

glorious by the valour of her sons and we are determined that the sacrifice shall not be in vain, and we will do our utmost to compel all to shoulder their responsibilities. Self preservation and national duty alike call us and I hope few will be found wanting in this great crisis. I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the Address-in-reply:—"We beg to assure Your Excellency that we will give most careful consideration to measures that will best promote the welfare and prosperity of Western Australia."

On motion by Mr. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.40 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 20th September, 1916.

Papers presented	..	..	..	..	Page
Assent to Bills	..	..	..	..	83
Address-in-reply, third day, amendment	..	..	..	..	83

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Land Clearing Operations—Audit of accounts to 30th June, 1916. 2, Stock Suspense Account Regulations. 3, Abattoirs Act, 1909—(a) Amendment of Regulation 18; (b) Amended Regulations. 4, Plant Diseases Act, 1914—(a) Regulation *re* importation of potatoes from Victoria; (b) Regulations. 5, Land Act, 1898, and Amendments—By-laws (Section 43). 6, Zoological Gardens Act, 1898—Regulations. 7, Cemeteries Act, 1897, and Amendments—By-laws.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Messages from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills of last session:—

1. Supplementary Loan.
2. War Council.
3. Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment.
4. Health Act Amendment.
5. Roads Closure.
6. Land Act Amendment.
7. Permanent Reserve.
8. Supply (No. 1).
9. Licensing Act Amendment Continuance.
10. Supply (No. 2).
11. Licensing Act Amendment.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the previous day on motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply and on the following amendment moved by the Colonial Secretary:—"We beg to assure Your Excellency that we will give the most careful consideration to measures that will best promote the welfare and prosperity of Western Australia."

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central) [4.40] : Permit me in the first place to offer my congratulations to Mr. Colebatch on his elevation to the leadership of the House. I feel certain from my experience of the hon. gentleman that with his great ability and his masterly grasp of details, shown during the time he occupied the position in the House which I now enjoy, he will do very great credit indeed to the office. Henceforth I shall, to a large extent, be the critic instead of the criticised, but I trust that in all my comments I shall be fair and in no case indulge in purposeless or wanton criticism. I do not intend to traverse the whole of the speech made by the Colonial Secretary yesterday, but the hon. gentleman trenched on some controversial ground and made statements which I do not intend to allow to pass unchallenged. The Minister boasted that Mr. Hamersley's return for the East Province was a brilliant victory for the Liberal side. This is only a small matter, but if I

were in the hon. gentleman's position I would not exult over the discomfiture of my ally. Perhaps the Minister cannot be blamed for taking that view of the situation, but I would remind him that there is another aspect of the case, one which is taken by very many, namely, that Mr. Hamersley's victory and Mr. McCabe's defeat were due to the alliance between the Liberal party and the Country party, and that a large number of farmers were opposed to that alliance and threw over Mr. McCabe. Whichever is the correct view I do not pretend to decide. We were told that the Liberal Government made no promises to the farmers which were inconsistent with the Liberal policy; and in the very next breath we were informed that the Liberal Ministry have abolished terminal charges and also the extra charges imposed on railways under construction. In each of these instances it was a complete reversal of the Liberal policy. The Liberals were the authors of the terminal rates. The Liberals brought them into existence, and those rates had been in operation for some years until the Labour Government came into power and abolished them. The rates remained abolished for two years when, in consequence of the fact that it was impossible for the Labour Ministry to get their taxation measures through this Chamber, the rates were reinstated. The outrageous charges on railways under construction were the handiwork of the Liberal Government. At one time the charges were as high as 6d. per ton per mile, and they were imposed in the first instance for the special benefit of railway contractors. When we went into office the charges had been reduced to 4d. per ton per mile. We did not abolish these rates, but we substantially reduced them. We reduced them to the extent of ordinary railway rates plus 50 per cent. No doubt, this very desirable reform would not have been effected by the present Government had it not been made a condition of their so-called alliance with the Country party. They were practically forced into that reform. Reference has been made by the Colonial Secretary to the Royal Commission appointed in connection with the agricultural industry. The principal object of that

Royal Commission, as set forth in the public Press, is to inquire into the possibility of farmers' carrying stock, of their entering upon bacon curing and butter making and the manufacture of jam and preserves. It appears to me that all this information could have been supplied by the Department of Agriculture. The previous Government appointed three Commissioners, a Commissioner for the Wheat Belt, a Fruit Industries Commissioner, and a Commissioner for the South-West.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Not the previous Government.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I mean, the previous Liberal Government. Now the question arises whether these experts have failed, because the present Government have appointed a Royal Commission who are, in effect, to supersede these Commissioners. What do the Royal Commissioners propose to inquire into? Into facts which are known generally. There can be no two opinions as to the advisability of farmers' carrying stocks. There can be no two opinions as to the necessity for making provision for bacon curing and butter making, in view of the large imports of bacon and butter from the Eastern States. There appears to be ample justification for action to be taken, and taken without unnecessary delay. There is no need at all for a Royal Commission to discover these obvious facts, which have been disclosed as the result of the war. The necessity for action in the directions indicated was not so palpable prior to the war as it is now. The necessity has become urgently apparent in consequence of the difficulties in the shipment of wheat. Everyone now realises—even those who did not realise it before—that the time has come when the farmer should be encouraged to do something more than produce wheat, when he should be encouraged to go in also for the production of pork and poultry. There is no necessity to appoint a Royal Commission to discover what is already known. The steps which should be taken by the Government are in the direction of providing assistance to the farmers to purchase the necessary stock—

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why did not your Government do it?

