been very good.

Mr. TEESDALE: The "Evening News" says—

They are always favourable to the expenditure of money in these cheap countries.

That is where they have their chief interests. They must be careful not to tread on the toes of the Lancashire people. It is to Lancashire they owe their being. One of them was dragged out of political obscurity, and another out of a typewriter business into a position of prominence. They must see that they do not offend their employers or they will again lapse into obscurity.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: One of them was a political agent in England before that.

The Premier: He was a very good man.

Mr. TEESDALE: The article continues—

With all due deference to any claims these gentlemen may have to be classed as authorities on cotton, this paper begs to differ from them and their predictions regarding the future of cotton in Australia. By way of a start, it is interesting to take last year's production in Queensland and compare it with the production elsewhere.

They are always detracting from the possibilities of Australian-grown cotton. A man in Lancashire said recently that, so far as Australia is concerned, one must admit that up to now there are no great signs of its ever being an important competitor. Did he refer to Australia as being a competitor with nigger-grown cotton? Are they afraid of our competing with their huge obligations in Asiatic countries? Why do they not speak less grudgingly and more hopefully so far as cotton growing in Australia is concerned? They always belittle us. They are convinced that the Empire will be dependent upon Asiatic countries for its supply of raw cotton. The newspaper article continues—

The total quantity ginned last year was 3,779,000 lbs. Up to the 6th instant the quantity ginned this year amounted to 10,775,362 lbs., with a fair amount still to be handled.

That is an indication of our progress. We may not be making terrific strides such as are being made in countries where capital can be obtained to any extent that may be desired. Queensland has its troubles. It is very much on all-fours with this State. It has a tremendous lot of difficulties to contend with, and suffers from shortage of money, just as we do. It is a splendid thing that the production should have jumped from 3,779,000 lbs. to 10,775,000 lbs. in one year, and to know that a fair amount of cotton still remains to be handled. The "Evening News" says—

When all is said and done, the quantity ginned this season will be about three times last year's quantity. The same rate of increase next year will bring the quantity to forty million pounds, but we can rest assured that next year's crop will be very considerably in excess of forty million pounds. In Central Queensland the cotton ginned this year will be six million pounds, which is nearly double the total production of last year.

So much for the Lancashire prophecy that Australia will never be of any material consequence in the world's supply of cotton! I must now proceed to back up a remark I made earlier in my speech with regard to the work going on in our own State and the satisfactory nature of the present position. Admitted that we have nothing brilliant to report, yet the steady progress in the North is most gratifying. It is a splendid indication that cotton is not yet dead in the West, as one tuppenny editor in Broome wrote in his rag—"Death of Cotton in the West." I wish to draw attention to one or two ventures in the North of which no one in the South hears anything. It is only a fanatic like myself the people concerned will write to; they write to me in the hope of getting back encouraging replies. I appreciate their difficulties and their isolation, and I trust that in another 12 months I shall be able to give the House satisfactory news concerning them. Of course there is always the general election to be borne in mind, but when I speak of what I am going to do in the future, it is always subject to the proviso that I shall remain here. One case I have particularly in mind is that of four returned soldiers now growing cotton on Sir Graham Moore Island. It is a big island, and contains a good deal of alluvial ground. I wish there were some gold on the island, so that these young fellows could get on without having to bother the Premier for sustenance. I thank the Premier sincerely for a little assistance I got from him the other day for these boys. Although it merely represents bare tucker, they are quite satisfied. They wrote to me asking that I

should try to secure them the right to experiment in cotton growing on the island. Through the kindness of the Premier and the Lands Department, they were enabled to take up the island. They already have about four acres of cotton planted. When they wrote to me, the cotton was looking splendid, with any number of bolls and good substantial growth. They landed on the island in February last, and had the land cleared by the middle of March. During the planting only about two inches of rain fell, and there was another inch in the next month, March, making a total of three inches. The samples of their cotton which were sent by me to Queensland have been most favourably commented on. Yet three inches of rain can hardly be regarded as affording a fair or satisfactory test. Nevertheless, the cotton is described by the Queensland people as of good colour and good fibre, although a little short in length. This defect is readily explained by the scarcity of rain. On the 17th June the cotton plants, which had been planted in February, were 2ft. 6in. high, and entirely free from pests. There was no sign whatever of the hibiscus worm. The results I have quoted prove that the climate of the North offers a splendid advantage in respect of its humidity and heavy dews. That feature represents the secret. The tropical dew is equal to almost half an inch of rain at times. The island contains large areas of black and chocolate soil, of which these young men are clearing another 40 acres during the present season. These facts show how the boys have been and are working. I had long interviews with them when I was in the North, and it did my heart good to see their enthusiasm. Previously they had a rotten time of it. At pearling they had got hard up. After that they were cruising about the coast, picking up a few sticks of sandalwood. They also did a bit of dry shelling, to keep the tucker bag going. After such hard times there are no more enthusiastic men in the North than these boys, as they see their cotton plantation growing up and thriving. Let me add that they like the flesh pots of the city just as much as we do. Two of them had spent practically all their lives in the city before they went to the Front. It speaks well for their solid determination that they have stood all the hard initial work and to-day are just as enthusiastic as ever. They hope to be able to finance their venture without Government help. That is the sort of thing one likes to hear. These boys are not sitting on the doorstep of the Government offices. They have splashed up £400 of their own money in this industry. They spent all their own money before they asked for any assistance, and then they asked merely for a few pounds to fill the tucker bags. They wanted no houses built, no teams or machinery supplied. All they have asked for is a little credit at the local store so that they can get tea, sugar and flour; not a farthing cash. They came down for supplies in their

own lugger, and had a three days' beat up against a snorting headwind. They picked up their tucker, and then got back to their island. It is easy to stand here, nice and comfortable, and talk about beating up in a lugger. I have had a bit of beating up in luggers, and I know what it is. The Premier had 24 hours in a lugger without any beating up at all. The beating that he did was in point of language; in this he nearly beat me. The time lost in going backwards and forwards is a very serious item to these boys, especially when adverse winds compel them to lie up behind islands. They have all their money in the venture; their only possession is a little credit at the local store. The people at the Drysdale River mission, are past the experimental stage in cotton growing, and they have also had some very fair returns from tobacco. It is satisfactory to know that they are growing enough tobacco to keep their natives going, instead of having to buy it in Perth, where it is very expensive just now. It was the sight of the cotton plantation at that mission which caused the young fellows to try the experiment on the island. They are going to put in tobacco, and will also try sugar cane as soon as they have the cotton in proper going order. During the time two of these young fellows were on the island, they did not see another face of their own colour for six months. We know what a tendency the average man has to get tired of the other fellow. Two men alone together have to be very good at giving and taking in order to live in a little humpy on an island for six months without the possibility of getting away. It takes a bit of heart for two fellows to put up with that. The only variation in their life would be the arrival of the lugger, which they would see five or six miles away, beating backwards and forwards with their supply of tucker and perhaps a handful of old newspapers or a few back numbers of magazines. There is not even a native on that island. I would like to take a couple of hot-soaked individuals from Hay-street and put them on such an island for six months. Just another incident illustrating the life of these returned soldiers on their island: While one of them was cruising round trying to spot a decent landing place to prospect for a bit of sandalwood, he espied a sail in the offing. This was unusual up there as it had no Broome port mark. At Broome each owner has a certain mark, which is painted on the truck of his boat to denote the ownership. Every pearler in the North, so soon as he sees a craft, can determine with his glasses whether it is a Western Australian boat or not. Members can imagine how surprised these young fellows were when they saw the strange sail. One went over to board the craft, and to his surprise found that it was a schooner from Koepang, on the east coast of Java. The schooner was engaged in the very interesting occupation of "pinching" our *bêche-de-mer*. They had a nice little camp ashore, with smoke furnaces rigged up. About 10 Koepangers were scouring the reef, right along

the beach, and the other crowd were doing the smoking and cleaning, and getting the bêche-mer ready for market. I will give hon. members an idea of how patriotic these young fellows are. On the occasion I refer to, one of the lads was accompanied by only two native boys to help him with the boat. He boarded the vessel and demanded to know what right the skipper had to be there and insisted upon the production of the ship's papers. Hon. members can just visualise the position! Here was this bit of a stripling boarding a schooner about ten times bigger than his little lugger, demanding to know by what right the foreign skipper was there and by what authority he was working in Western Australian waters! It will be realised that these young fellows are practically policemen, patrols or coast guards, supervising the coast, and looking after the interests of the State. After a brief conversation with the skipper, this lad was satisfied he would be able to bluff the crowd. He demanded the log and took copious notes of various details of importance to the Customs authorities in Western Australia, such as the date of departure from Koepang, the owner's name, the crew and other such like items of information. The schooner had come prepared to make a long stay on the coast. All the necessary plant was established on the beach and furnaces were lit up, cooking and smoking the trepang ready for sale at Macassar, where most of this commodity is disposed of. One can get a better price for smoked fish at Macassar than at any other port in that part of the East. I have sent the smoked flesh of the trocus there and have received as much as 25 guilders per piece for it. That product has no value anywhere south of Broome. The consequence is that every year, two or three of these schooners are fitted out by Arabs or Chinamen, manned with native crews—all good sailors, whose services can be secured for about 10s. a month—and away they come to the Western Australian coast. That has been going on for the last 30 years. I have found remains of old smoke houses on the islands, crumbling away with age. I wonder how much wealth has been filched from the State by this means during the past 30 or 40 years! What does it matter? It is no one's business. It is only the unknown North! It is not for the Federal Government to provide a patrol boat to look after the State's interests. It is not for them to do that, in order to see that the pearlers, who have to pay heavily towards the maintenance of lights along the coast, big advances to the divers and all the other imposts they have to shoulder, may have a reasonable chance of getting what is in the waters there. As it is, they have to take their chance. These heathens come down and take thousands of pounds worth of shell every year without any interference. Who cares? It is nobody's business. In the incident I have related, the lad found that the schooner had left Koepang on the 7th March, so that the young self-appointed revenue officer got on to them before they had

