

area. At any rate it seems to me it is not for this Chamber to go into the consideration of whether trade will be diverted from Perth to any of the suburbs. What hon. members have to determine is whether this question should be submitted to a referendum of the electors. And when we come to consider it the three parties concerned are all represented by the electors. There are the shopkeepers, the employees, and the customers. The customers have a right to some consideration in a matter of this kind. They have the right to say whether from their standpoint it is advisable that the shops should close on Saturday, and they certainly should have an opportunity of voting on the question. If the decision were left to the ratepayers, only a small section of the community would be entitled to vote whereas this matter concerns the whole of the community. In connection with referendums there are some questions difficult to submit to the decision of the people at large; but there are no difficulties in connection with this particular question, for every grown-up person in the community can thoroughly understand it and can vote plain "yes" or "no" without qualification. When in Committee I may support the suggestion of the Colonial Secretary in connection with the Wednesday. I think there should be some option as to whether Wednesday or Saturday should be the half-holiday. For the present I simply support the principle which the Bill contains.

The **PRESIDENT**: An amendment is before the Council.

Hon. R. D. MCKENZIE: I move—

That the debate be adjourned till Tuesday next.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	9
<hr/>				
Majority for	..	..	..	4

AYES.

Hon. F. Connor	Hon. M. L. Moss
Hon. J. W. Hackett	Hon. W. Oats
Hon. A. G. Jenkins	Hon. G. Randall
Hon. R. Laurie	Hon. S. Stubbs
Hon. W. Malcy	Hon. T. H. Wilding
Hon. R. D. McKenzie	Hon. J. T. Glowrey
Hon. E. McLarty	(Teller).

NOES.

Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. B. C. O'Brien
Hon. J. D. Connolly	Hon. R. W. Pennefather
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. Throssell
Hon. W. Kingsmill	Hon. R. F. Sholl
Hon. J. W. Langsford	(Teller).

Motion thus carried; debate adjourned.

BILL—YORK RESERVE.

In Committee.

Clause 1—Change of purpose of Reserve York Town Lot 211:

Hon. T. H. WILDING: The object in moving the adjournment at the preceding sitting had been to see whether it would not be possible to include other reserves in the Bill. However he had discovered that this could not be done; therefore he would support the clause.

Clause passed.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment; the report adopted.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS.

In Committee.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2—Repeal.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1908.

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

QUESTION—STATE BATTERIES SUPERINTENDENT.

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Mines : 1, Has the Public Service Commissioner made a recommendation *re* the appointment of Superintendent of State Batteries ? 2, If so, when is that recommendation to be given effect to ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied : 1, The Public Service Commissioner has acquiesced in the appointment of a Superintendent of Batteries under a special agreement for a term of three years under Section 36 of the Public Service Act. 2, As soon as the necessary formalities can be gone through.

QUESTION—LANDS DEPARTMENT, TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Lands : 1, Are all temporary hands in the Lands Department paid according to Public Service Act Regulation 336 ? 2, If not, why not ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied : 1 and 2, The Public Service Commissioner informs me that the temporary employees in the Lands Department are paid according to Public Service Regulation 335, and are in receipt of a salary at the rate of £156 per annum, and inasmuch as there are permanent officers doing work of equal value in receipt of a salary even less than that of the temporary employees, it would be manifestly unfair to pay temporary employees at a higher proportional rate.

QUESTION—RAILWAY LAUNDRY CONTRACT.

Mr. GILL asked the Minister for Railways : 1, Is it true that the ruling wage clause in the contract for railway laundry work has been deleted ; and if so, why ? 2, Will the Minister see that this clause is embodied in future contracts ?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied : 1, Yes, that charity organisations might compete. 2, Due consideration will be given before any new contract is entered into.

QUESTION—SAVINGS BANK LOAN, P. STONE.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Treasurer : 1, What is the area of the land alleged to have been valued at £500 on which the money (£1,500) was advanced to Mr. P. Stone for building purposes by the Government Savings Bank ? 2, Where is the land situated ?

The TREASURER replied : 1, One and a-half acres. 2, Greenough. Corner of Padbury and Evans Roads, adjacent to Walkaway Railway Station.

MOTION—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY, TO INQUIRE.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill) moved—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the administration of the Goldfields Water Scheme with a view to suggesting a well-defined policy with regard to—(1) Rating. (2.) The utilisation of the scheme as an aid to mining and agricultural development ; and (3.) The supply of water to various classes of consumers.

He said : As I outlined in the discussion on the financial statement, I have not moved this motion with any feeling of hostility to the administration of the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme. It has become apparent, particularly to the Minister for Works, or rather the permanent officials directly charged with the administration of this work, as it has to those who have taken an interest in the general policy followed in the scheme, that owing to the different conception as to the object for which that scheme was primarily adopted, the administration at the present time is of a piecemeal character. Everyone will agree that that scheme has been of great advantage to the people on the goldfields. It has been of advantage, in that it has to some extent made life more desirable for those residing there. It has given them a cheaper water supply, and an opportunity of modifying those unpleasant surroundings which had previously characterised life on the goldfields. In the second place it has made it possible for the Govern-

ment to settle a large area of land along the Eastern Goldfields railway line, and to open up what had previously been regarded as an area not suitable for cultivation, but anyone who has watched the development that has taken place there since the water main has gone through must have been astonished at the rapid development in the settlement of that area, and in the cultivation of the soil. In other directions too, in the assistance which has been given in some directions to the development of the mining industry, the water scheme proved of great advantage, and my idea in moving this motion is that the time has arrived when this House should through the investigation and recommendations of a select committee formulate some co-ordinate policy which will enable the scheme to be administered and the water supply to be used with the fullest possible advantage by those who are consuming it, at the same time making the burden on the taxpayers of the State as light as possible. In the first place when the scheme was first suggested by the late Engineer-in-Chief and taken up by Sir John Forrest, there can be no doubt it was designed primarily, and I think entirely, as a scheme to supply water at a cheap rate to the goldfields.

Mr. Taylor : Coolgardie alone.

Mr. BATH : It was called the "Coolgardie Water Scheme," but at that time they assuredly had in their minds the development that was taking place in the newer field of Hannans. Since that conception of what the scheme was designed for, we have had numerous reticulation services and we have made it supply not only the goldfields towns for the assistance of mining propositions, but we have also supplied water to agricultural towns along the goldfields line, and on the Great Southern Railway, and we are also making it a medium for assisting agricultural settlers; and each of these separate propositions has been added to the first conception of the scheme, with the result that there has been no single policy running through the administration of the Goldfields Water Scheme. I have not anticipated the investigations of the select committee by going into

figures or details with regard to the revenue derived from the different classes of consumers on the goldfields. I believe it will be borne out by those who have watched the administration of the scheme, that the heaviest burden in providing revenue to meet the charges of this scheme is borne by the household consumers on the Eastern Goldfields. We are told, and it is often urged especially from the goldfields that the scheme should be utilised to a greater extent for the encouragement of mining development, and giving assistance to low-grade propositions, while on the other hand the Minister for Agriculture in his enthusiasm for that department of the State's activity has not only outlined a policy that it should be used to a greater degree for agricultural development, but his influence has been used in the administration, in favour of specially low terms for what is known as irrigation work. I have heard a great deal about this scheme, and what it was going to do for the people of Western Australia. We have had elaborate pictures about the desert blossoming as the rose, but I have never had any faith in this scheme as a means for encouraging any extensive irrigation work. Where water is to be pumped a great distance involving a large direct expense, and an indirect expense of maintaining a long water main and making provision for a large amount of depreciation, wear and tear, it is absolutely impossible to go in for any scheme of irrigation on an extensive scale. I have looked into this question elsewhere, and it is held in Victoria and New South Wales, where they go in for irrigation on an extensive scale, and even in America and India, and where they supply water at anything more than 6d. per thousand gallons, it is altogether impossible for irrigation purposes. It is altogether too expensive, and even 6d. per thousand gallons in the United States is regarded as a prohibitive rate for irrigation purposes. Bearing that in mind it seems to me that even before we undertake a small scheme in the way of irrigation, we must perfect the details of administration, so that the scheme will be of the greatest possible advantage for

those for whom it was primarily designed, and they are the people on the goldfields. In regard to mining development, I am satisfied that whatever assistance we give in that way should be by a direct vote on the Mines Estimates; it should be approved by Parliament; it should be a sum voted by us for the encouragement of the mining industry and administered by the Mines Department, not, I would say, under present methods, but under methods I will outline. However, that assistance should be administered through the Mines Department, and it should be a recoup to the Goldfields Water Supply Administration according to whatever changed details may be decided upon, either by the recommendations of this select committee or by the Works Department itself. While I advocate that a lump sum should be voted—and I do it not only in this connection but also in regard to the encouragement of mining generally—I say we will never have satisfaction or impartial administration until we call to our counsels the practical advice of those who are on the spot; and if we vote a direct sum for the purpose of recouping the Public Works Department for what might be regarded as the unprofitable sale of water from the goldfields scheme, we should have some practical advice, the advice of men on the spot, to say who should receive that assistance and the extent to which the assistance should be granted. My proposal in regard to the scheme—and I have thought the matter out—is that the goldfields should be regarded as one division of the scheme. The Public Works Department should contract to deliver certain specified quantities of water at the reservoir at Bullabulling, one million gallons at a certain price, a million and a half at a lower price, and two millions at a still lower price: but the reticulation of that water—what we might call the retail sale—would be taken over by a trust to be elected by those people directly interested in the administration of the scheme so far as the goldfields are concerned. That trust would take over the existing reticulation at a valuation to be decided on, and they would have complete control of the supply of water to

the various classes of consumers within the area, which would include Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and the outlying mining centres.

The Minister for Works: Southern Cross?

Mr. BATH: Southern Cross could not very well be included in a trust controlling the Eastern Goldfields.

The Attorney General: Do you include the reticulation in the municipality itself?

Mr. BATH: Yes; I see no possible object in splitting up the administration into separate local governing bodies on the goldfields. It would only lead to confusion, conflict of views and unjustifiable expense in administration. In fact if we were to split up the control among the different local governing bodies there, the last state of the water supply would be worse than the first. I think the area is not only sufficiently compact to justify one local governing body for this purpose—call it trust or board or what you may—but it is sufficiently compact to justify amalgamation for other local governing purposes, an amalgamation I hope to see accomplished in the near future.

Mr. Walker: Do you include Kanowna?

Mr. BATH: Yes. The trust should have the right to fix the prices or the rates at which the water would be supplied, as I said before, to the different classes of consumers; and when it came to a question of considering the need for encouraging mining development they would fix their price on their ordinary scale, and whatever assistance Parliament would render in that direction would come directly from the Mines Department, from the vote which we, as members, would allocate each year on the Estimates.

The Minister for Works: Would the trust deal with extensions?

Mr. BATH: They would deal with extensions on the goldfields area.

The Minister for Works: Would the Government put the capital at their disposal?

Mr. BATH: The trust would act, so far as that area was concerned, in precisely the same way as the present ad-

ministration in securing the subsidiary capital for extensions, temporary or permanent, as the case might be; and they would have precisely the same powers as the present administration, so far as that area is concerned. This, in my opinion, would have the effect of bringing to bear the local experience of those who are interested, of those who know the local wants; and they would probably fix the rates on a more equitable basis than can be done by an administration, no matter how good or capable, centred in Perth. Another matter that requires consideration is that of rating. Under the existing system, so far as the agricultural areas are concerned, water has been supplied in many instances under what has been known as the guarantee system. Certain people make representation that they want a branch pipe line laid out to an area in which a number of them are settled together, and the first thing the department do is to secure details of the cost of the proposed reticulation; and then if the proposition appears to be good enough they go the extent of having a survey made, and they make known to those who have made the application what the annual cost will be to them. The cost is fixed on a basis of 10 per cent. on the cost of reticulation, and these applicants are asked to provide a guarantee to return that amount, and are given a supply of water up to that amount according to the rate per thousand gallons fixed for the area, while anything over the amount is paid for as extra water. The position now is that certain people may be willing to come forward with a guarantee, in order to secure a supply, and if a sufficient number of them have guaranteed to provide the amount necessary to pay the 10 per cent., the pipe is laid down and they secure the benefit of the water; but those who refuse to pay any portion of the guarantee are also able to secure a supply of water from the branch pipe line. Of course it is true, as the Minister for Works pointed out the other night, that if the supply is only sufficient to go round for those that have provided the guarantee, then those who have not paid anything are not permitted to secure the water; but from what I have

been told, those who have refused to provide any portion of the guarantee have been able to get their water at the same rate as those who have put up their money.

The Minister for Works: When it is available.

Mr. Butcher: There is no hardship; the guarantee costs them nothing.

Mr. BATH: The guarantee costs them a great deal. They might not need the water to the extent of the guarantee, yet they have to provide the full amount, whereas the man who does not provide any guarantee can get as much water as he wants, and all he has to do is to pay for the water he consumes. I know instances where very big landowners on the branch pipe line from Northam to York and Beverley absolutely refused to come up with any portion of the guarantee. They were wealthy men and in a position to pay, but the burden had to be borne by the smaller landowners who provided the guarantee asked for.

The Minister for Works: I think you have overlooked the fact that if an extra consumer comes in it reduces the liability to the guarantors.

Mr. BATH: It certainly reduces the liability, but does not put the guarantors on the same basis as the others. The Minister will admit that the man who does not provide the guarantee has an advantage over the others. My opinion is that an equitable adjustment of this, and one that would give the Works Department greater security, would be that where a pipe line is asked for, a certain rating area should be proclaimed, and the landholders within that area who would benefit by the pipe line should be rated on the unimproved value of their holdings. Then they would pay in proportion to the area held by them in the locality.

Mr. Butcher: Whether they require the water or not?

Mr. BATH: Yes; because the construction of the pipe line would confer on them equal advantage to the others.

Mr. Butcher: It is no advantage if they do not want the water.

Mr. BATH: If the hon. member knows the country to the East of Northam,

where a great deal of reticulation has been carried on from the pipe line, he would know that the carrying of the pipe line through those areas, or the provision of water supplies, has greatly enhanced the value of the land there. Even though some of the landholders may not use the water it has put up the price of the land there and made it possible for these landholders to sell at a greater price than they could have obtained before the pipe line was put there. They have benefited to a great degree, and anyone desirous of purchasing land there would ascertain that knowledge for himself when it came to a question of deciding terms. Now, in connection with the supply of water to various classes of consumers, as I say, on the goldfields that matter would be decided by the trust that would be constituted under my scheme, but those areas nearer Perth, nearer to hand and, therefore, practically under the control of the administration, should still be under the direct control of the administration. I may say at the outset that I am opposed to the idea of the constitution of one board to control the whole scheme. I do not think it would be workable or that it would be any advance upon the present system of administration by the Works Department through a sub-branch. In order to meet the different circumstances of the different classes of consumers right along the pipe line, it would be necessary to have a board altogether too unwieldy for the economic administration of the scheme. The consideration of the supply to Midland Junction, Guildford, and those areas supplied by that branch pipe line, would also be under the control of the administration as at present; but I am hopeful that when we come to the consideration of the whole question of a better water supply for the metropolitan area, we will undertake a scheme that will make available for the supply of the metropolitan area the surplus water in the Mundaring Weir, over and above what might be termed the maximum capacity of the pumping plant along the pipe line. I believe that would be preferable to embarking on the more ambitious scheme of constructing a new

reservoir on the Canning river, and I believe it would supply a sufficient quantity of good water for the metropolitan area for years to come, and it would be the means of reducing the burden on the taxpayers now incurred in the payment of sinking fund on the capital expenditure on the scheme.

The Minister for Works: In what way?

Mr. BATH: I believe it would provide one or one and a-half per cent. sinking fund out of the revenue derived.

The Minister for Works: Would the value of the water at Mundaring, supplied to the metropolitan area, be about £40,000 a year?

Mr. BATH: My estimate takes into consideration the economy which I believe could be affected, or the cutting-out of supplies at extra cheap rates that are not justified under the present condition of the scheme.

The Minister for Works: How would the scheme benefit by supplying water to the metropolitan area? You said it would be about half the sinking fund.

Mr. BATH: Yes; my estimate is based on my conception of what would be possible under better administration of the scheme under local control than there is at present. I believe we would have a greater contribution from the goldfields.