Hon. J. M. DREW: and also the necessary poultry. Our Government took a very important step in that direction. For two or three years we were endeavouring to get a Bill through this House to provide for the irrigation of the south-western lands. That measure met with stern opposition, but eventually was passed; and its passage meant the beginning of the development of the dairying industry. However, as I said before, the urgency for action in these directions, which is suggested by the present Government, has become more evident during recent months. If we have to wait until the Royal Commission report—and the Royal Commission will sit for months and take evidence—a whole year will have elapsed before action is taken; and action ought to be taken immediately.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Irrigation has nothing to do with the supply of stock.

Hon. J. M. DREW: To my mind the *personnel* of the Commission is not satisfactory. With the exception of Mr. Giles they are practically unknown men outside the districts in which they reside. Mr. Paynton I do not know. Mr. Castieau I have never heard of. Mr. D. L. Clarkson I have heard of frequently, but I do not think he has ever been outside the Northam-Newcastle district. A full year's delay will occur in consequence of the appointment of the Royal Commission, and I think the appointment was indeed a great mistake. I observe that the old railway advisory board has been revived. It seems to me that a wiser step for the Government to take would be to reintroduce the Public Works Committee Bill, which was rejected by this House. Of course, the Government would have stultified themselves by so doing, but I think they would have been applauded by the general community. The principles underlying that measure have been endorsed by the Federal Liberal party. Those principles form part of their platform. Such a measure is now on the Commonwealth statute-book, and I believe it is working well. The Colonial Secretary has referred to the motor ship "Kangaroo," stating that she is making large profits, and that she will reduce her capitalisation to normal if the war lasts much longer. I am indeed glad that the Colonial Secretary has the manliness to admit that the previous

Government acted wisely in purchasing that ship. He does not say that in so many words, but he admits at any rate that the "Kangaroo" will be a profitable vessel. With regard to the "Western Australia," the British Admiralty, he states, are not paying charter rates during the time the vessel is in dock. Under the agreement the British Admiralty were called upon to pay from the time they took delivery of the vessel. So far as I know, there was no dispute in that respect up to the time I left office. There was, however, some dispute as to who should pay the full costs of the improvements required. It appears that the British Admiralty, on thorough investigation of the "Western Australia" made after taking her over, discovered that to make her fit for the special service in which she was to be engaged, namely, as a hospital ship, would involve an expenditure of something like £15,000. They required a high rate of speed, about 26 knots; and in consequence extensive improvements had to be effected. The late Government were approached with a view to bearing a share of the cost of these alterations, and it was agreed to refer the matter to arbitration. But I think the British Admiralty are liable from the very time they took delivery of the ship, for the payment of the charter rate. The whole of the legal business in connection with the charter was fixed up by Mr. M. L. Moss, who is known to members of this House, and who protected the interests of the Government in every respect. It appears to me that the Colonial Secretary's remarks about the "Western Australia" and also about the "Kwinana" were highly injudicious. The impression will get abroad that the Government are prepared to sell these vessels at any price. Undoubtedly the "Western Australia" was an unsuitable ship for the North-West trade. That has been abundantly proved. But she has shown herself good enough for the British Admiralty, and I believe she is now giving every satisfaction. At any rate, it seems to me most unwise to do anything to discredit Government property. The "Kwinana" is, as the Colonial Secretary has said, an old ship; but the Government will have no difficulty whatever in finding a ready sale for her. It is doubtful, however, whether, if the Colonial Sec-

retary's expressions used in this House were to gain general currency, the Government would get as satisfactory a figure for the "Kwinana" as would be obtainable under other circumstances. I am not surprised, however, at the Colonial Secretary's remarks after reading a public statement made by the Premier himself. The hon. gentleman quoted from the manager of the State Steamship Service, but quoted only partially, and did not refer to the subject with which the manager was dealing. The manager stated that the "Western Australia" and the "Kwinana" were out-of-date ships. Mr. Stevens, however, was putting up a case in favour of purchasing two motor ships for the North-West trade, if I remember the circumstances correctly, and in order to make his case he pointed out—what is the fact—that steamers are not suitable for the North-West trade. Steamers involve large expenditure for coal, whereas the cost of running motor ships is comparatively small. To me it seems most unfair on the part of the Premier to quote only one portion of the report, or rather only one part of a sentence, omitting the remainder, in a matter of this kind. I am pleased, however, to learn that the Government intend to afford the people of the North-West the best shipping service possible. This was not stated by the Colonial Secretary, but by his chief. His chief has said so from a very public position. I hope that this announcement is the prelude to asking Parliament for authority to purchase two motor ships for the North-West trade.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: I hope the Government will ask Parliament, any way.

Hon. J. M. DREW: If the Government are desirous of establishing a first class service for the North-West, they must certainly take action in that direction, and I can assure the Colonial Secretary that in such action he will have my strongest support. But could there be any stronger justification of the action of the previous Government than this declaration of the present Ministry that they intend to provide an efficient and up-to-date shipping service for the North-West? For what reason did we establish the service? The remarks I refer to were made by the Premier publicly, and very recently, too.