been long on the job. That was evident, because there was no cargo in the boat, but there was a large quantity of tucker aboard, indicating they were prepared for a stay of about four months. Through the determination, bluff and pluck of this young fellow, the Koepangers got a fright and that night the anchor was heaved up and the schooner was sent off with the mosquito lugger, manned by the lad, sailing along in attendance until the schooner was well on her way to Koepang! It shows a splendid trait in that settler's character that he should regard the State's interests of so much importance. He demonstrated that it was not his own selfish ends that he studied, for had he done so, he might have gone ashore and looked for sandalwood, leaving the Koepangers to take what they wanted. As it was, he looked after the interests of Western Australia and sent the Koepangers back to their port with a round turn. I venture to assert that he gave this man who was in charge—I will not mention his name, for I know him well—such a fright that I do not think he will venture south again, to poach in our waters for trepang or anything else. As I say, I know the "gentleman" who was in charge of the schooner. He was a Western Australian who went to Koepang and gave these Arabs the "office" regarding what was to be picked up on our shores, telling them what a tin-pot crowd the authorities were in Western Australia, and how the Koepangers could come to Western Australian waters and hold a circus there without anyone being the wiser. The Arabs and "Chows," despite the fact that loads of trepang, worth £70 or £80 a ton, are to be procured there, will have some hesitation in sending out schooners next year, for fear the "revenue cutter" may be waiting for them. Yet it was a mere boy who ordered the schooner out of Western Australian waters, and told the owner not to return. An application has been made to the Customs authorities on behalf of the returned soldiers, that they should be appointed to patrol the coast for a few pounds a year. It would not be a bad appointment, and it would be a slight acknowledgment of what they have done and intend to do in the interests of Australia. It would be a satisfactory arrangement for the Customs authorities if, by encouraging these lads, this sort of thing could be prevented. I have never before detained the House for so long since I have been a member, and I do not desire to delay members much longer. In concluding my remarks, I would ask those hon. members who have not been in the North-West to endeavour to conjure up the frightful monotony and loneliness of life in the North. I am not talking about the townships. I do not care twopence for those centres, for they have some of the essentials of life. I am not speaking of those parts where they have the telephone, the telegraph and all sorts of advantages, not possessed by the "way-backer." I speak of the station hand, the small pastoralist, the poor, unfortunate, lonely woman. Were

it not for the fact that these people go out into the back country, there would not be any of the coastal communities, for they would not be required. There would be no need for the storekeeper, for the forwarding agent or anyone else. It is the back country that creates these little communities on the coast, and I have no particular interest in the latter. I have great interest and unbounded sympathy with those people who are hundreds of miles from the coast, with no railway communication, no aeroplane — the aeroplanes, after all, only fly along the coastal fringe — with considerable intervals between mails. Even when they do get a mail, half the time it comprises bills from the local storekeepers! These people outback have very few friends in the State and letters are few and far between. Their's is indeed a lonely life, and I am satisfied, more and more, every time I go North that something must be done to obviate this loneliness, this soul-racking monotony. Something has to be done to smash up this frightful —

Hon. T. Walker: Solitude

Mr. TEESDALE: That is the word. The Mitchell Government have done wonders with the money at their disposal. The huge stretches of country down south must be attended to. I always recognise and fully sympathise with the Government in the task they have to carry out. When I come into this Chamber, on occasions, I feel like dealing it out to someone, but I realise it is impossible for everything to be done at once throughout the whole State. Down here the community's interests can be so easily dealt with. Those districts that are in communication with the larger centres of population by means of railways and other easy means of transport, must be developed immediately in order to provide employment for the people who are coming to the State. I always recognise that the North's requirements must take a back seat for the time being. The more often I go North, the more I am satisfied the task of development cannot be properly undertaken by the State Government. I always realise the huge work confronting the Government in tackling the development of such a vast State. That task is an impossible one. There is already too much to be done down South. Great works have been started here that must be carried to a successful issue. We cannot expect any radical division of the activities of departments and officials in order that the development of the North may be handled completely.

Mr. Latham: Then you are in favour of smaller States?

Mr. TEESDALE: Rather is it a Federal matter. Had we but one-fifth of the money frittered away in the Northern Territory, what might not be done? Why should we not have some such expenditure up North? Are we not part of Australia, just as is the Northern Territory? Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been frittered away in the Territory, and nothing is said about it! Why should we not receive from

the Commonwealth something in the nature of a tropical subsidy? What could we not do with it? For one thing, once and for all we would determine whether the North was capable of anything more than cattle and sheep raising. Would it not be a splendid thing to know that the development of the North was failure, if it is to be such, for anything is better than this wretched uncertainty as to when these tests are to be made. Why cannot we have these experimental plots strewn along the coast at every port? Why cannot we have our experiments to show whether cotton, tobacco and coffee can be grown there? When I was up North, a Queenslander told me that if the country at the back of Wyndham were in Queensland, every place where they can knock up enough alluvial to plant a coffee seed, would be dealt with and the whole of the country would be utilised. He told me that he had never seen any country more congenial or where the conditions were more favourable for the growing of coffee than the hills for miles around Wyndham. This man was a coffee grower, and so knew what he was talking about. Is it not a crime that we should seem to be powerless to take advantage of these opportunities? I am not railing at the Government. I never have railed at the Government. It is all too big for them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You need not tell us that you never rail at the Government.

Mr. TEESDALE: Possibly I rail at the Government in private. Sometimes I get in some fine work in the corridor, without publicity, but I cannot be expected to do it openly. I could not help being struck with the tremendous drain on the Government when I read that, last year, 66 per cent. of our loan indebtedness was due to assistance given to farmers. Can any young country stand that frightful drain?

Hon. P. Collier: That is 66 per cent. on £3,300,000! Work that out.

The Premier: It is only loaned.

Mr. TEESDALE: I recognise that the farmers must be helped, for the whole of the State is dependent on agriculture. It is of the utmost importance that we should help the struggling farmer, even though his account in the books of the Industries Assistance Board looks bad, so long as he has done his level best and it is only that the fates have been against him. Then it is that a man who knows agriculture from A to Z will say "We must give this fellow another chance"; whereas, if somebody knowing nothing of agriculture were in charge of the Industries Assistance Board he might say, "Look at that account! If it cannot be reduced we must out this man."

Mr. Clydesdale: The North-West will wipe that out.

Mr. TEESDALE: That sort of thing is not done in the North. Men up there have big hearts and big ideas. They will always stand by a man, unless indeed he is a racing man. As long as a fellow keeps away from

the neddies and does a fair thing, he will always find somebody who will say "What about giving So-and-so a couple of thousand breeders and letting him get a fresh start." That is what I like to remember about the North, the way they help each other. There they do not sell a man up. Rather do they give him a chance to pull himself together next year—that is if God is kind to him. Sometimes He is not. I hope members will pardon me for having dealt with this question at such length. The subject is of great importance to me.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And to the State.

Mr. TEESDALE: Yes, and to the State. I hope something will be done to make settlement in the North more attractive. Something will have to be done, for things cannot go on year after year as they have been going. For 40 years have I known the North, and I confess I see very little progress there, save for one or two fine illustrations in my own electorate. I see great possibilities in the Onslow district.

Hon. P. Collier: As a matter of fact the North is losing population.

Mr. Hughes: It is not losing its members.

Mr. TEESDALE: I had some heartening news the other day to the effect that my agent had put 75 new electors on the roll.

Hon. P. Collier: Making a grand total of 250.

Mr. TEESDALE: Also I have found out that my electors constitute the biggest rent payers in the whole of the State, contributing a bigger sum to the revenue than do the people of any other electorate. That is a goal to work for—to help along a district that is materially helping the State. Unfortunately those electors, though not deliberately hostile, are a little apathetic towards some of the things I have been advocating to-night. However, they are not antagonistic, and I trust that when we get the report of Mr. Wise—I could wish that he had a little more experience of cotton—their attitude will undergo a change. I have a good deal of faith in Mr. Wise. He is young, but he knows a lot about the country he comes from, and I am sure his services will be of great value to the State. I trust that when we get his report the Government will at once begin an energetic development. Still, I hope that development will be in a small way to start with. I have no faith in these big splashes. I want to see trials on small, inexpensive blocks until we know that the soil is just what the cotton requires. Then I shall want the growers to spend money themselves, or alternatively ask the Federal Government for a substantial tropical subsidy, as has been provided in the Northern Territory. Then, I am confident, the House will recognise that what I have said to-night has not been altogether in vain.

Mr. DURACK (Kimberley) [8.23]: If, after the able speech of the member who has just resumed his seat, I were to say very much on this subject, the House would have

a surfeit of the North-West. I wish merely to deal with the question in a general way. The hon. member began by saying there were very few grievances in the North-West, that everything in the garden was lovely. When I see on the Estimates the small amount set down for dealing with the North-West, a territory with 1,300 or 1,400 miles of coastline, and containing practically three-fourths of the area of the whole State, I feel that we have a very real grievance.

Hon. P. Collier: But this amount is only for the salaries of officials. There are the Loan Estimates to come.

Mr. DURACK: But consider the paucity of this Vote to deal with three-fourths of Western Australia! Moreover, if we are to pursue successive Estimates to their logical conclusion, in a few years there will not be anything at all for the North. The year before last the amount provided was £29,000; last year it was £26,000; and this year is £22,000. So it is only necessary to pursue the ratio for a few years, and we shall have no Vote at all for the North.

Hon. P. Collier: But the efficiency of the service might be in inverse ratio with the amount provided.

Mr. DURACK: Mr. Gregory, M.H.R., who, I suppose, has had a good deal of experience, speaking at a deputation in Broome the other day, said the fact of the matter was that the people of the North did not kick enough. And Mr. Gregory's remarks were endorsed by some of his fellow members. Probably Mr. Gregory was correct. The people of the North do not make sufficient noise. If only we had more tongues like that of the last speaker, tongues that could so graphically portray the solitude, the isolation and the innumerable disabilities under which the people up North are labouring, probably we should get more consideration.

Hon. P. Collier: Is not the isolation due principally to the big pastoral holdings, those million-acre blocks?

Mr. DURACK: Not at all. Do not forget that there are up there millions of acres only awaiting the arrival of adventurous spirits to develop them. Unfortunately those adventurous spirits cannot be found. The Minister for Agriculture said it was the intention of the Government to seriously undertake the encouragement of cotton growing in the North. Presumably they are awaiting the report of the expert. The Minister said they were anxious to secure sufficient suitable land to allow of the planting of an extensive area with cotton. At Wyndham the Government have a reserve of about 100,000 acres. I know that a great deal of that area is suitable for cotton cultivation. Notwithstanding that the experiments at Derby and Broome were not altogether successful, I am convinced that cotton can be successfully grown in those districts. I have said previously that I do not see a very bright prospect for agricultural development up there; but certainly I believe that cotton will be successfully grown from Broome northwards.

Mr. Clydesdale: Are the pastoralists spending any money on experiments in that direction?

Mr. DURACK: Yes, I know of two.

Hon. P. Collier: Those two returned soldiers?

Mr. DURACK: Yes. They have been there for the past three years.

Hon. P. Collier: But what about the other bigger pastoralists, who have been there so much longer?