The Minister for Works: You do not consider that the water supply from Mundaring if supplied to Perth would bring in a revenue of £40,000 a year?

Mr. BATH: That is a point I have not gone into. I have not the necessary data from which to make the deductions, but we have the facts that there is a surplus water supply available in the Mundaring weir, and that the reservoir is a much more permanent work than any of the subsidiary works, such as the pumping stations and the mains along the pumping line. These facts make it appear to me, a layman who has not gone into the question with the capacity and knowledge of an engineer, that we could bring the water to Perth and supply it at a rate acceptable here, and so relieve the present position of the scheme to a very large extent. If the scheme which I have suggested were able

to be carried out, it would certainly mean a reduction in price which would affect the financial results of the Goldfields Water Supply Administration generally; and therefore this proposition should receive consideration before we pledge the credit of the metropolitan area to a scheme which would mean a very great expenditure and about which considerable doubts exist at the present time. I have moved this motion because I believe a select committee could obtain the views of people on the fields directly interested, representatives of the different classes of consumers—the householders and the larger and poorer mines—and there would also be gained the benefit of the experience of the officers of the department as constituted at present. In addition, the committee would obtain data for the future administration of the water supply. There is no doubt we are faced with a serious position as to the corrosion of the pipe line, and that we will have to make considerable provision in the future for depreciation. That must be done either out of Consolidated Revenue or from revenue derived from the Water Supply Administration, and in these circumstances there is need for an investigation and a complete reorganisation of the department with a view to administer the scheme as a whole under the present conception of what it is intended for, as opposed to the conception of that for which it was first intended by the late Engineer-in-Chief and subsequently taken up by Sir John Forrest.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price): From the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition I take it his great idea of the best method to reform this department is by the establishment of trusts for the local management of the various districts through which the administration operate. That is quite in contradistinction to the idea one hears from time to time in connection with water supplies in this State that they should be brought under the control of one department. There is a good deal to be said for decentralisation and a good deal also to be said for the other

idea. At all events it must be realised that in the districts in which the department operates we should have some guiding principles influencing us so far as the rating and the concessions we may make from time to time to consumers are concerned. With one controlling body there would be no difficulty about that. In my opinion such is desirable and, even if the principle upon which we work is not altogether perfect, it is preferable that we should have uniformity in our methods of dealing with consumers rather than that we should have diverse principles guiding the management in the different centres. If the records of the Water Supply Administration are examined it will be found that, in a minor manner, the methods advocated by the hon. member have already been tried. I do not say we have gone to the length of forming a trust to control all supplies in Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Coolgardie and Kanowna, and the immediately surrounding districts, but there are some centres which have distributed water "on their own." In every case, where the supply has been locally managed it has been an absolute failure. We have the instance of Southern Cross. That municipality to-day takes water in bulk from the department and distributes it to the ratepayers and consumers of the locality. I am now speaking solely of the domestic supply in the district. In 1903-4 the average consumption in Southern Cross was 5.1 gallons per head per day, and in 1907-8 it was seven gallons per head per day. This is under local management. Compare these figures with Kalgoorlie, where to-day under the administration of the department the supply of domestic water is 17 gallons per head per day. There is a still more striking example in the town of Northam where some time ago local control in water supply matters was tried. Before 1904-5 the Northam people controlled their own supply. About that time they handed it over to the department, placing it back in our hands, and the consumption per head of the population was 4.8 gallons per day. In the very first year the administration were enabled to raise the consumption in the district to 13.7 gal-

lons per day, and to-day the consumption in Northam stands at 24 gallons per day.

Mr. Bath: But you have an irrigation scheme there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These figures refer largely to the town domestic supply.

Mr. Bath: I know that some of the irrigation works are in the town.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There may be one or two, but very few. The supplies I refer to are for domestic purposes. This scheme has been tried in other parts of the world where water supplies have been administered by trusts. The other day I was looking over the annual report of the Victorian State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, and on page 5 of the report I found that out of a sum of £788,000, which had been advanced by the Victorian Government to 19 trusts, it had been found necessary to wipe off as bad debts £540,000 or 68 per cent. of the sum originally loaned. There is a difficulty, especially in connection with mining centres, which the hon. member has not attempted to deal with. We know perfectly well there are two interests which do not altogether run on the same lines in the various mining centres. I refer to the domestic supplies and to the supplies for the mines. I venture to think there would be a danger that in some localities the price to the mines would be increased so that too cheap water for domestic purposes might be supplied to the town; that is possible. I do not say it would occur, but it would be possible, especially if the trusts were appointed on such a footing as that which was suggested last night in connection with the appointment of vermin boards. It appears to me that if there is to be one vote one consumer, the mining portion of the the community will be practically swamped in so far as the representation on the trusts is concerned. The rates at Kalgoorlie and Boulder and Coolgardie might be totally different and struck on an altogether different basis from that which exists, for instance, at Southern Cross. At the present moment there is a logical reason for every rate the Water Supply Administration have

struck and each rate bears a logical relation to the other. I do not want to weary the House, but I might read some of the rates in so far as the water supply is concerned. The department supply water for domestic purposes at Midland for 1s. 6d. per thousand gallons, and 1s. per thousand excess, while the prices at the other centres are:—Northam, 3s. 9d. per thousand gallons and 2s. excess; Meckering, 4s. 6d. per thousand gallons and 2s. 6d. excess; York, 5s. per thousand gallons and 2s. 6d. excess; Beverley, 5s. 6d. per thousand gallons and 2s. 9d. excess; Newcastle, 5s. per thousand gallons and 2s. 6d. excess. At Coolgardie the price is 6s. 8d. per thousand gallons and 4s. excess, and where a certain quantity of excess water—I think 5,000 gallons or over—is taken, the excess is only charged for at the rate of 2s. 6d. per thousand gallons. At Kalgoorlie and Boulder the three prices are 6s. 8d., 4s., and 2s. 6d.; Kanowna, 8s. 4d., 4s. 6d., and 3s., and Bulong 10s., 5s. and 3s. 6d. Anyone looking at these rates will see there is reasonable progression in them when one takes into account the distance from the head works, the number of pumping stations and the length of the pipe line through which the water is carried.

Mr. Scaddan: What is the minimum rate to be paid?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One pound for an occupied house.

Mr. Scaddan: And an occupied block?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One pound, I think. Then take the price for mining supplies. There again we see a reasonable progression based on just the same issues as we adopt in connection with domestic supplies. At Southern Cross the water is supplied to the low-grade mines at 3s. and the high-grade mines at 4s. 9d. These figures relate to those mines which are using the scheme water exclusively. At Kalgoorlie and Boulder the prices are 3s. 6d. and 5s. 3d., at Boorara 4s. and 5s. 9d., at Bonnievale 3s. 9d. and 5s. 6d., at Burbanks 3s. 9d. and 5s. 6d., at Kanowna 4s. and 5s. 9d., and at Bulong 5s. and 7s. Then again there are special rates for mines which

use the supply from the Goldfields Water Supply Administration only partially. The rates in such cases are higher. But in this case also the same progressive system both for high and low-grade mines is observed.

Mr. Underwood: What do you call a high-grade mine?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The regulation dealing with low-grade mines is as follows:—

“The Minister for Mines in classifying mines as of ‘low grade’ gives consideration to the circumstances of each particular case, and it is entirely discretionary with him whether to classify any mine as of ‘low grade’ or not, but as a general rule he will be satisfied to classify the following mines as of ‘low grade,’ viz.: 1. (a) Mines on which the ore-treatment is confined to milling only, and from which the returns by amalgamation only do not exceed 20s. per ton of ore milled, the value of the resulting tailings not exceeding 14s. per ton by assay. (b) Mines on which the ore is being both milled and cyanided, but the returns from these combined operations do not exceed 32s. per ton of ore treated. (c) Mines on which cyanide operations only are being carried on will not be classed as ‘low grade,’ but mines on which old tailings heaps are being treated and at which milling and cyaniding combined, or milling alone, is being also done will be so classed provided the returns do not exceed those mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs (a) and (b). In estimating the grade of the ore the average returns for the three calendar months preceding the application will be accepted as a basis, but if at any time after classification the returns for any month exceed the figures above quoted the Minister may cancel the classification of such mine as of ‘low grade’ for such month, and full rates for water shall thereupon be due and payable for such month. 2. But no mine will be classified as of ‘low grade’ which in the opinion of the Minister is making a profit of not less than ten per centum over the actual working costs of raising and treating

the aforesaid ores and old tailings, and in computing such costs the Minister may in his discretion allow to be included such actual expenses as may seem to him reasonable for mining development work done during the months in which the ore is treated, but in no case exceeding 5s. per ton of ore treated.”

Mr. Scaddan: Is there not another rate?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The price to high-grade mines at Kalgoorlie is 5s. 3d. That is for independent supplies. But in consideration of the Mines Trust guaranteeing to take a certain amount and to use our water exclusively and make a payment in one sum with regularity, we are supplying that body with water under contract at 5s. They also agreed to take water for a period of three years. That agreement terminates in September next. We give them a concession on account of this guarantee of an exclusive consumption of our water for three years, and also on account of a guarantee that all the various mines—

Mr. Scaddan: What about that eighteen pence rate?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know that I need go into that. I have explained it to this House so frequently. Hon. members opposite appear to differ radically from the department in the wisdom of such a departure. Still I maintain it was fully and completely justified.

Mr. Scaddan: Was it done on my suggestion?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know; I am not sure of that. From its excellence I should think it was not. The Attorney General I am afraid was giving the hon. member too much credit. I cannot imagine the hon. member having a business idea of that quality. I notice that the Leader of the Opposition in referring to this scheme said we had absolutely departed from the original intention when the Goldfields Water Supply main was laid down. I once made that statement myself and I had my knuckles very severely rapped by Sir

John Forrest for so doing. He said it had always been his intention that this water should run into the agricultural districts. Being curious on the point I looked up early files and records connected with the construction of that scheme, and I ascertained that at all events it was the intention at that date to supply the town of York with water.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: He always spoke about it in connection with the opening up of agricultural areas.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One objection which has been taken to the present administration is that we do not differentiate sufficiently as between the various low-grade mines. The department is constantly receiving requests from mines of lower grade for some assistance in the shape of reduced rates for water, the contention being that this would lead to their possible expansion. I have always held that is a most difficult matter to deal with. In my opinion there must be a clear line of demarcation between high grade properties and properties of lower grade, so that our officers can easily apply the principle and the public readily understand what mines are entitled to a concession by reason of their low grade. It means that in the Kalgoorlie district at the present time we are supplying low-grade water at from 7d. to 14½d. per ton of ore treated; and when I say that the water costs us 4s. 11d. per thousand gallons in that district, exclusive of sinking fund charges, it will be seen that we are already giving to those low grade mines a very considerable concession. Supposing a man uses 200 gallons of water for treating a single ton of ore: It means that we are conveying a ton of water over 300 miles for 7½d. and losing money on it in order to assist a low-grade mine to carry on its operations. When we go as far as that we cannot reasonably, I think, be asked to make still further reductions.

Mr. Underwood: Is it worth it for low-grade mines at all?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There are mines in the State which have been enabled to work by low-grade water, and

which to-day are in a flourishing condition as a result of that concession. I think the low-grade prices we have in this scheme are eminently justified. It has been stated that if we reduced the price we would increase the consumption; but the only evidence we have in respect to this is of a very contrary nature. In 1904 prices which were ruling to consumers of water in Kalgoorlie and Boulder were for rate allowance 8s. per 1,000 gallons, and for domestic excess 7s. and 7s. 6d. a thousand gallons. The member for Guildford when Minister for Works promised that from the 1st January, 1906, a rearrangement of prices should come into operation. At that date the price for rate allowance was dropped 1s. 4d., to 6s. 8d., and the price for domestic excess to 4s. Some months afterwards—rather more than 12 months afterwards—I went a little bit further and agreed that the excess water, after the first 5,000 gallons for domestic supply should be 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons. We did this in the endeavour to increase the consumption. But what was the effect? Taking 1904, the last year when the higher prices were obtaining, as the result of domestic supplies as compared with the result of 1907, we find that the consumption increased by 40 per cent. on a comparison. It went from 11,671,000 gallons to 16,541,000 gallons; but the actual revenue received decreased by 16 per cent. That was from the 1,615 services which were continuously metered in both years. So the only fair comparison we could make as to whether a decrease in price would lead to an increase in revenue has been altogether against such a proposition. It has been usual in connection with a big scheme like this to hear all sorts of condemnatory references. However well you may run such a scheme there will always be a great numbers of grumblers. I have had men complain to me who have occupied prominent municipal positions in some parts of the State. For obvious reasons I have no wish to mention names. But in one particular district a well-known councillor had his water cut off just like an ordinary individual. We at once made a bitter enemy of him and he has made various attacks on the scheme since that date.

We have not considered individuals at all. We have sent out our cut-off notices, and we have given the public every opportunity of paying. Still we have not chased them for the debts as the grocer might do for a £2 or £3 account. We have treated all individuals alike, and while we do that surely no one can complain.

Mr. Collier: Have you ever had any complaints from roads board secretaries?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have gone even further, and where genuine cases of hardship have been brought before us we have endeavoured somewhat to relax our restrictions. But is it possible that in a scheme of such dimensions everyone could be absolutely and completely satisfied? I do not know if they expect to obtain that happy set of circumstances under a trust, but I have grave doubts as to whether it would be the case. In our grants and gifts to all sorts of public and semi-public bodies for the purpose of improving recreation grounds we have during the last two years actually given free some 5,000,000 gallons of water for this purpose and I do think that sometimes faults are placed on our shoulders which in justice we should not be called upon to bear. The scheme is economically administered and personally I very much doubt whether the hon. member is asking the House to move in a direction which would be beneficial to the water supply. It should be brought under one board. The first thing we should endeavour to secure is uniformity as a guiding principle right through the different districts where we operate.

On motion by *Mr. Scaddan* debate adjourned.

MOTION—RAILWAYS, INDUSTRIAL CONDITIONS.

Mr. JOHNSON (Guildford) moved—

That in the opinion of this House the Commissioner of Railways, when arranging the next industrial conditions for the Railway employees, should start at a minimum of 8s. per day, irrespective of privileges, for all adult male workers, and 48 hours to constitute the week's work; always reserving the right given in Section 89 of the Indus-

trial Conciliation and Arbitration Act to pay a lower rate to any worker who is unable to earn the prescribed minimum.

He said: I feel that I am bringing forward this motion at a very opportune time, inasmuch as the present industrial agreement under which the railway workers are working is just about to expire. Consequently it is a fitting time for Parliament to intimate to their servant, the Commissioner of Railways, exactly under what conditions they consider the railway employees should work. The resolution deals with adult workers and I trust that during the course of the debate arguments will not be advanced pointing out that junior workers are practically apprentices and that consequently 8s. a day is a big wage. That argument is not introduced in the motion. In that respect the motion deals only with adult workers, but it deals also with the question of hours, and I would like to point out that the motion does not propose to fix eight hours as a working day. I would like to see it introduced, but I realise the difficulty of introducing it into a railway system. Still, while I see a difficulty in regulating a day's work of eight hours, each day standing alone, I see no difficulty whatever about fixing 48 hours per week. This has already been made possible in an industrial agreement under which the loco. men are working. In their industrial agreement—I do not know whether it has expired at the present moment—but in the last one drawn up provision was made that 48 hours should constitute a week's work. That is the locomotive employees, 48 hours; but when we come to the traffic branch the hours of the traffic man are fixed at 96 hours for the fortnight. The Premier will remember that on this question there was a great deal of controversy, and he himself took an active part in settling a dispute which was eventually decided by making the fortnight stand as 96 hours. Members will see the unsatisfactory state of affairs, and the possibility of friction arising between the two sets of employees. The locomotive employees have a separate organisation and union; they are leading the train, while the traffic man, that is the

guard, is on the back of the train, and he has his separate union. The train goes out of the station, and the man on the engine knows that he has only to work 48 hours when he has finished his week's work. The man on the back of the same train is called upon to wait for a fortnight before his time is actually made up; therefore, members will see the unsatisfactory state of affairs. I am in a position to say there is a certain amount of friction arising at certain times between the two sets of employees, owing to one industrial agreement recognising 48 hours, while the other industrial agreement recognises 96 hours per fortnight. Members will see how difficult the position is. The man has really got to work for a full fortnight before he knows the time he has put in, and the other man works a week and knows what his time is. I suppose there are occasions when he does not work his full time, but he knows at the end of the week how he stands, but the traffic man does not know until the end of the fortnight what his salary will be. There is a great deal of irritation because of the Sundays, and the Sunday time that is made up in the 96 hours.