Member: When?

Hon. J. M. DREW: Within the last 24 hours. The hon. gentleman said that the Government intended to afford the people of the North-West the best shipping service possible. These remarks are reported in the *West Australian* of this morning, and I extracted them from the paper this afternoon. I am pleased to learn that the Government intend to persevere in the policy which was initiated by the previous Government. For what purpose did the previous Government embark on the shipping enterprise? To serve the interests of the North-West, in order to provide facilities for the producers of the North-West, and also to serve the interests of the people in the south. I hope the present Government will not forget the people in the southern parts of the State, but that the "Eucla," or some other ship, will be kept in operation on the south coast. As I said before, this declaration of the Government, this decision of the Government to go on and provide an even better shipping service, is a first-class testimony to the wisdom of the late Government. I was surprised to read a statement of the Premier that the loss on the shipping service for the last financial year amounted to £16,850. I cannot credit it. I would like to have some clear explanation on the point. I trust that a mistake has been made.

The Colonial Secretary: That is for the coastal service, outside the "Kangaroo."

Hon. J. M. DREW: Even then it is most difficult to realise that that can be the case. The amount of revenue received in respect of every ship during last year has been far greater than that received during any previous year, and the expenses have not been as great in comparison. I had a balance struck after the 31st May last; everything was included—interest, sinking fund, depreciation, and I was informed by the accountant that there was a profit of £13,000 not counting £12,000 which was due in connection with the chartering of the "Western Australia." These figures were supplied me by the accountant of the State Shipping Department. Now, I would like to see as soon as possible an audited balance sheet and, in addition to the balance sheet, the Auditor General's report in connection

with the last year's transactions. The statement of the Colonial Secretary in reference to the fish supplies I really cannot understand. It would appear that there was a very heavy loss up to the first of last March, and then the enterprise was placed on a new basis; the men were given a bonus to increase the output and to work longer hours, but it was difficult to see why it cost just as much to take in ten tons of fish as to bring in four. At that time the weekly output was something like four tons a week, which gradually increased, and when I left office it was something like ten tons. Since then it has increased, so I see by the papers, to 14 tons a week. In consequence of that the enterprise should be paying handsomely. I may say that this enterprise was a pure experiment and it was not brought under the Trading Concerns Act until we were satisfied that it would prove a success, and I am very much surprised that it is not a success now, but I have something more than mere assertion to back me up. I have a statement here from the accountant of the Colonial Secretary's department in reference to the progress of the enterprise since the 1st March, and it appears very satisfactory indeed.

The Colonial Secretary: That has since been corrected.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I received this in May—it deals with financial operations of the State fish supply for the month of April and it reads as follows:—cash receipts £1,014 4s. 4d., sundry creditors £121 15s. 4d., value of fish on hand and *en route* to Fremantle £746 2s.; total £1,882 1s. 8d. Less value of fish on hand on 31st March £376; Total £1,506 1s. 8d. Expenditure £1,049 2s. 6d., surplus for the month £456 19s. 2d. These figures do not include any provision for depreciation and interest. The accountant goes on to say—

The value of the cargo of the fish which did not arrive in Fremantle until the 1st inst. is included in the amount shown above as "fish on hand and *en route* to Fremantle." Adding the surplus, £456 19s. 2d. for the month of April to that for March, £339 18s. 5d., shows that the excess of revenue over expenditure for the two months since the inauguration of the

bonus system was £796 17s. 7d. On the Thursday prior to the Good Friday, the cash takings at the Fish Store amounted to £138 3s. 6d., and the number of customers served were 1,722.

The Colonial Secretary: I asked for an explanation of the inconsistencies of that statement, and one subsequently provided, and I was informed that it was incorrect, as the hon. member can see.

Hon. J. M. DREW: The information supplied to the Colonial Secretary may have been incorrect. I asked them to carefully prepare the information for me. I did not want to get incorrect information. I was very anxious about this and wanted to arrive at the truth. These were the figures supplied to me, and I took the precaution to keep a copy. Now, then, I wanted to know how these figures were arrived at, and this statement was supplied to me:—Fish supply—month of May—cash receipts £1,486 19s. 9d., sundry debtors £134 0s. 10d., value of fish on hand £669 3s. 9d.; total £2,290 4s. 4d. Less value of fish on hand 31-4-16 £746 2s.; total £1,544 2s. 4d. Expenditure £1,391 0s. 11d. Surplus for month £153 1s. 5d. Surplus of receipts over expenditure since 1st March £949 19s. There was no provision for interest and depreciation. Now, this is what I received the morning I left office. There is a bit of a falling off here; but still satisfactory. This statement is dated 26th July, 1916.

The loss of the fish supply from inception in November, 1914, to 8th February, 1916 (this being prior to the bonus system), and exclusive of interest and depreciation, etc., amounted to £4,918. Since the operation of the bonus system, that is, from March to 30th June, 1916, a profit of £598 is shown. This also is exclusive of interest, depreciation, etc. These figures are only approximate, as it is impossible, owing to the tardiness of the State Steamship Service in rendering claims paid by them as our agents, to ascertain our definite commitments. No allowance has been made in the above for the repairs and slipping of the "Torrens," which, I understand, are extensive.