Mr. DURACK: We have carried on experiments that have proved that cotton will grow up there. I have not been enamoured of the possibility of agricultural development in the North, because I have feared the depredations of white ants. But experience has shown us that the white ants will not interfere to any great extent with the cultivation of cotton. The member for Roebourne takes exception to the comments of Colonel Evans with regard to cotton growing in Western Australia. I met Colonel Evans a few weeks ago at Darwin, and I formed the conclusion that while there may have been some justification for criticism in connection with those remarks of his that have been quoted, and that in consequence of them cotton growing might have been discouraged to a slight extent, I do not think it can be said that Colonel Evans discounted the possibility of cotton growing in Western Australia. He was just as guarded in respect of cotton growing in the Northern Territory as he was after his visit to Western Australia when he dealt with cotton growing in this State. He said at Darwin that he did not enthuse over it there, but he believed that cotton growing could be carried on under the family system in the Northern Territory, and in connection with the cultivation of other products. I read Colonel Evans' report submitted to the Minister for the North-West shortly after his visit to that part of the State, and I did not form the opinion that he discounted the possibilities of cotton growing in Western Australia. He said that cotton could be grown more successfully on the black soil rather than on the pindan areas. Speaking of the pindan country, it may be mentioned that there are different classes of it. There is the pindan that will respond very well and quickly after it has been burnt. There is another class that is not so responsive. In the experiments made at Derby it is possible that they tried to grow cotton on the pindan land that was not responsive. Before I leave the subject of cotton I wish to refer to what was published the other day to the effect that the Commonwealth Government were about to issue instructions that no ratoon cotton was to be grown in the Northern Territory. I believe it is the intention of the Commonwealth Government to put through an enactment to carry out that intention. I trust the Minister for Agriculture will give the matter consideration and enter a protest against the proposed enactment being made to apply to Western Australia. I would suggest experi-

menting with ratoon cotton carried over a period of three or five years, the areas to be isolated. If we can succeed in growing it as a perennial, it will be an important factor in helping to bring about the success of the industry. We know very well that the conditions in the far North render employment of labour a serious matter, and if it can be proved that ratoon cotton is as good as the annual, the result will be good for the State. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) referred to the steamer service on the North-West coast. Whilst I am not going to discriminate between the companies trading on that coast, I cannot but remark that the vessels employed have served their purpose very well. I do say, however, that the "Bambra" and the "Kangaroo" of the State shipping service, are obsolete, and are not fit to be employed on the North-West coast.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You cannot say that the "Kangaroo" is out of date.

Mr. DURACK: The vessel is slow; its average speed is not more than eight or nine knots. In justice to the member for Guildford (Mr. Davies) I must say that in my opinion he did not make any disparaging remarks about the service after his return from a visit to the North-West, that is, if I read correctly his remarks published in the Press. He gave the State Shipping Department credit for having an excellent staff, but he did say that the "Bambra" was too slow, and that he had experience of a tide being missed by an hour which meant a delay of 12 or 14 hours. Everyone will admit that the "Bambra" and the "Kangaroo" are not fit for our coastal service. We want more up-to-date vessels that are capable of 12 or 14 knots. We know that the tides on our coast are responsible at times for delays of 12 or 14 hours, and that these delays could be obviated if a vessel could get to a port at a greater speed. I agree with the member for Roebourne that it is time we set about to do something to break down the isolation of the North. Year after year reference is made to the great possibilities and resources of the North-West. Up to the present time, however, we do not appear to have taken up the matter seriously in the hope of being able to develop the latent resources that are said to exist.

Mr. Hughes: How can you develop those resources when you have all the land locked up?

Mr. DURACK: The land is not all locked up. If, for instance, it is shown that cotton can be grown profitably in the Kimberley district, speaking on behalf of my firm, I can say that we will have no hesitation in handing over to the department the land that they may require.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Government can take the whole lot if they want it.

Mr. DURACK: It can all be taken over for agricultural purposes if the Government

need it. The hon. member should not bring up that old bogey about the pastoralists of the North retarding development by reason of their holding the areas that have been leased to them. The bogey is rather played out.

Mr. Hughes: Can the land be taken over without compensation?

Mr. DURACK: There are still vast areas of good land available up there.

Mr. Marshall: How far from the coast?

Mr. Durack: Right on the coast between Derby and Wyndham.

Hon. P. Collier: The coast is rather inaccessible between Derby and Wyndham.

Mr. DURACK: About three years ago the Government appointed a committee to inquire into the possibility of the better development of the far North, and an exhaustive report was presented. In that report a suggestion was made that a port should be established between Derby and Wyndham. If that suggestion had been carried out there would have been no occasion for the interjection made by the Leader of the Opposition. I was interested in the remarks made by the Premier a few nights ago when speaking on the subject of the South-West settlement. He said he did not think that any country in the world would permit such a vast extent of territory to remain undeveloped and unoccupied. The south-western part of the State to which the Premier was referring contains 2,295,000 acres. Compare that with the North, which embraces an area of 416,000,000 acres. How much more, then, should a remark like that made by the Premier apply to the northern portion of the State.

Mr. Pickering: What is the latitude and longitude, comparatively, of that area?

Hon. P. Collier: Tell us the latitude of Busselton, the very old Busselton, the troglodite Busselton.

Mr. DURACK: It is really time we ceased to talk about the North. We should do one thing or the other. If it has the great possibilities that we all believe it possesses, we should set about to develop it. But this development cannot possibly be done by the State. I have said before that in regard to the development of the North there should be the fullest co-operation on the part of the Commonwealth and the State, and assistance from the Imperial Government.

Hon. P. Collier: How is Mr. Miles' scheme progressing; is it likely to assist?

Mr. DURACK: That scheme has occupied a good deal of attention in the outside world, and if it has done nothing else, it has helped to advertise the north of Australia to an extent previously unknown. A lot of credit for that is due to Mr. Miles. While some hon. members may regard Mr. Miles' scheme as visionary, it has been the means of calling attention to the vastness of that part of Western Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: The scheme is Napoleonic in its conception.

Mr. DURACK: The Minister for Home and Territories, when speaking in Perth a

few weeks back, declared that the time was fast arriving when it would be not so much a question of the Commonwealth neglecting the States, as the States shirking their responsibilities. That is how I regard the position. Western Australia is shirking its responsibilities in respect of the development of the North. We cannot help arriving at that conclusion when we see what little interest is taken in the North by members generally. I must give credit to members sitting opposite in that they are present in greater numbers to-night than is the case on this side to listen to the remarks made by North-West members concerning the possibilities of the North.

Hon. P. Collier: They have slipped over there.

Mr. DURACK: Some members do not look at the North as being of any great economic importance. According to the statistics Broome should rank as the third most important port in Western Australia. The trade of Broome for the years 1911, 1912 and 1913 was over one million pounds. The value of the exports, over the imports, a great factor in estimating the wealth of a country, represented £536,767. The customs revenue amounted to £55,729. These figures would seem to indicate that there is some wealth in the North at any rate. The freights charged along the coast constitute one of the big handicaps of the North. Although freights are high, the State steamers are losing money. It is difficult to understand why freights cannot be brought down. If we had better boats, a better service, and a more up-to-date one, possibly the freights could be reduced.

Mr. Marshall: Why do not the private companies reduce the freights? Are their boats not up to date?

The Minister for Mines: They are not allowed to.

Mr. Marshall: The shipping ring will not permit them to do so.

Mr. DURACK: Freights to Java were greatly reduced in order to encourage trade. The freight on flour is now about 30s. a ton. That may be all right, but the freight to Wyndham, for instance, on a ton of flour is 66s., to Derby 60s., and to Broome 57s. 6d. It may be advisable to encourage trade with foreign ports, but it is equally desirable to encourage the settlement of people in our northern areas. In fact, it is of greater importance to settle our own territory than it is to establish a trade with Java. Why burden the people, who have to eke out an existence in the North, with these abnormal freights such as a charge of 66s. a ton on flour to Wyndham as against a freight of 30s. to Java?

The Minister for Agriculture: We would not get an Eastern buyer to take our flour if we did not reduce the freight.

Mr. DURACK: The same preference should be given to the North. If we are going to settle people in the North we must offer exceptional inducements to them to go there. The first inducement is to exempt

them from taxation. The Commonwealth authorities are apparently in earnest in their attempt to develop that portion of the North that comes within their jurisdiction. They recently announced their intention to exempt the Northern Territory from taxation for five years on the agricultural, mining, pastoral and fishing industries. This shows an earnest attempt on their part to encourage settlement in the North.

Mr. Marshall: They have no right to collect taxation at all. Those people have no representation in Parliament.

Mr. DURACK: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: No, they have no vote there.

Mr. DURACK: They have a lot to say there.

Mr. Hughes: Do you suggest we should cease to tax pastoralists, notwithstanding that they have the highest incomes found in any occupation in the State?

Mr. DURACK: That may be so, but I understand these are the intentions of the Commonwealth authorities. If the hon. member takes exception to this he should address himself to the Minister for Home and Territories.

Mr. Hughes: Do you suggest we should cease to tax pastoralists here?

Mr. DURACK: Unless we offer exceptional treatment to people to induce them to remain in the North of Australia, they will not do so. I do not say in what direction we should offer such inducements. The chief thought actuating the people who go to the North is to make all the money they can. The money they do make is generally invested in some proposition in the South, but in other cases men accumulate a certain amount of money and then go away. The only method by which the position can be attacked is to offer sound inducements to people to settle in the North, and remain there. We must make it more profitable for them to stay in the North than it would be for them to operate in the South. We want to make it possible for them to remain in the North with their wives and their household gods, otherwise we shall never settle the north of Australia.

Mr. Hughes: The pastoralists have the biggest incomes of any people in the State.

Mr. DURACK: I accept the hon. member's statement.

Mr. Hughes: Do you suggest we should cease to tax them?

Mr. DURACK: I am glad my fellow pastoralists are in such a prosperous way. I should like to see every citizen in a flourishing and prosperous position.

Mr. Hughes: But you get all the cream.

Mr. DURACK: No doubt the time will come when the great percentage of our people will be prosperous and happy. There can never be a successful administration of affairs in the North unless matters are dealt with on the spot. I admit that the Commissioner for the North-West has done well, and infinitely better for the State with the funds

at his disposal than the Commonwealth have done, but I think his power is too limited. I am borne out in this statement by Mr. Colebatch, our new Agent General, who, having travelled through the North, must know a great deal about the subject. He has had an opportunity of judging the effects of government in the remote parts from the metropolis. In an article written by him he speaks of having visited Darwin, and says—

At Darwin one is depressed by the sense of declining prosperity and falling population, so common to the towns of the North. Industrially Darwin to-day suggests peace, perfect peace, but the territory is not well administered. No place could be well administered from so great a distance as Melbourne.