The Minister for Railways: Not now; the Sunday time stands alone.

Mr. JOHNSON: I understand there is some method of compelling men to put in certain time on Sunday when they have not made up their 93 hours.

The Premier: That is done away with now.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am pleased to know that. But still some friction must exist between the two sets of men, for one man is called on to work for 96 hours in a fortnight, while the other man works 48 hours per week. It has been argued that some difficulty exists in fixing a definite wage of 8s. for aged and injured men, and it is said that if we fix 8s. for all adult workers we preclude the possibility of the Commissioner employing those men who have been injured, or who are aged, on light work. I anticipate argument of that description, which, no doubt, would be sound argument. But the Commissioner would always have the right to take advantage

of the section that was specially put in the Arbitration Act to overcome difficulties of that kind. Section 85 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act says:—

“The court, in its award, or by order made on the application of any of the parties at any time during the currency of the award, may prescribe a minimum rate of wages or other remuneration, with special provision for a lower rate being fixed in the case of any worker who is unable to earn the prescribed minimum. Provided that such lower rate shall in every case be fixed by the court in such manner and subject to such provisions as are specified in that behalf in the award or order.”

So consequently when an industrial agreement is framed by the Commissioner, specifying 8s. a day as the minimum wage for adult workers, the Commissioner can reserve to himself the right to fix a lesser rate to be paid to old or injured workers, and usually this is done by the organisation meeting the Commissioner, or by an application being made to the Arbitration Court. Under Section 23 of the Railways Act, subsection 26, the Commissioner has power to make by-laws for working, classifying and paying the staff employed on the Government railways and prescribing the terms of employment. It is no doubt under that subsection that the Minister takes up the position that he has no right to interfere with rates of wages and conditions of employment of railway workers who are receiving less than £400 per annum. While there may be some argument why the Minister should not interfere, there cannot be any reason why Parliament should not instruct their manager as to the exact conditions under which their employees should work. I feel members will agree with me that we should take up this position, and realise that we have in the railways a huge trading concern. We have over that trading concern a manager, and the railways should be worked on all-fours with trading concerns controlled by private enterprise. Where private enterprise is controlled by a manager, the

proprietors instruct the manager what rates of pay the men shall receive and under what conditions the men shall work. We are in this position. Parliament is representative of the people who own the railways, and I claim it is the duty of Parliament to give the Commissioner some guide as to what wage members consider the railway employees should receive. I quite agree that it is absolutely impossible for Parliament to go into the details and fix the rate of wages for the different employees, but we should see that every adult worker receives sufficient on which to live and rear a family; a sufficient wage to provide the necessities of life, and also to guarantee the same for his wife and children. Let us take 8s. a day. I am not prepared to admit that even 8s. a day is recognised as a living wage in Western Australia, but it is generally admitted to be the minimum rate that is paid by all outside employers of labour for daily work. The minimum is always, as far as my knowledge goes, 8s. a day. Members may argue we should not take a private employer as our standard, that we should set a better example and pay more than 8s., when we recognise that 8s. is not sufficient to keep a man and his family under fair conditions, but I am prepared to take that as the minimum generally recognised by outside employers. But even 8s. possibly members may argue is too much, and evidently the Commissioner thinks it is too much, for there is quite a number of adult workers on the railways receiving down to as low as 6s. 6d. a day. Consequently, when we find the Commissioner is not setting the example which it is generally considered the Government should set to private employers, but is setting a bad example in paying less, it is the duty of Parliament to step in and say that we want to pay to our adult workers rates of pay which are recognised by outside employers as the standard. Eight shillings a day means 48s. a week. Unfortunately a big majority of the railway employees are compelled to pay rent; this is due to the fact that they do not get continual employment in one given centre, but are

subject to continual transfers, with the result that very few railway employees have an opportunity of establishing homes for themselves, consequently they have to pay rent. In the majority of cases the rent that is paid, based on a fair average, is 12s. 6d. a week, and allowing the worker the ordinary provision for tobacco and his lodge, we have to recognise that in rent and these absolute necessities—for I take it tobacco is understood to be an absolute necessity—we have 15s. out of the 48s. a week before a man reaches his home at all. That leaves him 33s. to take home. Basing the family of the average railway employee at three or four—I think it would be nearer to base it higher, for it is a remarkable thing that the railway employees as a rule have large families. I know that is so in my electorate where quite a number of railway employees exist, and in looking around I notice that the majority of the workers who are railway employees in my electorate have an average family of six. But basing it at four, that is, four children, and with the husband and wife that makes six, if we distribute the 33s. a week that the man takes home amongst the six persons he has to feed and clothe, it amounts to the sum of 5s. 6d. per week per head. Any member who has studied the question must realise that a man with a family, and after all he is the man we have to cater for, receiving 8s. a day, with the conditions under which the railway employees have to work, is altogether too small. A man has only 5s. 6d. per week per head with which to feed and clothe his family, and it is an impossibility for him to do it. With 8s. as the minimum it is too big a struggle to put on a man's shoulders to expect him to bring up a family on. I know immediately the Minister speaks he will refer to the fact that apart from the wages received that the railway employees receive certain privileges, and he will base the value of these privileges at from 1s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. a week. What is the use of privileges to a man who receives 8s. a day. It is true he gets certain privilege tickets, that his

family have the right to travel at reduced rates, but the fact remains that these people cannot afford to travel on the railways at all, and therefore are precluded from utilising these privileges; they cannot afford to travel even at the reduced rate. In certain cases these privileges are used, but they are not used to the extent the Minister will expect the House to believe. Again, the Minister may point out the railway employees receive 17 days, or about a fortnight's leave on full pay every year. I can be put right on this by members who know more about the question than I do.

The Minister for Railways: According to Mr. Jull, the privileges ought to be worth 6d. a day.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am going to argue that they are not worth anything, and that it would be better to rub out the privileges altogether; and I believe if a referendum were taken of the railway employees they would vote to wipe them out. Give the railway employees a holiday at the end of the year and what is the use of it? The worker has to go home and he has to stay there. He cannot save money on his wages to go for a trip and take his wife and children away, for he has to live from hand to month throughout the whole of the year. If he gets a holiday it is no particular advantage to him, because the man does not enjoy the holiday when he is compelled to stay at home for the whole fortnight. He may stand it for a day, but it begins to drag at the end of seven or eight days. The result is that the railway men receiving 7s. 6d. and 8s. a day do not appreciate the privileges because they cannot utilise them: and they would sooner see them rubbed out altogether than that they should be forced upon them. Because the railway men receive these privileges which they do not appreciate they are expected to work at a lower rate of wages.

The Minister for Railways: We have never heard that from the men.

Mr. JOHNSON: But I have heard it from many of them. Of course the Minister would fix the privileges as being

worth 6d. a day in order to get the railway employee to vote in favour of it. But the position is this: that if he would pay 8s. a day and recognise it as the minimum and do away with the privileges, and submit that question to the railway employees, I am sure it would be found they would accept it. However, this is a side issue, and I am prepared to admit that they get certain privileges, but I am not prepared to admit that the wages should be reduced because of the existence of those privileges. We will probably have another argument, and that is that we have the Arbitration Act, and why not allow the men to go to arbitration? I would point out that before they can do that there must be a dispute, and do hon. members desire that every 12 months railway men should have a dispute with the Commissioner? Is it the desire of Parliament to expect the railway employees to fix the rate of wages? We should aim at having no dispute. We should fix the rate that would meet with the approval of the worker and thus avoid any kind of friction that arises now practically annually, or every 18 months when these industrial agreements expire. Again, we have to bear in mind that when the Commissioner of Railways is discussing the framing of these industrial agreements he has behind him the whole time the Treasurer pushing him or forcing him to bring about certain economies; and we know that in connection with the economies that have been effected in the railway department, that the railway employee has suffered to a great extent. And after all you cannot blame the Commissioner. The Commissioner is supposed to have control of these men, and he is compelled by the Treasurer and the Minister for Railways to so economise that he is at his wits' end where he can best economise, and he goes to the man who he can more easily tackle, and that is the employee. The result is he is fighting the whole time to reduce wages in order to meet the requirements of the Minister.

The Minister for Railways: Is that not unfair in view of the fact that the Commissioner has already completed an industrial agreement in which he has not reduced anyone 6d.

Mr. JOHNSON : But he has not raised any of the wages, and I am arguing that the minimum is too low. I did not know that the Commissioner had renewed any agreement. If he has done so he has renewed it and fixed the minimum too low, and Parliament does not desire that that minimum should be fixed at such a low rate.

The Minister for Railways : The conditions are equally as good to-day as they were three years ago.

Mr. JOHNSON : But the struggle three years ago is entirely different from the struggle of to-day. The struggle of to-day is too great for the railway employees, and it is impossible for a man with a family to work in the railways and keep himself free from debt. The railway worker is the man who is continually struggling and scratching and getting into debt. And if he should happen to be a man with a family it is an absolute impossibility for him to pay his way. We do not want that state of things to continue. As the Minister says, it has continued for three years ; but it has continued for three years too long. We do not expect the Commissioner to get below the minimum rate of 8s. After all what has been the criticism against the Minister, the Government, and the Commissioner? The argument right through about railway economy has been confined to the fact that the Commissioner in his economy has brought into the railway system sweating conditions. He has reduced the worker below the standard that permits the employee to live under fair conditions.

The Treasurer : No one has been reduced.

Mr. JOHNSON : I gave an illustration in the House on the last Estimates, and showed where men who had been receiving 8s. per day in the loco. branch and ways and works, were receiving 7s. to-day. Consequently there has been a reduction of 1s. there. That is the economy that we object to. We will applaud the Commissioner when he brings about economies in the general working ; but we will condemn him when he gets below what is recognised as the minimum

fair rate of wages. In previous agreements he did get below the minimum and now we want that minimum raised to the recognised standard, and until that is done no Minister or Commissioner or Government will have any peace.

The Treasurer : Do you mean to say the Commissioner reduced the men in the workshops from 8s. to 7s.?

Mr. JOHNSON : I say again the men were reduced from 8s. a day, and that some men to-day are receiving 7s.; in other words they have suffered during the last year or so a reduction of 1s. per day. That is the absolute state of affairs that exists to-day ; and it is that condition of affairs that influences me to move this motion. I say while we support the Minister and the Government in their effort to effect economies in the administration of the Railway Department we have no desire that there should be any interference with the recognised minimum of 8s. a day. The Minister has apparently interpreted our instructions to be that he must economise where he can make reductions, and the result is that the Commissioner has tackled the man who is least able to kick.

The Treasurer : Oh, no.

Mr. JOHNSON : It is true nevertheless that 8s. a day men have been reduced to 7s. I say definitely that this is so ; and if that is not definite enough I do not know what is.

The Minister for Railways : I asked for instances.

Mr. JOHNSON : I have already given the Minister instances. I told him that I could give him names if he desired to have them, but he told me not to give names but to give instances. I will give an instance now where men working as labourers to painters, originally received 8s. a day : to-day, or previous to the general election (possibly they are not working at all to-day) they were receiving 7s. a day. Again, the labourers working in the way and works branch were receiving 8s. a day. They were retrenched and afterwards put on at the same work and were given 7s. That, too, was before the elections. There are instances where men have suffered even greater reduction.

Mr. Scaddan: Some have been reduced from 12s. to 7s. 6d.

The Minister for Railways: That has not been proved yet.

Mr. JOHNSON: I think I gave a sufficient number of instances to the Minister to justify him believing that these men have suffered the reduction of 1s. per day. I do not want to labour this question any further. I think I have dealt sufficiently with it, and the motion in itself is comprehensive and must appeal to hon. members. I again want to point out that I recognise that we must have juniors and apprentices, and these employees must work under certain reduced conditions. But when they reach the age of manhood they should receive the recognised minimum rate, and I claim 8s. is little enough. In the motion I outlined that I am prepared to accept not eight hours a day, but 48 hours a week, which is already granted to a section of the railway employees. Then in connection with the junior workers I provide that opportunity can be taken of the provisions of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act to fix the reduced rate of wages under which these men shall work. I have much pleasure in submitting the motion, and I trust it will receive the favourable support of members.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. Gregory): I certainly cannot agree to the motion which the hon. member has brought before the House. In the first place I think if we desire to approve of a motion of this sort it will mean the taking away entirely of the right to appear before the Arbitration Court. And in the second place in approving of a motion of this sort one has to consider the effect of such a motion in connection with all the employees of the Government, quite outside the Railway Department. If we fix a minimum rate of wage that the Government shall pay in connection with the railway system, then I should assume at once that the same minimum wage would have to be paid in connection with every other department in connection with the Government of this State. Possibly that is

what members desire; but at the same time in considering a motion of this sort one has to consider what its effect is going to be in connection with the finances of the State. The hon. member in bringing forward his motion stated he thought the present was the most opportune time to submit it, because the agreement which was in force at the present time would expire at the end of the present year. At the present moment in connection with the permanent way branch an agreement has not yet been effected between that branch and the Commissioner. The Commissioner of Railways has completed an agreement with the locomotive employees. I do not know the exact terms of that agreement because I have been away so much of late, but it has been made for a period of 12 months, and the conditions are certainly no worse; they may be slightly better; I do not know of any change. I believe that the agreement has been continued for another 12 months, and that an agreement has also been made with the boiler-makers. They have entered into an industrial agreement with the Commissioner for a period of three years, and this agreement has been effected between the Commissioner and the men without any interference in any shape or form from Parliament, and apparently to the satisfaction of the men. At present agreements are being entered into with other mechanics, and we are trying to make agreements with them for three years. These agreements are being arranged I think in a manner that will be approved of by the men and by the Commissioner. The member for Guildford says he wants this minimum rate of 8s. to apply to adult workers alone. He must remember that in connection with adult workers there are a great number of coaching porters who graduated from junior porters to coaching porters. At present the minimum rate fixed by the court for coaching porters is 6s. 6d. per day, but I will show directly that with almost two exceptions, for which I can give very good reasons, we are paying considerably more than the rates fixed by the Arbitration Court. Apparently the hon. member

is not conversant with matters affecting railway men. He drew attention to the hours the men were working, and asks that 48 hours should constitute a week's work, and he pointed out that many men were compelled to work on Sundays so as to make up their 96 hours. But that is not the case. Under the arbitration award in connection with traffic and permanent way men, 96 hours was to constitute a fortnight's work inclusive of Sunday work, and we were to pay time and a-half for Sunday work, and time and a-quarter for overtime. If a man worked 96 hours in a fortnight and eight hours on one Sunday the men claimed that the Sunday's work should be eight hours plus four, which with 96 hours would make 108 hours for the fortnight, and then they asked to be paid overtime on that, which meant giving them 115 hours in all. I think the men ultimately recognised it was an unfair proposition; but when it was brought before the Government, the Government interfered, with the result that from February of last year Sunday time has stood entirely alone. A man has to be paid for 96 hours for the fortnight, and Sunday time stands alone. I am not going to say what arrangement will be made in connection with the new industrial agreements. It is a matter which the Commissioner has to work out with the men, but I will say that in the Eastern States a similar condition of things exists. Railway work is entirely different from work in any other department. In Victoria the period is a month. If a man gets any overtime in one month, that overtime can be cut out in the next month. A similar principle is followed in all the other States except New Zealand. Here we may be able to make things a little bit better for the men, but at the same time I impress on members that the Government gave instructions to the Commissioner that Sunday time should stand alone. If the men work on Sunday now they can claim time and a-half for it. If they work 96 hours in the fortnight they can get paid for 96 hours, and if they work any overtime they get time and a-quarter for it. The hon. member has said that the Minister takes up the position that under Section

23 of the Railways Act he cannot take any action. That is wrong. If the Government consider it wise to interfere, even although there is a Railways Act giving these powers to the Commissioner, they consider it their duty to interfere and take the responsibility of so doing. We took that responsibility in regard to Sunday time, when the late Commissioner wished to reduce the wages of fitters. I consider generally that it is not the duty of the Government of the day to interfere with the Commissioner in connection with these matters, but sometimes circumstances arise which render it necessary, more particularly in such a great trading concern as the Railway Department, where we have such a huge amount of money invested, and where we have such a large number of employees whose welfare is well worthy of consideration. It is the duty of the Government, if they consider it necessary, to interfere and to take the responsibility of that interference. But should Parliament step in in the face of an arbitration award and in the face of the possibility of arranging an industrial agreement with these men? Has Parliament the right or is it a proper thing when we consider all the circumstances that may arise in connection with other departments, that Parliament should step forward and give instructions to the Commissioner of Railways that he is not to pay a lower rate to adult workmen than 8s. a day? I have pointed out to the hon. member that there are special perquisites given to these men which not I, but the Arbitration Court valued at about 6d. a day. The court put down the value of the holidays, special passes, and special facilities given in the Railway Department at that figure, and I think it was approved by the men. I am speaking without authority, but I believe Mr. Casson at the time agreed to it. At least I believe that it was agreed by both parties that the perquisites of the railway men were worth about 6d. a day.

