

Hon. J. E. DODD: In this way the hon. member was defeating his own case. We were dealing with coroners' inquests only. If the persons appearing were only to be allowed to inquire into the cause of death, why allow them to visit the scene of the accident? Again, why insist upon the jury being a jury of miners? Whatever occasion there might have been for the deletion of the words which Mr. Gawler had first sought to have struck out, there was no justification whatever for the extended amendment.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The practice in coroners' courts on the goldfields to-day was that the representative of the miners' union appeared and cross-examined witnesses as to the cause of death. The original amendment would still have allowed these representatives to do by law what they were to-day allowed to do by custom. That was really all that was necessary. The inspector of mines was allowed to be present on the coroner's inquest on the goldfields. Mr. Gawler himself had pointed out that the coroner was not always a fully qualified man. Therefore to allow a representative of the miners' association, an inspector of mines, and the representative of the person killed to be present at the inquest would materially assist the coroner and save time.

Hon. W. Patrick: All that is in the clause now.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The amendment would prevent the representative doing anything further than viewing the scene of the accident.

Hon. W. Patrick: And he can examine any witnesses as to the cause of the accident.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It was proposed to strike out those words, and it would be a case of attending the inquest and doing nothing.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: He could ask questions through the coroner.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Why not give him the right to assist the coroner?

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 5.17 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 13th November, 1913.*

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

### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Railways: Copy of a minute of Executive Council approving the terms of re-appointment of John Tregerthen Short as Commissioner of Railways.

### QUESTION—WAGIN-DARKAN RAILWAY.

Mr. MOORE (for Mr. George) asked the Minister for Works: 1, On what date was any provision made in connection with the proposed Wagin-Darkan railway in the Loan Estimates? 2, What was the amount allocated—(a) as to surveys; (b) construction of the railway; (c) rails and fastenings? 3, Is the total amount so provided lying dormant or has it been appropriated for other purposes? 4, If dormant, is the interest payable on the borrowing being debited to the Wagin-Darkan railway? 5, If appropriated for other undertakings, is the Wagin-Darkan railway relieved of the incubus of interest on loan? 6, If allocated to other undertakings, upon what authority has this been done? 7, Do the Government propose to proceed with the Wagin-Darkan railway, and when? 8, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, 21st December, 1909, £10,000; 6th February, 1911, £18,000. 2, (a) None—separate vote; (b) all; (c) none—separate vote. 3, Lying dormant—unappropriated. 4, No. 5, Replied to by (3). 6, Replied to by (3). 7 and 8, Representations in regard to this matter

were made to the hon. the Premier by the member for the district, Mr. S. Stubbs, when he was in the locality recently, and the Premier then conveyed the policy of the Government with respect to railway construction.

Mr. Bolton: So it should be given to the member for the district. He should not be interfered with by anyone else.

#### QUESTION—WICKEPIN-CORRIGIN RAILWAY.

Mr. LAYMAN (for Mr. Harper) asked the Minister for Works: When do the Public Works Department intend to hand over control of the railway from Wickepin to Corrigin to the Commissioner of Railways?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: When all the ballasting, station buildings, station yards, etc., are completed.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But when?

#### QUESTION—BUNBURY HARBOUR IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. MOORE (for Mr. George) asked the Premier: 1, What do the Government intend to do in connection with Bunbury harbour? 2, When do they intend to do it?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, The member for the district (Mr. Thomas) has been actively urging the claims of Bunbury in this regard, and a reply to his (Mr. Thomas's) representations appeared in this morning's newspaper.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is not a fair answer at all.

#### QUESTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST, ANNUAL REPORT.

Mr. CARPENTER asked the Honorary Minister: 1, What is the reason for the delay in presenting the annual report of the Fremantle Harbour Trust? 2, When will the report for the year ending June last be laid upon the Table of the House?

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. C. Angwin) replied: 1 and 2, The report was completed in September, but has been delayed awaiting the report of the Auditor General on the accounts. That report has now come to hand, and the complete documents will be presented to Parliament in the course of a few days.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE, CAPTAIN HARE'S RETIREMENT.

*Request for members to give evidence.*

Message from the Council requesting the Assembly to authorise the Honorary Minister (Hon. W. C. Angwin) and the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) to attend to give evidence before the select committee on the retirement of Captain Hare, now considered.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest): I move—

*That the request of the Legislative Council as contained in Message No. 20 be not agreed to.*

I do not know whether I am strictly in order, but I desire to move that the request contained in the message from the Legislative Council be not agreed to. I admit that to raise a protest against a message of this kind being agreed to may be a novel procedure in this Chamber, but I want to point out that should a motion be submitted from the Ministerial benches asking that leave be given to the Honorary Minister and the member for Mount Margaret to attend the sitting of the select committee, I for one would oppose it, and would, if I could, induce other hon. members to oppose it also on very specific grounds.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Let us have them.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The grounds are that I think we are having too great a multiplicity of select committees to inquire into matters that are definitely settled and matters that are not of public interest.

Mr. Underwood: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bolton: Some members made up their minds before the appointment of the committee.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Some of these select committees are prompted by prejudice in many respects and sufficient jus-

tification has not been put before Parliament or the country for the expense that will be entailed before the committee in question arrive at a conclusion.

Mr. Dwyer: They are simply hunting grounds to catch political game.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: So far as the present committee are concerned, we find that they have been appointed for the express purpose of inquiring into the dismissal of a public servant, and it is within the knowledge of every hon. member of both Houses that that officer was retired in accordance with the law as he had reached the age limit, and there was no obligation on the part of the Government to retain his services any longer. I venture to say that if the select committee sit till the end of the year they will not bring anything tangible forward which would indicate to the public that the Government had done a wrong action.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are pre-judging the thing.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am not pre-judging it. I am only asking the House to say by a definite vote whether it is prepared to prolong the practice of bringing into existence select committees to inquire into imaginary grievances.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Justice ought to be done.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I can only raise my protest to the select committee being assisted by the evidence that may be tendered by a couple of hon. members from this House, whether it be of a laudatory character or dealing with any apparent injustice to the civil servant who has been retired, and if I am not successful in getting my motion carried I will certainly move for a select committee to cover similar grounds. What I fear, and that fear is evidently justified by the opinions expressed in another place, is that the select committee will not deal particularly with the civil servant affected, but will cover much more ground and open up many more subjects, and if that is the case, and if, as one hon. member has pointed out, it is to be a hunting ground for political game, I, for one, protest against the public expenditure on these select committees. I have very little faith

in select committees, but if it is a question—

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are reflecting on members of Parliament.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I say I have very little faith in select committees, and I am justified in expressing that opinion. I have evidence of select committees having been appointed before and very little practical good has resulted from their deliberations, and if we do not put our foot down on the multiplying of select committees which mean so little to the public who have to pay the piper, whether the expense is small or great, but if on the other hand we allow the practice to continue, we will not be doing our duty to the taxpayers who sent us here. I do not intend to labour the subject except to say that from my observations, and from the opinions expressed in another place by members who were very keenly desirous of having the select committee appointed, the committee have been appointed, not for the purpose of inquiring into an alleged act of injustice to a civil servant, but to open up other subjects and try to bring something to show the public that the present Government did wrong in the action they took. The Government have explained their position. The responsible Minister in another place has explained that the officer was retired in accordance with the Act under which he was appointed. If that is the case, why the necessity for a select committee to inquire?

Hon. J. Mitchell: If that is the case.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have no reason to doubt the Minister's assertion.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You want to know that such is the case.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We have proof, and absolute proof.

Mr. Dwyer: He had reached the age limit.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We have proof that the officer had reached the retiring age and if the Minister decided that a change of policy was necessary or that a younger and more vigorous man could do the work to the advantage of the taxpayers, the Minister was quite within his rights in retiring that officer.

Mr. Underwood: They ought to retire a lot more.

Mr. Lander: It is a pity they did not go further.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I hope the House will support my motion.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie): I have much pleasure in seconding the motion. I have in mind the fact that several select committees have been appointed by another place and have asked for the attendance of hon. members from this House, and I take it that much valuable time and money have been wasted by the calling of witnesses and the printing of the evidence. I have in mind a select committee in another place on the Wickpin-Merredin line, and a select committee which was appointed by this House on the same subject showed that the report of the Council committee was altogether contrary to fact. There was also a select committee on the Irrigation Bill.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, is the hon. member justified in reflecting on the members of a select committee appointed by another place?

Mr. SPEAKER: What remark did the hon. member make?

Hon. J. Mitchell: The hon. member stated that the select committee appointed by this House proved conclusively that the report of a select committee appointed by another place was not in accordance with fact.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know what select committee is being referred to. Will the hon. member state what he said and what he referred to?

Mr. GREEN: I was referring to a select committee appointed by another place on the Wickpin-Merredin railway.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member consider that a reflection?

Hon. J. Mitchell: My point of order was that the hon. member reflected on hon. members in another place.

Mr. Underwood: They deserve it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not justified in reflecting on hon. members of another place.

Mr. Bolton: They can reflect on us.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not my business.

Mr. Bolton: I wish it was.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Premier: Are we to understand, then, that a member of a select committee is in the same category as a member of the House, and are we not permitted to discuss the findings of a select committee?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have stated that a member is not justified in reflecting on members of another place.

Mr. GREEN: I wanted to point out that the conclusions arrived at by the select committee of this House and the conclusions arrived at by the select committee appointed by another place were at variance; consequently both could not be right, and I wanted to deduct from those remarks that select committees under conditions of that kind are absolutely valueless. The point has been stressed with regard to expenses, and we can call to mind a select committee which was appointed by this Chamber with regard to the dismissal of another public servant. A great deal of evidence was taken by that select committee and the result was such that, I venture to say, members of this Chamber will agree that the time of those who constituted the select committee was absolutely wasted, and that the cost which was incurred was not justified. I trust we will be very careful in giving our concurrence to a request of this kind. I have stated that the time of the Chamber has been wasted in the past by the appointment of similar select committees by another place, and I take it we are not playing at politics, that we are here to do business and to conserve the finances of the country as much as possible. It would be absolutely useless to agree to this request. It is not justified by the finding of select committees in the past, and I trust the request of another place will not be agreed to.

Mr. DWYER (Perth) moved—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

Mr. Bolton seconded the motion.

Motion put and declared negatived on the voices.

Mr. Male : Divide.

Opposition members : No, no.

Mr. Bolton : Yes, we must divide now.

Mr. Dwyer : I claim the vote of the member for Kimberley.

Mr. Bolton : Wait, you are a bit early; we will get the division.

Mr. Male : I withdraw my call.

Mr. SPEAKER : Does the hon. member persist in his call for a division ?

Mr. Male : No.

Mr. Underwood : Divide.

Mr. O'Loughlen : There was a call for a division on both sides.

Mr. Bolton : We will see whether we can divide.

Hon. J. Mitchell rose to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER : I shall allow the division.

Bells rung.

Mr. Bolton : I desire to claim the vote of the member for Kimberley who called for a division.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member withdrew his call for a division and the division was not given on his call.

Division resulted as follows :—

Ayes .. .. . 20

Noes .. .. . 10

Majority for .. 10

#### AYES.

Mr. Bolton	Mr. Lewis
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Collier	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Foley	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Gill	Mr. Swan
Mr. Green	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnson	(Teller.)
Mr. Lander	

#### NOS.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Moore
Mr. Harper	Mr. A. E. Piesse
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller.)
Mr. Monger	

Motion thus passed, the debate adjourned.

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1913-14.

##### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day: Mr. McDowall in the Chair.

Railway Department (Hon. P. Collier, Minister).

Vote — Railways and tramways, £1,758,536:

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS (Hon. P. Collier): Although it is the practice for Ministers in introducing their Estimates to give a résumé of the doings of their department during the year, I think there is very little by way of information that I can add to that which has already been supplied to the Chamber per medium of the annual report of the Commissioner of Railways. A perusal of that document will show that the utmost detailed information has been supplied. It is of a very comprehensive nature and much more so than it has been in previous years.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Do you endorse all he says in it?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I endorse a good deal of it but I am not going to commit myself by saying that I endorse everything that appears in the report. The railways still remain the most important asset in the State. We had at the end of the financial year 2,854 miles of railway open, the increase for the year being 256 miles, and, as showing the improvements to the railway system of the State, I may point out that the total amount debited to capital is £14,913,128, or an increase in the year of £1,680,035. From that it will be seen a fairly large portion of our loan funds has been expended in the construction of railways in the State, and the results of the operations of the railways, covering many years, show that those who advanced the money have indeed a good asset. The total amount debited for interest during the year was £505,925, or an increase of £66,772, over the amount of the previous year. That was a big increase but it is largely due to the fact that we took over a considerable mileage of new lines during the year, and also to the interest paid in connection with the

resumed properties in and around Perth and East Perth. The total earnings, for the first time in the history of the State, exceed two million pounds, the figures having been £2,037,853, or an increase over the figures of the previous year of £153,249. It is very satisfactory to note that the increase was of such a considerable extent. The working expenses for the year were £1,506,600, an increase of £162,623 for the year. The surplus earnings over working expenses were £531,253, and the net surplus earnings amounted to £25,328. It will be argued that that is a considerable falling off on the figures of previous years but all things considered the fact that we came out on the right side to that extent is satisfactory. It might have been more satisfactory if we had not been operating so many spur lines, principally in the agricultural districts, at a considerable loss.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It would have been worse for the spur lines.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The difference in the profits for last year over those of the preceding year and that of 1911 to some extent was due to the increases which have been given to the wages and salaried staffs of the railways.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We have heard that before.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: And it will stand repeating. No hon. member, while complaining of the altered financial position of the railways, will say that these increases were not warranted.

Mr. Lewis: The leader of the Opposition said so the other night.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, and a member of that party in the country only a few nights ago complained of the altered financial position of the railways, but did not have courage enough to say that much had been given in the way of increases to the wages and salaried staffs. Having regard to the fact that the wages and salaries have gone up all round during the past year or two in the State, even at this late hour I repeat that the increases were absolutely justified.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No one has said anything else.

The Premier: Your leader did.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Hon. members knew these facts when they complained of the altered financial position of the railways. It has been frequently complained of outside by hon. members opposite that, whilst three years ago the profits of the railways amounted to £224,000, last year the profit was only £25,000, and that, taken in conjunction with the comments about the increases in wages, it is fair to assume that hon. members are complaining about these increases. Where there is the utmost efficiency it is impossible to get an increase of efficiency no matter how you increase wages. I want to point out that the altered position is due very largely to the number of unprofitable railways we have open at the present time.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Certainly not.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If the hon. member will turn up the Commissioner's report he will see a formidable list of twenty different lines which shows an actual loss on the year's operations of £61,813.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: An approximate loss.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The fact remains it was a loss as the result of the operations of the railways during the past year.