These remarks apply equally to Western Australia. I do not care how earnest a Government may be in its intentions—I believe this Government is actuated by the best of motives—it cannot deal with situations that arise in parts of the country far remote from the capital, 2,000 miles away at least. The interests of the South are so vastly different from the interests of the North. Those who are on the spot and should know what is wanted are not given the power they should have. It would be much better for the Northern Territory if it were given a freer hand to control its own affairs. Mr. Colebatch continues—

The men on the spot who know what is wanted are not given the powers they should have. Undoubtedly the same thing applies at Darwin. One cannot help thinking that it would be well for the territory if he (the Commissioner) were given a freer hand. But I did not start out to discuss political administration. The whole point is, that there is only one form of effective rule, and that is, rule on the spot.

We might take that advice to ourselves.

Mr. Marshall: He believes in job control.

Mr. DURACK: We should give some consideration to the necessity for rule on the spot. There can only be proper and effective administration if this is carried out by people on the spot. I do not suggest that the administration in the North should be altogether apart from the administration of the State, but the North-West Department should be removed lock, stock, and barrel to Broome, which is the most central place in the North-West. A good deal of developmental work could be done there.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the Commissioner's headquarters.

Mr. DURACK: Yes. We might shift the whole of the North-West Department there. A vote might be applied for and allocated to the administration of the North. A committee or administration consisting of the local magistrate and two other gentlemen who might be appointed by the Governor in Council could then sit with the Commissioner of the North-West and deal directly with all questions affecting that part of the State. The Commissioner would be the mouthpiece of the Government. He would have all the

evidence before him to enable him to deal with different questions that were brought under his notice. He could then make his recommendations to the Government, and the members representing that part of the State could deal with the position here. If a local administration of that kind were formed, there would be more development in the North and more contentment, and a better condition of affairs would exist than is found at present. There are many directions in which probably the North could be assisted, but other opportunities will be afforded of dealing with them.

Mr. Marshall: This is your last chance before the general election.

Mr. DURACK: It is practically impossible for people in the South to understand the requirements of the North where the people are temperamentally different. In the South we are too absorbed in the many important questions that occupy our attention. Our vision cannot take in the magnitude of the great North-West. What would be the position if some new country were discovered in the Indian Ocean or the Pacific containing only half the resources of the North? What a stampede there would be! Any amount of money would be made available for opening up that new country. Although we have a country that has unlimited resources at our very doors, namely the North-West, we hesitate to do anything for it. The time for speaking is past; the time for action is now. I was interested in what the member for Guildford had to say as the result of his excursion to the North. He was evidently impressed with the vast undeveloped resources there and suggested there should be a Commission of inquiry to go into the matter to see whether something better could not be done than is now being done. I hope the question will occupy the attention of the Government, and that they will quickly do something to assist in the development of the North.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascayne) [9.1]: Realising, with other members, that this division is really an administrative one, covering the salaries of a small handful of officials who are administering a very large and very sparsely populated territory, I shall not have much to say on it. The division also includes a few amounts for maintenance and repairs. I hope to have a good deal to say when the Loan Estimates are introduced. Then I shall direct my special attention to that section of the Loan Estimates which deals with North-West matters. Personally, I am very gratified by the selection of the new Minister for the North-West. Since Mr. Ewing has held that position, I have found him most sympathetic in taking note of any matter affecting North-West development that is brought before him.

Hon. P. Collier: New Ministers are usually that way.

Mr. ANGELO: I hope it will continue. I know that Mr. Ewing not only listens to representations, but makes full inquiries and

replies expeditiously. Unfortunately, Mr. Ewing is not the Treasurer.

Hon. P. Collier: Fortunately, you mean, for the State.

Mr. ANGELO: That is not my opinion. I feel perfectly certain that Mr. Ewing will recommend only those things which will be of advantage, not merely to the North-West, but to the State as a whole. However, we know that the Treasurer's purse is not bottomless, and that he has to keep a fairly tight rein on the finances. But we North-West members are looking forward to very satisfactory Loan Estimates as regards the North-West. The Premier is always recognised to be a man who keeps his word. He has told North-West members and the public that the North-West will receive attention from the Government. On a recent occasion, when Federal Ministers were present as well as the State members for the North-West, the Premier is reported to have said—

The State Government are giving "very serious attention" to the development of the North-West.

Hon. P. Collier: That is an original sentence.

Mr. ANGELO: The words "very serious attention" are in inverted commas, which represents the same thing as underlining words in a letter.

Hon. P. Collier: The use of the inverted commas means that the words between them have been used before.

Mr. ANGELO: Inverted commas put emphasis on the words. The report continues:—

He believed that when we get going, it would be very rapid.

Hon. P. Collier: That is very indefinite, you know.

Mr. ANGELO: The Premier is further reported as saying—

The North-West will be one of the State's greatest assets.

Hon. P. Collier: That is definite enough.

Mr. ANGELO: I am telling the House what I expect from the Loan Estimates. Here are the Premier's promises in black and white.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, definitely set down, in detail.

Mr. ANGELO: The Premier further said—

There was no doubt that cotton could be grown in the North. The Wyndham experiments had established that. Like the South, the North was much misunderstood. Up there was a territory as well watered as Java, a magnificent territory with a very good rainfall. Forty million acres were still in the hands of the Crown in that northern corner. But people would never go there unless they were provided with the facilities of civilisation.

It is those facilities of civilisation that we want in the North. We must have faster boats. We must have railways from the coast line into the hinterland, opening up the areas at present unoccupied. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) has already said that between Derby and Wyndham there are tens of millions of acres of magnificent pastoral

country, well watered, up to the present untouched. It is impossible for private persons to start cattle stations in that area. It cannot be done in isolated instances; the natives are too bad. Why cannot our Premier follow the example of the late Lord Forrest and send up an expedition to one of those ports, and from that stepping-stone develop this huge unoccupied area, which has not its equal utilised in any part of the world? Lord Forrest sent up a party by steamer to establish Wyndham townsite, which was the jumping-off for the development of the whole of the Kimberleys. The same thing was done from Derby. Further south there are valuable sheep areas, at present unsuitable for occupation, because too distant from the ports for the cartage of wool. If a spur line was run in from Carnarvon, and later another from Onslow—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We have heard this before.

Mr. ANGELO: It has not had much effect so far. The Premier's reference to "facilities of civilisation" gives one an opportunity of pointing out what is really needed. The directions I have indicated are those in which a great deal might be done by the present Government towards opening up the North-West. Someone has said that the North is only capable of growing cattle and sheep.

Mr. Marshall: That is utterly ridiculous.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes. We have not, however, by any means got to our limit as regards cattle and sheep production. Indeed, there is room yet for millions of sheep in the North-West. What is needed is the opening up of unstocked areas by means of transport facilities. Another means would be to make better use of some of the lands already held. I know of millions of acres of country within 120 and 150 miles of port on which at present only cattle are being run. That country should be stocked with sheep. The change could be brought about by in some way acquiring those lands. Then they could be used to carry sheep.

Hon. P. Collier: Why are they not carrying sheep now?

Mr. ANGELO: Until the price of wool rose to its recent height, they were a little too far away from port for cartage. With the present price of wool, however, lands formerly unpayable as sheep propositions are gradually being turned to that use. Moreover, the price of fencing wire has been almost prohibitive until just recently. The Federal Government are now going to give a little help in that direction—unfortunately only five miles of wire per year in any one case.

The Minister for Agriculture: Who is going to get the wire?

Mr. ANGELO: I gather from the Press that people desirous of embarking on pastoral pursuits can get from the Federal Government fencing wire, but only to the extent of five miles. That is not sufficient. The State Government might be able to supplement the assistance offered by the Federal

Government. Of course the Minister for Agriculture knows more than I do about the Federal proposals regarding fencing wire. Perhaps he will tell us what the conditions really are, if the Federal Government have advised him on the subject.

Hon. P. Collier: The wire ought to be given to the State Government for distribution.

Mr. ANGELO: I think so too. The efforts of the Federal Government, moreover, should be supplemented by State assistance. The chief means, however, of bringing land under sheep-carrying conditions will be the giving of transport facilities from the existing harbours into the hinterland. In the Gascoyne district there are, east of the Junction, six million acres which could carry sheep, but which, at present, carry only a few thousand head of cattle. I am absolutely convinced that cotton can be grown in the North, and that sugar can be successfully planted in the Kimberleys, with their rainfall of 60 inches. Again, jute growing should be experimented with, seeing that we are such large users of jute goods. Pigs could be grown in the North to much advantage. Tropical fruits and other tropical products should also receive attention. Dairying will, I believe, prove one of the industries that will build up the North. There have been several reports on the suitability of the Gascoyne district for dairying. One of those reports was by Mr. Hampshire. The Federal Public Works Committee, who travelled North recently, formed and expressed the opinion that some day the Carnarvon country would be a very rich dairying district.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The members of the Committee were all dairying experts.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes. But all these expert opinions are being discounted by the fact that people are not quite certain whether there is sufficient water in the Carnarvon district. I would again urge on the Government that they should borrow from India an engineer who has been doing irrigation work there. That officer should be sent to report not only on the Gascoyne River, but on all the rivers in the North. One dominion may well help another in that respect. Recently the Hume Pipe Company asked me to discuss the subject of irrigation with them. They have in their employ an engineer who has been doing irrigation work in India for 17 years, and they offered to send him up to Carnarvon to make a preliminary report, provided the Government would undertake, in the event of the report of the company's engineer being favourable, to follow the matter up by sending a departmental engineer to report. The company realised that the Government could not go to any great expense on the strength of a report made by an engineer not in their service. I put the proposal before the Government.

The Minister for Mines: Would you accept such a proposal?

Mr. ANGELO: The company suggested that if their engineer's preliminary report was satisfactory, the Government should send along another engineer to satisfy themselves. The company say this is the only Australian State in which they are not carrying out huge irrigation works. From what they have heard about the Gascoyne, they think there is a possibility of a large irrigation scheme in that district. I consider their offer a very fair one. To a certain extent the Government have accepted it, saying that if the report of the company's engineer is favourable they will consider what they can do in the matter. I understand that the company's engineer is to go up, and so something may result. The Minister for Agriculture has told us that at last the Government have sent a tropical expert to the North. I am very glad that the officer has gone up there. Mr. Wise is a gentleman who has already impressed many people in the North-West. I have heard many favourable comments regarding him. The people think he is the right man in the right place, and knows his work. But, unfortunately, he is only one man. Here we have a huge territory of 650 million acres with one expert to try to develop it! Take the case of Queensland. Queensland is an established State with a population of 700,000. But Queensland is not satisfied with one expert. Queensland has over a dozen experts to do work similar to that which Mr. Wise is expected to do by himself for the North-West. Each of these experts in Queensland is looking after two or three experimental plots.