Mr. Johnson: Provided the men use them.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : They get their holidays and their passes and they get continuous work. Cer-

tainly the court held that these perquisites were worth 6d. a day.

Mr. Scaddan: Especially when the holidays are got at election time.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In that case they got the holidays for other purposes. The hon. member was paid his salary as a member of Parliament, but used it to go away electioneering, and I am satisfied that my opponent said the hon. member did him more harm than good.

Mr. Heitmann: He did not say it. That is not true.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is true; but we can deal with all these questions a little later. The member for Guildford asked a little while ago why we should have these disputes, why we should let these people go to arbitration, why we should not let these things be fixed up in Parliament. He said that the Arbitration Court fixed all details, but the primary things, such as the minimum rate, should be fixed up by Parliament. I do not wish to be rough on the hon. member in any way, but I want to point out that when he was Minister for Railways there was trouble between the traffic branch and the Commissioner of Railways. The men were working under an industrial agreement then and they wanted concessions, and the hon. member as Minister had the power, if he dared to exercise it, to use his influence on behalf of these men. It was on the 25th July, when the member for Guildford was Minister for Railways, that the Commissioner of Railways served notice on the clerk of awards of his intention to retire from the industrial agreement in force between the men and the Commissioner. The men were forced to cite the Commissioner with the result that there was a big reduction in the minimum rate in connection with nearly every branch of the Railway Department. That was the position the hon. member found when he was in office, and the conditions of living have not changed between then and now. If the men at that time were not receiving a fair rate of wage, then those persons who were in power, who had the responsibility on their shoulders of preventing friction among that large body

of workmen whose welfare should have been as great a matter of concern to the hon. member as it is to-day, could have done it at a time when an award was being arranged to fix a certain minimum rate. I may say that then there was revenue to enable the department to give a higher rate of wage than can be given to-day. But I want to show that in no sense have we reduced the wages of the men. I have a table giving the award of the court and the rates of wages we are paying in the various branches. For guards the minimum fixed by the award was 8s., but the lowest rate we are paying to a guard is 9s. For signalmen the minimum rate was fixed at 7s., but the lowest we are paying is 7s. 6d. For coaching porters the minimum rate fixed by the award was 6s. 6d., and we have a certain number employed at that minimum rate. There are 38 of them. But I can give a very good reason why these men's wages have not been increased to 7s. a day. The Railway Department insist that these coaching porters should be compelled to pass what is known as the safe-working examination. Those 38 men have not passed it.

Mr. Bolton: You are absolutely wrong. You have been misled by your officers.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I always believe my officers. The hon. member is not in the position to get the information that I am in. Surely the figures I am giving are official?

Mr. Bolton: Still they may be misleading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If the hon. member shows that they are not official I will have an investigation made and will have full particulars given to Parliament showing where I have made a wrong statement or where the department has misled me.

Mr. Holman: I will show you.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We will wait until the hon. member has his opportunity. We have 155 coaching porters at 7s., 57 at 7s. 6d., and 11 at 8s. A few goods porters are at the minimum, but the great majority of them are receiving 8s. and 8s. 6d. And so on with the other branches. The minimum rate fixed by the award for fettlers is 7s.

a day. Of course my figures were given me last month, but out of over 300 fettlers employed only 27 of them are employed at the minimum rate. My instructions to the Commissioner are that when new men come on they are to receive the minimum rate and to work as probationers for three months. If at the end of that time the Commissioner is satisfied with them he can pay them 8s., but if he is not satisfied he is to pass them out and get others. We have three fettlers employed at 7s. 6d., 252 at 8s., 31 at 8s. 6d., 16 at 9s., and three at 10s. These figures show clearly that we are paying more than the minimum rate fixed by the award with the exception of these coaching porters and fettlers, and I am advised that in the case of these coaching porters it is that they have not passed the safe-working examination, but that when they do pass it their wages will be increased.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : No advantage has ever been taken of the award of the Arbitration Court, and in nearly every instance we are paying from 6d. up to 2s. 6d. per day more than the sum fixed by the award. That will show clearly that although the minimum was fixed by the Arbitration Court at a low rate, the Government were desirous that whenever it was recommended by the officers of the department that a higher rate should be paid, the men should be paid according to the value of the work they gave. I do not think the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) is justified in saying that the railway workmen are always in a stringent condition. There may be some men, there always are in a large industry where there are a number of men employed, who are in indigent circumstances, but there are a great number of railway men in quite a decent circumstance of life, and it is good to think there are so many who have been able to make homes for themselves.

Mr. Bolton : I am worse off now than when I was a railway man.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : The case is not nearly so bad as was made out by the hon. member, and it is pleasing

to think that these men are not continually in debt.

Mr. Bolton : I was not, but I am now.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : Then the hon. member was better off before he entered into politics.

Mr. Bolton : I would take up the same position to-day in the department.

Mr. Heitmann : Yes, you have so much influence with the Government now that you would be sure to be taken back.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : Influence has been knocked out, and perhaps that is what some members are objecting to. If members compare rates of wages paid in Western Australia with those paid in the Eastern States they will find at once that the rates here are considerably in excess of any of the other States with the exception of New South Wales. The State of Queensland has been very often quoted here as the acme of railway perfection.

Mr. Swan : Not by railway men, perhaps by Mr. Chinn.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : Take our drivers, for instance; we pay from 11s. to 15s. per day.

Mr. Swan : So they do in all the other States.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : That is not correct. In Victoria they get from 11s. to 14s. In South Australia from 11s. to 14s. In Queensland from 9s. 6d. to 12s. 6d. In New Zealand from 10s. to 15s.; and in Tasmania from 9s. 6d. to 12s.

Mr. Swan : I am not satisfied that those figures are correct.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : They are official.

Mr. Johnson : What is paid in New South Wales?

Mr. Bolton : They are paying 15s.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : Do the drivers in New South Wales all get the same rate?

Mr. Bolton : Decidedly not.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : That would be altogether too absurd, for surely they have second-class men and first-class men there.

Mr. Bolton : They pay from 11s. to 15s. They were paying 15s. in Victoria too.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: For firemen we pay from 8s. to 10s. In Victoria the rate is from 7s. 6d. to 9s.; in New South Wales from 8s. to 10s., the same as here; in Queensland from 6s. 8d. to 8s. 3d.; in New Zealand from 8s. to 9s.; in Tasmania from 7s. to 8s. 6d. With regard to fettlers we here pay 8s. a day, with a small number of exceptions to which I have already referred. They are the probationers. The fettlers in South Australia get 6s.; in Victoria from 6s. to 7s. These figures I am now quoting are official and surely correct, for they were prepared by the department.

Mr. Bolton: They are not very recent.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I assume they are correct, and unless members can give me official figures showing otherwise I will accept them.

Mr. Johnson: The 6s. men in South Australia are probationers also.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No; I am giving the ruling rate of wage. I am sure members will admit I have not the slightest desire to mislead them. The figures are given me as authentic, and as the ruling rate of wages. If I thought for a moment the department was taking the lowest rate in one place and the highest rate in another, and making comparisons of that kind, I would look upon it as most improper. The officers of the department surely would not attempt to do such a thing as that.

Mr. Bolton: Are you not aware of an announcement made by the Premier of South Australia that he had raised the permanent way men from 6s. to 7s. in every instance?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: How long ago was that?

Mr. Troy: About 12 months.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In Victoria they pay the fettlers from 6s. to 7s.; in New South Wales from 6s. 6d. to 7s. 6d.; in Queensland from 6s. to 7s. 6d.; in New Zealand 8s., and in Tasmania from 5s. 6d. to 6s. These figures show that we are paying much higher wages here than the Eastern States, and in fact, taking all grades of men, we are paying 15 per cent. higher here than in any of the other States. This shows that the remark made to the effect that there has

been sweating in connection with our workmen is not justified. I told the member for Guildford last year, when dealing with the Estimates, that if he would give me specific cases where men had been employed at a certain rate, and had been reduced, I would look thoroughly into them. He pointed out that in connection with the workshops we had men employed at 6s. 6d.

Mr. Johnson: I did not say that, I said 7s.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Some member made the remark that we had men there receiving 6s. 6d. per day. There was one old man about 70 years of age who was employed at that rate. As a matter of fact at the time the case was mentioned even he had left the service. He was given the sum mentioned to do odd jobs in the workshop. That was the only instance, and I thought at the time we were surely justified in giving an old man that rate of wages in order to keep him out of the poor-house. I have taken a note of the statement of the member for Guildford as to painters' labourer who were employed at 8s. a day, retrenched, and then put on again at 7s. I will make inquiries into that case and see if such a state of things exists. I want to impress on members that we have in no sense a desire to make economies in the wages of the men, who can least of all afford to accept a reduction. Large savings have been made, amounting to nearly £250,000, as compared with three years ago, but in no instance, as far as I know, has the saving been effected at the cost of the worker. We have certainly reduced the staff; we have reduced the clerical hands and the workmen, and if we find it necessary we will go on reducing. We have no time in the department for men who are not prepared to earn their living. We have good men there now, and we are paying them as good wages as they can get outside.

Mr. Bolton: You do not do it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Well, it is strange how desirous men are to obtain service in the department. I am sure, even if we paid a lower rate of wage, we should get as many men on the staff as we require. We do not want to do that however. The rate has never in

single instance been reduced, so far as I know, since I have been in office, other than the cases of those men to whom I have referred, namely the probationers.

Mr. Swan: What is the length of the probationers' period?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Three months, and then if the department are not satisfied with the men they pass them out, but if satisfied they have to pay them the higher rate of wage. Those are the instructions the Government gave to the Commissioner of Railways a considerable time ago, and Mr. Commissioner Short, who is now in charge, fully understands our position. He is endeavouring to effect industrial agreements with all the men. We have now an agreement with the loco. men for 12 months, and so far as I can judge there has been no appeal in regard to the matter. They have signed the industrial agreement and are satisfied with it.

Mr. Johnson: I have met many men who are not satisfied with it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: One has to deal with a majority in cases of this sort. There are sure to be some who disagree.

Mr. Johnson: The great trouble is that the majority of the men are getting from 11s. to 15s., and they do not study the men who are receiving only 7s.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I cannot believe that. I do not say this in any way as a reflection on the hon. member, but there cannot be a majority of those men receiving the highest wage, as only the loco. drivers get as much as 15s. a day. With each driver there is a fireman, while in addition for every driver there are engine cleaners and other workers. All these are under the same industrial agreement, and therefore the majority cannot possibly be receiving 15s. a day.

Mr. Johnson: I said from 11s. to 15s.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The agreement has been approved of by the organisation. The boiler makers have also entered into an agreement for three years.

Mr. Johnson: That is different. for they are mechanics.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The other mechanics are now arranging an industrial agreement, and I hope in a few days to be able to announce the signing of an agreement with these people, to operate for a period of three years. We are now dealing also with the traffic and permanent way men, and we hope, without any interference by the Arbitration Court in any shape or form, to be able to effect an industrial agreement which will be satisfactory to the workmen, to the Commissioner, to Parliament, and to the country. I have pointed out that the hon. member was not so anxious three years ago that there should be a minimum wage of 8s. a day. That was when the hon. member was Minister for Railways, and when the Commissioner destroyed the industrial agreement and forced the men into the Arbitration Court. I can see no justification for this motion; to my mind it comes at a time that is most inopportune. We have the possibility of effecting an industrial agreement between the traffic department and the permanent way men and the Commissioner, and should any friction arise, then probably Parliament might be able to express some opinion in regard to the question. At the present time, I repeat, this motion is very inopportune. Then, when the Estimates are being considered in this House, members will have an opportunity of expressing their opinions that the wages being paid are not sufficient. To increase the minimum in the Railway Department will mean that many of the men employed in other branches of the service will have to get the minimum increased too. There has been no sweating in the Railway Department. Even when that little incident about an old man receiving 6s. a day was raised, it was said that we were sweating in the railway workshops. I remember the incident well; the question was raised here. When the Estimates are submitted, if hon. members think that certain branches of the railway service are not being paid a sufficiently high wage, that will be the time to bring forward a matter of this sort. I look upon this motion as a means of

achieving popularity. It is all very well to say that no man shall be employed for less than 8s. a day, but we must recognise what it will mean to increase the cost of the administration of the railways, and I am quite satisfied that the State cannot afford it.

Private Business, Continuation.

Mr. Speaker: I must draw attention, before the debate proceeds further, that under Standing Order 214, a motion must be moved if it is desired that motions shall be continued.

Mr. Johnson: I move—

That the discussion on motions be continued.

The Premier: I understood that the Leader of the Opposition preferred that we should deal with one or two private Bill, but I have no objection to going on with the motions.

Motion put and passed.

Debate resumed.

Mr. BOLTON (North Fremantle): I have listened attentively to the Minister, and I must admit one thing, that whenever a railway matter crops up in this House, in the drawer immediately in front of the Minister there seems to be a set of papers that always fit into the question. I do not think it is necessary to bring into requisition this set of papers showing what wages are paid in the different States. These seem to be trotted out on every occasion when something of the nature of this motion is brought forward, and the figures I may say are very misleading. I believe that the Minister is sincere when he thinks that these railway men are receiving a minimum of 8s. a day, but it would be just as feasible, when being asked for information, for him to give the wages of the permanent way men as from 7s. to 8s., and not 8s. a day, as he has done here, because in nearly every case the probationary and the minimum class are mentioned as the one thing under which the men are working; and it again follows that perhaps the same practice applies in the Eastern States as it unfortunately applies here, that the

minimum is so often the maximum. I am of opinion that the intention of the member for Guildford in introducing this motion is to give the Commissioner authority to pay a minimum wage of 8s. I think Mr. Short would be favourable to 8s. if he thought the Government or this House were favourably disposed towards the suggestion. I can hardly blame the Commissioner for entering into an agreement, and I do not blame him for his attitude. The men have to take that minimum, and again they are misled in this way. When a man joins the service as a junior porter he rises to the position of coaching porter, and he gets the magnificent sum of 6s. 6d. a day, and all he has to wait for is perhaps a few months, sometimes 12 months when he may expect an increase of 6d. a day, which brings his wage up to 7s.; and after that another term, which brings it up to 7s. 6d. The difficulty has been that for some years past there has been a big percentage at work on the lowest wage, in fact, the majority have been in receipt of 6s. 6d. a day.

The Minister for Railways: There are only 38 receiving 6s. 6d.

Mr. BOLTON: Perhaps that is a late figure prepared by the Commissioner.

The Minister for Railways: I have the exact figures here; 155 are receiving 7s., and 38 are receiving 6s. 6d.