Mr. Harper: They are feeders to the main lines.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Of course they are feeders. If you take the indirect argument where are you going to end? Many of the lines have been working over a number of years, and it is expected they have nearly reached the stage when a profit will be shown on them. For the information of the House I will read the list. Bridge-town-Jarnadup, £3,608 0s. 4d.; Coolgardie-Norseman, £5,001 14s. 10d.; Goomalling-Wongan Hills, £2,146 4s. 11d.; Greenhills-Bruce Rock (Nunajiu), £2,101 15s. 4d.; Katanning-Nyabing (Nampup), £4,231 12s.; Mount Magnet-Sandstone, £5,843 11s. 9d.; Mundaring Weir, £875 17s. 10d.; Nannine-Meekatharra, £3,121 4s. Narrogin-Wickepin shows a profit of £761

ls. 8d., Northampton-Ajana a loss of £2,992 0s. 3d., Pinjarra-Holyoake shows a profit principally because of the timber trade over the line since it has been opened. Southern Cross-Bullfinch, the now famous line, showed a loss of £1,632 2s. 10d.; Tambellup-Ongerup, £6,096 5s. 8d.; Torbay Junction-Denmark, £3,156 14s.; Toodyay-Bolgart, £2,613 16s. 6d.; Wagin-Kukerin, £4,556 17s. 4d.; Wokarina-Yuna, £4,762 12s. 7d. The total for these lines is £52,740 10s. 2d. If we add to that the two isolated railways, Hopetoun-Ravens-thorpe, on which there was a loss of £5,191 7s. 3d., and Port Hedland-Marble Bar, from which there was a loss of £8,744 12s. 10d., it gives a total for the whole twenty lines, including the last two mentioned, of £66,676 10s. 3d. These in a measure account for the altered position of the financial aspect of the railways during the year.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We had some of these lines.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Of course, but there is the fact that we took over 256 miles of railway during the year and of non-paying lines which have added to our interest bill very considerably. Included in the 256 miles is the Port Hedland-Marble Bar, with a very heavy capital expenditure, consequently there is a big increase in the interest bill, and added to the interest bill we have the actual loss on the working of the lines as well. The position, as far as the State is concerned, is somewhat serious. As to the mileage, we have a greater mileage in proportion to our population than any State in the Commonwealth. We have at the present time a mile of railway for every 108 people in the State. It has gradually come down during the whole of the years since 1894. The mileage then was one mile to every 209 of the population. In 1906 it was one mile to every 158, and since 1906 during the last seven years it has still further fallen from 158 to 108.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What active people we must be.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We are very active indeed. When we

compare that with the mileage in the Eastern States we find that Queensland has one mile of railway for every 146 people against our 108, South Australia 219, Victoria 372, and New South Wales 437, so that if we keep on adding to our mileage year by year, as we have done in the past naturally it is a serious matter to carry on and to operate the railways at a profit.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are not going to stop, are you?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We are not going to stop, but I am pointing this out, that it is pretty heavy work to make the railways pay or make a profit out of them when we have such a comparatively small population to operate. It is obvious that in New South Wales, Victoria, and the other States where they have a much greater population per mile of railway, it ought to be an easier task for them to successfully carry on than it is in Western Australia; but I say that the management of the railways of Western Australia will compare favourably with that of any of our neighbours in the Eastern States. During the year the expenditure incurred in rolling stock amounted to £315,920 10s. 6d. Additions to the locomotives during the year numbered 27, and there is a balance of 41 locomotives to complete the existing order. That will mean that over 70 engines will have been added to the rolling stock during the past two years. I want also, in connection with the interest bill I have referred to, to point out that it has been due largely or in some measure, to the amount of money spent on rolling stock. We found 18 months ago that it was absolutely essential, if we were going to cope with the increased production in the agricultural districts, that we must spend a considerable amount of money in the construction of rolling stock.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Did you not tell the people you took it out of revenue?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think any Minister told the people that. The fact is that if you spend £500,000 in rolling stock you considerably increase the interest bill, so the revenue is affected in that way. I

do not think anyone has contended that rolling stock is built out of revenue, but, as I pointed out, the interest bill on approximately half a million of money has to come out of the revenue of the Railway Department. There were 883 four-wheeled waggons added to stock during the year, and 877 are under construction at the present time. I think it will be admitted on all hands that, considering the large harvest that had to be moved last year in comparison with previous years, the department did well indeed. There were, as far as I can gather from the columns of the Press and from my office as well, fewer complaints with regard to obtaining rolling stock last year than there had been before for many years past. Although it is expected that there will be a very considerable increase even over last year's good harvest, the department have been alive to the fact, and I believe we shall be able to move the coming harvest with as few complaints as we had last year. It cannot be expected that in the rush traffic that comes only once in the year, covering only a short period, delays will not occur. It would not be good business to provide absolutely sufficient rolling stock to meet rush traffic for a short period of a few weeks or a month or two in the year and have the whole of the rolling stock lying idle during the rest of the year. With the additional power we have with the new engines, we have been able to repair the old ones. The fact that the new engines were running during the year enabled us to place the old engines under repair, and we shall be able to move the harvest without trouble. I believe the rolling stock we have will be sufficient for a number of years, except, perhaps, passenger accommodation. It is an undoubted fact that on some of the lines we could, perhaps, place additional rolling stock with advantage to the people using the railways, more particularly is that so along the Great Southern line. Although I am not in a position to say that rolling stock of an improved character will be built for the Great Southern line, I hope before long that something will be done in that direction.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: We are long suffering.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Perhaps there is some cause for complaint in that direction, for the traffic, both passenger and goods, is increasing year by year, and it is recognised by the department that the service with advantage to the people concerned, and the department, might be improved. In that connection we have undertaken to complete the re-laying of the line with heavy rails from Katanning to Albany. The work is going on at present, and it is expected to be completed about the end of the present month, or early next month. At any rate, it will be finished in time for the summer excursion traffic. Then we shall be able to run heavy engines right through, thereby giving an accelerated and better service than there is at the present time. The work of relaying from Albany to Katanning, a distance of 114 miles—

Mr. A. E. Piesse: We should have a service equal to Kalgoorlie.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Perhaps that is so, but Kalgoorlie is an important town and deserves the best service that can be given. Still, I believe the Great Southern line is entitled to a service equal to the goldfields, and to a regular fast express daily, and I admit at once also they are entitled to regular sleeping accommodation on that line. That is recognised by the department, and as soon as it is convenient to find the money to construct the necessary rolling stock it will be done and a better service given on the Great Southern line.

Mr. S. Stubbs: We have been promised it for four years.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** The hon. member is making a mistake, I did not promise. When I make a promise it is going to be carried out.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You have been there two years.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** The hon. member has never extracted a promise about the Great Southern yet. I appreciate the generosity of the members living along the Great Southern line in that they have not worried me much



when perhaps they were well justified in doing so.

Mr. Bolton: They will be having a go at you now.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Because of that generosity they will perhaps get some improvement earlier than they otherwise might have done. Even in the meantime without the additional rolling stock we shall be able to give an improved service when that relaying is completed between Katanning and Albany which is now in progress. We are also relaying at the present time the line between Mundijong and Brunswick Junction. On that line also there has been difficulty in running the service as well as it might have been run, because we had until some time ago heavy rails as far as Armadale. From Armadale they were extended to Mundijong and from Mundijong we are now extending them to Brunswick Junction. That work has been going on for some months and shortly will be completed, and we will then have heavy rails right through to Bunbury, and be able to run our heavy engines on that line. It is essential that we should be able to do that because we have a sufficient number of heavy engines, but we are finding difficulty in obtaining the requisite number of lighter engines to take up the work on the new light lines that have been opened up. So that it is more profitable to re-lay these lines with heavy rails and utilise our heavy engines, thus releasing the light engines now running for work on the new spur lines that are being built and opened. The expenditure from Loan on additions and improvements during the year amounted to £220,483, a portion of which, of course, is represented by that work I have just mentioned. As will be seen by a reference to the printed Estimates, the estimated revenue for the present year is £2,310,000, an increase of £262,180 over the actual revenue received last year. We are justified in estimating that increased amount in future because of the largely increased yield which it is anticipated we shall have from the coming harvest. The estimated expenditure for the current year is £1,678,786, or an increase over

the actual expenditure of last year of £162,993.

Mr. Bolton: It is costing a good deal more to earn the increased revenue.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is, and that is due to several causes.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Government.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, not the Government, because, as a matter of fact it is purely a matter of administration, and the Commissioner points out in his report the reasons which, in his opinion, cause this increased expenditure. The new lines also have some bearing on that extra cost. The estimated interest for the year is £543,000, or an increase over the actual interest expenditure of last year of £37,075. That, of course, will be caused by the taking over of new railways which it is expected will be added to the system during the current financial year. Last year the estimate of revenue was remarkably close, when we take into consideration the total amount involved. The estimate was £2,050,000 and the amount actually received was £2,047,820, or a difference between the estimates and receipts of only £2,180.

Mr. S. Stubbs: A good forecast.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is a remarkably close estimate considering that the total sum involved was over two millions, but we were not quite so close with regard to the estimate of expenditure. The estimate was £1,451,881, whilst the actual expenditure was £1,516,793, or a difference between the estimates and the actual result of £54,912. For one thing the interest was considerably under-estimated, because of the fact that money has been paid for resumptions in the city which it was not anticipated would be paid during the last financial year.

Mr. Bolton: That made a lot of difference to the total expenditure.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is another one of the babies we have had to nurse, because that land was resumed by the previous Government, justifiably, of course—

Hon. J. Mitchell: Your babies are all giants.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** They are, I admit, so far as the good things of the Railway Department are concerned, sound, healthy giants, but the hon. member knows that his Government resumed a large amount of property in the city about three years ago, and payments are being made, and have been made during the past year, amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds and the interest bill has been considerably increased thereby.

**Hon. J. Mitchell:** How much did you pay last year?

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** I have not the figures with me. A very interesting return in the Commissioner's report is that dealing with the goods earnings during the year, and if there is one outstanding feature in the return it is that which marks the wonderful development in the agricultural areas as compared with previous years. For instance, in connection with wheat, the total tonnage handled during last year was 201,467 as against 81,773 in the previous year.

**Hon. J. Mitchell:** You must reduce the freight, then?

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** The department's earnings from wheat alone last year amounted to £87,370, as against £32,814 during the previous year.

**Mr. Bolton:** That is only one side of the picture. It cost you a great deal to do that. It is not all profit.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Not by any means. I wish it was. As has already been pointed out we incurred increased expenditure in earning that money, but I only quote the figures as indicative of a very much better condition of things in the agricultural districts this year than in the years preceding, and there is not the slightest possible doubt that this year is going to see a big improvement on last year.

**Mr. S. Stubbs:** You will not be able to handle the traffic.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** I hope so. That prophecy is made every year against the Railway Department, but the Commissioner says that so

far he has won every time, and quite recently he challenged the farmers to stick him up this season. Personally, I shall not growl very much if we do hear complaints from the country as to the manner of handling the harvest, because I shall know that our revenue is coming in pretty freely.

**Mr. A. A. Wilson:** Does the Commissioner carry wheat at a loss?

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Any shortages there have been in the past we have decided to avoid, and in future we will only handle goods at a profit.

**Mr. A. A. Wilson:** The Commissioner puts it down to Collie coal.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** He certainly does deal pretty fully in his report with Collie coal, as he has done for many years past. Continuing the figures I was quoting, let me say that the tonnage of agricultural machinery carried last year was 8,162 as against 5,706 in the previous year. Those figures represent practically an increase of 2,300 tons in the agricultural machinery carried into the country last year, as compared with the preceding year, and our earnings from that source were £12,712 as against £8,833 in the year before. I do not think I need refer to the work of the staff during the year. The figures are supplied in the Commissioner's report, and he has there pointed out the increase in the number of staff employed, both on wages and on salaries, and also the increased amount paid by the Government during the last two years. All things considered, I think we can claim that the management of the Railway Service has given general satisfaction. After all, it has to be remembered that there is no department in the State which is more difficult to handle.

**Hon. J. Mitchell:** What about the fertiliser freights? Are you going to tell us anything about them?

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** There is no need to say anything about that. All the information in regard to the loss on fertilisers has been set out by the Commissioner. As I was going to point out, the Railway Department is one of the most difficult for those in

charge to handle. On the one hand it has the largest army of State employees in Western Australia, some 7,000, and, naturally, under any conditions there will be some measure of dissatisfaction or complaint amongst such a large staff. The fact that the dissatisfaction has not been greater shows that they have been fairly well treated, and I claim that the railway employees in Western Australia are better off, comparatively speaking, than the employees of the railway departments of the Eastern States.

Mr. Bolton: You have the best sample in Australia.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I believe that is so, as it is in many other departments. That is due to the fact that during the last 15 or 20 years Western Australia has attracted to its shores some of the best manhood, not only of the Commonwealth, but also of some of the older countries. They were young, bright, enterprising, and daring spirits who came West during the last 20 years, and the Government departments, in common with private employers, have absorbed a fair proportion of them.

Hon. J. Mitchell: And you came with them.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: And I was not the least of that bright and enterprising band, although I say it myself. On the other hand, in addition to handling a staff of that size, the Railway Department comes more closely in touch with and affects more closely the daily life of every citizen in the State than any other department. With our 3,000 miles of railways spread practically all over the State, and having to deal with people both as passengers and as goods customers, it is easy to understand that there will be always some measure of complaint. One of the difficulties we have at the present time is to grant the accommodation and facilities that are asked for. Naturally railway stations, buildings, accommodation, and services that were adequate a few years ago are altogether insufficient to meet the requirements of the people at the present time; but whilst we have of necessity to spend large sums of money in building railways, harbours, and

other public works and in giving access to ports and the interior, it is only reasonable to ask that those who are already provided with railway accommodation should put up with some little inconvenience until such time as the State is in a position to bring a larger section of the people into communication with its ports and its railways. Although we have been able to spend a considerable amount of money in giving increased platform accommodation and other things at stations, I do think the general public might well put up with the inconvenience of stepping from a train to the ground or from the ground into a train without the convenience of a platform while there are people so situated that they have not got railways at all.

Mr. Lander: They have to do it in America.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is so, and I do not think it is any more inconvenient for a person to get into a railway carriage with the use of steps than it is for them to climb into a buggy or a dray. What I have said applies more particularly to isolated or scattered districts where the passenger traffic is not so very great, and where the people might be expected to put up with this slight inconvenience. Another matter which will probably be referred to by hon. members is the re-appointment of the Commissioner of Railways at an increased salary, but I think hon. members might well forego any remarks they wish to make on that head while we are on the Estimates, as there will be an opportunity to discuss the matter by means of a specific motion which will come on next week. It is necessary in compliance with the Act for this House to ratify the appointment of the Commissioner and with that object in view I gave notice this afternoon of a motion in that direction. It will come on next week and any remarks that might be made under the Estimates will only be repeated during the discussion on that motion. I have a small, interesting return regarding the operations of the sawmills, in connection with the department, during the year. The production of jarrah

sleepers was 39,708 at a value of £3,067; sawn jarrah and scantling, £19,907; piles, poles, etcetera, and firewood, £2,192; or a total for the year of £25,166. The expenditure in wages and salaries was £10,825, on material £915, and on incidentals £8,928, or a total of £20,668. Added to that was the sum of £1,292 for interest, leaving a profit balance of £3,206 for the year. That of course was on the market rates, and shows that the work of that sawmill—there are, as a matter of fact, two operating now, the small one which was closed down for some time, having opened again—resulted satisfactorily.