The Minister for Agriculture: But Queensland is wholly a tropical State.

Mr. ANGELO: Our North-West is a tropical State! If the Government mean to turn it into the great asset the Premier spoke of on the occasion I refer to, every opportunity must be afforded to encourage its development as a tropical State. What can be done with one expert?

The Minister for Mines: That is a start.

The Minister for Agriculture: For 100 years you have had no expert. Now you have one to start with.

Mr. ANGELO: That is so, but if the Government intend to give serious attention to the North, more than one expert must be appointed and experimental farms must be established in different centres, as was done in Queensland. The carrying out of that policy in Queensland was not done by the present Administration only. Successive Governments have done their utmost to develop Queensland, which represents the North-East of Australia. But in the North-West of Australia practically nothing has been done. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) very rightly complimented the Government on the construction of the Onslow jetty. That is a magnificent work which will always be a monument to the Mitchell Government. Unfortunately it is the only monument erected in the North during the last seven years of administration.

Hon. P. Collier: As a rule, only one monument is erected in memory of any individual or institution.

Mr. McCallum: And that is generally a tombstone.

Mr. ANGELO: The Government, I trust, will have many more monuments erected to their memory before they leave the Treasury bench.

Hon. P. Collier: "In memory of" will be written on that jetty.

Mr. ANGELO: The member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) touched upon an important point when he questioned whether a Government domiciled in the southern portion of the State, could develop the North.

Mr. McCallum: Would you shift Parliament up there.

Mr. ANGELO: We cannot move Parliament to the North, but the fact remains that this is a serious question. The North-West must always be backward under existing conditions, and that is not as it should be in the interests of the Commonwealth and of the Empire. It is a question whether it would not pay better to have our own Government domiciled in the North, enabling administration to be carried out on the spot by the people interested.

Mrs. Cowan: Do you mean a new State?

Mr. ANGELO: Yes, or some such method as that outlined by the member for Kimberley under which the departments affected would be transferred to the North, giving better control of the work in the territory itself. What is more important still is that a reasonable amount should be allocated each year for the development of the North. Both the member for Roebourne and the member for Kimberley suggested that the development of the North might be too much for the State Government, and that the help of the Commonwealth and Imperial authorities should be invited to assist in developing our great territory. The Federal Ministers who were here recently, were very sympathetic in their remarks regarding Western Australia and its difficulties.

Hon. P. Collier: They always are; then they go away and we get nothing.

Mr. ANGELO: Their readiness to help was shown by their speeches.

Hon. P. Collier: They were sympathetically disposed to us with reference to the Forests Products Laboratory, and what happened?

Mr. ANGELO: When the Minister for Home and Territories (Senator Pearce) spoke at the Parliamentary luncheon I have referred to, he said—

I declare that it is the earnest desire of the Commonwealth Government to do all it can to assist this State in its great task of development—

Hon. P. Collier: Very definite!

Mr. ANGELO: He continued—

We are seized with the importance of development in the North and North-West—

Hon. P. Collier: Original, isn't it?

Mr. ANGELO: Then the Minister said— You will have noted that, in the policy of this Government, greater attention has been paid to the development of the Northern Territory and a greater tendency manifested to co-operate with your Government in any action in the North, than has marked any previous Federal Government. I assure you that both the Prime Minister and the Treasurer are fully aware of your difficulties. You can rely upon the most sympathetic consideration of any proposal in which the Commonwealth can help.

Hon. P. Collier: Empty words!

Mr. ANGELO: If they are empty words, why not let us prove them such? Why not put the proposal to the Federal Government and see what their promises are made of? Here they offer to help us—and they should help us. Western Australia is the only State that has a northern territory of its own to develop by itself. At the same time, we are contributing towards the cost of the development of the Northern Territory, which is administered by the Commonwealth. Our quota of the Federal money spent in developing the Northern Territory already amounts to £600,000. If only we could get that amount paid back to us with the provision that it should be spent in the development of the North and North-West, something would be gained. Let us put that forward as a proposal. The Minister for Home and Territories asked for our proposals to be placed before the Federal Government, and why should we not do so? I hope the Government will seriously consider some such proposal and that when the Loan Estimates come down, the Premier will be able to tell us what his policy for the development of the North will be. I trust he himself will introduce the Loan Estimates for the North-West, and that he will then tell us what he really meant by his address to the Federal members.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But that was after dinner.

Hon. P. Collier: They were at peace with all the world.

Mr. ANGELO: I do not care if it was an after-dinner speech or after-breakfast speech! The Premier has a reputation, and justly so, for carrying out his word.

Hon. P. Collier: I was not speaking of the Premier.

Mr. ANGELO: The Premier said—

The State Government are giving very serious attention to the development of the North-West, and when we get going, that development will be very rapid.

I want the Premier to give effect to his words.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He did not say when he would start.

Mr. ANGELO: The Premier played a trump card when he developed the wheat belt so many years ago. He is playing another trump card in the South-West now. I want him to play still another trump card.

Mr. Pickering: The three card trick!

Mr. ANGELO: I want him to play his third trump card in the North-West, which, he claims, should be one of the greatest assets of the State.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [9.24]: Having only a limited knowledge of the North-West, gained during a trip up and down the coast, I am diffident about participating in the discussion. I have no hesitation in saying, however, that even a brief call at ports along the North-West coast suffices to inspire in a stranger a great appreciation and regard for the men and women who are pioneering that portion of our State. I believe those people who went into the far North in the early days, 25 or 30 years ago, and accepted all the risks attendant upon pioneering, enduring all the hardships inseparable from such a life, are entitled to very fair consideration. I appreciate the statement by the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) regarding the isolation experienced by people in the back portions of the State. We found it was so even in the little communities at each port, where some social life was possible. Having some knowledge of inland places in other parts of Australia, I can well understand what the position is for those people who are living 300 or 400 miles inland from the coast. At Wyndham, for instance, we were told that the Federal elections had been completed for some three months before people living 300 or 400 miles inland, knew anything about them. Mails are sometimes received only at long intervals. Places like Wyndham are for six weeks or more without any mails from the South, while those inland places to which I have referred, go for much longer periods without any news from the outside world. That brings home to us the terrible isolation mentioned by the member for Roebourne. I spoke to women at Wyndham, Derby, and other ports, and ascertained that they had been residents of their respective towns for from 10 to 18 years. I spoke to youths, now grown up to manhood, and girls who had been born in those places, and had never been out of them. Some of the women had not had a holiday from Wyndham during the last 16 years. They pleaded with us to urge some consideration in the direction of reduced excursion fares on the State steamers at Christmas and at other times. The State Shipping Service would be justified, even at considerable loss, in granting a generous concession to those people, particularly to the women and children, to enable them to get away from the North and come South for an occasional holiday. If that were not possible annually, some provision should be made for such excursion rates every second or third year. For years past the taxpayers have been called upon to make up a loss of between £300,000 and £400,000 annually in com-

nection with our railways. That loss has been occasioned because passengers are carried and goods hauled at rates that are not payable. If we can do that in connection with our railway system, I see no reason why some loss should not be made in order to afford these facilities for the people along the North-West coast.

Mr. Pickering: Particularly seeing that they contribute their quota towards making up the loss on the railways.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope the Minister in control of the State Shipping Service will seriously consider this question.

The Minister for Agriculture: We already incur a loss on the shipping service.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but we have made large profits on the service too. The boats have to run, and this is one of those instances where reduced fares would not mean much increase in the loss. It has to be remembered that there are not so many people in the whole of the North-West. It is a regrettable fact that we have been losing population in that part of the State. When the Redistribution of Seats Bill was brought forward in 1910, the population in these parts was given as 5,000. To-day that population has dwindled down to 4,000. That shows we are not making headway there, but rather that we are going back. It seems to me that the job is too big for the State. The financial responsibility necessary even to give effect to what the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) suggested, is beyond the resources of the State. That hon. member suggested that what was required was the construction of railways stretching inland from the various ports and tapping the resources there.

Mr. Angelo: That is the way Queensland was developed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not finding fault with that policy. The northern parts of Queensland are traversed by railways from the coast, tapping the inland resources of that State. I have no doubt such a policy would be beneficial to our North-West, but with this immense territory and our limited population I fear the financial strain is beyond the power of the State; more particularly when we recollect that the Commonwealth Government, with all the resources of the Commonwealth Treasury behind them, have practically failed to make any progress in the development of the Northern Territory.

Mr. Angelo: We have better land than that in the Northern Territory.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is true, but it will require an enormous sum of money to develop our North which, I suppose, is as large as, if not larger than, the Northern Territory.

Mr. Durack: Our North is 100,000 square miles greater in extent than is the Northern Territory.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It ought to be apparent to the Commonwealth Government that this State is entitled to some financial assistance in the development of the North-West. The speech quoted by the hon. member—I have been listening to such speeches

ever since I was old enough to take an interest in public affairs—"We are greatly seized with the importance of this part of the State"—is a meaningless phrase! I have no faith whatever in fair words uttered by Commonwealth members. Here as our guests, they think there is upon them an obligation to utter honeyed words. But when in the past the acid has been put upon them, they have frequently failed us.

Mr. Durack: The Commonwealth have given us a good deal of assistance. That £25,000 is something.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is a beginning; only that, and nothing more. The Commonwealth can show millions of pounds of a surplus, and they could well devote half a million by way of assistance in the developing of the North-West. We hear a great deal about defence, and about peopling our empty spaces. It is an Australian obligation, one for the whole of the people, not exclusively for those who happen to be living in Western Australia. If it be an Australian responsibility to administer the Northern Territory, it is equally so in respect of the North-West.

Mr. Durack: Their problems are the same.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, much the same. It is chiefly a matter of money. For the State the difficulties are almost insuperable. It is well-nigh impossible for a Government to satisfactorily administer the affairs of an immense territory 2,000 miles away. Up there, one is in a new country altogether. The people know nothing at all about what is going on down here. Their mails are few and far between, their newspapers four weeks old on arrival. The people are out of touch with this part of the State just as much as we are out of touch with them. Consider, then, the difficulties of administration! A Minister who has to control the Education Department, the Department of Justice, and has other administrative duties to perform, cannot fail to regard the North-West as a mere side-line to which he shall give whatever spare time may be available.