Mr. BOLTON: I worked it out that there were 329 employees, without juniors, in receipt of less than 8s., the minimum wage that has been agreed to by members on the Ministerial side of the House when speaking on the hustings during the recent election. The Minister pointed out that it was the wish of the department to employ men according to the value of their services, and when a coaching porter in receipt of 6s. 6d. a day had passed the test he received a higher remuneration. I have in my mind the case of a man who has served nine years in this department, and has been through most of the grades. He was a ticket inspector, afterwards a ticket collector, and is at the present time a ticket collector. After nine years of service he received 6s. 6d. a day, and I would like to explain for the benefit of the Minister how this

happened. After the man had served nine years he had a family misfortune, and he had to leave the service to get out of that trouble; he found it expedient later on to rejoin the service at a time when his trouble became less acute, and though he had served nine years in the department no allowance was made to him, and in spite of having passed several working tests, he was again started at 6s. 6d. a day. If a man is to be paid according to the value of his services, how does it apply to this man? There are many cases where men have passed these necessary tests and are not in receipt of the wages that they should receive; and, moreover, this particular man has a family of four children, his wife being dead, to keep on a wage of 6s. 6d. a day. I say it is absolutely impossible for a man to do it, and this is no isolated case, because there must be scores of men in receipt of 6s. 6d. and 7s., having large families to keep who cannot possibly be free from debt. Again, there has been a lot made of some statements about a man employed in the workshops who was in receipt of 6s. a day. I do not remember who made the statement, but I know that the case of that man was trotted out during the elections at Busselton. Menzies, and even at Norseman. If the statement was made, I do not think it was meant to convey that men were working for 6s. 6d. a day, but in our opinion, there should be no man engaged on manual toil in the workshops who should be paid less than 8s., yet we find there are scores working in the workshops for 7s.; and difficulties arise month after month when times are bad and work is slack. Then it seems to be necessary to retrench a number of hands, although they have had years of service there, and after a time, when things brighten up, these men are again employed. Peculiarly enough, though they have length of service, they receive little above the minimum, but when they are re-employed they are put on at the minimum to do the same work that they were doing before. That is the form of sweating that I take exception to. It is really sweating to retrench a man only for

a week or two, and then re-employ him at the lowest wage, instead of re-instating him. That is sweating, and as long as I can, I shall raise my voice against that form of sweating. The Minister referred to an agreement that is practically settled if not signed, on behalf of the traffic department. The difference between that and the agreement of the loco. men is the 96 hours a fortnight. The member for Guildford, when speaking on that question, said a man had to wait before the completion of that period before he knew what wages he had to draw. I do not agree with that, but there is something more difficult than that in conjunction with the 96 hours a fortnight. Sometimes a man will work 60 hours of that period in one week, and the balance of 36 hours has to be worked in the remainder of the time. A man will probably be picked for duty on Monday, on Tuesday he will have a short shift, perhaps Wednesday will be adjusting day, and perhaps at the end of the week it is discovered that this man still has to work 12 hours to complete his 96 hours; the consequence is that he sometimes has to work on a 12 hours shift on the last day of that period.

The Minister for Railways: They have power to adjust the time in the next fortnight.

Mr. BOLTON: They can adjust only the overtime that he has put in on the 96 hour period. But it is more difficult than ever, because the man does not know what shift he is going to be worked on. It is more difficult still because he does not know how he is going to adjust that, and it has been a bone of contention ever since the 96 hour period came in. The eight hours a day proposal would be a step in the right direction. The 48 hour period is a compromise the Minister should have agreed to. If the member for Guildford had moved for eight hours a day and time and a-quarter after that, the Minister would have been able to say that it was interfering with the award of the Arbitration Court. But if Parliament agrees upon the 48 hour period there will be no longer any necessity to cite the employees before the court or for the employees to cite the department: be-

cause it will then be a mutual agreement for a 48 hour period. Again, there are no objections raised to those who are not of adult age receiving less than this money. Cleaners are engaged at a less rate than 8s.. But one of the regulations applying in the loco. department lays it down that a cleaner shall join the service at 19 years of age, and that at 21 he shall receive 6s. 6d. per day, and periodically shall receive an increase until the maximum of 7s. 6d. be reached. It has been the case that most of them have been first-class cleaners in receipt of the maximum pay. The first-class cleaners of to-day have served some years as firemen. When the retrenchment took place the first-class firemen were reduced to the grade of second-class firemen, the second-class firemen were reduced to third-class, and the third-class were nearly all reduced to the grade of cleaners. The first-class firemen of to-day are for the most part reduced drivers. A number of them have been reappointed to the position of drivers but the department has the power to reduce a driver to the grade of fireman with the maximum pay of a fireman. That being a living wage of 10s. this class of reduction has not led to the same complaints as have been made in regard to the firemen reduced to the position of cleaners. Surely if a fireman has been successful in his work for three or four years, when the Government find it necessary to reduce him to the grade of cleaner the Minister ought to be prepared to make his wage 8s. per day seeing that probably he has been in receipt of 9s. But no, whilst he is cleaning he has to drop to 7s. a day. In the circumstances many of these men have found it necessary to leave the department and in some cases to leave the State. Would it not have been better to give them a maximum wage of 8s.? If the Minister has not heard of this complaint he has not far to go to hear it. It has been a very real complaint for eighteen months or two years past. I am surprised indeed to hear the Minister say that the association to which I referred have agreed to accept 7s. 6d. per day for firemen temporarily reduced to the grade of cleaners.

The member for Guildford said that the employees had seventeen days' holiday during the year. He was not quite correct. Holidays range from nine to twelve days, and that is all the men get. Some will say that this is a good deal, and that it is very nice to be paid for nine days' holiday. Possibly it is; but the benefits the men derive are nothing at all beyond the fact that they are at home instead of having to go to work. On the miserable pittance they receive they have no money to go away with. It is not possible for them to have a holiday. It is merely staying away from work and being paid during the time. The Minister complained that if this motion were adopted it would have to apply to other workmen. Why not? We are asking for a minimum wage for all of 8s. per day, and I doubt whether hon. members opposite will fight such a motion as this and argue that 8s. a day is more than a living wage, if indeed they will argue that it is a living wage. I think the member for Guildford should get considerable support from both sides of the Chamber. I know one or two members who pledged themselves on the hustings to support a minimum wage of 8s. It will be interesting to see how they vote if this matter comes to a division. Then there is the question of probationers in the permanent way branch. It would be interesting to know why when it is necessary to retrench a number of permanent way men they, on re-appointment, should be asked to serve a probationary period, seeing that they have already proved their efficiency on that work. It is absurd to say that the probationary period is for the purpose of proving whether they can do the work. It means that they are to work so many months before they can get the minimum wage. But the minimum wage for the permanent way men is 7s. per day and it is not necessary to remind the House that if no further permanent way men were engaged those in the service would still get 7s. The Minister said that in Victoria drivers were in receipt of from 11s. to 14s. per day. As a matter of fact they are, or a percentage of them, are in receipt of 15s. When I was in the

service the same thing applied—only a certain percentage could receive a first-class driver's wage, and some score of men were due for the wages of a first-class driver but could not receive that amount until somebody died or left the service. The same difficulty cropped up in Victoria. Old first-class hands are in receipt of 15s. a day, and it would have been fairer had he who prepared the figures quoted made the wage range from 11s. to 15s., and not stopped at 14s. There are drivers in New South Wales in receipt of 16s. to-day. It was once the maximum pay there and whilst it has been dropped yet those men who were in receipt of it have not been reduced as they would have been in this State. It is not right to boast that in this State the pay is so much higher than in the other States. The living here is very much higher, and I would far rather accept 7s. in Victoria or New South Wales than 8s. in Western Australia. To quote the figures of Queensland and South Australia as against our own is absurd. Wages on the goldfields are very much higher than in the Eastern States and it is agreed that they should be so. Why then should they not be higher in the railway service also? The railway men should be well paid, more particularly in a State which has been practically immune from accidents or great losses, thanks to the splendid staff and splendid service that staff has given. I hope the motion will be carried; it will do good. It will be a direction to the Commissioner that it is the pleasure of this Parliament that a minimum wage of 8s. per day should be paid to all Government employees.

Mr. LAYMAN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division called for.

Mr. Holman: Is the hon. member in order in moving a motion from a seat other than his own?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member should move it from his own seat.

Mr. Layman: Am I in order in moving it now?

Mr. Taylor: The hon. member admits that he was out of his seat when he moved the motion.

Mr. Speaker: As far as I noticed he was in his seat. At all events exception should have been taken at the time.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	..	19

Majority for .. 6

AYES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Male
Mr. Carson	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Monger
Mr. Daglish	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Davies	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Price
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Layman
Mr. Jacoby	

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Johnson	

(Teller).

Motion thus passed; the debate adjourned.

MOTION—RAILWAY PROJECT,
BELMONT-BURSWOOD.

Mr. GORDON (Canning) moved—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the railway system should be extended to connect the present Belmont terminus with Burswood station.

He said: This is a question that has been under consideration since 1902. The residents of Belmont have been subjected to great inconvenience owing to the want of proper communication between Belmont and Perth; but putting on one side altogether the requirements of the residents of Belmont, a connection between the Bunbury line and the Eastern Railway would be very desirable in relation to the working of heavy traffic. All the heavy traffic in wood and coal could be dissected—I do not know if that is the correct rail-

way term—at East Perth instead of going into the Perth railway station.

Mr. Swan: But what would be the cost of a new bridge over the river to carry the heavy traffic?

Mr. GORDON: There are some who come to this House who are elected by the people under a misapprehension, and they do not recognise the value of matters raised in the House. This is one of the questions they have not the brains to understand. The fact that this traffic could be handled at East Perth is a recommendation for this project.

Mr. Gill: They would need to have shunting yards at East Perth.

Mr. GORDON: Oh, shunt out. Relieving the traffic of the Perth yards would be a great advantage. Also on race days at present the trains run backwards and forwards. Like the Labour party they do not know where they are. They run backwards and forwards instead of going, as would be the case if the line is connected from Belmont to Burswood, on a circular line so that one train would follow another, like the members of the Labour party follow their leader. Since 1902 the people of Belmont have been practically promised this railway communication, but they are still without it. There is a large traffic on the line to Belmont on race days, and the returns from that traffic alone would guarantee the interest and sinking fund on the construction of this short extension. Many of the people residing at Belmont I admit are of the racing community, but they should be considered on the week days as well as on race days. There are only two trains from Belmont to Perth daily and this is not fair to the district. The people of Belmont should have some decent communication with Perth.

Mr. Collier: What are the earnings on race days?

Mr. GORDON: I do not know what your yearnings are. I am sorry the Opposition seem to treat this matter lightly, but it is not a matter that should be treated lightly, because there is no denying the fact that 1,500 people near Perth are denied the right of travelling to and from Perth with decent communication. Another feature is the fact that they are

not in a position to get a tramline to Belmont because the Government deny them the right to connect with the Victoria Park tramline by passing over the railway line at Burswood. The Government will not give them the right to connect with the Victoria Park tram service, neither will they give them a decent train service.

Mr. Taylor: Then why do you support the Government?

Mr. GORDON: Oh, shut up.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not use that expression.

Mr. GORDON: I withdraw. I did not know it was the member for "Mulga." It is only right that a community of 1,500 to 2,000 people should be considered in a question like this, especially when it is on paper that the returns from the line to-day will guarantee fair interest and sinking fund on the extension. In spite of the inconvenience the district has been submitted to for the past 10 years it has been advancing. It is an ideal spot for a workingman to have a suburban home, if he has any opportunity of making a home of his own in this country. There he can have a garden and yet can go to and from his work in Perth. The land there is suitable for homesteads and little gardens, and it is close to Perth. It would be an advantage for the City to have a spot close at hand to which men can go after their work and do a certain amount of gardening. In this respect the country around Perth is deficient. Through all the suburbs when a man goes home if he has a plot of his own he can only dig up sand. On the other hand, with decent communication between Perth and Belmont, thousands of men could make their homes at Belmont on good soil. The distance is neither here nor there. It is no further than other suburbs from which the workers come into Perth to-day. At Belmont there will be the opportunity for the worker, not only to have a home for himself, but to have a little land on which to grow vegetables and raise poultry. I ask the House to take this project seriously into consideration. I contend that it will relieve the heavy traffic in the Perth yard, while on race days it will be a greater guarantee of safety for the travelling

public. In addition to all this it will be the first section of a railway which ultimately must be built between Fremantle and Guildford on the South side of the river. No doubt that proposition must come sooner or later, and this would be the starting point of it.

Mr. Bath: What is the length of the line?

Mr. Angwin: About two and a quarter miles.

Mr. GORDON: It will cost about £10,000, but the earnings of the railway between Belmont and Perth to-day guarantee interest and sinking fund on this proposed extension to Burswood.

Mr. Bath: What are the present earnings?

Mr. GORDON: Do you not know that? I am surprised at the Leader of the Opposition. On a question such as this I thought he would at least have followed the statistics. Probably he does not know the earnings of any of the railways. Since 1902 this railway has been recommended by the railway authorities.

Mr. Gill: Where will you find that?

Mr. GORDON: You will find it I suppose if you look for it. I suppose if you take the trouble to look up the jacket you will find it, because it is there. As I say, since 1902 this work has been advocated by the railway authorities, and it should have been carried out, so I trust members will assist me in seeing that it is carried out now.

On motion by *Mr. Angwin* debate adjourned.

RETURN—GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENTS.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) moved—

That a return be laid on the Table of the House showing the total amount in detail of the expenditure incurred by the Government in advertising in the various papers (shown separately) published in the State for the period 1st January to 30th September, 1907, and for the period 1st January to 30th September, 1908.

He said: My reason for asking for this return is to try and see if some better means cannot be arranged for advertising

than exists now. On looking through the papers we see Government advertisements appearing in those which circulate solely in Perth. I can mention several papers which are bolstered up in the shape of Government advertisements at the expense of the State. Take for instance the *Daily News*, that receives a tremendous amount of money for advertising, whereas it is well known that that particular paper is not distributed outside Perth, and very little inside of it, so far as that is concerned. Then there are several papers with large circulations, which are distributed throughout the districts where the subject matter of certain advertisements is of great interest, and yet such advertisements do not appear in those papers at all. The Government should advertise on local matters in the papers circulating throughout the district. We should adopt the same method that obtained some years ago and have an advertising agent, who would distribute the advertisements to the best advantage, and see that every time a Government advertisement was put in, the State got full return for the price paid. There is a paper called the *West Australian Mining, Building and Engineering Journal*. It is highly probable that very few members of Parliament, and very few people outside, know there is such a publication in the State; yet we find month after month, and perhaps year after year, pages of Government advertisements published in that paper. The price we pay in some of the papers for bolstering up one or two of the Ministers is altogether too high, and the time has come when we should adopt another method in connection with advertising. Then with regard to advertisements notifying land sales. On more than one occasion I have seen advertisements concerning land sales in the country districts appearing in papers which never circulate there, while no notification of the sales appear in the papers which are circulated throughout the district. There are cases I know of on the Murchison where, instead of the advertisements concerning matters affecting that part of the country being published in the local papers, they are published in Perth papers, and are therefore absolutely use-

less to the people of the district. I have known of cases where advertisements as to land sales were published in Perth weekly papers which never circulate outside the City, and as a matter of fact have a very small circulation in the City.

The Treasurer: What weekly papers are those?

Mr. HOLMAN: When the return comes down I will give the Treasurer that information. I will be able to show the Treasurer how he will be able to save about £3,000 by altering the method of advertising, instead of trying to save that money by cutting down wages of railway men.

The Treasurer: The total sum paid for advertisements does not amount to £3,000.

Mr. HOLMAN: I once called for a return which showed that one paper in Perth had received several hundred pounds for one advertisement. The question is whether it is advisable to spend so much money in absolutely useless advertising. This is only done to bolster up papers which, without these advertisements, would in all probability cease circulating; if only this happened we would be much better off for it. The Treasurer might argue that it would be better to have the return covering a period of 12 months, but I want to see a quarterly return. If the department cannot supply the returns for the quarter, then their books must be kept in rather a peculiar way. In any business concern one should be able to ascertain at once what the quarterly returns are.

The Treasurer: Will not a return for the whole year do you?

Mr. HOLMAN: I require the figures for the periods as set out in the motion. I thought when drafting the motion it would be a simple matter to get a return of that nature. After the return is placed on the Table I intend to take further action to see if we cannot effect a great saving in advertisements. One or two other papers might be mentioned as examples of the way in which Government money is absolutely thrown away. The sooner we adopt a better system of advertising, and so enable the people most directly interested to obtain the benefit of the advertisements the better. Where

there are matters of public importance affecting one district let the advertisements concerning such be published in the papers circulating in that district.