Included in it were the repairs to the "Una," redocking same for twelve months, the vessels being taken down once a year. Anyhow,

the big expense mentioned here has not materialised since.

The loss for the month of June is shown in the heavy claims received for repairs and purchase of fish. There were only two shipments received during June, totalling weight 12 tons 8cwt. against an average of 20 tons 6cwt.

These ships had come down to be docked and consequently could not fish, and as a result the revenue fell off and instead of the profit being £949 less interest, sinking fund and depreciation, it had dropped to £598. Well, of course some items had to be debited. The accountant said here—

Of this weight no less than 10½ tons were purchased.

So that I think this is a matter for investigation.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: You make just as much profit out of the purchased fish.

Hon. J. M. DREW: There is no profit in the purchased fish. Unless we were in competition it would not be possible to purchase so cheaply. I think the accountant should be called upon for some explanation.

The Colonial Secretary: The explanation is on the file.

Hon. J. M. DREW: Either I have been given a false statement or the Colonial Secretary has been misinformed. The position is this: apart from all statements from 6th March last the output has increased from May to December from 188lbs. of fish to 2,127lbs. Since then, during the time the present Colonial Secretary has been in office, it has been increased to 650lbs. a week, so how possibly can there be any loss? I notice that the Government propose to fund the deficit and pay £100,000 off. It is hoped that they will not start to build up a new one. It appears to me they have made a very good beginning in that direction. They had a clear month's run in August and went to the bad £37,000, and they would have gone back considerably more but for certain circumstances which I have explained. An item appears in the published statement under Revenue, "Shipment of cattle, £48,822." That is all right—payments, I suppose, extending over two months; but there is nothing debited in the expenditure column. There should be a corresponding

expenditure or something nearly approaching it.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It might be profit.

Hon. J. M. DREW: As a matter of fact it is not possible to run the "Moirá" without some cost, and that cost was not shown in the financial returns. There is £48,822 shown as revenue and no expenditure whatever. Although recently we have heard a lot of criticism regarding financial returns, I would very much like to know what is the explanation of this very strange occurrence. Besides that, there were the receipts in connection with the stores of the "Kangaroo," and the carriage of kerosene from New York to Queensland. The revenue for the corresponding months of the previous year were something like £9,000; for last month it was £43,000, so that there must have been an amount representing something like £34,000 revenue from the "Kangaroo"—the despised "Kangaroo." Now, only for the "Kangaroo" leaving, and only for the item of £48,822, against which there is no corresponding debit on the expenditure side, the Government would have had a big deficit for last month. Now they propose to introduce taxation with a view to reduction of the deficit. Well, that is what we tried to do and failed. Almost every taxation measure introduced into this House was thrown out with the exception, after a long struggle, of the Bill imposing income tax on companies which were previously exempt. As a matter of fact, it was an amendment of the Dividends Duty Act. After a long struggle we succeeded in getting that Bill through the House, but when we introduced the War Amendment Bill, the arguments raised were that we would be unable to obtain the money, but the present Government now come forward and say they propose to introduce a taxation measure, the object of which is to reduce this deficit, and I hope it will do so; but when the tax was introduced it met with very scant courtesy indeed from hon. members, although some were prepared to support that portion of the Bill. I notice that it is the intention of the Government to permit the holders of Workers' Homes to convert from leasehold into freehold. Well, we will not be very long if that is done before some of these homes get into the hands of capitalists. We are all liable to mis-

fortune and many of us come to financial embarrassment: we often find ourselves in such a position that we cannot meet our bills. Some of the unfortunate workers may be in this position, with the inevitable result that their homes will be sold over their heads. That could not possibly occur. It would not be possible for anyone to sell up a workers' leasehold home, but make the land freehold, even if there is a big mortgage, as soon as a financial crisis occurs in connection with the occupant he has lost his home.

The Colonial Secretary: It is quite optional.

Hon. J. M. DREW: Yes; we know that many may avail themselves of it but the opportunity should not be given. The Colonial Secretary has, in support of his attitude, referred to the fact that leaseholders are in arrears to a greater extent than freeholders. It is only a natural course of events. The freeholder under the Workers' Homes Act is generally a man who occupies a position in the civil service where he gets a regular salary. He can meet his payments, but the unfortunate worker who has a workers' home under the leasehold system and who is not in certain employment often falls into arrears. That, however, is no argument against the system. The Bill will come forward in due course, and I shall be able to deal with it at greater length when it is submitted to the House for consideration. The Minister gave a very feeble explanation, in my opinion, for the stoppage of the work of the construction of the Esperance-Northward railway. Mr. Mann's report, he said, had never been published. It is a very strange thing, if it has never been published, that it is so widely known, and if it is not widely known, it should be so. All the papers, so far as I know, in connection with the Esperance Railway were laid on the table of the House. I had no knowledge as to whether they were laid on the Table of the House last session, but they were laid on the Table as a result of a motion moved by the Hon. Mr. Kirwan on the 28th November, 1912, and Mr. Kirwan during the course of his speech read copious extracts from Mr.