Mr. Durack: Unfortunately that is the general opinion.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not criticising any particular Minister. But it is inevitable that if the Minister for the North-West is burdened with other administrative duties he will not be able to give to the North-West the time and attention it not only deserves but requires. If the Minister were to do justice to the portfolio of Minister for the North-West, it would be necessary for him to spend quite a lot of time travelling in that part of the State so that he might keep in touch with the requirements and views of the people up there. I remember the satisfaction with which the creation of the North-West Department was hailed by members for the North-West. Personally I was sceptical about the predicted good results. So long as the department be carried on as it has been in the past, the results cannot be very satisfactory to the people of the North. As a State we ought

to be continually experimenting in every part of the North-West to determine what the locality will grow. The people of the North do not know the possibilities of the North. To carry out experiments in cultivation is not an expensive proposition, big areas are not required, and so we might well keep on experimenting right along the coast.

Mr. Durack: And have the agricultural expert stationed up there, with authority to do what he thought best.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, I think so. I do not know how far it would be wise to go in granting full powers to the North-West, but certainly, having secured reliable officers and having laid down a policy for them, we might well give them power to decide matters on the spot, thus avoiding the delays inseparable from communication with the capital city.

Mr. Durack: And you would approve of a certain amount being provided.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, under the direction of Cabinet, with a policy laid down to be followed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do not expound your policy prematurely.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If we had a Minister who could devote the whole of his time to the North-West portfolio, I do not see why he should not take his secretary and reside in Broome, at all events during the recess.

Mr. Durack: During recess it would be very hot up there for a Minister unaccustomed to the climate.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Surely he would manage to survive if he had the other half year down here where the cool breezes blow across the Swan River. It seems to me something of the sort will have to be done if anything is to be accomplished. For instance, we found a general feeling in Carnarvon that dairying could be successfully undertaken there. The dairy expert went up on the boat with us, and left it at Carnarvon. I have not yet learnt the nature of his report, but the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) informs me that it was very favourable. Personally I was impressed with the town and surroundings of Carnarvon. But the people themselves do not know what the locality will grow. Only by Government assistance can they obtain that information. Let us experiment in those places right up the coast. Also I believe the North-West has not had a fair trial in respect of cotton growing. From what one could gather at Broome and Derby, it seems the department acted in a rash and hasty manner. In consequence it was broadcasted that cotton growing in the North-West was a failure. I say that was done on insufficient information and without sufficient test.

Mr. Durack: There were many complaints that the Government were not moving fast enough in that direction.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Unfortunately at Derby, perhaps through the impatience of the people concerned, the department allowed themselves to be pushed into it before they

were ready. It was generally conceded by those with a knowledge of the position that the Derby experiment was not a fair one at all. The seeding was six weeks late, the scrub was just cut down, the ground scratched up, and the cotton planted. The area sown was in the midst of a thick network of roots. We walked over the area and found it like a spider's web with the interlaced roots. All the nutriment had been taken out of the ground by the vegetation growing on it for ages past, and so the cotton crop was not given a chance. It would have been only sensible to allow the area to lie fallow for a season. However, when the expert came along and condemned the crop, the whole thing was abandoned.

Mr. Davies: And still the cotton grew!

Hon. P. COLLIER: Still the cotton was growing. I am not at all convinced that cotton cannot be profitably grown in the North-West. The favourable report we had at Wyndham from two returned soldiers out 25 miles from that port impressed us very much. I understand that since we were there the results have been quite satisfactory. Yet those men accomplished all that without the advice of any expert.

Mr. Teesdale: Never saw the expert.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Notwithstanding which, their crops were successful. I am beginning to be very sceptical about experts. We have had many instances of hard-headed practical men whose judgments and opinions have proved more valuable than those of so-called experts with a merely theoretical knowledge of their subjects. I am at a loss to know what can be done for the North-West. From what I have read of it over many years, and from the speeches I have listened to in the House for the past 17 or 18 years, there are, to use a hackneyed phrase, immense possibilities in the North-West. Nearly all the minerals known to science occur in the North-West, in addition to its great pastoral resources, and the possibility of growing products such as were mentioned by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo).

Mr. Durack: Do you not think a railway in the North, right through to the territory would be more justified from the developmental point of view than the present Great Western railway?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do. I am convinced that the only sound policy for Australia is for the Commonwealth Government to bisect this continent with railways, and run railways right across the empty spaces, east and west and north and south if necessary. If this cost 10 million pounds or 20 million pounds the expenditure would be well justified. We shall not do very much towards settling the great inland spaces, situated hundreds of miles from our ports, except by railway communication. This has been done in other countries and will have to be done in Australia; but it is a Commonwealth responsibility and ought to be undertaken by them. It is all very well to talk about our sympathy, and about our being willing to do this or to do that. Let us as a State put up a proposition

to the Government for the construction of railways, and for the expenditure of money. This cannot be done without the expenditure of money, for it would cost a great deal to open up the North-West of this State as well as the Northern Territory. Let us put the case before the Commonwealth Government, test their sincerity, and see where they stand. We know that money can be found by the Commonwealth in large sums, such as in the expenditure of money on the conservation of water. Money has been spent by the Commonwealth on propositions not half so deserving as the opening up of the north of this State, and on propositions which do not, and never will, partake of a national character such as the building of railways into the greater areas of the North-West. Following on the sympathetic utterances of Ministers who were here recently, we ought to submit proposals to the Commonwealth Government. I have not much faith in those sympathetic utterances, when I remember how the Commonwealth Government treated us in other ways, such as in regard to the export of our gold when we asked for consideration in that respect. We might put up a definite proposition to them and see whether they are prepared to come to our assistance.

Mr. Angelo: Put the acid test upon them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes.

The Premier: We are preparing plans now to submit to them, in order that they may help us.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope the Premier will not be too modest in his claims.

The Premier: I have not much hope.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We should ask for substantial assistance. We are entitled to substantial financial assistance to enable us to carry out what is, after all, a national work, not a Western Australian work. It is an obligation cast upon the Commonwealth of Australia to do this. We are entitled to assistance at their hands.

Mr. Durack: The Commonwealth Government would be justified in giving us cheap money for the purpose.

Hon. P. COLLIER: All Australia has contributed enormous sums to keep alive and develop the sugar industry of Queensland. The taxpayers of the Commonwealth have done this. We have felt that this was necessary in the interests not alone of Queensland but of Australia, that it was a national undertaking. We have done this in order to keep our white population in the northern portion of Queensland, called the tropical areas. We were justified in doing this because it was a national work; similarly the taxpayers of Australia will be justified in assisting in the development of Western Australia.

The Premier: What about the Murray water scheme?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Something like three million pounds is being spent on the Murray irrigation scheme, and half of this was contributed by the Commonwealth Government. As taxpayers we are paying our portion of that half. A big irrigation scheme like that

is an Australian undertaking, although it more particularly benefits the people of Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia, who are in the immediate vicinity. One of the largest reservoirs in Australia must be nearing completion on the Upper Murray, above Albury. This will conserve water for the irrigation of those parts of Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia immediately affected. The Commonwealth has contributed about one-half of this money, and we are paying our share towards it. What have we had from the Commonwealth to assist in opening up our own resources?

The Minister for Agriculture: A new post office.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is merely a pile of bricks costing a lot of money. It will not add £1 in value to the State. It will not produce a ton of flour or a ton of potatoes, or increase our export trade or add any wealth to Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It opens up a new area.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It provides unlimited accommodation for their taxation officials and others. The Commonwealth Taxation Department gauge their requirements from the staff point of view solely by the space that is available for new hands. If an application for appointment to the Taxation Department is made, the chief goes through the offices, and if he can find a vacant corner in one of them, where another chair can be placed, he says to the applicant, "All right, you can start in the morning." If that policy is to be continued now that the Commonwealth have at their disposal the luxurious and spacious floors of the new post office, the department will soon be loaded up with an enormous staff. The building is not of much benefit to us. We could have carried on for a few more years even with the inconvenience of the old post office.

Mrs. Cowan: That is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: People in other parts of the State are prepared to submit to many inconveniences while they are pioneering and developing the country. We, too, could have managed to carry on. My experience is that those who are in the initial stages of developing an industry, whether it is a manufacturing or primary one, are prepared to put up with almost any inconvenience whilst doing so. They are not concerned about the building they occupy so long as they are putting their money into something that will produce wealth. I hope we shall be able to put forward some definite proposals to the Commonwealth Government, and induce them to undertake a responsibility which rightly and properly belongs to them, the responsibility of assisting in the development of those rich and natural resources contained in a territory that forms one-tenth of the whole of the Commonwealth.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [9.53]: The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) has performed a signal service to the North-West by his vigorous speech to-night. It would

be unbecoming on the part of any member of this Chamber, who has had an opportunity of visiting the North, to remain silent whilst this vote is under consideration. Western Australia generally has a complaint against the Eastern States in that we are far removed from the central Government. Another source of complaint is that Western Australia is but sparsely represented in the Federal Parliament. Although this State represents a third of the continent of Australia, in a house of 75 members there are only five from this State. In this Assembly of 50 members four only represent the North. That may be one reason why attention has not been given to the North in the past such as would possibly be given if each of those four members raised his voice on its behalf as the member for Roebourne did. The member for Roebourne was not quite correct in stating that I criticised adversely the State steamers trading on the North-West coast.

Mr. Teesdale: In regard to cattle.

Mr. DAVIES: I made no reference to the motor ship "Kangaroo," for I know nothing about it, and have never travelled on it. I stand by what I said concerning the "Bambra." The opinion I formed, after spending five weeks on that steamer is that it is the most unsuitable boat on the coast for the cattle trade.

The Premier: It is an excellent passenger boat.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes. On the trip in question the "Bambra" shipped 250 bullocks at Derby for the metropolitan market. I saw between six and eight bullocks thrown overboard every day. I was informed by cattle-men on board that by the time the boat reached Fremantle about 50 per cent. of the cattle would be lost.

Hon. P. Collier: We lost only four on the ship immediately after, on the "Kangaroo."

Mr. Teesdale: The loss could not have been prevented even if the cattle had been put into the saloon.

Mr. DAVIES: I do not say that the 50 per cent. loss occurred through mortality, but it occurred also through the wastage owing to the bullocks becoming mere skeletons while sweating through the tropics. Consumers in the metropolitan area will never have cheap meat from the North-West while bullocks are brought down under conditions such as these. The accommodation on the "Bambra" for passengers, as well as the manning of the ship, was all that could be desired, and she is regarded by the residents of the North-West as the best boat on the coast.

Mr. Duraek: You do not say she is up to date?