Mr. Male: Who purchases the sleepers?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They are for our own use for the Working Railways. The hon. member will understand that the Working Railways require a large number of sleepers every year, and the sleepers to which I have referred are those cut at our mills. The figures given are the estimated actual value of the sleepers and do not indicate money received for them.

Mr. Lander: Do you sell the scantling?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We sell the scrap stuff at the mill for firewood and we sell the scantling. The scantling has been advertised from time to time.

Mr. Lander: Is it commanding a ready sale?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It has not had a ready sale. We have had some difficulty in disposing of it.

Mr. Bolton: The quantities are too big, I believe.

Mr. Lander: You should sell it in trucks.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is not convenient for the department to handle it in a retail manner, and we could not do so unless we were to open a depot in the City here and sell it in a smaller way. If we cannot successfully dispose of it otherwise, I do not see why we should not adopt that course.

Mr. Lander: Would you supply it in trucks to farmers?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I think so.

Mr. Male: What terms, three years' credit?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: With regard to the tramways taken over by the Railway Department during the year, I need say very little, as much information of a detailed character as to what is being done and what it is intended to do, was supplied by the Premier in his Budget, therefore I do not propose to repeat all the figures he gave. The estimated result for the year 1913-14 is, earnings, £115,000; expenditure, £79,750; three per cents., £3,450; interest, £27,625; leaving a margin of £4,175. The Government are perfectly satisfied with the deal they have made in the tramway service.

Mr. Lewis: Hear, hear.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have no doubt whatever that the system is going to be one of the most valuable assets in years to come which the State possesses. Traffic has been increasing week by week since we have been operating the tramways. There has been an increase of from £200 to £300 in the receipts compared with the corresponding week of last year, and I believe that when we will be in a position to give a better service the receipts will still further increase. It was recognised, of course, when the tramways were taken over by the Government that extensions were required in many directions and also an improved service, but, as has been pointed out already, it was found impossible to do that until such time as the new power house is in order. All the contracts have been let and work in connection with the foundations is now going on. Next year some time we shall be able to place a large number of additional cars on the roads and extend the service in many directions in which it is required at the present time and make duplications as well.

Mr. Male: Is not the power house going into the bottomless pit with the septic tanks?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The power house is all right.

Mr. Harper: They are driving piles for it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is the latest approved method of laying foundations for that class of work. The power house is going to be built on piles. A large number of piles have to be driven and coated over with concrete on top.

Mr. Bolton: The Opposition cannot be expected to understand everything.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have read in some sections of the Press criticisms with regard to the operation of the trams since they have been taken over, and I think a good deal of it is based on insufficient knowledge or else prompted by a desire to belittle anything that is under State control.

Mr. Lander: It is inspired.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I say emphatically that the service since the Government took it over has been better than ever it has been in the history of the tramways. From the 1st July this year to the 31st October, a period of three months, there have been 507,555 car miles run as against 460,577 for the corresponding period of last year. If we run in a period of three months 46,978 miles more than was the case last year, that is surely an indication that a more frequent or better service is run than before. One critic even went so far as to complain that it seemed to be a good thing for the Railway Department in that officers of the Railway Department in any way connected with the tramway service were receiving an additional £1,000 a year, because £1,000 was down in our Estimates in that direction, entirely oblivious of the fact, of course, that the £1,000 is paid to the credit of the Railway Department for services, and the officers concerned in the conduct of those services are not receiving any additional remuneration in connection with them. The tramway figures for the quarter ended 30th September have already been published, but they are worth repeating. The gross receipts were £27,279, cost of working £13,939,

or net earnings £13,340 during that quarter. We have placed eight new cars on the line since we have taken the service over. In fact, they were on the lines a few weeks after we took over the system, as after the Government had decided to purchase it the construction of ten new cars was put in hand at the workshops. I do not mean to infer that there are an additional eight cars on the line, as the new ones enabled us to take some of the older cars off for repairs they were badly in need of.

Mr. Harper: I hope you will not have any more of the same pattern built.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I think that some more room might be given in the future. They seem to be somewhat cramped for room in those cars.

Mr. Foley: You have to take a long breath when getting in.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Two bogie cars complete, of the "Washington-New York" type and design, have been ordered from the United States of America, and will arrive at Fremantle shortly. They are the latest type used in New York, and we are really purchasing them to see how they will suit our traffic here in Perth, and if we are satisfied, then additional cars of that kind will be obtained in the future. They are known as the long grille car, and the opening and exit are from the centre and will save much time compared with the present style of car, as, with the latter, before persons can enter they have to wait until those inside get out and then the stream pours in. But with the new car which we are getting people can be entering on one side at the same time as people are alighting, and a good deal of crushing will be avoided. They have been specially recommended by those in a position to judge of them, but we did not get more than two in the first instance, as we desire to see them in actual use before spending further money on them.

Mr. Foley: If they are a success, is it your intention to have the rest made here?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is the policy of the Government to have all rolling stock that can possibly

be made in our own State constructed here. We have pursued that policy since we have been in office, but in regard to rolling stock, particularly engines, we had to send to the Old Country as we had not the space to build them in our own workshops, but the extensions under way in the workshops are nearing completion, and in the future it is to be hoped we will be able to construct all the rolling stock we require in Western Australia. We certainly have the skilled labour necessary to turn out rolling stock equal, I think, to that which can be turned out in any other part of the world. I do not wish to take up the time of the Committee further. I shall perhaps have an opportunity of saying a few words again after I have heard the remarks of hon. members. I now submit the Estimates for the year to the favourable attention of the Committee.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin): Taken as a whole the management of the railways in Western Australia was very good indeed. In connection with the spur lines it might be well to remove an impression that might be gained from the Minister's remarks. The Minister quoted figures to show the approximate loss on those spur lines. The Commissioner of Railways pointed out that only a few of them paid in the first year or two. The fact, however, should not be forgotten that these lines produced a big traffic for the trunk lines, and it was hardly fair to credit the trunk lines with the earning of all the money and then put a loss down to the spur lines. If all these spur lines were losing concerns, as they appeared to be on paper, it might be questioned whether any Government would be justified in going on with the work of constructing new ones. More credit should be given to these lines and less attention should be paid to showing the losses incurred on them, for the reason that it might appear to outsiders, especially those upon whom we depended for the money we required for the building of these railways, that they were not the success that was claimed for them. A great amount of money had been spent during

the past two or three years in hauling water. It was unfortunate that the Minister for Works was not in his place, for he would like that Minister to know that thousands, if not tens of thousands of pounds, had been spent in recent years in that direction along the Great Southern railway, whereas with the expenditure of £30,000, streams of water two miles long, a chain wide and 20 feet deep, could have been tapped for railway purposes. The quality of the water was excellent and yet the department had been obliged to haul water night and day from almost in the vicinity of Albany to Narrogin.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That has not occurred this season,

Mr. S. STUBBS: Perhaps not, but it might happen again next year. The previous Administration borrowed money with which to build a line of railway to tap those streams to which he had referred, forming part of the Arthur River, but that money up to now had not been spent, although Parliament last year passed a measure for the construction of a railway which would pass right alongside these pools, and across them in more than one place. If the Government could start that line at once there need never be any fear of a shortage of water or the necessity to haul it over long distances, as had been the case during the last two or three years along the Great Southern railway. This matter was of such importance that it should not be lost sight of, and the Minister on inquiry would find that the statements he had made were correct. The Minister for Railways, in answer to an interjection earlier in the day, said that the increased expenditure in the Railway Department was largely due to the fact that the Government had increased the wages by 1s. a day. There was not one member who would raise any protest against that.

Mr. Lewis: What did the leader of the Opposition say the other night?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The leader of the Opposition did not state that he was against these increases which had

been given to the wage earners in the railways.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The statement has been published.

Mr. S. STUBBS: But one could not believe everything that appeared in the Press. He had known the leader of the Opposition for 20 years and had had business relations with him. Very often one heard the man in the street characterise the hon. member as a sweater; but he (Mr. Stubbs) denied that there was any foundation for such a statement, for, having been associated with him in business for so long, he had never heard the leader of the Opposition once suggest that it was his desire to pay a man an unfair wage.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What does he mean when he condemns the heavy expenditure in the railways and says it was due to those increases?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Without giving away any secrets, or wishing to bring the Minister into conflict with any of the station masters or responsible officers in the department, he desired to say that he had heard complaints from men holding high positions in the railway service to the effect that the engine-drivers and other men connected with the service were drawing higher wages than were those who were complaining.

The Minister for Railways: Who has a more responsible position than the engine-driver?

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Minister for Railways, of course.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Did not a station master in charge of an important station hold a very responsible position?

Mr. Bolton: No station master, if he is in charge of a big station, gets less than an engine driver.

Mr. S. STUBBS: A man holding a high position in the service had stated that there were those in the service occupying less important positions, with not such an amount of responsibility, earning better wages, and this man and others had declared that that kind of thing was not an incentive to them to give their best energies to the service. There was no desire that he (Mr. Stubbs)

should be misunderstood. He was not advocating low wages, and as long as he lived he would maintain that high rates should always be paid, because if that were not done it was known that the country was not prosperous. The point he wished to make clear was that certain responsible officers seemed to think that their increases had not been as proportionately high as those of men holding less important positions in the service. These men had not complained to him with the idea that he should ventilate the matter in Parliament, but he was just wondering whether that was the point the leader of the Opposition might have been referring to. It was to be hoped that the Minister's estimate of railway revenue would be greatly exceeded. There was no doubt that every effort would be made by the department to cope with the heavy traffic which would be carried over the railways in the shape of grain during this season. It was his belief that this year would see the end of the losses that were being shown by the spur lines, and he hoped as years went on, these lines, which were not now paying interest and sinking fund, would become highly profitable. He hoped the Minister would recognise the claims of all the officers from the highest to the lowest, and he commended the foresight of the Minister in proposing to increase the salary of the Commissioner, because in Mr. Short we had a man who was second to none in Australia so far as railway management was concerned. Mr. Short had the interests of his work at heart and would do his very best, and if Parliament agreed to the increase the State would not lose anything by the action.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you think we will get better results?

Mr. S. STUBBS: A man could not do more than his best, but if he was to have added responsibilities it was an incentive to him, if his salary was increased, to give his best to the State, and as the general tendency was to increase wages in the railway service, the officers holding the higher positions, in addition to the Commissioner, should

not be lost sight of. It was his intention to support the Railway Estimates generally and he hoped that next year would see a far better profit than had been the case in the last year or two, attributable, as hon. members knew, to the conditions not having been favourable. As years went on, however, he predicted that Western Australia would produce more grain and carry more over the railways than any other State in the Commonwealth.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): It was his desire briefly to refer to one or two matters in connection with the Railway Estimates. He felt proud to know that the operations of this great department had increased to such an extent during the past year, and that there was every promise of that increase being more than maintained during the forthcoming year. When one analysed the railway revenue and expenditure for the past year, one could not but be impressed by the great operations of the department, and also by the fact, as pointed out by the Minister, that profits over and above working expenses and sinking fund had been greatly decreasing. Of course there were reasons for it, but as we had gone pretty fully into some of those reasons when the Estimates were under discussion last session, it was hardly necessary to again refer to the matter, except to say that it behoved the Minister and the management of the department to see that a good return was given for the expenditure incurred. Last year he had referred to inaction and want of interest shown by some of the staff. He was pleased to say, from observations made during the past year, that there had been some improvement in this respect, clearly showing that it only required proper treatment and the sympathy of all members of Parliament in placing before the employees in Government departments the responsibilities which they owed to the country, to have those responsibilities cheerfully met. He was pleased to notice that it has been possible during the year to improve the condition of the station-masters in some of the larger centres.

Quite a number of them had been brought within the operations of the eight-hour system. There were no harder worked men in the service than some of the station-masters at out-lying stations. It was not to be expected that all these stations could be brought within the eight-hour system in one operation. No doubt as the stations increased in importance the department would see that justice was done and that men in such responsible positions would not be called upon to work excessively long hours, which all would admit endangered the travelling public. One point in the report of the Commissioner of Railways occasioned him grave concern. It had been referred to by the Treasurer in his Budget Speech when forecasting the proposed increased rate upon fertiliser. There was no more suicidal policy than that embodied in the proposal to increase the freight charged for the carriage of fertiliser. It had been proved over and over again that 90 per cent. of the land under cultivation in this State required fertiliser to ensure a crop. Therefore it was madness for the department to propose to further handicap the agriculturist by increasing the cost of fertiliser, one ton of which would give an increase of from three to five tons of produce to be carried over the railways. If the Commissioner of Railways was not getting a direct return from the carriage of fertiliser he was getting it indirectly through the increased production brought about by the use of that fertiliser.

Mr. Bolton: The increased cost cannot mean more than £1 in a season.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: In this proposal the department was making a great mistake. No good could come from the increased rate.

The Minister for Railways: Does the hon. member think that wealthy farmers, established for 20 or 30 years in the older settled districts, should have their fertilisers carried at an actual loss to the department?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Even to carry at a loss a commodity that would further increase the productiveness of the soil and ensure a certain return was good



policy. Even if the fertiliser were carried for nothing it would certainly ensure an indirect return.

The Minister for Railways: Extend that argument and we will be carrying everything free.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: By carrying fertilisers cheaply the department was helping to improve the productiveness of the soil and secure an increased tonnage of grain, whereas the placing of a further impost on fertiliser would mean running the trucks back empty. The Commissioner also stated in his report that a loss had resulted from the passenger traffic on the railways. In the circumstances one might have thought that before the Government proposed to increase the freight on fertilisers they would have increased the passenger fares. Surely that would have been a more satisfactory way of making up the difference. Instead of penalising an industry which was going to further increase the traffic on the railways. In his report the Commissioner of Railways had said—

Taking one-third of the "Mixed" train mileage as run solely on account of passengers, and adding it to the exclusively "passenger" train mileage, the earnings from fares on the total so arrived at represent 52·63d. per train mile for the year ended on 30th June, 1913. During the same period the cost of working amounted to 64·30d. per train mile over the whole system. The net result of the passenger service shows, therefore, a loss of one shilling per train mile in cost of working alone, and without calculating the interest charge, which amounts to 21·60d. per train mile.

The Minister for Railways: Does the hon. member support an increase in passenger fares?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: If the Minister could show that it was not possible to reduce the cost of management, then he would have to make ends meet by increasing something. The Minister had not told us what he proposed to do in regard to this. Either working expenses must be reduced or revenue brought up.