Mr. HEITMANN (Cue): I second the motion.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson): I would have been quite prepared to agree to this motion had the hon. member amended it so that the figures should include the whole year. Further, I would have given the information as to the quarterly figures, if possible, although it would have taken some time to get them out, but the hon. member has gone outside the terms of the motion and has accused the Government of giving advertisements to papers for bolstering up Ministers, as he calls it. He laid charges against the Government of lavish expenditure in this direction, and I think that in those circumstances I would be quite justified in moving the adjournment of the debate so that I could get particulars in answer to his accusations.

Mr. Walker: You are making a speech and cannot now move the adjournment of the debate.

The TREASURER: I am merely explaining the reason why I should ask for the adjournment of the debate, inasmuch as I would desire to get particulars from the department to answer the charges which occupied the major portion of the hon. member's time when introducing his motion.

Mr. Nanson: Let there be an amendment to amplify the information.

The TREASURER: The hon. member can move the amendment when I have done. Let me explain that it is rather difficult and expensive to compile a return such as the hon. member wants. There are six ledgers, and as there are 67 papers in Western Australia participating in advertising matter, it is necessary that there should be 67 accounts kept in each ledger. In making up returns as to advertising, accounts have to be dissected and charged up against the different departments referred to in the various advertisements. That means that with the 67 newspapers, and with six entries probably for each advertisement,

the work of getting out details for, say, a period of three months, would be very expensive. It would mean going through the whole of the six ledgers and the 67 different accounts kept in each ledger and dissecting the amounts charged up.

Mr. Holman: Why do they not keep proper ledger accounts?

The TREASURER: That is the system adopted. The officers do not balance ledgers of this kind every month, or even every half year, for they are brought into running with the financial year, and at the end of each 12 months a proper summary, as the hon. member knows—for it was laid on the Table last year—is made up showing exactly the papers that have participated and received money from the Government in connection with advertising matter. The hon. member suggests that we should have an advertising agent, but I may tell him that we have one, that he is a very capable clerk, and has been in charge of that department for several years.

Mr. Taylor: You did away with the agent.

The TREASURER: There is an agent now. Every department puts its advertising through that agent. If I had known that the hon. member was going to rake up the transactions of this department for some years past I should have obtained figures as to the working, and so proved to the House that his insinuations of unfair dealing in connection with advertising are quite incorrect.

Mr. Holman: I will prove them.

Mr. Troy: There is unfair dealing.

The TREASURER: The hon. member who states that, says something which is absolutely incorrect. It is nothing of the sort, and the cost of the department has been brought down considerably. If I remember rightly, the cost has been reduced to one-third or one-fourth of what it was when this clerk first took charge. If there is one thing I am proud of in the Treasury it is this advertising department, which now spends only hundreds of pounds as against thousands of pounds some years ago. The department is well run. If the hon. member likes to deal only with the metropolitan Press I will be able to get him the quarterly

return as he desires, as I think there are only eight papers in the metropolis which receive Government advertisements.

Mr. Holman: I want to show that you treat the country papers unfairly.

The TREASURER: We are advertising in 67 papers in Western Australia. Notwithstanding what the hon. member says, anything of local interest is always advertised in the local paper.

Mr. Taylor: Also in the metropolitan papers.

The TREASURER: Of course. The *West Australian Mining, Building, and Engineering Journal*, to which the hon. member has referred, is a very excellent paper and it is well worth advertising certain matters therein. I do not think that paper receives more than £25 per half-year for the whole of the Government advertising.

Mr. Holman: More than the whole paper is worth.

The TREASURER: If the hon. member likes to make statements like that let him do so.

Mr. Heitmann: You have advertised the Goldfields Water Scheme in the *Mirror*.

The TREASURER: I daresay we did, and in many other papers also, papers that reach every section of the community. But what I say generally is this, hon. members will find when the return is made out, and the annual return will be made out in due course, that every care has been taken in connection with advertising, and there is not any sort of favour granted to one paper over another. If there were, then I could quite understand the hon. member getting up in his place and challenging the Government on that ground. As far as I am concerned I am quite willing that the returns shall be placed before the House, but I do ask, unless there is something serious in the hon. member's mind, instead of putting the department to undue expense, that he and other hon. members should wait until papers are presented to the House before they make charges.

Mr. NANSON (Greenough): I think it would add to the utility of the return

if it embraced not only the amount paid to the papers published in the State but also the papers published outside, and we would then have information as to what the Government are doing to advertise the State in the old country and the Eastern States, and as to how far the journals used for disseminating this information are proving of value.

The Treasurer: I do not think you would get the information from the Agent General in time.

Mr. NANSON: Well, then, as far as possible. I fully agree with what the Treasurer has said as to the inadvisability of making charges against the Government in regard to these matters before the information is placed before members. In moving the amendment I do not bring it forward with any intention of making charges against the Government, but merely so that the House may be placed in possession of information that I have no doubt will not only be useful, but will probably show in regard to advertising outside the State that the Government are exercising great care in connection with the expenditure of public funds in that direction. I move as an amendment—

That in line 5 after the word "State" the words "and elsewhere" be added.

Mr. HOLMAN (on amendment): I have no objection to the amendment provided it will not delay the return. I am anxious to get this return out at the earliest possible moment. The argument of the Treasurer that it will take a lot of work to bring out this return will not hold good. I am not much of a scholar, but I can keep books, and I can produce my ledgers and furnish returns every month, or for 6, 9, or 12 months. I do not know if it is different in the Treasury, but if it is, the sooner there is an alteration there the better. The items should be set forth as they are expended, and it should be very easy to show any month's expenditure and produce the figures exactly. However, I have no objection to the amendment, provided it is not going to delay the production of this return.

The Treasurer: Will a twelve months' return do you, and then three months in addition?

Mr. HOLMAN: I am asking for the details; I want the figures for the preceding nine months. If what I am asking cannot be furnished by the Treasury Department, then I am not surprised at the occurrences that we have heard of lately in some of the branches of that department. I will be greatly interested in seeing the number of advertisements that are published in the Eastern States and in the old country, and in seeing what is being done in the direction of advertising the State; and it would be of some advantage and information to us if we could have copies of the advertisements placed on the table of the House. I am satisfied they would be an eye-opener if we could only see some of them. If we have an assurance from the Treasurer that the amendment will not delay the return over this session, I shall not oppose it. We may get returns from the Eastern States, but if we have to await returns from the Agent General, then we can say good-bye to this information that I am asking for.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I readily recognise the desire on the part of the member for Greenough to extend the scope of the return, but I hope he will see that if his amendment is passed there will be no possible chance of getting the return before this session ends.

Mr. Nanson: We can have the information in two chapters, or in sections.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am afraid that the first section would be of little value. The value of the return would be in the second section, and that would not be forthcoming perhaps until the next year. I believe the desire of the member for Murchison is to have a return laid on the Table of the House this session, so that the House may be able to deal with that aspect of the question. Notwithstanding the statement of the Treasurer as to the magnificent manner in which this advertising department under his control is conducted, there is a widespread opinion, not among journalists, but among those who have left the Press, that the Government do not advertise wisely.

That has been remarked to me in many places.

The Treasurer: Because we do not spend sufficient money?

Mr. TAYLOR: Not on that score, but it is on the score of not wisely expending the money that is expended. We find advertisements in the metropolitan Press of certain land sales in the most distant town sites proclaimed, and we find in the weekly Press, published close to those localities, that advertisements concerning these sales do not appear, and if they do appear they are very small. We also find that matters of that kind are advertised in what are known as the social journals, weekly publications that are not really good advertising mediums. I do hope that the House will not accept the amendment, because, in my opinion, it will prevent the motion, moved by the member for Murchison, from carrying out its object. It is necessary that we should have a return, and the statement of the Treasurer with reference to the complication of the bookkeeping system is not a justification for prolonging the issue of this return. The Treasurer says they have an advertising clerk. I would like to remind him that we had in this State in 1903 an advertising agent, and the returns laid on the Table by the then Treasurer clearly and conclusively showed, notwithstanding that his salary was much higher than that of the clerk now filling the position, he effected a great saving. He was removed from that post largely. I believe, because—I am speaking in his own words—he cut down the advertisements in papers in which, in his opinion, it was not necessary to advertise, because the State did not get full value for their money. Then when those papers did not allow their leading columns to speak so favourably of the Government as they had previously done when receiving Government advertisements, this officer was removed. He is the only officer we have had since my time who has been an efficient advertising agent. He was a journalist, and a man who held a high position on one of the leading papers, and was, I believe, a competent and capable man, and in the words of the then

Treasurer, he was doing magnificent work. The then Treasurer had a higher opinion of the work of this agent than the present Treasurer has of the agent he has in his office to-day. I do not think it is fair to amend the motion of the member for Murchison with the object of—I am not going to make any accusation against the member for Greenough—but I say the result will be that there will be delay in the preparation of this return, and we may not get it before the present session closes.

The Minister for Railways: We can get you separate returns.

Mr. TAYLOR: On the assurance then that the Government will furnish the House with the returns that they have at present, I shall be prepared to let the amendment go, but I am not prepared to sit silent in my place while I see there is a possibility of this House not getting the information that is being called for in the motion. I will not further oppose the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): I desire to move a further amendment to the motion. It will be noticed that the hon. member desires a return showing the cost of advertising during a period dating from the 1st January to the 30th September, 1907, and a similar period in 1908. I can hardly see the object to be attained by giving statistics to this House which will not embrace the total expenditure in connection with advertising. We are spending a certain sum of money and the House wants to know what we are spending. Surely we should have a return showing the total expenditure incurred by the Government in connection with this matter. I move—

That all words after "the" in line 5 be struck out with a view to inserting, "financial years 1906-7 and 1907-8, together with the quarter ending September 30th, 1908."

That will give a complete list of the cost on all advertising during the period mentioned. In connection with the amendment moved by the member for Greenough, it may not be possible for

us to give all the information in connection with these advertisements and with the expenditure incurred by the Agent General. However any information the Treasurer has he will be only too pleased to give to the House although he cannot claim that it will be a complete return. I beg to move the amendment.

Mr. Jacoby: Presumably we can take that motion to read that the amount per inch paid will be included in the information given.

Mr. HOLMAN (on further amendment): The Minister himself now wants a return. I think the motion as originally moved was sufficiently clear. If the Minister wants a return for the last financial year I have no objection; but if I move for a return I think the motion should be allowed to go as originally framed and should not be altered merely because the Treasurer says the return cannot easily be furnished. The officers of the department who keep the books can supply the returns. In regard to the point raised by the member for Swan (*Mr. Jacoby*) I have already had answers to questions in which I find that the amount paid per inch varied very greatly in different papers. Again, surely it would be an easy matter to have the return set out in the first three quarters of the calendar year. There should be no more difficulty about furnishing such a quarterly return than there is about the usual quarterly returns from the Treasurer's Department. I was surprised to hear the Treasurer saying it was almost an impossibility to get such a return at all. If that be so, then if the Treasurer will allow me to look into the books I will guarantee, provided that the books have been properly kept, to get the figures out myself and save all the expense we have heard about to-night.

Mr. TAYLOR (on amendment): It is quite apparent to me that this amendment is a very old Ministerial dodge. When a member in Opposition moves a motion which may have the result of exposing figures which the Government are not anxious to disclose. Ministers calmly proceed to oppose the motion

to cloud the issue, and to make it possible, by extending the operation of the motion, that the return cannot be produced during the session. We have repeatedly had these tactics since the present Government came into power—this clouding of the issue by the moving of amendments to motions coming from this side of the House. It will be within your memory, sir, that the most heated debates and the keenest cross-firing that have ever taken place in this Chamber have arisen out of the self-same tactics to which we are being subjected to-night. The member for Murchison is after special information the necessity for which he is not at this juncture prepared to reveal. He knows something more than I do, and he is moving a motion with the object of satisfying himself as to the accuracy of his information. And what do we find? That an attempt is being made to prevent the discovery of these figures.

The Treasurer: Could he not have taken the House into his confidence?

Mr. TAYLOR: The Treasurer is too old a politician for any sophistry of that kind. I have had the pleasure of sitting in opposition to the Minister; and I have sat on the Ministerial benches when the Minister was in opposition to me and I know that there are few hon. members as capable as the Treasurer of dealing with a question of this character. I think when an hon. member desires something that should be the property of Parliament his motion should not be made a party question. The actions of a Government should not require to be covered up. There should be no necessity on the part of Ministers to hide their tracks. Ministers should be fair and square to Parliament and to the country. If there be something that the member for Murchison is after it should be given to the House. I say there is no justification for these tactics on the part of Ministers. It is an old dodge that we have had repeated time after time within the last three years. The *Hansard* records of this House prove that. I hope that whatever may happen to this motion the House will not be debarred from obtaining the information sought

by the member for Murchison. In the hon. member's opinion it is necessary that this information should be given and I want to say that he was generous to the Government when he moved his motion couched as it is in moderate language. In his speech also he was generous notwithstanding the taunts of the Treasurer that the hon. member was making charges against the department. I venture to say that if we get these papers covering the period mentioned in the original motion we shall be able to speak with more force on this question. I hope the amendment moved by the Minister for Mines will not be carried, and that the object of the member for Murchison will not be frustrated. I think it is about time the House was given information of this character when an hon. member on this side moves for it. When an hon. member believes there is a defect in the administration of any department there should be no desire on the part of the Government to withhold the information asked for, and especially when that information affects the people's money. I hope the amendment moved by the Minister for Mines will not be carried.

Mr COLLIER (Boulder): I also fail to understand why the Minister for Mines should have moved this amendment. We have the member for Murchison moving for special information regarding the expenditure over a certain period. No hon. member has asked for the information which will be embraced in the return moved for by the Minister for Mines.

The Attorney General: Which return will be the more correct?

Mr. COLLIER: It is not a matter of which will be the more correct, it is a matter of supplying the hon. member with the information he desires.

The Attorney General: If he wanted a balance in the middle of a week would you give it to him?

Mr. COLLIER: I am quite certain there should be no difficulty about getting out the information if the Minister desires to give it. It leads one to suspect that there is reason for covering up this return.

The Treasurer: Or some reason for moving the motion.

Mr. Holman: There certainly is a reason for moving the motion.

Mr. COLLIER: If the hon. member desires the information, he is entitled to have it. I do not know whether the charge of favouritism in advertising is justified, but I do know that the charge of extravagance in that respect is fully justified. I have seen advertisements for land sales at Leonora inserted in the *Mirror*, a classic journal circulating only in the hairdressers' shops along St. George's Terrace. Has anybody ever seen the *Mirror* in Leonora? Then in the *Sunday Times* last week there was a double-column advertisement at 6s. per inch, amounting to about £5 10s. What did the advertisement refer to? Land sales all over the State: at Bridgetown, at Geraldton, at Albany, and at Kalgoorlie. As one who has some knowledge of newspapers circulating on the goldfields I want to say that the *Sunday Times* never reaches the goldfields. I venture to say it is not read by a dozen people throughout Kalgoorlie and Boulder, yet there is Government money paid for advertising goldfields land sales in Kalgoorlie. Again, we have Menzies, Southern Cross and Lawlers. Does the *Sunday Times* reach such a remote spot as Lawlers? Again, there are land sales advertised for Carnarvon and Onslow, and down in the South-West as far as Kundip and Ravenshorpe. The Treasurer is a business man. If he had blocks of land for sale in those districts would he advertise in the *Sunday Times*? I cannot imagine a shrewd business man with the ability of the Treasurer advertising in the *Sunday Times*. The paper never reaches Lawlers.

The Treasurer: Do you not read the *Sunday Times*?

Mr. COLLIER: Not since their remarkable somersault during the last eight or nine months. I would like to know whether that somersault has had anything to do with this advertising. However, it is a ridiculous waste of money to advertise such items as I have read in this newspaper. But the return will be of little value if it is obtained; because, although it will set forth the lump

sums paid to these papers, it will be of little information unless it be more complete, unless it shows the rate charged, and the space occupied. The details will not be supplied judging from my experience. I have seen a return like this already laid on the Table. It is of no value to know that £50 or £100 has been paid to a newspaper for advertising unless we know the rates charged and the space occupied. However, I believe the motion should be agreed to, but the return should not be clouded over with information not asked for and not desired by the House.