O'Brien's reports which dealt exhaustively with Mr. Mann's analysis of the Esperance soil. Mr. O'Brien tore it to pieces, in fact. He set forth each particular set of analyses, and dealt with them from his point of view. That certainly was in the file, because I myself saw Mr. Kirwan reading it, but, apart from that, printed extracts from the papers were circulated amongst members of Parliament generally and amongst the newspapers of the State. In fact, Parliament House was littered with pamphlets which were prepared on the goldfields in connection with the matter and circulated broadcast. Every member of the House must have received a copy and at any rate they may be able to recognise it when they see it. Here is a copy of the document in question.

The Colonial Secretary: Mr. Mann's report is not in that.

Hon. J. M. DREW: It deals with the Esperance-Norseman lands, and has these headings—"Reports of Departmental Officers—A Lengthy and exhaustive investigation—More than a million acres classified—Equal to same area anywhere in the State—Question of water supply dealt with." Then we come to Mr. O'Brien's report which explains the whole matter. It is dated August 30th, 1912, under the heading—"Soils—Analysis of." He says—

About 200 samples of soil taken from the surface from 6 inches to 18 inches and from 18 inches to 30 inches were examined for salt by the Government analyst (Mr. Mann). The tables of the analysis cover five sheets of figures, which, if attached to this report, would serve only to confuse readers and probably leave a wrong impression. I will, therefore, endeavour to summarise the results of analysis and make clear the position. A complete analysis of samples 1 to 30 was made, and results, briefly put, are:—Not rich in humus, well supplied with lime, well supplied with potash, weak in nitrogen and phosphoric acid—as are most of the Western Australian soils. Proper farming and manures will make good the above. In these samples salt was found, so it was de-

cided to test all other samples (170) for salt only. Here are a few remarks about salts in soils will help readers to understand what is to follow concerning the particular soils in question.

Then follows a disquisition on the subject of salt in soils, which I need not repeat. After devoting a column and a quarter to the subject Mr. O'Brien continues—

Now, returning to the study of samples of soil examined by Mr. Mann. In his report Mr. Mann writes:—"I have throughout adopted the standard of .05 per cent. of salt as being, in my opinion, a reasonable one, although there is a considerable amount of variation amongst authorities on this subject; the limit of endurance for crops being stated at from .03 per cent. to .5 per cent." It must be noted that Mr. Mann is not dogmatic *re* the standard he has adopted, and he admits freely that authorities differ. Now, our soil samples are well within the variation .03 per cent. to .5 per cent., but a great many of them are not down to the standard adopted by Mr. Mann (.05 per cent.). After searching for local knowledge I find very little is available on this subject.

Then he refers to artesian water and goes on—

Professor Hilyard, of California, is a recognised authority on the subject. . . . Bailey's Cyclopædia of American Agriculture. . . . T. H. Kearney, physiologist, and Frank Cameron, soil chemist, in Bulletin No. 71, Department of Agriculture, U.S., p. 20, gives:—

Limit of endurance for wheat, 1.8 per cent.; do. peas, 1.2 per cent.; do. white lupins, 1.2 per cent.; do. maize, 1.4 per cent. It will be noted there is a wide difference between the standard adopted by the Government Analyst and other authorities quoted. The average per cent. sod. chloride, take 1 (cultivated land).—Top 6 in., .086 per cent.; 6 in. to 18 in., .230 per cent.; 18 in. to 36 in., .270 per cent., with a wide range between individual samples. These samples were collected in July, when a considerable proportion of the season's rain had fallen. It is apparent that some of the salt in the surface

must have been washed by rain into the subsoils before these samples were taken. Average per cent. sod. chloride in 43 samples taken in July, Esperance district.—Uncultivated land: Top 6 in., .1366; 6 in. to 18 in., .334; 18 in. to 36 in., .337. Cultivated land: Top 6 in., .082; 6 in. to 18 in., .168; 18 in. to 36 in., .305. General average of sod. chloride in uncultivated land is:—Samples 1 to 154, taken January-May: Top 9 in., .104 per cent.; 9 in. to 18 in., .262 per cent. Samples 160 to 198, taken in July: Top 6 in., .136 per cent.; 6 in. to 18 in., .334 per cent.; 18 in. to 36 in., .337 per cent. From a comparatively small portion of area represented by 1 to 154. The relative ratios corresponding with the above percentage are:—Samples 1-154, 2.51; samples 160-198, 2.46.

There was no attempt made at secrecy in connection with Mr. Mann's report. In fact, the matter was generally discussed amongst members of Parliament. I feel certain that this was so. The matter had been so much discussed that I deemed it necessary to deal with it in introducing the Bill in 1912. I could not read the whole of the report. If I had done so I do not suppose members would have listened to me. I dealt briefly with the matter. It was a matter, as I said before, of general discussion at the time. I could only give it a certain portion of my speech and a very small part at that. I did not deal with the subject at any great length. I said—

The soil is admittedly deficient in nitrogen and phosphorus, rendering fallowing necessary, and also the use of superphosphates, but that applies with equal force in nearly every part of our agricultural areas. Samples of soils were taken and examined, the examination of some being conducted by Mr. Mann, the Government Analyst.

There is no attempt to hide anything. There had been analysis and I show that it was conducted by Mr. Mann.