It was gratifying to know that the agricultural produce had meant so much increased revenue during the past year. He hoped that with the prospects of an improved harvest the Commissioner would have a busy time, and that before the end of the present financial year the department would show a good profit on the year's operations.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco): While it was not his intention to say anything in regard to the railways he desired to make a few remarks in respect to the tramways. The action of the Government in taking over the tramway system had been amply justified, for already necessary preliminaries had been transacted which would mean an enormous extension of the tramway system throughout the metropolitan area. He could endorse the Minister's complaint of the carping criticism which had appeared in the newspapers since the Government took over the service, and in which every little detail had been warmly criticised if it did not happen to meet with the approval of every member of the public. Those people who had been contending that the service on our tramway system was not so good since the trams had been taken over by the Government either knew nothing whatever about the matter or else they were actuated by ulterior motives. As a continual traveller on the tramways he was convinced from personal observation that we had now a better service than had previously obtained. Not content with mere observation he had made enquiries from the proper source, and found that on every route in the metropolitan area there had been a large increase in the mileage. In his opinion that was a complete refutation of the criticism which had been indulged in. On the financial side, also, we could not fail to be gratified. The Minister had given us the figures for the September quarter, from which it was learnt that the balance of receipts over working expenses amounted to £13,340. On the capital expenditure, namely £475,000, that figure worked out at approximately 11 per

cent. per annum, assuming that the rate of profit would be maintained for the year. Undoubtedly that was a very satisfactory position, and when we realised that the extension of the tramway system, together with the institution of penny sections, was going to greatly increase the traffic, it would be admitted that we could confidently look forward to an enormous increase in the tramway revenue.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Prior to tea he had been expressing disapproval of some of the criticisms levelled at the tramway service since it had been taken over by the Government, but he wanted to admit that there were one or two little matters that really gave cause for criticism, and which he believed had been responsible for those people who had been led to criticise going further than they were justified in doing. The abolition of the sale of tickets on the trams in favour of a system, firstly of selling the tickets at a central depot, and later at various depots along the tramway route, undoubtedly had been a great inconvenience to the public.

Mr. Underwood: Is it not abolished yet?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: No, but it was to be hoped that the new system would shortly be abolished. Being convinced in his own mind that the people were paying the full fare rather than go to the inconvenience of purchasing tickets at a central depot he had asked a question a few days ago relating to the matter. In reply he had been told that for the week prior to the alteration of the system the value of the 2s. 6d. per dozen tickets sold on the trams had been £548 9s. 7d., whilst for the week prior to his asking the question the value of the same tickets had been only £368 16s. 4d., or a drop in value of £177 13s. 3d. Those figures proved conclusively that the travelling public, who in the past had received a concession of 6d. per dozen by buying a dozen or more tickets at a time, were forfeiting that concession because of the inconveni-

ence of being compelled to go to a central depot. He trusted that the Minister and his expert officers would see the necessity for restoring that little concession to the public, large numbers of whom were continually travelling and were good customers of the system. Only those travelling constantly on the trams purchased tickets, and it was a recognised principle in all forms of business to allow some concession to large customers. The same principle was good in connection with the tramways. In reply to another question which he had asked regarding the scarcity of workmen's tickets on trams, he had been told that such scarcity might have happened in isolated cases. Half a dozen cases had been brought under his notice of conductors on the early morning cars being without workmen's tickets and the workmen, instead of getting a return for threepence, had been obliged to pay threepence for the single fare. Only a little care was required to see that the conductors were supplied with ample tickets, so that the workmen would continue to get the concession they had enjoyed in the past. With regard to the condition of the tramway track, he admitted at the outset that those conducting the system had justice on their side in this matter. The rails at the present time were in a state of great disrepair, and many of them were practically worn out. Anybody could see that, and to put down a proper roadway between the rails would be false economy until such time as new rails were put in, but something should be done. There was a great deal of loose metal along the route, especially on the Hay-street route to Subiaco, and only twelve months ago the Subiaco council had gone to enormous expense in tar-paving the whole of the roadway alongside the track within their district, thus making a first-class roadway. The centre of the track between the rails now stood in marked contrast to the remainder of the roadway because of the enormous amount of loose metal to which he had referred. Whilst he did not desire the Government to go to the expense of making that roadway good, and then having to pull it up in a

short time in order to put down new rails, he hoped they would find a way of putting the track in better repair.

The Minister for Mines: That applies to only one line.

Hon. J. Mitchell: To all lines.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The condition of affairs which had been described could certainly be seen by anyone who travelled on the trams between Perth and Subiaco. Another matter he wished to refer to was the new style of cars which had been introduced by the Government. The Minister had already mentioned the matter, and he believed it was the intention of the department not to have any more of that class of car. There might not have been so much objection to the cars if they had been made a little longer, but the passageways for entrance and exit were certainly far too small, whilst the compartments at either end for smokers were altogether inadequate.

Mr. Holman: They would be all right if you took the seats out.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: At the present time if two persons above average height were sitting opposite each other there was no room for their legs. The space for the motorman was also totally inadequate. He was jammed up in a little cabin where he had not the free use of his arms to properly manipulate the wheel.

Mr. Male: Was that car the Minister's idea?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The Minister would not be likely to saddle himself with the responsibility for that car. The car would not be so bad if it contained sufficient room. The design was a good one, provided the cars were made more spacious. Let the car be made longer, the space in the smoking compartments increased by 18 inches or two feet and the entrances and passages widened, and the car would be a good one. It had to be recognised that some provision had to be made in nearly every car for smokers. There were people who smoked continually.

Mr. Male: It ought to be abolished. Have local option!

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The hon. member could undertake that job if he chose, but he (Mr. Stubbs) would not. He had not previously heard any advocacy of local option in regard to smoking. Members must realise that some style of car must be designed which would make provision for those who desired to smoke on the car, and if any other design of car could be invented which would give that accommodation it would be welcome.

Mr. Layman: Is there anything wrong with the car barn, because that is the only part of the business you have not condemned?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: There was a lot of the system which he had not condemned. He gave credit to the Government for the increased efficiency in management, which was the only possible way in which the increase in revenue could be explained.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Increased mileage. Forty-seven thousand miles in three months must increase the revenue.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: There was no doubt that the superior management was responsible for the increased profits on the trams, and the Government had faced the position of giving a better service so far as the power at their command would allow. They had run a greater mileage on every route in the metropolis, and it was only the limited power at their disposal which prevented them putting on more cars and giving a better service than there was to-day. He trusted the matters he had referred to would receive the consideration of the Minister and his officers, and that they would remove those few little pinpricks which were causing annoyance to the public and which undoubtedly were the means of starting criticism which went further than was warranted.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): The hon. member for Subiaco usually proved in the end a pretty good apologist for the Ministry, and in that regard he always admired the hon. member's consistency. When the hon. member set out to criticise the Minister's control of the trams he had hoped that something might have been heard from him which would have in-

duced the Minister to do something more than he was doing. He appreciated the Minister's methods of introducing business to the Committee. The Minister for Mines invariably gave the Committee a fair and frank statement of the position, and his handling of his Estimates this afternoon had been no exception to the rule. He assured the Minister in all sincerity that members appreciated that attitude. Members were in Parliament to transact business. That could only be done properly when they had a clear statement of the business before them. The Minister had referred first to the cost of the Railways, and probably that was the proper way in which to bring the matter before members, because, after all, the cost of the various works was all-important to the general discussion of the railways and tramways, and the management of both. The Minister had told the Committee that there was 2,854 miles of railways open. In 1910 the mileage of railways open was 2,145, and the increase since that time has been fairly rapid. In 1911, 231 miles of railway had been built, and in 1912, 222, a little less, as was to be expected after the change of Government, whilst in 1913 256 miles had been added to the system.

Mr. Bolton: You say there was an increase under the present Government.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That interjection was hoped for by him because he did not know whether he could refer to the Marble Bar railway of 114 miles built during the time of the Wilson Government and included in the 256 miles.

The Minister for Railways: But it does not include the two big lines now nearly completed.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It did not include anything nearly completed or anything just about to be begun. It was good solid work accomplished and handed over to the Minister. If he attempted to discuss lines to be built or opened the Chairman would bring him up with a round turn, as would be done in the case of other hon. members. We had £11,377,000 invested in our railways in 1910. money which had to carry interest. That was increased by £642,000 during the year

1911-12, and that £642,000 meant an increase in train mileage of 231 miles. It had been said that no hon. member should use figures which he could not commit to memory because it was impossible to expect others to remember more than one could carry in his own mind, but one must use figures when discussing the Estimates. During 1912, 222 miles of railway were built, and the increase in the total cost of the railways was £1,214,000, which represented an increase of nearly twice as much as the increase of the previous year with nine miles less of railways laid. No wonder the Minister found it difficult to make both ends meet. In the next year we increased our total loan expenditure on railways by £1,680,000 for an increased mileage of 256. As a matter of fact the increase for every train mile of railway in 1911 was £2,778, which rose to £5,468 in 1912 and £6,562 in 1913. This included, of course, the rolling stock and other expenditure.

Mr. Lewis: Which had been starved for years.

Mr. Bolton: Your figures do not say much if you do not make that explanation.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: On every occasion he was fair to the Minister. He wanted to show what had been expended from loan funds in this connection, and how much heavier the task now was owing, in his opinion, to considerably more extravagance on the part of the people responsible for railway construction than the Minister should be compelled to face. In 1911 the Wilson Government spent £218,481 on improvements and additional rolling stock, and in 1912 £746,000 was spent from loan funds in this connection. He was bound to say that a great deal of the money was money used to pay for rolling stock ordered by the previous Administration. The rolling stock had to be paid for. A thousand trucks were ordered by the ex-Premier which the present Minister, when he came into office, had to pay for.

The Minister for Railways: And new engines.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, new engines were ordered by the previous Government.

The Wilson Government realised that more rolling stock would be needed and ordered it, and the present Minister had to pay for it. During the next year £728,500 was spent on rolling stock, and no doubt this rolling stock was absolutely necessary. Having made these deductions it would be found that our railways were costing a great deal more than in the past.

Mr. Gill: And they are managed better.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, they were not. How easy it was to say that sand ballast put down by the present Minister was better than broken metal used by the previous Administrations on suburban lines. How easy it was to assert, and how hard to prove. During the year 1910-11 the additional cost of railways for every actual mile of rails laid down was £1,835. During the next year under the present Administration the additional cost was £2,108, and last year it was £2,811.

The Minister for Railways: Where did the hon. member get his figures from?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: From the Minister.

The Minister for Railways: You are speaking now of the cost of construction.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister had brought down a certain statement, and he was not dealing with the cost on which interest had to be paid. He was showing that the expenses were so much greater than they were in the past and that it was largely due to the extravagance of the present Government. He wanted to make the admission that the Marble Bar-Port Hedland railway was included in 1913, and was an expensive line and of course added a little to the figures, but nothing like £1,000 which was the difference between the Wilson Government's railways and those constructed during 1913. In making that deduction he had reduced the mileage to 150 instead of reckoning 250 which it was claimed had been provided. He wished to point out to the public that the additional cost was enormous, and that by reason of this additional cost the Minister's expenses would not be limited to this year, but would be additional for all time. That

was a matter to be regretted. There was another item which required a little explanation. If hon. members turned up the railway figures on page 27 of the *Monthly Abstract* for September, they would find an amount of £231,671 apparently contributed by revenue towards the permanent investment on our railways. That sum of £231,671 was an amount contributed by previous Governments. From 1901 till June, 1908 contribution was made year by year with the object of renewing, repairing, and renovating rolling stock. It was not expended and the money had since been used for new rolling stock. When these figures went to the public they would imagine that the present Government had taken £231,000 from the revenue and invested it on our railways. That was not the case, because this money had been lying to reserve fund and was taken into account by the present Minister. He did not know quite how this had happened, whether it was a small book-keeping entry or whether the money was actually there and had been spent by the Minister, but he would like an explanation regarding the transaction. The Government had boasted from time to time that they had expended large sums from revenue, and presumably this sum represented the amount. The public ought to know just what had happened in this connection, and they ought to be aware of the fact that previous Governments had contributed this money. The Minister had rightly referred to our ever-increasing interest bill. It now reached the respectable total of half a million a year. Before the Minister could make any other payment he was bound to find £505,000 for interest alone. Two years ago it was £403,000 so that it had increased by £102,000 during the administration of the present Government. This of course was an important matter to the users of our railway lines, because it had to be a charge against earnings for all time, and all interest must come out of passenger fares and railway freights. He had mentioned the average additional cost of railways because he desired to show later on just what it actually meant. He did not wish to state too often that there had

been extravagance, but he feared there had been; otherwise the additional cost would not have been thrust on the people. The utmost care should be exercised in connection with the building of new lines. Lines should be fairly and substantially laid, and the cost should not be added to by alterations after the lines were handed over as had been the case in the past. This did not refer only to railways laid by the present Government. As long as the railways were constructed by the Works Department, so long would the Railway Department make application for money to improve the lines. If the Works Department put down a loop, the Railway Department contended that it was short and that they must have another. If the Works Department put down round sleepers the Railway Department said they wanted square sleepers. The better way if railways were to be constructed by day labour would be to allow the Working Railways to undertake the work under the supervision of the Works Department. This would be far more satisfactory. He did not think that day labour had proved satisfactory under the present Administration. It was far more satisfactory under the previous Administration. It sometimes happened that the workers took some little advantage of the present Government when they were laying rails, and so the cost was added to. It would be very much better if the Government let some of the railway construction by contract in order to have a check.

Mr. Foley: You mean it would be better for the contractors, do you not?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Whether it was better for the contractors he did not care, so long as the Government got a better deal. This added cost by reason of the present method was a tax for all time against innocent people who should not have to bear the burden, the farmers, the coal miners, the timber getters, and other people of the State. This House had not determined that day labour was to be the system. As a matter of fact the Minister himself had said that the results were not always satisfactory.

Mr. Turvey: Your views do not agree with those of the Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Thompson.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The views of the Engineer-in-Chief as expressed to the Minister for Railways did not concern him. They would probably be different from those expressed to another Minister.

Mr. Turvey: That is a nice statement to make regarding a public servant.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There was a report from the Under Secretary for Lands who agreed with something which from his (Mr. Mitchell's) point of view was absolutely wrong, being done by the present Minister.

Mr. Underwood: Do you think the Commissioner is not loyal to the Minister?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Commissioner was not being referred to by him. What he had said was that the Engineer-in-Chief was too loyal, and would probably agree with the methods of the present Minister.

Mr. Underwood: I do not think he is loyal, either.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Engineer-in-Chief, and not the Commissioner of Railways was being discussed by him.

Mr. Underwood: I will give you him in, too.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Commissioner of Railways was absolutely loyal. He considered that these officers were too loyal.

Mr. Underwood: I do not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister should use his common sense as he was expected to do. It was not for hon. members to attack the officials, but the Minister. If the Minister liked to put up with officials of whom he did not quite approve, that was his own concern. He should be able to build railways as cheaply as in the past. If he could not, we would turn the Minister and his colleagues out, that was all. It was not a question of what Mr. Thompson said about it. He (Mr. Mitchell) knew Mr. Thompson well enough to know he was a good and trustworthy officer, but knew his views varied a bit, and would sooner have the Minister's honest, frank admission of the position than any officer's.

Mr. Turvey: Mr. Thompson has laid it down that he can construct cheaper under day labour.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Mr. Thompson might be a good man under a good Minister, but under a bad Minister it is different. The present Government spent nearly £1,000 a mile more upon their railways than their predecessors spent.

Mr. Bolton interjected.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member for South Fremantle was too aggressive, but he was much obliged to him for his interjection. When Mr. Wilson was Minister for Works, he bought his rails at a much lower price than was the case now.

Mr. Underwood: Did he buy through the Tender Board?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member bought his rails very much cheaper than was the case now.