The TREASURER (on further amendment): In reply to the remarks of the member for Mt. Margaret, the Government have not backed out of office and covered up their tracks with sand, as the hon. member graphically described it. Perhaps he is describing the habits he followed when he occupied office. There is no dodging about this. I do not resort to dodges in these matters. I am only wishful to give the House the fullest information available that can be done at a moderate cost, and if I give the information that will satisfy the member for Murchison to enable him to get what he wants, surely it is all he ought to ask the Government to give. He says he can go into the office, go to the ledgers and get out the return in five minutes. Then if I give him the return for the financial year he can take any section of it he likes. That sounds reasonable and feasible. If it is so easily done, he can dissect it for himself. We are not anxious to hide anything. All we object to is being put to unnecessary expense in providing returns unless there is a good case made out for the production of the returns.

Mr. Taylor: You have not made out a case for extending the return.

The TREASURER: The hon. member says he is not so silly as to give his reasons. All the years I have had experience of Parliamentary usage it has been customary for a member when he moves for a return, or a select committee, or a Royal Commission, to make out his case, to give his reasons, to take the House into his confidence as to why he wants the expenditure: and if he does not, I think the

House would be justified in saying it is only a reasonable thing to fall in with the departmental dates for making these returns and placing them before the House. I want to give not only what the hon. member asked for, I want to give the return for the financial year 1906-7 and that for the financial year 1907-8. Then there will be a comparison, and the hon. member can take out nine months or six months if he likes. And I want to go to the extra trouble—it will be a considerable trouble—of giving him the return for the first three months of this financial year.

Mr. Taylor: The hon. member does not want you to go to all that trouble and expense.

The TREASURER: There is no expense in giving the return for the financial year. As I have explained before, the expense comes when we take a broken period that goes partly into one financial year and partly into another.

Mr. Holman: Do you publish quarterly returns?

The TREASURER: Not of advertising. Here is the note from the Treasury Office:—

“The above returns asked for, being a broken period, would entail a considerable amount of work. The advertising ledgers are made up to the 30th June each year.”

That is the official information given to me.

Mr. Taylor: They are not looking for work.

The TREASURER: I want to see as little of it as possible. If the hon. member explains what he wants, perhaps I could give him the information without going to the trouble of getting out these returns, but I ask the House to believe that the returns we propose to supply are reasonable in the circumstances, and I ask members to accept the amendment. Then the returns can be got ready immediately, whereas, according to the information given me, the returns asked for by the hon. member will take some weeks to get out, and this perhaps may defeat the end the hon. member aims at.

Amendment put and passed; motion as amended agreed to.

PAPERS—GERALDTON OLD MEN'S HOME.

Mr. CARSON (Geraldton) moved—

That all papers in connection with the removal of the old men from the Geraldton Home be laid on the Table.

He said: The reason for the establishment of the Old Men's Home at Geraldton some years ago was that there were many old men formerly residents of the Victoria District located in the home in Perth, while there were additional cases continually cropping up in the Geraldton district of men desirous of going to a home; and as there was available a portion of the Geraldton hospital, it was fitted up for a home for these old men and they were made very comfortable there. Now the Government had decided to close the establishment on the ground of economy, but this economy was not what the department made out. According to the reports the amount saved was to be something like 4d. per head per week, but included in the cost of the Geraldton institution was the charge of £1 per 1,000 gallons for water supplied by the Railway Department, whereas this water only cost the Railway Department 7s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons. The saving by the removal of these old men from Geraldton to Claremont was not equal to £200 per annum. But economy was not the only thing that should be taken into consideration. The old men were desirous of remaining in the district and of ending their days there. They had associations there, and it was a shame to remove them to a strange place. It was to be hoped the Government would place the papers on the Table so that members could have an opportunity of perusing them. This was another instance of centralisation and should be deprecated. Besides there would be cases continually cropping up of old men and women desirous of going into a home and they would have to be deported from Geraldton to Claremont. This would be a mistake. The amount saved was not worth considering. The consideration extended to these old men should be more than the few pounds saved by deporting them to Claremont.

Mr. NANSON (Greenough) seconded the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): This matter had disturbed some of the residents of Geraldton very considerably. It was used as an argument against centralisation, but we might very well apply the argument to every district outside of Perth. Why should an institution be maintained for old men at Geraldton any more than on the Northern goldfields or at Bunbury? Why should we not have these homes dotted all over the country? As the hon. member pointed out, the old men had been resident in an institution in Perth, and afterwards it was decided to utilise one of the expensive buildings erected in Geraldton to house them. But now we heard the cry of the need for economy everywhere, and where Mr. Longmore, the superintendent of public charities, was able to show that we could save at least £420 per annum by making the removal, the Government would be deserving of censure if they did not carry out the suggestion, especially when it could be done without any hardship to any of those concerned. Mr. Longmore stated that the institution had been reduced in numbers, and that there were only 23 men in it at present; and we had to maintain an expensive staff for these few men. Mr. Longmore also reported that there was ample accommodation at Claremont for these old men, while the quarters at Geraldton were not suitable for a home because of the proximity to hotels, which had frequently been the cause of a certain amount of drunkenness among the men in the home. At Claremont the old men were altogether removed from this temptation. A considerable sum of money would need to be expended in improving the building at Geraldton, and in erecting a proper fence around it. The action taken on the suggestion of the superintendent of charities must commend itself to members. There was no objection to the laying of the papers on the Table, and he was satisfied that if members perused them they would come to the conclusion that the action taken by the Government was justified.

Mr. CARSON (in reply): The Premier had said there were now only 23 men in the institution, but he did not mention

that some 20 men were removed from it about six months ago. It was very doubtful whether the saving mentioned by the superintendent of charities would be effected.

Question put and passed.

REPORT—NORTH BEACH ROAD CONSTRUCTION.

On motion by *Mr. Gill* ordered: "That the report of the Engineer who reported on the North Beach Road and Curtis Street, Osborne Park, be laid upon the Table of the House."

MOTION—ORCHARDS DESTRUCTION, TO INQUIRE.

Mr. DRAPER (West Perth) moved—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the circumstances under which three orchards in West Perth were destroyed by the Agricultural Department in March, 1906, and to recommend what compensation, if any, should be paid to the owners of such orchards.

He said: Some ten days ago I moved for the production of the papers in connection with this matter. My object in so doing was that I could peruse the jacket relating to the matter at issue, and that members could have an opportunity of verifying what I had previously said and what I intend to say to-night. The motion was carried, and I must protest against the course which is being followed. I do not know if it is the practice, for I have not been long in the House, but what has happened in this case is, that the papers have not been laid on the Table. Surely when such papers are desired by members they should be produced if a motion to that effect has been carried. In order that I can refer to the grievances suffered it is necessary that I should see the papers, and get the fullest possible information. So far as I am personally concerned the Minister for Agriculture has given me every facility to see the papers, but to-night I should like to use and quote from them, and if I cannot get them I cannot lay my case before members. [The Honorary Minister handed the papers to the hon. member.] The facts in this case are familiar to

some members. In March, 1906, there were three orchards in a flourishing condition in West Perth belonging to a widow named Mrs. Backshaff, Mr. Liddelow, and Mr. Ffarrington. These orchards contained about 400 trees, and of the number 300 were destroyed. Up to February, 1906, there was no suggestion whatever of the existence of codlin moth in the orchards. In fact these papers show that the owners of the orchards took every care to comply with the requirements of the department. At that time the trees were practically clean from the pest. In the month of February an inspection of the orchards was made, and, as I said before, there was only the slightest trace in each orchard of the codlin moth. I believe the Minister for Agriculture led the House to infer that the pest was rife in the district, but I would like to ask members to bear this in mind that where there are orchards comprising over 400 trees there should be some distinct and clear evidence that the pest, supposed to exist, is practically general throughout the orchard, before so large a number of trees as 300 is destroyed. As to Mrs. Backshaff, in his report of February, 1906, the inspector says:—

"I found one apple tree infested with larvæ of the codlin moth and two apples and one pear where the moth had evidently been at work."

The report as to Mr. Ffarrington's orchard is as follows:—

"I found two apples infested with codlin moth larvæ."

That was the only thing they discovered. After perusing the jacket I cannot take up the position that there has been no authentic proof of the existence of codlin moth, for it is abundantly clear that the moth has been found at different times, at all events in Albany, but what I am complaining of is the fact that the orchards, which were of considerable value, were almost totally destroyed upon insufficient grounds. In Mrs. Backshaff's orchard there were 69 trees, in Mr. Liddelow's 70 trees, and in Mr. Ffarrington's 157, making a total of over 300 trees. Those trees were of considerable value, and in fact I do not think it unreasonable, considering their age and that they

were in full bearing and in flourishing condition, to put the value down at less than £3 a tree. Mr. Farrington was receiving a rental of £2 10s. a week for his orchard, but the remains of it now return a rental of only £1 5s. a week. The reduction is due entirely to the destruction caused by killing the trees. Immediately after the traces of moth were discovered in the orchards, the fruit was destroyed. In the following month, March, 1906, 300 of the 400 trees were also destroyed. I understand it is the practice of the department in these cases not to destroy the trees at once but in the first instance to adopt other measures. These measures, for some reason of which I am not aware, were not taken in this case, but apparently on account of the discovery of slight traces of codlin moth the orchards were practically destroyed. In addition to the actual loss they sustained by the destruction of the trees the owners were called upon to bear the expense of the destruction, and the perusal of the papers will show members that such practice is not carried out in all cases where it is necessary to destroy trees under the Insect Pests Act. For no apparent reason that I can see, these unfortunate people had to bear the cost of their own destruction.

Mr. Bath: It depends on the constituency.

Mr. DRAPER: At that time the constituency was represented by the late Mr. Illingworth, who introduced a deputation to the then Premier (Mr. Rason) on the matter. Looking through the jackets it would appear that Mr. Rason was at any rate in sympathy with the deputation. Not only did he express sympathy, but he put that sympathy into practical form, because he wrote a minute to the then Minister for Lands—the present Premier—on the question. After going into some of the facts I have mentioned he wrote:—

“These with others (referring to the trees destroyed) were all mature trees in full bearing, and their destruction of course means a very heavy loss to the owners. They ask for compensation. I wish you would obtain a full report. The destruction of the trees

being in the interests of the fruit-growers of the whole State, a request for compensation does not appear unreasonable.”

That minute was sent on to the Minister for Lands, and he referred it to the Director of Agriculture, Mr. Chaplin. I cannot understand the Minister adopting such a course, considering it was a question of compensation and on a recommendation from the Premier. He should have come to a decision himself, and not have referred it to one of the officers of the department, who was thus placed in the position practically of usurping the functions of this House, and saying whether compensation should be granted or not. The matter was merely referred to Mr. Chaplin and he apparently did not understand the circumstances. He replied to the minute to the effect that these people had not been injured, and then went on to say they were claiming damages for, among other things, the loss of the shade of the trees. That was the spirit in which he received the minute of the Premier. Mr. Chaplin regarded the position of the unfortunate people, whose property was almost totally destroyed, in so sympathetic a spirit that he imagined they were asking for compensation for loss of the shade of their trees. The minute is open for the inspection of every member. Mr. Chaplin then goes on to give his own views on the question of compensation. He points out that in Victoria and New South Wales, where trees or vines had been destroyed, compensation was granted, but for his own personal particular reasons he did not consider compensation should be granted in this State. What Mr. Chaplin thought with regard to the right of people to receive compensation in this State had nothing to do with the question, for it was surely a matter for this House to decide. It may be that the inspectors were fully within their rights, according to law, in cutting down the trees, but what we have to consider is this. We have undoubtedly a minute on the file from the then Premier pointing out that the property had been destroyed for the benefit of those who inhabited the State, and that when destruction of that kind had been

carried out it was only fair and reasonable that compensation should be granted to the individual sufferers. The same principle not only applies to those who have the misfortune to have their property in the shape of trees or vines destroyed, but it also equally applies to those whose cattle have been destroyed in order that the community might benefit. In moving this motion to-night I am fully aware if the Government choose to oppose me I shall not get my committee, but I shall have done this, I shall have brought to the notice of the House that the present Act relating to insect pests does a considerable amount of injustice. I would ask hon. members to recognise that whatever the Act may say, it is only fair and reasonable that compensation should be granted to those whose property has been destroyed for the benefit of the whole State. Bearing that important principle in mind, it is desirable that the circumstances connected with the destruction of these orchards in West Perth should be brought to light. These unfortunate people who owned the orchards cannot take any action against the Crown, they have no legal remedy, but the only thing they can do is to ask the House to hold an inquiry into all the circumstances, and then the committee of the House can recommend what compensation, if any, should be granted to the sufferers. I hope hon. members will support the motion.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. James Mitchell): I am quite prepared to admit that the facts are as stated by the member for West Perth. It seems to me, however, that no good can come from the appointment of a select committee to inquire into this matter. It is a question of policy after all, and if the hon. member had looked into the Act he would have found that it is provided there that no compensation shall be paid for the destruction of orchards. The means cannot be arranged for advertising officers of the department were only doing their duty when they made their recommendation in regard to this orchard, and the destruction of the trees. It is a serious matter, this discovery of codlin moth in the State, and the depart-

mental officers were right in taking the most drastic measures to stamp out the disease. It is true, wherever you deal with a pest, you must work a hardship on the owner of an orchard but in stamping out a pest in one orchard we benefit the rest of the State. That applies also to the other diseases that we have endeavoured to stamp out. In the case of disease in cattle no compensation is paid; the cattle are destroyed for the benefit of the public health, and no compensation is given. The whole case made out by the member for West Perth is really in connection with the question of compensation, which, after all, is a matter of policy. No good can come from the appointment of a select committee. The Act will have to be amended if compensation is to be paid. I am not prepared to admit we can face this question of compensation in connection with the destruction of fruit trees. I think the hon. member having called attention to the fact that the trees were destroyed without compensation having been paid, the question now is whether the Government are prepared to alter the policy in regard to this matter. For my part, I am not prepared to recommend it.

Mr. JACOBY (Swan): I think the time has arrived when we should take into consideration the whole question of dealing with those cases where the property of the individual is destroyed in order to protect the State. It appears to me that some system should be adopted whereby, in cases of orchards for instance, we might establish some small acreage tax per orchard, so as to provide for the time which may occur when an important district may become infected with codlin moth, and it may be in the interests of the State that the whole of the infected orchards should be destroyed. Under the present circumstances no provision is made for compensation, and it would mean the absolute ruin of several orchards. In connection with the proposal of the member for West Perth, I propose to vote for the motion he has submitted, not so much because I imagine there is need for compensation in this case, because I cannot conceive of apple trees being

of much value when they are grown in an unsuitable climate and situation such as these were, but the committee may raise the whole question and bring prominently before the Government the fact that they will find it necessary to establish an insurance fund, such fund to be contributed by the orchardists themselves, in the same way that the South Australian vigneronns have established a system there in anticipation of having at some time to combat phylloxera. Years ago the South Australians met together, and after consultation with the Government, decided to put an acreage tax on each vineyard, and the amount raised is now available to meet any emergency that may arise in any portion of the State which may become infected. The vines will be instantly uprooted, and the owners will be compensated from this fund. It is more in the hope of raising the whole question that I am voting for the motion; not so much in the anticipation that any evidence the hon. member may bring forward will lead the committee to recommend anything like serious compensation.

Question put and passed.

Ballot taken, and the following appointed a select committee, namely:—Messrs Brown, Gill, Jacoby, Swan, with the mover (Mr. Draper), with power to call for person and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to report on 15th December.

PAPERS—MINES REGULATION BILLS.

Mr. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe) moved—

That all papers in connection with the Mines Regulation Bill, 1905 (introduced by Mr. Hastie) and the Mines Regulation Bill 1906 (introduced by Mr. Gregory) be laid upon the Table of the House.