Mr. DAVIES: No. The "Bambra" is 20 or 30 years old, much too slow and very expensive to run. I understand she costs £12 10s. an hour to run. If she misses a tide, it means a delay of 12 hours until the next tide comes in. On one occasion on this particular voyage she missed a tide by two hours, notwithstanding that extra men were put into the stokeholds to increase the steaming

power. This meant 12 hours' delay. It also put her out of her schedule and caused great expense to the State. The member for Kimberley said that people in the North were temperamentally different from people in the South. I agree with him. As I was only a visitor to the North, I do not wish to be so presumptuous as to pretend I know all about it. But visitors have come from overseas to Australia, and after spending five or six weeks in this huge continent, they have returned to their homes and written their impressions of Australia and their conclusions regarding it. No one, whether he be Foster Fraser or anyone else, can, after two months sojourn in Australia, conclude that he knows all about it. In the course of my five weeks' trip in the North I travelled along the coast and came into contact with the people of the North in a way that could not be done if the trip had been made through the hinterland. If one wants information from the people of the North, the only way to get it is to take a trip along the coast. In that way one can see practically 3,500 out of the 5,000 white people who are engaged in the North. Temperamentally we are different from the people in the North. They have for us exactly the same contempt as we have for them and as we in Western Australia have for the people in the Eastern States.

The Premier: Dance with them and they are charming.

Hon. W. C. Augwin: You must have come across a different set of people. I thought they were a jolly lot of fellows.

Mr. DAVIES: I did not say they were not, but the people of the North do hold us in the South in the utmost contempt.

Hon. P. Collier: We heard that view expressed only towards the "Bambra" passengers, not towards the whole of the South-West. We were behind you coming back.

Mr. DAVIES: Possibly they had had some experience to go upon. It is first impressions that last, not later impressions. The North-West people have the idea that we care little or nothing about them.

Mr. Pickering: But that is not true.

Mr. DAVIES: It is true to this extent, that very few members take the opportunity of visiting the North.

Mr. Pickering: Very few members have the opportunity.

Mr. DAVIES: Opportunities are now available. I was told that the "Kangaroo" went through in midwinter with half a dozen members. The people asked those members, "Why didn't you come up in the heat of summer?"

Hon. P. Collier: But that was said in a very good-natured way.

Mr. DAVIES: I admit that. It may have been said after dinner. On my return from the North, in an interview published at the time, I urged that at least the women in the North should be given facilities to come South for a holiday every two years, and this not at a fare reduced by 20 per cent., but for victualling cost only. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the boats

on the coast must keep to time-table. It would be no expense to the State, but it would be profitable to the State, if that were done.

Hon. P. Collier: If you get the women-folk to stay in the North, you will get the men to stay there.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes, if only we can get the people up there. They will go to the North if they are permitted to come South occasionally for a spell. It is unfair to expect people to remain in the North for years on end. The people in the North are not all pastoralists. In the ports of the North one can see lumpers working on the wharves. Those men have only intermittent employment. A boat comes in once a month, and that is the only opportunity the lumpers have of working. The rest of their time they have to put in scratching away at odd jobs. In the stores of the northern towns one finds Asiatics serving out goods to our men and our women.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not so in all the stores. I did not see any Asiatics in the stores at Wyndham.

Mr. DAVIES: Then the hon. member did not go into too many stores at Wyndham.

Mr. Angelo: There are Asiatic-owned stores in Barrack-street.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so, and unfortunately they are well patronised by Europeans. In one town of the North I met a woman who had been there for 18 years.

Hon. P. Collier: She looked well, too.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes. She landed in that town from England. She has no complaint against the North, but to-day she is a widow with three children, and is unable to take a trip to the South simply because she cannot afford it.

Mr. Angelo: We have one dear old gentleman who has never yet seen a railway.

Hon. P. Collier: "Dad" Foss has not been out of Carnarvon for 42 years.

Mr. DAVIES: What ought to be done is to appoint a Royal Commission to get the view-points of the people in the North.

The Minister for Agriculture: Give us this day our daily commission.

Mr. DAVIES: What other means can the Minister for Agriculture suggest?

Mr. Angelo: The members for the North-West are here.

Mr. DAVIES: It is true we have the North-West members in this House. But has any member of this Chamber railed more bitterly against the Federal authorities than the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo)? And yet we have our members in the Federal Parliament. The member for Carnarvon obtained the appointment of a joint select committee for the purpose of securing fair treatment from the Commonwealth.

Mr. Angelo: This State wants better financial conditions from the Commonwealth. Besides, the North is part of this State. We in Western Australia are complaining about other States.

Mr. DAVIES: There is no difference between the States of the Commonwealth. Australia is one land and contains one people who speak one language. There is no more difference between Perth and Melbourne than there is between the North and the South of Western Australia. We charge Melbourne with being unsympathetic towards us. Wyndham is so far from us, and we are so far from Wyndham, that Wyndham charges us with want of sympathy. The position between Perth and the North-West is on all-fours with the position between Western Australia and the rest of the Commonwealth. I never went into a North-Western port without interviewing the residents. I saw the doctors. I visited the hospitals and schools. I went to the representative men of the town, and I went to the lumpers on the wharf, and discussed matters with all of them. My observation leads me to say that there is only one way of getting at the requirements of the people of the North.

Mr. Angelo: Why should not the North-Western members of Parliament do that?

Hon. P. Collier: If they were active members, it would be all right.

Mr. Angelo: Southern members run up to the goldfields for a week, but they do not go to the North.

Mr. DAVIES: I went to the North for six weeks, and I hope to repeat the performance next year. I hope other members will then visit the North also.

Mr. Angelo: How many of our Ministers have visited the North?

Mr. DAVIES: When a southern member rises in the House to speak for the North, north-western members should listen to what he has to say. The speech made to-night by the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) will do more for the North-West than any speech made here for five years. I hope the hon. member's utterance will be given full publicity in the Press, so that the attention of the general public may be drawn to the fact that this State has a North-West, and, what is more, an empty North-West which constitutes a serious menace to this continent. Reference has been made to cotton growing in the North. I take a special interest in the cotton growing at Derby, because of the fact that the three or four families who have been allowed to remain there are ex-residents of the Guildford electorate. They told me themselves that the experiment at Derby had had no chance whatever, in view of the circumstances.

The Minister for Agriculture: Nobody claims that it had.

Mr. DAVIES: That is an excellent admission. But why was the experimental plot abandoned? That is the strange thing. Why was it permitted to go forth throughout the length and breadth not only of Australia but also of Britain that this experiment had proved a failure? That report will be quoted against Western Australia in the Lancashire

and Yorkshire papers, and throughout the Press of the English Midlands.

The Minister for Agriculture: Nonsense!

Mr. DAVIES: For the sake of the reputation of our State I hope it is nonsense. But certainly the report will do enormous harm to Western Australia.

Mr. Pickering: Do you blame the Government in this respect?

Mr. DAVIES: Whom else am I to blame?

Mr. Pickering: Who gave publicity to the report?

Mr. DAVIES: The Government accepted the report of the expert, Colonel Evans, and acted upon it.

Mr. Duraek: Cotton growing is being carried on in the North.

Mr. DAVIES: But not in that place, though not far from it.

Mr. Teesdale: That fact, however, was not cabled Home. That is the unfortunate part of it.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes. Let me give North-Western members my assurance that on every occasion when they want support in this House for any legitimate improvement or benefit to the North, they will find me not unsympathetic. When I was visiting the North, doors were wider open to me, as a member of Parliament, than perhaps they would have been to a private passenger. From the time I started for the North until I returned to the South, the complaint was that the people of the South do not understand conditions in the North. The only way we can obtain an understanding of those conditions is to get the view-points of the people in the North. Then it will be for us to act upon those view-points.

Mr. MARSHALL: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. MARSHALL (Murchison) [10.15]: In view of the defeat of the motion, it would appear that this vote is to be rushed through. In supporting the views expressed by members representing the North-West, while one need not argue that from a national point of view, it is the Federal Government's duty to accept their portion of the responsibility for the development of the North, it must also be conceded that the State Government have not displayed any great energy in connection with experimental work to prove the value of the North-West. For a long time past, the Meekatharra Road Board has been doing its utmost to secure a subsidy from the Government towards the construction of a road to join up the railhead at Meekatharra with the North-West.

The Premier: A very good road too.

Mr. MARSHALL: Under existing conditions it can be a very bad road. This movement was started in Mr. Colebatch's time and still no finality has been reached. The proposed road runs through auriferous and pastoral country and, if constructed, will shorten the distance between the two points I have

mentioned by 40 miles. The opening up of this route would facilitate the overlanding of stock, besides providing the shortest route from the North-West to the railhead. To date no result has been secured. I consider from a national point of view that the railway line should be extended from Meekatharra right through the North-West. In other parts of the world, the authorities do not wait until a few settlers go out and prove the value of the hinterland, but they ascertain for themselves the value of the country and its possibilities regarding production. We cannot hope to develop such a large territory without incurring heavy financial responsibilities. Vast sums have been spent annually in developing the South-West.

Mr. Pickering: What about the running costs of such a railway?

Mr. MARSHALL: I would not advise the hon. member to raise that point, because we know where our losses, due to cheap railway freights, have been incurred in the South. We were told that the last war was waged to end war. While that was the slogan during hostilities, we now know that it was so much hot air, for all nations are to-day preparing for war. Because of this fact, the Federal Government should be prepared to construct the railway I suggest. If Western Australia is to suffer from invasion or aggression on the part of any hostile nation, it will not be in the South-West, but in the North.

Mr. Pickering: What gauge would you recommend?

Mr. MARSHALL: If I were to gauge it by the hon. member's ability, it would be very narrow indeed. From a defence point of view the Federal Government cannot evade their responsibilities to put that railway through.

Mr. Pickering: We want a uniform gauge throughout Australia.

Mr. MARSHALL: The North-West should be linked up with the general railway system of the Commonwealth. The Federal Government are loth to take up the matter. Perhaps that is due to the fact that the Federal Government is so far removed from Western Australia that Federal Ministers are out of sympathy with us, while States closer to the seat of the Federal Government secure more consideration. That is due to influences brought to bear by commercial interests outside the Federal Government. Very few members in this Chamber have any conception of the value of the North-West. The Government have not made any serious effort to ascertain the actual wealth of the North-West.

Mr. Pickering: Would you favour a Royal Commission?

The Premier: Let us discuss that at Meekatharra!

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not wish to have a confidential chat with the Premier, because he knows too much for me. We should have information to show the wealth to be obtained in the North-West.

The Premier: No one knows that.

Mr. MARSHALL: There are a few who have a good idea. Apart from the very poor attempt to grow cotton, the possibilities of the North-West have hardly been tapped, as the result of Government efforts.

The Premier: I can show you four tons of cotton.