Mr. Underwood: Did the Tender Board buy them?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Mr. Wilson bought them. The question of buying rails was all part of the work. The Narrogin-Wickepin line, built under contract, cost £1,416 per mile, the Newcastle to Bolgart line (contract), £1,859, and Coolgardie to Norseman (contract), £1,559.

The Minister for Railways: How can you make comparisons, the work may have been extra?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There was another line, that from York to Nunagin. The first section, York to Greenhills, was laid at a cost of £3,115, before our time. Mr. Wilson built the next section from Greenhills to Quairading at £1,426 per mile, contract. The present Minister for Works came along with an improved method and spent £2,000 a mile to go from Quairading to Nunagin. Under the present Minister the work on this line cost, roughly, £600 more than Mr. Wilson spent; of course the present Minister did his work by day labour. The previous Administration did day labour jobs, too, for the railways, in fact, he thought we started the day labour system. The previous Administration believed in both systems, letting the officers supply an

estimate and calling for tenders, and if the tenders were considered reasonable the contractor was allowed to take the risk and build the line, and if the Government thought the contract too much, we took it on by day labour. That was absolutely a fair system to the State, and one which could not be described as anything but good, as there was a perfect check. The previous Administration built the Donnybrook to Boyanup line, day labour, at £1,554 a mile. Jarrahwod to Nannup, day labour, at £1,588, Collie to Narrogin, 58lb. rails, day labour, £2,701, Katanning to Kojonup, day labour, £1,196, and Wagin to Dumbleyung, day labour, £1,153. Contrast that with the Northampton-Ajana line, which cost £2,966 under the present Minister under the day labour system.

Mr. Bolton: Is it a fair comparison?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Of course the cuttings on that line made it a little more expensive, but when we went from £1,153 to £2,966 we wanted a bit more for our money. He was endeavouring to show to the Committee that the present day labour method was not the day labour method of the past Administration. Under the past Administration we got cheaper lines, and under the present Administration we got dear lines with the same system.

Mr. Foley: Is there the same supervision?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Under the contract system the Tambellup-Ongerup line was built for £2,022, and that was completed during the administration of the present Government, and he thought barring the Quairading to Nunagin line, which cost £22 less, it was the cheapest line they had built. This was under the contract system. Hon. members said probably the State got better work now, but of course we had the same sleepers, the same rails, and probably the same ballast.

Mr. Underwood: It is no good talking "probably" when you do not know.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: As a matter of fact he did not know whether they had sand ballast or gravel from Greenhills to Quairading and Nunagin, but when he

saw there was a margin of £1,000 to come and go upon, one would say we were not spending anything like that amount on additional assets. The point he wished to make was that the Minister should build lines as cheaply as the past Administration did, and mix contract with day labour as we mixed them. These figures would probably interest hon. members as he did not think they had had an opportunity of comparing them before. He had taken a considerable amount of trouble to look them up and assured the Committee that they were accurate. To get away from the cost of railway construction, which was of course of interest in this debate, he would like to deal with the working of the railways. Mr. Short's report was very interesting indeed and full of detail. Mr. Short was very frank in connection with every detail of his departmental work. For the year 1910-11 there was a revenue of £1,844,419, expenditure £1,216,447; net profit, £224,441. Last year the revenue was £2,037,853; expenditure, £1,506,600; and the profit had dwindled down, notwithstanding the increase in revenue, to £25,328. The earnings were £193,000 higher in 1912-13 than in 1910-11 and the cost £290,000 more. The Minister would have us believe he had given it all to the workers. The Minister knew full well that he (the Minister) had given something like £72,000, according to Mr. Short, in additional wages, and the rest of the £200,000 had gone in some other way. He (Mr. Mitchell) felt it was not wages alone, but slightly reduced effort and more men employed on the railways than were employed before. This was to be regretted. He, in common with most members, believed that wages should be good, but the effort should be fair.

Mr. Underwood: What about applying that to the highly paid civil servants, who do not get to their offices until 10 minutes past nine, and go out again—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Would it be possible for him to move for leave of absence for the hon. member for Pilbara for the rest of the session?

Mr. Underwood: You get on to those men, never mind the navy.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It was not correct to say he was getting on to anyone.

Mr. Underwood: You were getting on to the navy.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That statement was not correct, and he protested against it, as he had not singled out anyone. There were 6,951 persons employed on the railways two years ago.

Mr. Underwood: You try your clerical men, give your clerical men a chance.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Would the Chairman give the hon. member for Pilbara leave of absence?

The CHAIRMAN: One hon. member should address the Chair at a time, and at present the hon. member for Northam was speaking.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Now 7,750 men were employed. It might be, of course, that men working on the mills and at re-laying were included in this number.

The Minister for Railways: Not casuals who are re-laying.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: A thing he believed in was good wages, and he believed many of these men were not getting too much when they got 9s. a day. Railway men often had to work under conditions which were worse probably than those of anyone else. They had to put up with much discomfort. Before the past Administration left office, the now leader of the Opposition had determined that there should be some increase, but he (Mr. Mitchell) confessed it was not expected to give 1s. because it was thought the increase would be spread over the service and all should benefit. It was, however, intended to give some increase to the wages men. As a matter of fact, the past Administration did increase wages 1s. a day on those paid by the previous Government without losing our profit, because we got greater interest in our work. We brought the minimum up from 7s. to 8s.

Mr. Bolton: You did not, as the minimum was 7s. 6d.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We brought it up from 7s. to 8s.



Mr. Bolton: I deny that. You did not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member could say he did not.

Mr. Bolton: You know yourself it was 7s. 6d.

Mr. Lewis: Yes, it was 7s. 6d.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. gentlemen had just got into Parliament and talked about things which happened long before they came.

Mr. Bolton: I have been here as long as you have.

Mr. Underwood: The hon. member for South Fremantle has been here as long as you.

The CHAIRMAN: These interruptions must cease.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: At any rate, he was under the impression that the whole of the staff were raised to the minimum of 8s. with the exception of boys.

Mr. Lewis: They were not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The past Administration increased wages without losing their profit. Why could not the present Minister do the same?

The Minister for Railways: You increased wages only a few weeks before the elections and had not time to get the result.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Might he tell those gentlemen who knew so much that we increased the rate of pay to a minimum of 8s. years ago.

The Minister for Railways: Two weeks before the elections.

Mr. Bolton: I wonder that Providence does not intervene and stop the hon. member.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The increase referred to by him took place years ago.

The Minister for Railways: The hon. member's Government increased the minimum from 7s. 6d. to 8s. only a couple of weeks before the elections.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Without the slightest fear of contradiction, he said we had increased the minimum from 7s. to 8s. years before.

Mr. Lewis: I was on a deputation to the leader of the Opposition a fortnight before the elections, when he granted the 8s.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Another matter which he desired to know something about was why the Minister was employing 700 more men when the increase in the gross earnings was only £153,000. Did this number include all the people employed, or merely the men on wages? It was a point which required some explanation. There was no objection to the increased wages, but we ought to get increased interest from the working. Whilst the increased minimum wage was paid to a certain class, the other men in the department were neglected, and when the Minister had £70,000 to distribute, he should have considered every grade. There were some station masters who received less than the men who were serving under them. That was because the station masters did not get overtime and the other men did.

Mr. Layman: And they get less per hour for the work they do.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It was known that the Minister was applying the eight hours' system to the station masters and putting on additional men here and there. But this work on the stations was light and two men would be capable of doing it, if they got increased pay.

Mr. Underwood: Why did not your Government pay them better?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The party to which he belonged would pay them better some day or other. The Opposition were entitled to criticise the methods of the Government and to offer suggestions, and hon. members opposite should not resent the criticism. The increased expenditure over the earnings was a serious matter, and on account of that we had been told that the Government were going to increase freights on Collie coal, on the farmers' fertilisers, and in small ways here and there. It might be pointed out that the excess of gross earnings over working expenses per average mile worked in 1910-11 was £275, whereas for 1912-13 the figures were £198, a difference of £84. This was a tremendous drop and called for an explanation from the Minister. How was it that the earning power per train mile had fallen so much when there was an increased revenue?

The Minister for Railways: Higher prices for coal, for one thing.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Collie coal?

The Minister for Railways: Newcastle coal as well.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If Newcastle coal was responsible for this difference of £84, we had better resort to Collie coal.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There had been many bush fires, but these had been attributed, not so much to the coal as to the defective spark arresters on the engines. It was a serious matter to burn the country, and the Minister should give some attention to it. Quite recently a number of fires had occurred and the Minister would find that he would have to pay.

The Minister for Railways: We will not pay.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister had boasted that the revenue of the department had exceeded two millions sterling. That was a wonderful achievement, and we ought to be proud of it; it ought to be the forerunner of a reduction rather than an increase in the freights. There was also increased interest to the extent of £66,000, and the increased wages would mean a good deal, but there was something wrong with the state of Denmark when we found that the gross earnings were higher and the profits were so much less. The additional cost of rolling stock and the improvements effected on the various lines in the way of laying heavier rails and the running of heavier engines should mean the haulage of bigger train loads and a reduced cost of working.

The Minister for Railways: We were not able to get the benefit of that last year.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We expected from these increased facilities better results and a reduction in the freights.

Mr. Male: No possible hope.

The Minister for Railways: Do not be so pessimistic.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister declared that we had lost £48,000 on spur lines, but it might be pointed out that the system of calculating the earnings of these lines was absolutely unfair.

If a spur line brought a load in over a distance of 30 miles, and that load was carried 300 miles on a permanent line, the spur line was credited merely with the earnings over its actual length. There was nothing allowed for the fact that the spur lines had produced the traffic.

Mr. Bolton: It would be carried over the main lines in any case.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The system of calculation was not fair to the people who used the lines nor to the country which contributed the whole of the £48,000. The Minister had told the Committee that 200,000 tons of wheat had been carried on these new lines, and that the additional revenue which had been received had been largely the result of the operation of these new lines. The Minister, therefore, knew that the earnings of the spur lines should, in fairness, be credited with the whole of the profit made from the traffic they produced. Mr. Short in his report said, "It must also be borne in mind that the statement is prepared as though each separate district railway were a separate entity, as no satisfactory method of crediting such lines with a proportion of the revenue, which they add to the main line traffic receipts, has yet been discovered." Mr. Short there admitted that he had not been able to discover a fair method of crediting the spur lines with a reasonable proportion of the profit they earned.

Mr. Gill: It is computed on the same basis as in previous years.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That might be so but so much had never before been made of the loss. The previous Government never had a loss to cover up.

Mr. Gill: You kept it back so that no one would know.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The achievement was a splendid one for no one expected the spur lines would do as much as they had done. No one dreamt for a moment that on these 20 lines the loss at this stage in the history of our development would be only £48,000. The amount was more than covered by the additional traffic conveyed to the main lines. The Minister, when discussing these spur lines, said that we had a great many miles

of them and very few people. The Minister surely did not mean that we had enough lines; it was our duty to go on with the system of the construction of these railways until the whole of the South-West was served. The Minister would find, when he had completed a scheme of railway building, that he would not be losing very much, that in fact a profit would result from the added mileage.

The Minister for Railways : We have to bear in mind the mileage opened and the population served.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : The Minister produced a statement showing that the number of people to each mile of railway was lower in this State than in any of the other States. That was only because the people here were more active and energetic. If 108 people here could make a railway pay against 340 in New South Wales, that did not convey anything against our people. The Honorary Minister was bringing out another thousand people in a few days and that would give the Minister an opportunity for further railway development. We had to remember that a big traffic was provided for our railways by the timber industry, as well as by the firewood industry, and that last year we carried 280,000 tons of wheat and flour, and we could well afford to build railways in the country where there were broad acres to be settled. It was surprising to hear the Minister use the argument that we had too few people to each mile of railway line laid.

The Minister for Railways : I did not say we should stop building lines. I was merely drawing attention to the fact that we have less population per mile of railway.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : It was pleasing to have the assurance of the Minister that there was no intention to stop the building of railways. Of course it was necessary to develop the land adjacent to the railways as speedily as possible, and with this end in view he believed that agricultural bank advances should be cheerfully and generously given. We had the Minister boasting of increased traffic,

and straightway we were to have increased freights. Surely increased traffic should mean decreased freights. In New South Wales in 1900 the average cost of carrying goods was 1½d. In 1907 it was 1¾d., and in 1900 it was down to 1d. That was a very material reduction due to increased tonnage carried.

The Minister for Railways : And increased population; for the tonnage follows the population.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : No it was due to increased tonnage. That reduction of 50 per cent. in nine years represented a material benefit to producer and consumer alike.

The Minister for Railways : At the present time they are increasing rates by 7½ per cent.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : Apparently the more we carried the more we lost. That was a point to which the Minister should give special attention. We had carried 320,000 tons more than in the previous year, and our profits were down £80,000. This sort of thing should not continue. Of course the railways should not be used for revenue making; but we were entitled to get freights reduced as we produced more traffic. We ought to have from the Minister a definite statement about the fertiliser freight. Without fertilisers farming could not be carried on. Every ton of fertiliser carried would spread over 30 acres of land and result in 10 or 12 tons of additional produce being carried. Without fertiliser the land could not be used at all. If we could carry fertiliser free it would be a good investment from the point of view of the Minister, because the more fertiliser used the greater the traffic.

The Minister for Railways : If we carried the people free we would have more traffic too.

Mr. Bolton : That is a fair argument.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : It was not a fair argument. Fertilisers were carried over the railways in order to make the land produce a greater tonnage for the railways. What was required was to encourage people to use fertiliser, by giving the cheapest possible freight. The previous Administration had reduced the freight on fertil-

iser in the realisation that it was a good business proposition.

The Minister for Railways: It was but a small thing in those days.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Even so, it had been more difficult to do then than it was now, because every ton of fertiliser meant so much increased freight. There should be no increase in the freight on fertilisers. Indeed the Minister should bring about a decrease if anything, because it would benefit him and his railways as nothing else could. The Minister ought to tell the Committee frankly what he intended to do. It was not necessary at this stage to address oneself to the question of increased coal freights, because the member for Collie (Mr. A. A. Wilson) could do that very effectively. In New South Wales the grain rates for a distance of 80 miles was 6s. 6d. as against 8s. 1d. in Western Australia. The Minister would realise that that represented an appreciable difference. For a distance of 150 miles the rate in Western Australia was 10s. 8d., and in New South Wales 8s. 8d. or a difference of 2s. For a distance of 300 miles the rate in Western Australia was 17s. as against 10s. 6d. in New South Wales.

The Minister for Railways: Do you think New South Wales a fair comparison? They get coal there for 10s. a ton.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: As already pointed out, increased traffic meant reduced freights in New South Wales, and it should mean the same here. In the days of small things the freight in Western Australia was naturally higher, but we had arrived at a period of bigger things and the freight should be proportionately reduced. The Minister should give special consideration to this subject. The Minister had told us that cheap coal was obtainable in New South Wales. We had coal in Western Australia also, and the price was somewhere about 10s. a ton. It was pleasing to see that the Commissioner of Railways had been reappointed. In his opinion £2,000 a year was not a bit too much. There were many senior officers in the department who were doing well, and whose

salaries had remained stationary for many years past. However, we would have an opportunity of discussing the question of salaries when the Minister brought along his motion.