He said: I do not intend to weary the House more than to give reasons for moving for the production of these papers. A little time ago it came to my knowledge that a certain clause had crept into the Bill of 1906, the nature of which the Minister in charge of the Bill had

very nicely avoided mentioning to the House. It was not discovered by any hon. member. It was only by chance that I was informed that the clause was in existence. I challenged the Minister on the public platform at Boulder with having given information in respect to that clause to the Mine Owners' Association in London. The clause affects the right of injured persons to sue for damages for injuries received through a breach of the Act or regulations. In reply to my charge the Minister made a long statement to the various newspapers in the State, and while not denying it—

The Minister for Mines: I did deny it.

Mr. SCADDAN: Well I will take it that he did deny it. He admitted in a roundabout way that he had cabled through the Premier's office in reply to statements made by the Mine Owners' Association in London. To a certain extent I am speaking at second-hand, and I want the papers in order to satisfy myself as to whether the statement I made was correct or incorrect. It is the only opportunity I will have of speaking to the question, and the Minister is in a position to deny it from his seat in the House. But I believe the Mine Owners' Association in London complained about certain clauses in the Bill. They complained through the Agent General to the Premier, and through the Premier to the Minister in charge of the Bill. I am informed that the Minister arranged a *précis* to send through the Premier giving certain information to the Mine Owners' Association in London. It was done through the Agent General, who had forwarded their complaints. In that *précis* the Minister stated, as far as I can arrive at his words, "the Bill which is now before Parliament removes any doubt that might have existed under previous legislation giving the right to injured persons to sue for damages under the Mines Regulation Bill." That, to my way of thinking, was holding out a salve to these gentlemen in London who had been complaining to the Minister. I contend the Minister was lacking in his duty if he was in possession of special knowledge with regard to this clause when the Bill was passing through

the Chamber, seeing that he did not inform the House to that effect. In his reply to my charge he declared that the clause was very plain, and that anybody could have understood it. For my part I do not think anybody would have so interpreted a clause with the marginal note "Application of penalties," and which reads as follows:—

"1. Where a penalty is imposed under the Act for any offence against this Act, which has occasioned loss of life or personal injury the Court may, if it thinks fit, direct such penalty or any portion thereof to be paid to the person or distributed among the persons injured or the relatives of any person whose death may have been occasioned by the act or omission constituting such offence; provided that (a.) Such person or person did not, in its opinion, commit, and were not parties to committing the offence; and (b.) The fact of the payment or distribution shall not in any way affect or be receivable as evidence in any legal proceeding relative to or consequential upon the act or omission constituting the offence. 2. Nothing in this Act contained shall confer on any person a right of action which would not have accrued to him if this Act had not been passed."

I want to assert in the presence of the Minister that he was aware of that clause when the Bill was before this Chamber, and that as a matter of fact he went so far as to ask the advice of the Crown Law Department as to whether the clause would remove all doubt in connection with this particular matter. The Minister denied that, and I want him to deny it on the floor of the House, and to say if he can that he did not request the advice of the Crown Law Department on the point. I believe the Crown Law Department replied in the affirmative. I remember that when we attempted to have reinserted in this very Bill a clause which would have given the right to an injured person to recover damages owing to negligence on the part of the owner or his servant, the Minister, with the Attorney General, opposed us and yet carefully avoided referring to the fact that there was a clause in the Bill removing that

right. It was apparently part of the policy of the Government to remove any possibility of an injured person recovering damages, and yet they refrained from mentioning it but permitted the Committee to discuss the question for about three hours. Surely, knowing as I do that the Minister was in possession of the fact that this Bill was removing that doubt, the Minister would have been doing his duty if he had informed members of the provision prior to this amendment being discussed.

The Minister for Mines: Who drafted the clause?

Mr. SCADDAN: But the Minister evaded doing it. It does not affect the position to-day who drafted the clause. The fact that the Minister asked the Crown Law Department during the passage of the Bill to express an opinion whether it would remove that doubt once and for all, and that they replied in the affirmative while he refrained from mentioning it to the House, is sufficient for me to charge the Minister with having failed in his duty to members. With regard to the fact that it was introduced in Mr. Hastie's Bill I charge Mr. Hastie, together with the present Minister, with having done something that was not in the interests of those whom the Bill was supposed to benefit.

The Minister for Mines: Do not forget that the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson), was in charge of the Mines Department right through the drafting of that Bill.

Mr. SCADDAN: I am fair enough to the different Ministers by asking for the papers—

The Minister for Mines: Here they are.

Mr. SCADDAN: Dealing with the Mines Regulation Bill introduced by Mr. Hastie, together with the papers dealing with the Mines Regulation Bill introduced by the present Minister.

Mr. Troy: Did Mr. Hastie or the member for Guildford mislead the House in a similar way?

Mr. SCADDAN: The Bill introduced by Mr. Hastie was read a second time but did not reach the Committee stage. So the clause was not reached. But in

the case of the Bill introduced by the present Minister the clause was reached and passed. An amendment was moved to reinsert the section of the old Act which had been repealed, because of the passing of the Employers' Liability Act and the Workers' Compensation Act, but the Minister for Mines refrained from informing the Committee that this clause preventing action being taken under the Mines Regulation Act existed in the Bill. As a matter of fact, no one knew it except the Minister and the Crown Law Department, until a little time ago.

Mr. Collier : They knew in London.

Mr. SCADDAN : In spite of the many times the Minister has asserted that his Bill is better than that introduced by Mr. Hastie, I am not satisfied that the Bill introduced by Mr. Hastie was solely his own. I want to find out whether Mr. Hastie was responsible for this clause being inserted, and at this stage I would rather believe that it was inserted by the Crown Law Department ; because I believe the present Minister had under consideration a draft of a Mines Regulation Bill before Mr. Hastie took over the control of the department. At any rate, the Minister stated publicly on several occasions that he proposed to bring down a comprehensive Mines Regulation Bill as early as possible in the next Parliament, and that was the Parliament in which the Labour Government were in power. In view of that fact I am still of opinion and will remain so until I can prove otherwise from the papers, that this provision was in the draft measure before Mr. Hastie took office. If that was not the case, then I charge Mr. Hastie and the present Minister with being unfaithful to members in not informing the Chamber of the existence of this clause, because it is a distinct duty on the part of a Minister when introducing a Bill to inform members of all changes as compared with the existing law ; and if Mr. Hastie failed to do that, he failed in his duty. I charge him with having failed in his duty just as much as I charge the present Minister. My object in bringing this matter before the House is because it is of vital importance to the men employed in our

mines. They have the right to recover damages under the Employers' Liability Act, and under the Workers' Compensation Act, and the Minister says they have the right under common law, but when a case is taken before our courts under the common law we have the argument advanced that the men are in common employment and the company cannot be held responsible for the act of a fellow employee, the result being that this right is taken away from the men. We have on the statutes an Act for the protection of the men employed in our mines. There are between 17,000 and 18,000 of them, and surely it is a matter of vital importance to the whole community to see that they are properly protected, but it is useless on the one hand to give them protection by Act of Parliament, and then on the other hand to remove any right to sue for damages owing to a breach of that Act ; it is useless to provide a penalty of £10 in the event of the evasion of any of the provisions in the Act when a person has been seriously or fatally injured ; it is useless to the injured person ; so that the Mines Regulation Act is practically a dead letter. As far as its administration is concerned, it is absolutely useless from the point of view of being a benefit to the men employed, and I regret the Minister did not take members into his confidence and inform us of this fact when the Bill was in Committee. The Minister would not have permitted the country to know the fact had it not come out in a certain manner. I was able to ascertain from something that came from London that it was well known in London when it was unknown here.

The Minister for Mines : Nothing of the sort : you had no need to go to London.

Mr. SCADDAN : I did not go to London, but I got the information all the same. I want to inform the House of the amendment moved to the Mines Regulation Bill by the member for Murchison to show that it had a bearing on this particular point. His amendment was as follows :—

"If any person employed in or about a mine suffers injury in person,

or is killed, owing to the negligence of the owner of such mine or his agents, or owing to the non-observance in such mine of any of the provisions of this Act (such non-observance not being solely due to the negligence of the person so injured or killed), the person injured, or the personal representatives of the person so killed, may recover in any court of competent jurisdiction, from the owner of such mine, compensation by way of damages as for a tort committed by such owner."

That was exactly contrary to what was contained in Subclause 2 of Clause 62 of the Bill, yet the Minister in his second reading speech and also in his remarks on this particular amendment, which I have gone through carefully, evaded referring to it in any fashion. It was not known that this clause was in the Bill until such times as the Minister admitted it through the columns of the Press after he had been charged by me; and I contend it was a serious charge to make. The Minister in reply to my statement endeavoured to cover up his tracks and to get away on side issues.

The Minister for Mines: You made a statement that was not correct and I contradicted it.

Mr. SCADDAN: I made a statement that was absolutely correct and it will be found to be correct on a perusal of the files. I contended that his action in this connection alone was sufficient to prove the correctness of my remark that he was much more concerned about the interests of the mine owners in London than about the lives and limbs of our breadwinners. That was a statement I made publicly, and I contend now that my remark must stand unless the Minister can show that he did not cable the information to London. If he can show that he did not I will unreservedly withdraw the statement.

The Minister for Mines: You need not worry, you will have to withdraw the lot.

Mr. SCADDAN: Many times the Minister has tried to misprove statements I have made, and he has turned up old files, and new ones as well, to prove them incorrect, but he has not been able to dis-

prove any one of them, and I think he will find that I am absolutely correct in this matter. Therefore I repeat the charge in this Chamber; and if I am incorrect I will withdraw unreservedly should the files prove that it is untrue. I believe the Minister will lay the files on the Table, and possibly at a later date it will be necessary for me to have something further to say.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): I have brought the papers with me and I have no objection to laying them on the Table. The section of the Act in question says:—

"Nothing in this Act contained shall confer on any person a right of action which would not have accrued to him if this Act had not been passed."

That is the crux of the whole question, and it will be found by the file that workers have the right to sue for damages under the common law, the Employers' Liability Act and the Workers' Compensation Act, that is in connection with the administration of all the Acts. It was contended when action was taken in the Supreme Court that action could also be taken under the Mines Regulation Act; and I received letters from the miners' union in Kalgoorlie asking me whether we could not make some special provision in the Mines Regulation Bill dealing with actions that might arise in connection with accidents in mines. We had no special provision except in the Machinery Act; and we held that all that was necessary was to follow the usual course, namely, that if an accident occurred, say under the Machinery Act, the worker could sue for damages under the Employers' Liability Act, the Workers' Compensation Act, or the common law. It applied to all our other legislation and might apply equally to the Mines Regulation Bill. The clause the hon. member takes exception to was taken from the Bill introduced when the member for Guildford was Minister for Mines.

Mr. Scaddan: He was not the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was introduced when he was Minister. He

went through the Bill and he corrected the draft Bill as the member for Ivanhoe will find when he goes through the file. It is no use throwing the responsibility on someone else outside the Chamber any more than the hon. member can escape from his own responsibility, because he was here when both Bills were put through and he was neglectful in his duty, or else he could not understand the common language of the clause, though it was perfectly clear.

Mr. Scaddan: You were not perfectly satisfied about it?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The subclause was taken from the Bill introduced by the Daglish Administration and was copied into this Bill, our legislation remaining exactly the same as before, namely, that in case any accident should take place the person who met with that accident would have to apply through the same old channels—the Employers' Liability Act, the Workers' Compensation Act or the common law. I do not think it is necessary for me to deal with the question raised by the hon. member regarding a message sent to London. It was a message sent to the nine owners in London in regard to the Bill. I do not know that the date is on the file, but it was just after the Bill passed that I was asked by the Premier to draft a cablegram to send to London in connection with the matter, and this is the draft I sent:

"Mines Regulation just passed gives liberal interpretation of repeal Sunday Labour Mines Act. Clauses relative use reduction. plant are as formerly, and continuity process is allowed, but no work except in case emergency and general repairs allowed below ground. Surface men except officials and others specifically mentioned, they must have one day off in fourteen. This is only new restriction of past legislation and from humanity point commends itself, and should not entail much trouble to managers."

That was the cable I drafted, and which was sent by the Premier's office.

Mr. Scaddan: Is that the whole of it? he only one sent?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It is the whole of the cable I sent in connection with that matter. There was a long account sent afterwards by the Premier.

Mr. Scaddan: And what was in that?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: There was no knowledge of that until I published it. The hon. member, in his speech, was simply dealing with facts which I gave to the Press; but the way he put it was altogether contrary to fact. I wish I had a copy of his speech here, for I would like to deal with the question he raised, and the manner in which he spoke on the platform on that point some time ago. That, however, is outside the question. The papers are here, and after the motion has been dealt with, I will ask leave to put them on the Table of the House. When the hon. member sees the papers and peruses them he will find that in what he has been referring to to-night he has found a mare's nest. What he was referring to related to an entirely different matter from what he thought. He obtained private information, and on this occasion that information happens to be wrong. The question he spoke of was not the one referred to the Crown Law Department. The information he has obtained in this case is particularly bad, as he will find if he peruses the papers. I have acted quite fairly and properly, and I do not think I have anything to apologise for in connection with this particular section, for after the clauses of the Bill had been debated at great length, the particular one to which he now takes so much exception, passed through the House without one word being said upon it from either side.

Mr. SCADDAN (in reply): It would have been much fairer on the part of the Minister, in view of the fact that he read one cablegram from the file so that it might be published by the Press, if he had read also the message to which I referred. I never referred to the one he read. He does not deny the statements I made.

The Minister for Mines: The other message was a long précis of the Bill sent by post afterwards.

Mr. SCADDAN: I refer to the précis in which he informed the Mine Owners' Association in London as to certain parts of the Bill, whereas he had not given the information to this Chamber.

The Minister for Mines: You were talking about a cablegram sent to London.

Mr. SCADDAN: Do you deny this one was sent?

The Minister for Mines: I have just read out the only cable sent.

Mr. SCADDAN: Was another message sent? If there was, the Minister has not read it.

The Minister for Mines: I caused that to be published.

Mr. SCADDAN: Why not read it now?

The Minister for Mines: There is half a column of it.

Mr. SCADDAN: There is not half a column of the matter to which I referred. There was only a small paragraph dealing with this particular section. It was the concluding paragraph. All the Minister is now doing is to try and quibble out of the position into which he has got. It is nonsense for the Minister to say that he is sorry he has not all the particulars before him now, so that he could reply to the speech I made on the question, for this notice of motion has been on the Notice Paper for some time. He even obtained the files, and yet he now says he cannot find the statements made by me. All he says is that he denies the accuracy of what I said. It is easy for the Minister to say that my statement is incorrect, but in what direction, let him tell me, is it incorrect? It would be much fairer for him to read the précis which was sent by him to England. He seemed only too glad to read the cablegram, which puts his case in a good light, and makes him bear the appearance of a good fellow, but it does not apply to the present position at all.

The Minister for Mines (in explanation): The hon. member makes an untrue statement. He spoke of a cable which was sent to London; I have read out the full terms of that cable. There was afterwards a message sent by the Premier, which dealt with the whole Bill.

That is quite a different matter from the cable. I am prepared to read to members, if they desire it, the full text of that précis.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not use the word "untrue" when describing the remarks of another member.

The Minister for Mines: I withdraw the word. His statement was incorrect.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister for Mines has denied the accuracy of the statement made by the member for Ivanhoe, who must accordingly withdraw.

Mr. SCADDAN: I did not say that the message to which I referred went by cablegram. I merely said that the message was sent from the Premier's office. I withdraw the statement that a cable was sent, and I now say that a message was despatched to the Agent General. I would ask the Minister to read that message. He has said he is willing to do so, and it is just as well that he should let members know what it was that was sent. Personally, I have not read that message.

The Minister for Mines: You have read it.

Mr. SCADDAN: Only a small portion of it was published.

The Minister for Mines: I published all of it.

Mr. SCADDAN: Well, will the Minister read it again?

The Minister for Mines: It has already been published.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Papers relating to the removal of the Old Men's Home from Geraldton (ordered on motion by Mr. Carson). 2, Report of the Zoological and Acclimatisation Committee, 1907-8. 3, Papers relating to the delivery of baggage at Fremantle (ordered on motion by Mr. Angwin). 4, Papers relating to the destruction of orchards in West Perth (ordered on motion by Mr. Draper).

By the Minister for Railways: Papers in connection with the Mines Regulation Bills, 1905, 1906.

House adjourned at 10.37 p.m.