Mr. MARSHALL: Members who do not know much about the North are prone to argue that there is a water shortage in those parts, and suggest that, apart from the fringe of country along the coastline, nothing much can be accomplished, because there is no water to be obtained inland. Have the Government made any inquiries regarding the possibility of water conservation in the North-West?

The Premier: Of course we have.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have not seen any indication of that effort on the part of the Government. There are immense possibilities ahead of water conservation and irrigation in those areas. Will the Premier shape some policy regarding experiments to be carried out so as to ascertain the value of the North-West?

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

The Premier: If you can irrigate, there is no necessity to conduct experiments, because you know what will happen.

Mr. MARSHALL: The work should be started in order to prove what can be done. If we can show results, we will not lack the necessary population and capital to develop the North. One of the difficulties will be to find a proper type of migrant to develop the North. At present there is a great tendency on the part of migrants to gravitate to the city. People of that type would not make suitable settlers in the North.

Mr. Mann: That is only a percentage of them.

Mr. MARSHALL: Those people would never do for the North-West. Present-day social tendencies have been in the direction of weaning the rising generation from any desire for the life of a pioneer.

Mr. Pickering: You have hit the truth there.

Mr. MARSHALL: I cannot help what society has done, but the Government should decide upon a policy that may overcome this difficulty and help us to get suitable people.

The Premier: We know where we can get suitable people.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then I hope the people will come here.

Mr. Mann: From the Mediterranean?

Mr. MARSHALL: We may get them from there. The provision of water is one of the problems of the North-West. By means of damming the rivers and by general conservation in the wet months, irrigation up there is by no means impossible. Then we have the artesian waters to draw upon. Right through Pilbara and Murchison the water supplies are all gained from holes or wells, notwithstanding which the pastoral wealth produced is enormous. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) was on sound ground when he declared that people quickly

tired of the solitude of life in the North-West!

The Premier: Nonsense! I have seen the third generation living up there.

Mr. MARSHALL: A great deal of that solitude is due to the fact that as the result of the vast pastoral leases the people have to live so far apart. It would have been sounder policy if originally those areas had been somewhat restricted. I do not say they should be brought down to starvation point, but certainly the existing leases are altogether too great. Even the leaseholders admit that they have more than a fair share of the earth. It is because of that the life there is so lonely.

Mr. Mann: Are they, as a general rule, improving their holdings?

Mr. MARSHALL: Oh yes, I think so. They have to go on improving, or get out.

Mr. Pickering: Hobson's choice.

Mr. Mann: The motor service has assisted to relieve the solitude.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, it has been of very great benefit.

The Premier: And the pastoralists are all married now.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is another point. There are wealthy squatters, but also some are very poor. At certain seasons of the year we provide cheap excursion fares for people along the railways down here. Similarly the Government ought to provide excursion fares on the coast for the people up North, even though some small loss were entailed. Women and children in the remote North-West have not the facilities enjoyed in other parts of the State. For instance, educational facilities are by no means readily available. The Government should show consideration for those people by affording them a chance to get down south once a year. It is very necessary for their health.

Mr. Durack: That is not much of a complement to the North-West.

Mr. MARSHALL: As the hon. member knows, the heat is intense and is greatly aggravated by pests. In the North-West the flies alone are just as bad as the heat. We have all heard the old gag about sin, sand, sorrow, and sore eyes.

Mr. Durack: That does not apply to the North-West.

Mr. MARSHALL: At all events, we have come to appreciate the value of the North-West, and we should encourage those up there by giving them facilities to come south.

Mr. Durack: We want facilities to enable them to get up there, not to come down here.

Mr. MARSHALL: If they could come down periodically they would serve to advertise the North-West. The theory that a white man cannot live in the North-West is mere tarradiddle. We have fine men and women up there.

The Premier: I saw the third generation living there; splendid young people, too.

Mr. MARSHALL: Well, what an advertisement for the North-West if they could be seen down here! Unfortunately we see but one section of the North-West community down here. Probably they advertise the North-West amongst their own circle, but they never come into contact with people suitable for the rough pioneering life up there. It is of no use sending up North men of the type mentioned by the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale), men who would want a saloon passage down south after making dismal failures doing nothing up North. I do not need to be convinced about the possibility of growing cotton and tobacco in the North-West, and I have very little doubt about the possibilities of tea and sugar, though I do not know whether the Government have ever made experiments in that direction. The member for Roebourne asked why it was, when we reached a certain stage in our experiments, that they crumbled up. We have no need to look far for an explanation. There are people reaping huge profits out of these things. They are both growing and selling tobacco. A great deal of influence, therefore, is brought to bear against the production of either cotton or tobacco in this State. We have had the experience of the woollen mills. A great deal of pressure was brought to bear to prevent that undertaking from going forward. Western Australia was willing enough, but the influence in the Eastern States was constantly used against the industry. We found the same thing when the Government started the State Implement Works. One importer who was giving evidence before the select committee said there was no hope for any individual or company who started implement works, and that the only hope lay in the State starting them.

Mr. Hughes called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have solved the trouble connected with the North-West. It is due to the lack of interest displayed by those representing the primary producers, and the handful of people in the North-West. The cross-benches have throughout this sitting been empty. No doubt the North-West seats next year will be contested by primary producer representatives. Water conservation and irrigation in the North are of great importance and should be taken up by the Government at once. By this means only can we hope to get closer settlement for tropical agriculture. We should endeavour to prevail upon the Federal Government from a national and defence point of view to build railways in the North-West and encourage people to go there, but the State must first play its part in conducting experiments and testing the possibilities of that part of the State. The State has not done its duty in this respect: it has failed dismally. The money spent in the South-West would have de-

veloped the whole of the North-West, and the South-West would in all probability have developed itself without that expenditure. The South-West has for many years had railways running through it for the benefit of those who might want to settle there. The climate is better than that of the North, and the people are nearer the seat of government and receive more attention. It would have been wiser and more economical if the Government had started out first to develop the North-West, and come south gradually. The member for Roebourne referred to a glaring instance of poaching along our coast. This points to the urgent need of the State Government taking upon themselves the responsibility of developing the North-West, or handing it over to a body such as that suggested by the member for Kimberley.

Mr. Mann: A road board?

Mr. MARSHALL: The road boards of which I have had experience have conducted their local affairs more economically and effectively than the Government have conducted State affairs. I heard the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) read the promises that had been made by the Premier. I do not want any promises; I want activity. Ever since I came to this country, 22 years ago, I have read in the Press and heard in public all sorts of promises. They have been altogether too numerous. We want the North-West developed, and developed immediately. It is the duty of the State Government to carry on the necessary experimental work, and to prevail upon the Federal Government to carry on the national part of the work. These things should be done without further delay and without more promises.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [10.52]: It is becoming a practice in this Chamber to reflect upon the attendance of members of the Country Party in their places. One member addressing the House this evening stated that he regretted his own party did not take as much interest in the vote under discussion as did members of the Opposition. I took the opportunity to count, and I found there were 10 of that member's party in their places, not including the Chairman of Committees. The greatest compliment that has ever been paid to the North-West has been paid to-day. I arrived in this Chamber at 23 minutes to five o'clock, in the hope of participating in the discussion on one of the most important votes Parliament has to consider—the Education Vote. I found that in seven minutes the House had got through prayers, notices of motion, questions, and the large votes for Education and Justice. Yet to-night we have given undivided attention to the question of the North-West, which involves the relatively paltry expenditure of £24,915.

Mr. Angelo: It should be £500,000.

Mr. PICKERING: My contention is that North-Western members should take heart of grace at this House giving such studied attention to a matter involving on the Estimates merely the paltry sum of £24,915. I venture

to say that the speeches made to-day by North-Western members will go far towards convincing the people of this State of the importance of that vast territory. Those speeches have shown us that there are very many avenues in the North-West which admit of being exploited with advantage to the whole community. Like the member for Guildford (Mr. Davies), I desire to assure North-Western members that, coming as I do from the remote South-West, any support I can give whilst representing that electorate will be most heartily given for the advancement of the North-West.

Item, *Roads and Bridges throughout the North-West, including subsidies to roads boards, etc.; North-West roads generally, £2,750:*

Mr. DURACK: I desire to call attention to the meagreness of this item for a territory of 650,000 square miles and with a coastline of 1,400 miles. The Federal Government have laid down in this connection the principle that area should be taken into consideration as well as population. I hope the Government, when considering this matter next year, will deal with it more on that principle. In that case the North-West would get a very nice sum for its roads. Roads are one of the principal factors in opening up the North. That fact was stressed by the action of the Federal Government in sending a special tractor and road-making machine to Port Darwin. The share of the North-West from the Federal grant towards road construction should work out at about £50,000. I hope the State Government will see that the North-West is fairly treated in that connection.

Item, *Derby jetty, £1,000:*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This item illustrates a procedure that is hardly fair to the North-West. On turning to the Colonial Secretary's Estimates, hon. members will see that there is a revenue of £29,000 from tramways and jetties of the North-West. The cost of keeping up the tramways and rolling stock is charged to the North-West vote, while the revenue received from that expenditure is credited to the Colonial Secretary's Department. Surely if the North-West is to be treated as a separate entity it is essential that the revenues earned by North-West public utilities should be kept separate.

The Premier: I agree with that.

Mr. ANGELO: In supporting the contention of the member for North-East Fremantle, let me remind the Committee that in reply to a question I recently asked, the Colonial Secretary stated that the Carnarvon tramways made a profit of £900 the year before last and a profit of £1,000 last year. I entirely agree that the expenditure should not be charged to this vote while the corresponding revenue is appropriated by the Colonial Secretary's Department. One of my reasons for asking a question on the subject was to show that the so-called facilities of the North-West are really profit-making concerns.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Aborigines (North-West), 67,548:*

Mr. PICKERING: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

[This concluded the Estimates for the Department of the North-West.]

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [11.1]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 30th October.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would like to call the Premier's attention to the fact that several annual reports have not yet been presented to the House. These include reports from the Auditor General and from the Commissioner of Taxation, and also the Public Accounts. I hope the Premier will endeavour to have them made available by the time we meet again.

The PREMIER: I do not know that I can promise they will be presented by then.

Hon. P. Collier: It is time we had them.

The PREMIER: I will certainly ask for the reports.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.3 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 30th October, 1923.

Deputy President—Appointment ...	1200
Condolence: The late Lady Wittenoom ...	1201

DEPUTY PRESIDENT, APPOINTMENT.

The Clerk announced that, in the absence of the President through family bereavement, it would be necessary to appoint a deputy president.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move—

That the Hon. J. W. Kirworn take the Chair as Deputy President during the absence of the President.

Question put and passed.