Mr. Mann reported that he found in some of the samples a high percentage of salt—That is straightforward. and the analysis of further samples disclosed generally the presence of salt.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: There is plenty of salt.

I am quoting from *Hansard*, 1912, pages 4093 and 4094. The extract continues—

The Colonial Secretary: The limit of tolerance of wheat for salt is placed by Mr. Mann at .05 per cent.; by Hilyard, the greatest living authority on soils, the limit is placed at .25 per cent.; and by Kearney, renowned in Egyptian and American agriculture, the limit is placed at from .25 per cent. to .4 per cent. Disregarding, however, the divergencies of scientists on this point, we have the proved fact that wheat has already been successfully grown on ten farms in the Esperance mallee country.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: What will you do with it when you grow it?

The Colonial Secretary: This demonstrates that whatever be the true limit of tolerance, there is not too great salinity of soil for successful wheat growing. It may be pointed out here that soil samples from other localities—the well-known wheat area of Coorow and Baandee—have shown salt in every sample tested.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: There is not much wheat grown at Coorow.

The Colonial Secretary: I think so. The existence of salt lakes which occur more or less thickly throughout the area, has been referred to as condemning the country from an agricultural standpoint. But it is known that the soil is of rather better quality in salt lake country. I know myself at Carnamah, where there are many lakes, we have some of the very best soil in Western Australia.

That was a pretty lengthy statement to make on the subject of the salt aspect of the question, and there was no attempt at all on my part to keep information from members of the House. In addition to that, the particular soil which was analysed by Mr. Mann had been made up into small parcels which were on view in Parliament House throughout the length of one session. Not only were the parcels on view but Mr. Mann's analysis was attached to each packet. It will be seen, therefore, that no attempt whatever was made on the part of

the Government to practise deception. That is a very serious charge to make.

The Colonial Secretary: The report was kept back.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I could not say whether it was put in or not.

The Colonial Secretary: Mr. Mann's actual report was not published.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I did not examine the papers which were laid on the Table of the House.

Hon. J. Cornell: You took him on the question of soil but not on that of whisky.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I have here proof that the criticism of Mr. O'Brien of Mr. Mann's report was laid on the Table of the House. Even suppose Mr. Mann's report was not laid on the Table of the House, if members had wanted information they should have asked for the production of the report. If there was any member of the House who took any interest in the matter, or who had any doubt at all as to the correctness of Mr. O'Brien's quotations, he should have asked me to furnish the report and I would gladly have done so. There was no reason to hold it back, as all the extracts from the report concerning the analysis appeared in Mr. O'Brien's report.

The Colonial Secretary: Mann's opinion is not quoted once.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why did you not ask for them?

Hon. J. M. DREW: I referred to it in the course of my speech, and said that Mr. Mann was not an expert in regard to wheat; that he was an analyst and nothing more; that he possessed no authority in regard to wheat. Probably he does not know wheat from barley. He might be a good analyst, and on the other hand he might be an expert farmer for all I know. Then again there is another grievance that when the Bill was introduced I stated that the estimated yield was six bushels to the acre. I did say so, and it was quite correct, but the Colonial Secretary declared that I did not supply the date of the actual return. I could not supply what I did not have. When I moved the second reading of the Bill last year, it was on the 12th January, and so far as I knew there were no returns in then. As a rule, returns do not come in until

March as regards this particular district. It is an extensive district and is not confined to within 20 miles of Esperance; it extends to within 60 miles south of Coolgardie. In reference to other districts of this State, my experience is that their returns never come in before March and some of them do not come in until May, and then six men are brought in from outside to work out the averages. That is how I know that it is about March that the returns come in, and under the circumstances how could I furnish the House with the information on the 12th or on the 20th January when the Bill became law? It was an impossibility. The personnel of the Commission appointed to inquire into the Esperance lands is open to very strong objection and the worst member of it appears to be the Chairman, who is a local resident. This gentleman, Mr. Dempster, is a pastoralist, and that is quite enough for me. Pastoralists everywhere are the arch enemies of close selection because where there is close selection they must disappear. From what I can gather, Mr. Dempster is the holder of a large extent of pastoral land in the Esperance district. If there is successful settlement there, it means that Mr. Dempster's runs will be taken up. That fact may not interfere with his judgment, but it would be much more preferable if someone not so deeply interested from a personal standpoint were appointed to the Commission in his stead. That is, of course, if the Commission were necessary. So far, we have had no evidence at all in justification of the appointment of the Commission. Then again, we find that a clerk from the Taxation office has also been appointed on this Commission. I can just imagine how Mr. Cullen would have stormed and exercised his severest eloquence against the Labour Administration if they had been guilty of appointing a clerk from the Taxation office on such an important Commission. What becomes of the farmers suggested by the hon. gentleman last year to constitute a Commission to deal with matters similar to this? In my opinion, the decision of a commission constituted such as this one is will carry no weight whatever with the general public.

Hon. J. Ewing: What about Mr. Padbury?