Mr. Gill: You have been condemning their administration all the time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No; he had been dealing with the work of the Minister all along. Hon. members claimed that they, and not Mr. Short, had put up the wages, that they and not Mr. Short had given better conditions. Yet now they were prone to say, "blame Mr. Short." Could anything be more ridiculous? The railway officials had always been very attentive, and he agreed with the Minister that we had a very good staff indeed. Just the same he did not agree with a good deal that had been done, and he doubted whether it was necessary that the Minister should have so many refreshment rooms all about the country. The Minister had put in a good many of these rooms during the last year or two. Some of them were quite unnecessary, and meant nothing beyond additional delays to the trains. He did not agree with the idea of the Minister in endeavouring to make as much revenue as possible out of these refreshment rooms. The Minister let the right by tender, irrespective of whether the tenderer was the most satisfactory man to hold the room, and altogether irrespective of the comfort of the travelling public. A great many of these refreshment rooms were very well run indeed, but it was no credit to the system under which the Minister let them.

The Minister for Railways: Why?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Because the Minister made the people pay too much. At Pinjarra some time ago a tremendous amount had been paid for the refreshment room right. Then the trains were altered, and the man who had the refreshment room must have lost a great deal of money by the alteration.

The Minister for Railways: I have not altered the system since your colleague was there.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, but the Minister had gone one better and provided more refreshment rooms and insisted on a better price for them. In regard to the tramways, he noticed that the capital cost was now £497,000. The system had been purchased for £475,000 and the cost was now £22,000 more than had been anticipated. Was this due to the fact that Ministers had made a bad bargain and arranged with the company that they were to be paid either in cash or debentures at the option of the company? Did this £22,000 represent the cost of raising the £475,000? Did Ministers pay in cash? If so, this was a monument to their want of capacity. It was £22,000 absolutely wasted because the agreement was wrong. He did not suppose the Minister for Railways had much to do with it, but it seemed to him that the bungle ought to be exposed. In every other Government agreement the Government took the option to give cash or bonds, but in this particular agreement the company had been given the right to take cash or bonds. And apparently they had taken the cash, and Ministers could only raise the cash at a discount, which had cost £22,000, an immense sum absolutely flung away because the agreement had not been rightly drawn. The Minister might explain why it had been necessary to pay £22,000 more than the original price. Only a day or so ago he had noticed that the Treasurer had raised money at £97 on 4 per cent. interest, added to which was the cost of raising, some 50s. or thereabouts, and six months' interest. The member for Subiaco had rightly said that the tram roads were in bad repair, and that the cars were in different. Certainly the new cars were uncomfortable. The road was in bad repair, and clearly we had made a bad bargain. The public were asking for reduced fares. The Minister had told us that he was running more trams, and in his (Hon. J. Mitchell's) opinion they were being run more conveniently for the public. However, the people were looking for reduced fares, but he was afraid they would look in vain, because this £500,000 did not represent tram service. He had seen some of the rails stripped

the other day; they were in an awful condition.

The Minister for Railways: We are going to spend £10,000 this year on repairs, and will still show a substantial profit on the deal.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Before the lines were in satisfactory working order the Minister would require to spend a great deal of money. Of course it was easy to show a profit on a fare of 3d. for a short ride, but it was not satisfactory to the people, and the people wanted reduced fares.

The Minister for Railways: Reduced freights, reduced fares everywhere, and yet you want to know why the profits are not greater.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We had acquired a second-hand plant and second-hand rails, and the Minister would have to spend an enormous amount of money before the system was put into working order.

The Minister for Railways: It was the best deal ever made for the State.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Everything was the best deal, according to Ministers, although as a matter of fact every deal they had made was a bad one as far as he knew. However, he had no wish to discuss the tramways further. The public had them, and he hoped the Minister would make good use of them. The Minister had some timber mills. It was interesting to hear that the Minister had made a profit on these mills. It was still more interesting to hear the Minister say, in reply to an interjection by the member for Kimberley, that this profit was merely a book-keeping entry. The Minister had charged up his timber to his own department, and the Railways had paid for it. Of course it was very easy to make a profit in that way. No doubt the Minister had compared the price of the sleepers he had cut with the price charged by the hewers. The Minister had a great deal of money invested there. However, that mill had not been erected by the present Government, but by the previous Administration.

The Minister for Railways: And even now it is no good because we are in charge.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The previous Government had put the mill up because they found it necessary to cut timber on their own reserve. He was only objecting to the Minister's method of showing a profit. He wanted to know if the Minister still had intact the 750,000 acres reserved for railways, and if so did he intend to hold that area for railway purposes?

The Minister for Railways: So far as I know.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister ought to know. It was most important, and there had been disquieting rumours about the reduction of that area. It was necessary that the Government should keep timber for themselves. The railways would need sleepers for all time, and this area had been set aside for railway purposes. Parliament could not, under any Act, make the area more secure than by handing it over to the Government, because it could not be made a Class A reserve, but the Minister should say that he would not allow an acre of that land to be let to anybody, or alienated, or leased in any way. The cut area should be protected and the young jarrah should be cared for. This mill had been put into the best jarrah forest in Western Australia because the Government needed a lot of timber for the railway, and if the benefit of that timber was needed anywhere it was needed by the railways. The Minister should be able to cut sufficient sleepers to have a year's supply ahead, and so store the sleepers for at least a year before they were put down. If the sleepers were allowed to season they would last much longer than the green sleepers he was now compelled to use. It would be a good idea if the Minister would instruct the department to stop all relaying while they cut a year's supply if they were unable to overtake the demand. With the new lines that were being built and the relaying of others, it was difficult to get a sufficient store of timber to enable the seasoning to be carried out,

but it was known now how necessary seasoning was. He believed that the seasoned jarrah would pay a dozen times over for the money that would be lying idle while the Minister was waiting for sleepers to become ready for use. He hoped the Minister would tell the Committee how he proposed to deal with those reserves. Of course members were concerned to have those reserves held for railway purposes for all time; they were concerned too, about the question of reducing railway freights to the farmer on the increased tonnage the department was handling, and they were further concerned not to have the fertiliser freights increased, not altogether because of the interests of the farmer, but because of the interests of the State and of land development. The Minister expected that his trams would show a profit during the coming year, and perhaps they would. He hoped the trams would run as smoothly as the Minister said they would, but he rather thought that the department was going to have a rough time with them, and he ventured to say that the public would not be satisfied unless they received a better and cheaper service. However, that was a matter for the Minister to consider. The trouble would only be for the next ten months, and after that he supposed a Liberal Government would be able to do a bit better.

Mr. BOLTON (South Fremantle): The member for Northam had opened his remarks by complimenting the Minister on the manner in which he had introduced his Estimates. The hon. member had been justified in throwing that bouquet at the Minister, and he had followed up that remark by stating that he also had gone to a great deal of trouble in getting out his figures. He had spent a hard day on those figures, and those members who had heard the hon. member speak would agree that it took a good deal of thought to get out such statistics, but the difficulty was that one could not make the hon. member's figures tally. That was quite usual with the hon. member.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You always get out of trouble by abusing somebody else.

Mr. BOLTON: There might be cause for abusing the hon. member before the speech was concluded, but he had not abused him yet. A cursory glance at the report of the Commissioner of Railways should not be sufficient for the hon. member to build up a mass of figures; he should go a little deeper.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Where was I wrong?

Mr. BOLTON: Here was one particular in which the hon. member had been wrong: he had asked the Minister to explain how it was that 700 additional men were employed by the Commissioner, and he had remarked that it was laxity of effort on the part of the men which made it necessary to employ that additional 700. Such a remark was unworthy of the hon. member, although that sort of thing seemed to have been his trouble all this session. If the hon. member would look at page 12 of the Commissioner's report he would see that only 443 additional men were employed.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I took the two years.

Mr. BOLTON: And the hon. member would have said that he had referred to four years if his critic happened to be disputing his figures for two years. The member for Northam had further stated that the additional profit was only £153,000, and that there were 700 extra men to earn that profit, showing that there was laxity of effort on the part of the employees. On the very same page from which the hon. member obtained his figures these remarks were made by the Commissioner—

During the year ending the 30th June, 1913, 7,907 men were on the average employed throughout the whole of the period, contrasted with 7,464 persons during the preceding year. On the basis of the average mileage worked, 2.84 persons were employed per mile compared with 3.3 in 1911-12.

And yet the hon. member stood up and said that additional men were required to work the railways for the comparatively small additional profit of £153,000, because the men would not do as much work for the present Government as they had done for the previous Government,

whilst the very page from which the hon. member had taken his figures contained a statement that the number of men employed per mile last year was less than ever before. It was absurd for the hon. member to talk in that fashion. Then the member for Northam had proceeded to show that there was a difference of £1,000 per mile in the cost of railway construction under the present Government, compared with the cost under the Liberal Government, and when asked if the same engineer was in charge of construction then as now, the hon. member had not replied. The hon. member had quoted a few railways which had been built at a cost of from £1,100 per mile upwards. But he had forgotten to say that on those railways there had been provided no facilities, no railway stations, no railway yards, and not even ramps to load wheat. The hon. member knew that under the previous Government there was one continual outcry for added facilities on those cheaply built lines. As a matter of fact both sides in politics had complained repeatedly that the lines were being built far too cheaply. The then Government were merely building lines without ballast or anything else.

Mr. Monger called attention to the state of the House; bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. BOLTON: The call for a quorum had interrupted the pointing out of the extraordinary figures used by the member for Northam when he said that there was nine miles less railway built in 1912 as compared with the year when the Wilson Government reigned, and yet the cost had been doubled. The hon. member had explained that in 1911 £218,000 had been spent on rolling stock and repairs, in 1912 £746,000, and in 1913 £728,000, and he had gone on to say that the previous Government had been able to construct railways at from £1,100 per mile. The hon. member had forgotten to say that no facilities whatever were provided on those spur railways. Both parties in this House at the time of the inauguration of the system of light spur lines and ever since had been complaining that it was absurd to just simply lay rails on

a sand bed without ballast, sidings, ramps to load wheat, stations, or any other facilities. All that was being done was to lay the rails, and the difficulty was that whilst they were able to overcome for a number of years the appeals of the settlers for some facilities, the time came when those facilities had to be provided, and the difference between the £218,000 in 1911 and the £746,000 in 1912 was explained by the fact that the present Government had given the facilities for which the settlers had been asking for so long. It was absurd to say that there was a difference of £1,000 per mile in the construction cost of the railways built under the previous Government and the present Government respectively. The hon. member had claimed that during the reign of the Wilson Government the average cost of the railways built had been £1,800 per mile, and under the present Government £2,800 per mile, taking into account the increased mileage opened each year, and yet that £1,000 per mile, which the hon. member said was additional cost, was now attached to the construction of new railways. When asked if he meant that it cost £1,000 per mile more to construct railways to-day than it had done under the Liberal Government, the hon. member had replied in the affirmative, and then when some other member interjected he had replied that of course there were rails and fastenings to buy and it took an expert to buy them.

The Minister for Works: Some of the new lines are standard lines.

Mr. BOLTON: Of course, but the member for Northam would not admit that. The hon. member had quoted some railways as having been built for just over £1,100, but some of the new lines that had been built were already standard lines.

The Minister for Works: Yes, some are built with 60lbs. rails.

Mr. BOLTON: And even those lines which were essentially agricultural spur lines had been equipped with facilities which had added to the construction cost of those lines. On the lines built by the previous Government there was never a ramp to load wheat,

but such conveniences had been provided by the present Government; yet they were told that those things did not come into consideration at all, and that railway construction was costing under the present Government £1,000 per mile more than under the previous Government. Doubtless, if one could have taken a note of the other figures used by the hon. member they would have been found to be equally absurd.

The Minister for Works: He could have said £2,000 per mile; he let you off lightly.

Mr. BOLTON: There was a remark by the hon. member for Kataning to which he desired to refer that the margin of profit was decreasing year by year, and the hon. member asked why. It was because of the very pathetic appeal that the hon. member for Northam had put forward asking for further facilities and for further reductions. This was taking place from January to December, not only so far as this year had gone, but for a number of years past. There had been a continual appeal from farmers to assist them further. The present Government had done remarkably well in the matter of assistance given to the farmers, and still they were like Oliver Twist crying for more. Yet hon. members wondered why the margin of profit was decreasing. The hon. member said that either the cost of operating would have to go down or that passenger fares would have to go up. For a long time he had advocated the single journey tickets, and he believed this would be a solution of the difficulty. In other places one could not get such a thing as a return railway ticket. A single journey ticket had to be taken, and this had proved very effectual in gaining more revenue. The time was coming and had perhaps arrived, when there would have to be a slight increase in the passenger fares paid, but in the first instance he believed it would cost the Government next to nothing to introduce the single ticket system, and that from this source there would be a considerable increase of revenue.

Mr. Allen: It would be taken out of the people's pockets.



Mr. BOLTON: It would have to be taken out of the people's pockets in order to be put into the people's pockets.

Mr. Lewis: And it would do away with scalping.

Mr. BOLTON: The people's railways were used for that purpose. Many return halves of tickets were not used by the individuals who purchased them. If only this evil were overcome something would have been accomplished. It was not fair to assume that a half of the price of a return ticket would be the price of a single journey ticket. There would naturally be a little additional charge because at the present time a single fare cost more than a half of a return ticket.

Mr. Lewis: It is more than the whole of the return fare.

Mr. BOLTON: That was not right, and he could offer no explanation of the hon. member's statement. This was a suggestion which was well worth considering. Though it might be an innovation so far as this State was concerned, it was in operation elsewhere. One other matter referred to by the hon. member, and also by the hon. member for Northam was the suggested increase of freights on fertilisers. He really thought that little would have been heard from the Opposition on this point. Surely to goodness the idea of fertilisers being carried at low rates, and the appointment of seed wheat boards, and so forth, were designed to give the struggling farmer a chance to get over his difficulties. What did it mean to a struggling farmer and even to one who could not make ends meet? He would not have to pay more than an additional sovereign a year in order to pay the proper rates on fertilisers; a sovereign would cover it all. It was not so much the struggling farmer who, perhaps, was not as careful of his pounds as the St. George's-terrace farmer with his 10,000 to 20,000 acres of land who was complaining. There should be no opposition to this; it was a fair charge for the carriage of fertilisers.

Mr. Harper: The hon. member knows the farmer cannot afford more.

Mr. BOLTON: There were men who could not make ends meet, but he would

never believe that an additional sovereign, and in many instances less than that, would be the last straw on the back of the farmer. The men with the big lots of land who could afford to pay the proper rates, and who in some instances were buying big quantities and handing it out to smaller farmers, these men, together with the agents, were the people who were complaining, and not the small farmers. The Government gained very little from the increased freights, but every little helped, and all that the Government had done for the farmers should at least prompt their representatives in this Chamber not to whine so much about the increase which was perfectly justified, small though it was. The Minister pointed out that the increased earnings for this year amounted to £153,000. While that sounded satisfactory the next item was not quite so satisfactory. The increased earnings amounted to £153,000 and the increased expenditure totalled £162,000. It was costing more to earn the revenue on the railways to-day and it was gradually costing more than it had done in the past. If the farmers' friends could claim that climatic conditions had prevented them from making the progress which they should have made during the past few years, the Government could surely make the same claim. If the forecast of the crop this year turned out to be anything like correct, he believed the farmers would be over their difficulties. It had been said several times this session that the Government would not be able to handle the coming harvest on the railways. The way in which it was handled last year was a credit to the Railway Department, and judging from that he believed they would have no difficulty in handling it this year. Although the harvest forecast represented a very big increase on previous years, the lesson which the Railway Department taught to croakers last year should keep them quiet until they had reason to make complaints.