Hon. J. M. DREW: I believe Mr. Padbury is a pastoralist; he owns a large extent of territory and it seems to me that his interests are not at all in common with the interests of the farmer. I am glad indeed that his name was mentioned; he is a conscientious man and he might try to do justice to the farmers, but I doubt whether he is a competent authority to settle this question. We are told by the Colonial Secretary that the appointment of this commission will cause no delay in the construction of the line, inasmuch as they did not have the material to enable them to go on with the work, that they were short of rails and other necessities. That is the conclusion I drew from the remarks of the Colonial Secretary. It is a very strange thing that the people residing in the particular district do not agree with the view taken by the Government in that respect. A few weeks ago, to be precise, on the 26th August last, I received a telegram from the Chairman of the Roads Board which read—

Petition wired Premier to revoke order discontinuance railway works chiefly because sufficient material on hand to construct line to Gibson's Soak. All preliminary work done, small outlay wages only. Work estimated take less than two months. This would make 16 miles available settlers.

All that the people of Esperance asked, and they communicated with the Premier in regard to the matter was that the line should be constructed as far as Gibson's Soak, which is 16 miles out from Esperance, and they declared that there was sufficient material on the ground to enable this stretch of country to be traversed by the railway, and it would have taken only two months to complete the work. I do not know whether that is a fact or not. The only reply that the people of Esperance received from the Premier was the appointment of the commission. The late Government was grossly misrepresented in connection with the Esperance railway question in the *West Australian* a couple of days ago. It was stated there that the Labour Ministry induced settlement on the Esperance lands. I do not know whether there is a single member in this House who believes such an assertion. I do not know who the leader writer of the *West*

Australian is; perhaps he is a recent importation, but if he had consulted even one of the apprentices in the printing department of the newspaper he would have learned that the Labour Government were not responsible for the settlement of these lands. The writer needed only to refer to his own paper of a few weeks ago and he would have found out that was so. On the 7th inst. the chairman of the Esperance Road Board wrote a letter to the *West Australian* in which he stated—

The Liberal Government opened up the mallee. At the time of Mr. Mitchell's tour as Minister for Lands in May, 1910, over 30,000 acres had been selected and he, to his credit, had the dams constructed.

It is quite needless for me to read further extracts from this letter; everyone knows there is no truth in the assertion of the newspaper. More than that, the late Government closed the land against selection. They disposed of only grazing land because they realised it would be unfair to encourage people to settle on this land until they were provided with railway facilities. The Liberals have all along been opposed to the Esperance railway, and every member of the present Government is hostile to its construction, and this hostility has been shown all along the line. When they got into office, by a side wind they took action in the direction of preventing the work from being carried on. It seems to me they are flouting the will of Parliament. I have never read or heard of a similar instance in the history of British administration. It is quite unfair and unjustifiable and the pretext is most flimsy. I do hope that the result of the commission's operations will soon be known and that the matter will be finally settled; at the same time, I have no faith in commissions such as have been appointed by the present Government.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East) [5.40]: The position of the debate is not one to challenge the eloquence of the House nor to call for lengthy speeches. I had hoped that the Government would have asked the House to clear the ground of the old questions in the Address-in-reply and that then both Houses would have had the opportunity of dealing with the legislation to be submitted. However, that was a question for Ministers

and they decided to proceed on the lines that are now before us. I think that the country's interests can best be served by brevity, so that we may get at the real work of the shortened session. There are only two points that I think need notice in Mr. Drew's speech. The first is his challenge to the Colonial Secretary over the wretched fish stall business. Will it not strike every hon. member and every citizen that it is a sad come down for a parliamentary institution to be discussing the future of fish stalls? On the subject of the trading concerns, I might say to the Colonial Secretary that the consensus of opinion in this country seems to be that when the position and the prospects of those concerns have been fully inquired into, most of them should be wound up as speedily as possible without the slightest compunction. Wind them up and get rid of them and if there be one or two that may seem worth preserving, get them into non-political control as speedily as possible. Let there be no continuance of competition with the legitimate enterprise of the people of the State. I trust that this will be done at the earliest moment possible. There is another point in Mr. Drew's speech to which I should like to refer, the action of the Government in stopping the construction of the Esperance railway and appointing a Commission. To me it seems a pity that Ministers should have found it necessary to reopen this vexed controversy. If Ministers had looked closely into the question they would have realised when appointing the Commission that it was necessary to have not only men of probity but men with a knowledge of soils and men whose findings would be calculated to be received with confidence by the people of the State. It seems to me that a blunder has been committed by the Minister who made the recommendation of the *personnel* of the Commission. I should be sorry if as a result of the investigation into this question anything is done which will interfere with the construction of the line. I am glad to notice that the Government propose dealing with one of the greatest of our social questions, the evil of gambling. The late Government had available the report of a Commission, and pressure was brought to bear upon Ministers, but nothing was done, although the report contained some ex-

cellent and practical recommendations. I am glad the present Government has taken up that question, and I hope that the result will be satisfactory. Gamblers are absolute parasites upon society, whether they are street bettors or bookmakers, or stock exchange gamblers, the last-named being the greatest parasites of all.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Every purchase of a share should be an investment.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I hope the Government will face this matter and say, "We want a law that can be carried out, a law that we shall insist upon having carried out," and I hope that the Government will not tolerate any introduction of graft under which wrongdoers are protected in proportion to the money they pay. I hope the matter will be grappled with; and if the Government are urged to be very careful lest they should injure racing, I hope they will not be unduly hindered in that way. I think honest racing would really be a healthful sport; but racing, as it is now, is a pure instrument of gambling that has not an atom of influence on the breeding of utility horses. I hope that Ministers will not be unduly hindered by this baseless claim in the interests of horse breeding and the encouragement of racing clubs. Racing as a sport I am ready to help—I happen to be a member of a number of clubs—but racing as an instrument of gambling simply helps to cultivate this parasitical burden on the community. I am very glad that the Government promptly handed the control of the Industries Assistance Board to the Agricultural Bank. I have urged that year after year. Think of the utter absurdity of taking the clients of the Agricultural Bank and putting them under the control of an entirely different board, a board that would be completely in the dark as to their financial standing, as to their previous obligations, and could not possibly get the information without going to the Agricultural Bank for it! Never could such a blunder have occurred among men who gave any thought to the matter at all. Of course, it is recognised that the Industries Assistance Board was started hastily. Ministers wanted to do a kind action for the farmers in distress, and so a start was made on a false basis. The past Government took no steps to correct it. I am glad that the present Gov-

ernment have made the Agricultural Bank the controlling authority for all assistance to farmers. That is the right course to take. I have said that there is a great deal in the proposals of the Government which will meet with general support, and be very helpful to the agricultural community. Now let me say this: I am supposed by the ex-Colonial Secretary to have been a little severe, once in a way, in criticising the Labour Government and their proposals, which were specially provided for their own supporters. I was just as ready to criticise the previous Liberal Government, and will exercise the same right with the present Government. But I want to say straight away that the statement delivered by the Colonial Secretary yesterday is one which I think will command very hopeful expectations from the whole of the people of the State. It shows that Ministers have grasped the situation, that they are concerned for the primary industries of the State in the first place—not to coddle them, but to create a clear field for the enterprise of the people. All that I think they will require to add is a determination to cheapen, as far as possible, the transit of our products to market. It is quite true that we have a Railway Commissioner under statutory powers, but it rests with the Government to decide the policy under which the Railway Commissioner shall act, and I want them to consider how far can an enlightened Administration annihilate the penalty of distance. If the whole of the lands of the State are to be brought into profitable occupation, how far can the Administration ignore distance and make that occupation profitable for farmers 300 or 400 miles away from the port? Certainly a great deal will have to be done in the reduction of freights over long distances before this policy can be applied. I am not going to contend that a man living 400 miles back is to be put on a parity with the man in the City. In most cases he goes back for better land, for freer selection of land, or perhaps for better climatic conditions; and there must be some penalty, some countervailing of these advantages. But to say that as the miles multiply freights also shall multiply is certainly an obsolete policy, a policy on which this State

can never be satisfactorily developed. A short time before the change of Government the farmers were penalised because it was alleged that the Government had set themselves to carry certain taxation which the majority of members of this House thought inadvisable, and the Government said, "Very well, then; farmers are no friends of ours, and we will put on the terminal charges once more; we will increase the rates on manures and many other classes of freight." They did so, and in so doing imposed a severe wrong upon the farmers and set up a deterrent to that class of immigration which we had hoped to see setting in. The Government that have just gone out have done a great deal to retard immigration and land settlement; not intentionally, but that has been the effect of their administration. In view of the desire of the new Government to encourage immigration and land settlement, I commend to them the desirability of greatly reducing freights. Of course this will reduce our railway income. But why has this country adopted as a policy the monopoly of transit in the hands of the Government? Simply because the Government, as owners of the public estate, desire to use the railways as an instrument of land settlement. Well, then, even though a considerable amount of railway income may thus, for the time being, be lost, let the Government study the settlement of the land, assured that every settler will be a producer of revenue in countless ways. I hope the Government will study the question of how far can we reduce freight in proportion to distance, and open up all the lands of the State to profitable settlement. I wish the Government all success in the very heavy task they have undertaken.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 20th September, 1916.

	PAGE
Papers presented	95
Questions: Fremantle Harbour, deep dredging	95
Rottnest Island hostel	96
State Implement Works, balance sheet	96
Esperance Northwards railway, Commission	96
State Trading Concerns, returns	96
BILL: Sale of Liquor Regulation, 1B.	96
Address-in-reply, third day, amendment	96

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Papers in connection with the construction of the Esperance-Northwards Railway.

By the Attorney General: Amendment to the rules under the Legal Practitioners Act, 1893, relating to the Barristers' Board.

By the Minister for Agriculture: Albany Government Cold Stores—Cool Storage charges.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR, DEEP DREDGING.

Mr. CARPENTER asked the Minister of Works: 1, In view of the steps now being taken in other States to provide a depth of 40 feet at their chief ports for the accommodation of deep-draught shipping, is it the intention of the Government to make early provision for similar accommodation at Fremantle? 2, Is the dredging plant now employed in dredging the Fremantle Harbour capable of dredging to a depth of 40 feet? 3, If not, what steps have been taken to secure the necessary plant?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The matter was under consideration by the late Government and is now being gone into by the Minister for Works. The expenditure contemplated runs into one and a-half million pounds, exclusive of cost of new plant. 2, The dredges we have are not capable of taking depths up to 40 feet. The "Parmelia" could be altered but the engineers advise against it. 3, The estimate for a suitable dredge is approximately £100,000, in addition to which docking facilities would have to be provided.