Mr. Harper interjected.

Mr. BOLTON: It was definitely stated two or three times in this House that the Government would never be able to

handle the harvest. The hon. member for Wagin mentioned it that evening, and although he stated that last year they were successful and he was optimistic enough to believe they would be successful this year, the statement was reiterated by the hon. member for Northam. Night after night this statement was sent forth—

Mr. Male: What does the Minister for Works say about it? He could not take the Commissioner's word for it, and so appointed a commission to see if it could be handled at Geraldton.

Mr. BOLTON: What application that had to the subject under discussion he could not see. Several hon. members said that the railway staff was of the very highest class. We had every right to claim that Western Australia possessed the best railway staff in Australia. The reason, he believed, lay in the fact that the men joined the railway service as young men and were trained to make thoroughly good men. When we had young men joining the service and serving 10 years, 15 years, or even longer periods, it followed that they must be competent men and were well deserving of the increases they had received. While we had men like these the management could boast of their ability to handle the traffic, but if we did not have a competent staff it would be impossible to handle the traffic.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Commissioner says he is not getting a return. Is he right?

Mr. BOLTON: In his opinion the Commissioner was utterly wrong. Probably the Commissioner was guided by subordinate officers, some of whom were by no means in sympathy with the increase of wages granted to the lower paid men. The question of handling the harvest was referred to by the Minister when he said there were 27 additional locomotives. Yet the hon. member for Northam pointed out the additional cost per mile under the present Government. Twenty-seven additional locomotives, all of which had to be paid for by the present Government, and which were probably ordered by the previous Administra-

tion, who had kept their figures down to £218,000 against £746,000 spent by the present Government.

The Minister for Railways: There are about 80 new engines.

Mr. BOLTON: That was why it was absolutely unfair for the hon. member for Northam to refer to the disparity in the figures. There was one feature which was by no means satisfactory, and of which he hoped the Minister would take a note. In regard to these 27 new locomotives, to make sure of overcoming a difficulty which had been experienced with a shipment of locomotives a few years ago, an expert was sent to England to supervise the construction of these engines. That expert went to England to supervise the construction in order to prevent boiler troubles that had occurred in connection with nearly every engine which had been imported into Western Australia. It was claimed, and there was a good deal of truth in it, that the water supply for locomotive boilers had been the cause of the trouble, but in this instance in less than 12 months some of the new engines imported had had to go in for boiler repairs, and what was somewhat disgraceful where the refreruling of tubes was necessary it was found that all the tubes were too short to enable the refreruling to be done, and new tubes had to be put in. Perhaps the Minister knew nothing about this, but he would find that the statement was correct, and was worth at least some inquiry. After having gone to the additional expense of sending a man Home to supervise the erection of the boilers to prevent further trouble, within nine months one engine at Northam was taken in for boiler repairs, and when the tubes were taken out for refreruling in order to prevent them from leaking none of the tubes could be used again. It had been the same old trouble year after year. For five years he had occupied a position of having to run trial trips on all new engines and on engines that had been overhauled and he had some little knowledge of this subject. One of the greatest troubles which the Railway Department of this State or of any other

had had was in regard to water for use in locomotive boilers. This was the reason why water had to be carted from Perth to Fremantle in order to supply the engines there; there was no suitable water at Fremantle.

The Minister for Works : There is now.

Mr. BOLTON : Yes, but for many years it was necessary to run water trains. The hon. member for Wagin stated that if the Government had spent £30,000 on the Wagin-Darkan railway they could have obtained a good supply of water from the Arthur River, and could have saved an expenditure of tens of thousands of pounds on the carriage of water. It was highly probable that the water in the Arthur River would have been found to be unsuitable for locomotives. It was easy to understand that any sort of water would not do for locomotive purposes and high pressure boilers. There was little water which was suitable. It was necessary to have the best water, soft rain water, and then only could the best life be got out of the locomotives. Even the scheme water from a catchment area had been a source of great trouble to the Railway Department. Certain suggestions had been made with a view to improving the water for these boilers, but up date nothing had been done.

The Minister for Works : It has been improved now.

Mr. BOLTON : There was room for improvement. The question of the loss on the spur lines had been referred to, and he did not intend to waste many words on it. The bald fact remained as the Commissioner had pointed out, that there had been a loss of £47,788. It was all very well to say it was unfair to load the spur lines with the loss because they were only allowed the revenue received from the starting to the finishing point of the spur line. It was claimed that some portion of the main line revenue should be credited to the spur lines. But if the spur lines were never built the farmer would be carting his produce 15 miles to the present main line, and if by laying down a spur railway the farmer

had only to cart for a distance of two miles and on top of that he required a percentage of the revenue to be allocated to the spur line, because the produce went to Albany or Fremantle as the case might be, it was unfair. The Commissioner was right in saying that he had not discovered a proper means to allocate the revenue received from spur lines, but he did not say what the hon. member for Northam said he did. The hon. member for Northam said the Commissioner's remarks were to the effect that no fair method had been discovered. The Commissioner said nothing of the kind, because it was a mere matter of degree. As a matter of fact, the man was carting his wheat a less distance because of the spur line and much of the revenue received could not be allocated. He (Mr. Bolton) noticed that there had been a big development on the south-western district railway, and he noticed at the present moment that there had been additional staff stations and a great number of crossing loops. That particular railway could have been built cheaper than any railway in Western Australia because it would have been a duplication. The light rails could have been left down for the time being and heavier rails run alongside for at least two or three sections. A number of crossing loops would be a far greater cost than the added cost of laying one or two sections in the manner indicated. They were replacing the 45lb. rails with 60lb. rails, but it would have been cheaper to have laid a line of 60lb. rails for a considerable distance, leaving the existing line there while the traffic was heavy. It had evidently been thought best to pull up the 45lb. rails and replace them with 60lb. rails and put in a number of crossing loops, but that was going to be a big expense, and it was going to cost a lot of money to keep that South-West line going. It was worthy of a better service than it was getting, and because of its paying nature it should get some attention. He would like to have seen his suggestion carried out in preference to pulling up the 45lb. rails. He found that the little out-station known as Robb's jetty, which was among the very

top in its receipts of revenue, in fact, it came about seventh on the list for the State in the matter of revenue, having an increase of £4,405 from last year and £15,161 compared with five years ago, had two dog boxes for the staff to do their work in. He referred to the matter, not from any parish pump standpoint, but because a station that was responsible for adding £25,000 annually to the revenue should have for its staff of four something better than these dog boxes to work in.

Mr. Lewis: Is that the yearly revenue?

Mr. BOLTON: That £25,000 was this year's revenue.

Mr. Lewis: Was it mostly from cattle?

Mr. BOLTON: A total of 45,205 tons of goods came in and out of Robb's jetty, live stock being equal to 14,116 tons. Hon. members would admit that a lot of work was done by the small staff at this station, and they were at least entitled to some better accommodation than they had at present. Ways and Works showed an increase of £30,000. He did not know why they should, because, as a matter of fact, during the term of the hon. member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) as Commissioner of Railways, he did one of the best works he had done in putting the blue metal ballast between Fremantle and Midland, as a result of which the maintenance cost was reduced. He (Mr. Bolton) regretted to say that the blue metal ballast put in by the hon. member had been neglected very considerably, and if something was not soon done in regard to it, it would cost as much to put right as it cost in the first instance. Blue metal ballast, generally speaking, wanted very little attention, but unless it was looked to to some extent it did not get a fair chance, which it should have, of proving that there was no other ballast to equal it, although it was expensive at the start. With reference to Collie coal, he believed there had always been a mistake in the matter of delay in transit of this coal; great depreciation took place during the delay which occurred from the time it left the pits until it got to the different depots. The Government for their own use should run coal trains. It

would pay the department to run their own coal trains right through to their different depots and the coal would be of superior quality if it did not deteriorate so much in transit, and the cost would be lessened. Coal trains as a rule got a through run. The Commissioner pointed out, and in this case, most unfairly, that the cost per thousand miles in connection with locomotives had gone up from 31.9 to 34.1 tons, or an increase of 7 per cent. He (Mr. Bolton) wanted to point out that for years the load tables had much increased year by year. As a matter of fact, when he first started on the locomotives over 20 years ago, the tonnage of locomotives used was about 145 tons, and they used to run 110 miles to Beverley and 110 miles back on 35 cwt. of coal. To go 110 miles to-day and 110 miles back would require just four times that amount of coal. But would it be a fair comparison? The engines to-day were much heavier and had increased in their hauling capacity. The load tables had increased year by year and we could not expect a locomotive whose load was 500 tons to consume the same amount of coal as a locomotive some years ago whose load was 250 tons. If there had been an increase per 1,000 miles, it was a justifiable increase. As a matter of fact, the same argument could apply to steamers. Steamers anything up to 15,000 tons were being built to-day and we could not expect them to come out here from the Old Country with only the same coal consumption as the small vessels of, say, 4,000 tons which were coming out some years ago. When locomotives hauled an additional tonnage and earned additional money, there must be a greater consumption of coal per 1,000 miles. He intended to discuss the increase to the Commissioner of Railways as he believed the Government took a wrong action in placing a traffic superintendent in charge of the trams. It would pay the Government to get a traffic manager and pay him his salary. If the £500 which was to be added to the Commissioner's salary had been added to the £360 which was to be paid to the traffic superintendent, to whom he had referred as being in charge of the

concern, and the amount brought up to £1,000 the Government would have been able to get a really good manager for the Perth trams to-day and ready to go into the question of the extensions the Government would have to face within the next year or two. He hoped that if the present arrangement was not yet permanent, the Government would consider the advisability of appointing a manager for the tramways and let him be responsible only to the Commissioner of Railways.

*[Mr. Male took the Chair.]*

Mr. LEWIS (Canning): In his introductory remarks the Minister had supplied a good deal of valuable information in connection with the railway Estimates, but, as was only to be expected in a big department like this, there were very many important matters which he overlooked and did not refer to. He (Mr. Lewis) intended to refer to some of them and he hoped that the Minister would take a note of them and in replying touch upon the various points raised. The first matter he desired to refer to was the form in which the Estimates for the Railway Department were introduced. They were altogether different from those of the other departments. Other departments showed in detail how increases were to be allotted, while in the Railway Department we had them under the heading of "Salaries, wages, and allowances to officers and employees generally, and contingencies, including stores and materials, etc.," which included charges of a general character not otherwise specifically provided for. Certain increases were laid down, for instance, in the Commissioner's branch £927; traffic branch £24,777; locomotive branch £75,600; Ways and Works branch £40,460; and a number of others in connection with incidental matters. He would like to know with regard to these increases how they were to be allotted, what amount of increase was to be allotted to the salaried staff, whether station-masters who were on the minimum doing postal and savings bank work were to receive any consideration for that work,

and also what amount of increase was to be allotted to the wages staff. Also what amount of money would go to the increase of staff, as he noticed the staff was increased considerably both so far as the salaried and wages men were concerned. Another very important feature in connection with the railway estimates was the financial position. As was mentioned by the hon. member for Northam, the increased interest charges this year over the previous year amounted to £66,000, and we had to take into consideration the fact that our mileage was increasing rapidly. A vast amount of that money was due to the fact of interest charges on the capital cost of our spur lines. Yet we had the Opposition croaking in their usual style; in fact they had all become croakers and were the biggest pessimists in the House, especially the member for Northam. It was surprising where the hon. member got his figures because he quoted figures which were altogether inconsistent with those which appeared in the report of the Commissioner of Railways. A certain amount of the increased interest charges had been brought about by the laying of heavier rails, the ballasting of lines which had been taken over from contractors, and also adding to the rolling stock. The member for Northam, as was usual with him, would never give credit to the present Administration for the work it had done. The hon. member always endeavoured to decry the efforts of the present Government, but he was absolutely astray in all the figures he had quoted. For instance, on page 2 of the annual report of the Commissioner of Railways we found these remarks:—"During the 24 months ended on the 30th June last 478 miles of railway have been taken over, and when existing orders for locomotives are complete in a month or two from now, 104 locomotives will have been added to stock within a similar period." The Commissioner also pointed out in another part of his report, in connection with the increase in the rolling stock, that the additional locomotives last year numbered 27, while there was a balance to complete existing order of 41. In the previous year

36 new engines were brought into traffic, making a total of 104. If there was one thing more than another for which the Railway Department deserved credit, it was the fact that the rolling stock had been brought up to date. This had enabled the traffic to be carried effectively over the lines. The delays which happened so frequently previously were due to the fact that the rolling stock had been starved for the previous seven or eight years.

The Minister for Railways: Ten years.

[*Mr. McDowall resumed the Chair.*]

Mr. LEWIS: If the Railway Department had sufficient engines to keep the trucks moving, that was the most effective way of dealing with the wheat traffic. Additional wagons had been added during the term of office of the present Government to the number of 1,800, and 900 bogey and four-wheeled trucks were yet on order and to be completed so as to deal effectively with the increased production. There was not one member among the Opposition who ventured to congratulate the Railway Department for their efforts of last season. Members were aware of the increased traffic and this was well and expeditiously handled by the department, and proof of the department's success lay in the fact that not a single complaint had been heard. Yet we had hon. members opposite, in the course of this debate, anticipating all sorts of difficulties and predicting that we would never be able to cope with the wheat traffic in the coming season. We all knew that it was not possible to adopt any other policy with regard to our spur lines. These lines were opening up the interior and permitting development to take place. The members of the Opposition always came along and asked for additions to these lines, and when these additions brought about increased expenditure they twitted the Government with having increased that expenditure. The thing was altogether illogical. It seemed, however, that Opposition members, and the member for Northam particularly, were always prepared to make any kind of state-

ment, without being able to support it. The Government deserved to be congratulated for having raised the minimum to 9s. for the men who were working in the sun and in all kinds of weather keeping the lines in repair. Many of these men, too, had large families to support and they were entitled to that minimum of 9s. Then the traffic men had to pass an eyesight test and undergo medical examination before they became entitled to that minimum. The leader of the Opposition, with his usual sneers towards the wage-earners, belittled with enthusiasm the efforts of the Government in raising the minimum. Yet we found the member for Northam taking credit for having raised the minimum to 8s. I remember being on a deputation which waited on the leader of the Opposition when he was Premier, urging him to increase the minimum rate of pay. This was a fortnight before the elections. The member for Northam declared that his Government raised the minimum to 8s.; they did nothing of the kind. There were scores of men in the railway service who were on the 7s. 6d. minimum and they were fettlers who had to serve a probationary period of three months before they received the 8s. The leader of the Opposition sneered at what he called boy porters who received the increased minimum wage of 9s., but those boy porters, before they could receive that minimum, had to reach the age of 21, and they were fairly well developed boys then. These porters had to pass an examination which included signalling (and a very stiff examination it was), eyesight tests, and a medical examination before they received the minimum. The wages of the fettlers were raised certainly in 1911, but they had to threaten to strike in order to get that increase. We knew that the leader of the Opposition had appeared before the arbitration court and had advocated a 6s. minimum, and now that hon. gentleman was bidding for the support of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association whose chief plank in their platform was longer hours and lower wages. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) had referred to a number of anomalies which existed.

There were scores of them, however, and with the permission of members he would refer to a few, so that the Minister might make full inquiry into them with the object of increasing the revenue. There was a tendency on the part of some people to avail themselves of concessions which were never intended for them. The Premier had told the House that we sent forward to the other Chamber certain taxation proposals in order to bring in increased revenue, but that all our efforts were rendered futile by that Chamber throwing out as quickly as it could the measures submitted to them, the object being to discredit the Government. We should get full value for services rendered and it was his intention to quote a few instances so that the Government might take some action. The special excursion fares were abused by a section of the people. It was possible to go to Albany by a certain train on Saturday afternoon at the first class return fare of 30s., and second class £1.

The Minister for Railways: The fares have been increased.

Mr. LEWIS: That must have been done then within the last week. The single fare to Albany, first class, was £2 15s. 9d., or a difference of £1 5s. 9d. over the first class return excursion fare. The second class single fare was £1 14s. 7d., or a difference of 14s. 7d. over the second class excursion return fare. Therefore, if the average man went to the railway station and asked for a second class single ticket to Albany he would have to pay 34s. 7d., whereas the man in the know would ask for a second class special excursion return ticket and he would pay £1 for it.

The Minister for Railways: It is 30s. now.

Mr. LEWIS: It was his desire to do justice to the people living on the coast and to give them the fullest opportunity of visiting the southern seaside resorts, while the goldfields people should also be given every opportunity to spend a holiday at the coast. The Government, however, in connection with excursion tickets should introduce the single ticket system, so as to prevent scalpers and others

trafficking in the tickets, and making illegal use of them. If he had adopted the course followed by the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) and disguised himself, he could have gone to many of these scalpers' establishments and purchased tickets. These people were to-day making a good living by trafficking in railway tickets and they were depleting the coffers of the State. These people also manipulated the tickets. For instance, a ticket which might have been available for three months, expired, and these scalpers secured from the booking office a ticket bearing the date of the day of issue, and after splitting the expired ticket, they pasted the stamped portion of the newly purchased ticket on the old one, and they did it so well that it was almost impossible to detect that such a fraud had been perpetrated; in fact, it was only detected when the ticket reached the audit office, and the number on the ticket was found not to be the correct one. It would be advisable to issue single tickets at a considerably reduced rate, and in that way scalping would be prevented, and at the same time considerably increased revenue would accrue to the department. With regard to the Bunbury excursions, the first class return fare by certain special trains was 15s.

The Minister for Railways: That has been increased too.

Mr. LEWIS: The second class return excursion fare was 7s. 6d. The single ordinary fare was first class 18s. 4d., or 3s. 4d. more than the first class return excursion fare. The second-class single ticket was 11s. 4d. There was another difference here. The return fare, first-class, was 27s. 6d., while the first-class single fare was 17s. There were also many anomalies in connection with periodical tickets. In the rate-book were to be found scores of concessions given to people who used the railways and who were undoubtedly entitled to some concession; but when it was found that we were giving the privilege to passengers to use the railways for a month at a cheaper rate than if they paid for an ordinary ticket, it was time the matter was looked into. There were the long

distance rates season tickets. From Fremantle to Laverton, a first-class ticket for one month—in which a man could do four trips or more comfortably—cost £7 5s., whilst the first return ordinary fare was £7 6s. 10d. In other words a monthly ticket was 1s. 10d. less than the ordinary return fare, which was available for only one journey. He could quote scores of such instances, but he thought two would be sufficient to show the Government the necessity for bringing about an adjustment of these anomalies. A first-class monthly ticket from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie cost £5 18s. 6d., the distance being something like 387 miles, while an ordinary first-class return from Perth to Kalgoorlie was £4 14s. 2d., and a first-class monthly from Fremantle to Perth was £1 12s. 6d.; so that only £4 6s. was paid for the extra mileage to Kalgoorlie, and the holder of such a ticket could travel as often as he wished. Thus a passenger who had business to do at Kalgoorlie and desired to make the journey there and back would save 8s. 2d. by taking out a monthly season ticket from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. There could be no disputing these figures, because they were all contained in the rate-book. His desire was merely to point out to the Government and to the taxpayers these anomalies in the train fares, an adjustment of which would bring about an increased revenue.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: They are not the only anomalies.

Mr. LEWIS: No, there were others, undoubtedly, and the member for Toodyay would have an opportunity of enumerating them. The Commissioner reported that the passenger service did not pay. Was it any wonder, seeing that the instances he had given were only a very few of scores that could be quoted, merely one or two which he had picked out? He could assure the Minister that it was general as far as these particular concessions were concerned. Another important matter which the Minister might well look into was in connection with rebates to agents. Certain large firms such as Messrs. Bewick, Moreing, and Messrs.

Dalgety & Co., were to all intents and purposes agents, who received rebates on season tickets in accordance with the amount of freight paid. Farmers and settlers sent their produce to those agents to be disposed of. Having disposed of the produce those agents deducted the amount of freight from the cheque which they forwarded to the settler, and took to themselves credit with the department for that freight, which, as a matter of fact, was the farmer's freight and not theirs at all. In accordance with the amount of freight paid, these agents received a five per cent. rebate on one or two yearly or half-yearly tickets, whether all lines or sectional tickets. Thus a firm paying £12,000 in freight was granted a rebate of 50 per cent. on two season tickets, while if £50,000 was paid in freight the firm got a rebate of 75 per cent. on three all-lines tickets. This meant a serious handicap to the average business man in a small way, who was called upon to pay £80 for an all lines ticket for a year, or £12 for a month. Would the Minister explain why this concession was granted to these big firms? Were not the freights cut as low as possible? Did we not give to the public of Western Australia through our railway system the best possible facilities? The main principle of the nationalisation of public utilities was to give as good a service as possible while providing working expenses, interest, and sinking fund, and a small margin of profit. Pressure had been brought to bear on the Government to reduce fares in the interests of settlers, yet these big firms were receiving these concessions, which served to subject the poor man in a small way of business to unfair competition. Speaking from memory he thought there were 19 firms enjoying these concessions, some of them having four or five tickets apiece. This system of rebate was followed only in countries where keen competition existed between privately owned lines. There was no necessity for it on a State railway in connection with which the people were getting full value for their money. The Minister should go thoroughly into these anomalies and secure a fair thing



from those who used the railways, In addition to the special excursion tickets previously mentioned, and issued only for certain trains on Saturday afternoon, the department also issued summer excursion tickets every day during the summer months. If they were going to issue these summer excursion tickets every day throughout the summer, and in addition run special week-end excursions, they might as well do away with the ordinary tickets altogether.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The excursion tickets are only for certain trains,

Mr. LEWIS: The summer excursion tickets issued on week days were available by any train. During the summer these tickets were issued at single fare plus 5s. to Albany, and plus 25 per cent. to Bunbury, Busselton, and other places. Perhaps the Minister could tell the Committee where the necessity lay for this, when special excursions at reduced fares were provided each week-end.

Mr. O'Loghlen: The week-end trains could not carry all the traffic.

Mr. LEWIS: If that was so, the proper remedy was to put on additional trains. What was the use of having ordinary tickets and then issuing excursion tickets every day in the week for three or four months of the year? No person with any knowledge of railway fares would purchase an ordinary ticket when he could get an excursion ticket at a considerably lower rate. As for the single tickets, with which he had already dealt, by introducing this system of excursion tickets, the department would eliminate the scalper and could still give the same facilities to the public. Under the present system a passenger from the goldfields, not intending to return, naturally tried to dispose of the return half of his ticket; so, while the department was giving concessions to the public it was at the same time offering a premium to individuals to cut into the railway profits. In his opinion we should give the fullest facilities for perishable traffic, and allow it to be carried on passenger trains. In connection with our fish traffic, it was

being carried at 7d. per cwt. in the metropolitan area, notwithstanding which the public got no advantage; in fact fish was dearer now than when the rate was higher. This lower rate had been provided for the Dago, who had a ring in fish, and who scooped the pool while the public paid high prices for their fish. If a preferential rate was to be made for these people we should see to it that they sold their fish at a fairly reasonable rate. In his opinion that traffic was carried at a loss. In respect to the question of railway construction, the Commissioner had repeatedly pointed out the necessity for bringing that work under the Working Railways. The Government might well inquire into this and endeavour to bring it about.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): It would be a mistake.

Mr. LEWIS: It would not be a mistake. The Railway Department knew exactly what was required at the various sidings, knew what loops were necessary, and were familiar with all the requirements for the carrying of the traffic. They knew how to ballast the line, what weight of rails to use, and what amount of traffic to expect. We should profit by experience. The Pinjarra-Holyoake line was constructed through sandy country, was full of grades, and had been handed over by the Works Department in a shocking state. This line had subsequently cost thousands of pounds to bring up to standard. It had to be rebalasted, and new cattle pits put in, some of the original cattle pits having been constructed of saplings. One driver, unfortunately, had lost his life in coming round there one night owing to the defects of the line. On the subject of the passenger traffic in the suburban system the Commissioner had specially drawn attention to the fact that very often a train leaving the central or a terminal station was overcrowded with passengers who had paid the minimum fare, that the train had to do a certain mileage for the least fare, and after it had passed one or two stations it was practically empty. He wanted to call the attention of the Minister to the

requirements of Maylands, and first of all he would point out that the revenue at the Maylands station had increased during the last two years by between £6,000 and £7,000. There was a train into Perth before 9 o'clock in the morning, and in each compartment there were fifteen or sixteen persons. The Maylands people wanted a better service and they were entitled to it. Mount Lawley and Bayswater were growing very rapidly, and he would suggest to the Minister a way by which he might give a better service at a reduced cost. His proposal was to run a train from Perth to Belmont and it could do the return journey in something like 50 minutes, at any rate easily in an hour. The train could run out to Belmont, and shunt clear of the main line. It would provide a better service for those particular stations whilst at the same time instituting a service to Belmont, which was isolated and handicapped through lack of decent means of communication with the City. The South-Western line had been neglected for a considerable time, and on Royal Show day and Eight Hours Day the most important train of the day, the 5.30 at night, was cut off, in order to provide rolling stock for the increased traffic to and from Claremont. That irritated the people and they were up in arms about it. An increased service should be given along that line also. In paragraph 17 of his report the Commissioner drew attention to a very important matter, and that was the necessity for the Government giving early consideration to the route to be adopted for the coastal section of the 4ft. 8½in. main trunk railway. Several deputations had waited on the Commissioner lately to ask for improvements at various stations. For instance most of the platforms on the South-Western line had been lengthened, except at Victoria Park. Women and children had to get out of corridor cars at that station without having a platform to step on to, and the Government ran the risk of having to pay damages for accidents owing to the shortness of the platform. The Commissioner had told

the deputation that he could not consider the lengthening of the platform until the route of the main trunk line was decided, and the same answer had been given when a request had been made for a bridge across the line. The delay in settling that route was hanging up a lot of work, and he would like the Government to consider the matter at an early date. He realised that it would be some time before the line would be required, and it would be an unreasonable thing to at once saddle the taxpayers with the interest and sinking fund charges on the large amount of money which would be necessary for the construction of that line, but the Government could very well come to a decision as to the route the line should take.

The Minister for Railways: Some people say it should go on the south side of the river.

Mr. LEWIS: A line on the south side of the river would open up a new area. Two lines running side by side were not going to create any more traffic, but if the new line were constructed on the south side it would bring about progress in a locality the growth of which had been retarded through the absence of railway facilities. He would like to emphasise the point that in the New South Wales Railway Department and also in Melbourne, considerable difficulty was being experienced owing to the congestion at the central station, and the same difficulty existed at Perth. There was a bottle neck at East Perth where two lines, the Eastern and the South-Western, met, and to bring the main trunk line through there would only increase the congestion and pile up the working costs permanently. As one who had acted as foreman and had worked the traffic in Perth on busy days, he knew that delays frequently took place, and that the traffic was disorganised on scores of occasions owing to the fact that the bottle neck was not big enough to accommodate the extra traffic. A goods train would arrive and stand for hours, blocking a particular road which the officials wished to use

for passenger traffic and for shifting trains about. That terribly hampered the Railway Department in working the traffic effectively from the central station, and then when the goods train reached the station yard it had to wait for hours, costing money all the time for fuel and wages, to get a clear line to Fremantle. That sort of thing only increased the cost of running the railways, and as agricultural development was proceeding and this State expected to be the greatest wheat producer in the Commonwealth, it would be necessary to build another line which would divert the traffic away from the central station and not take it through the City. The *West Australian* was very emphatic on this question, and in a leading article said that it was necessary to construct the main trunk line along the existing route in order that it might receive a portion of the revenue from the suburban traffic. Let the goods traffic be kept away from the central station, and a suburban service sufficient for Western Australia for the next 50 years could be built up on the existing 3ft. 6in. line. It was contended that the broader gauge would give a quicker service to the people between Perth and Fremantle, but he would quote from the time tables of the Victorian department to show that the main trunk line was not going to revolutionise the suburban service, in the way suggested by the *West Australian* and other critics who were urging that the new line should follow the existing route. The Melbourne-Brighton journey, 9½ miles, with nine intermediate stops, occupied 32 minutes; Perth-Fremantle, 11½ miles, ten intermediate stops, 36 minutes; Melbourne-Williamstown, 8½ miles, ten stops, 35 minutes, or one minute less than the journey from Perth to Fremantle; Perth-Midland Junction, 10½ miles, nine stops, 31 minutes; Melbourne-Boxhill, 9½ miles, 39 minutes; and Melbourne-Sandringham, 11½ miles, 39 minutes. The last named was the same distance as the journey from Perth to Fremantle, and yet on the broad gauge it took three minutes longer than was occupied on the 3ft. 6in. gauge in this State. So how

could it be said that the suburban traffic required a 4ft. 8½in. gauge?

The Minister for Railways: And theirs is a 5ft. 3in. gauge.

Mr. LEWIS: Besides the considerations which had been mentioned, it must be remembered that if another line was built alongside the existing one the cost would be piled up considerably. It would involve a good deal of costly resumption, and the two lines together were not going to create any more traffic. This was a very big question, on which he could speak for a considerable time, but he just wished to emphasise those few points, and he hoped at an early stage to have an opportunity of impressing upon the Government the necessity for having another avenue for carrying wheat to the ships at Fremantle. Another consideration that might be mentioned was that an east and west main trunk line was not going to carry suburban traffic. The passengers would be persons anxious to travel through from Fremantle to Adelaide, and they would not want the train to be hampered with suburban traffic. In regard to the tramways he realised that the Government did a wise thing when they took over the system. It was going to prove a magnificent asset, and the people would get some opportunity of developing the suburbs and getting away from the slums of the City. If there was one thing more than another which was conducive to the creation of slums in the City it was the fact that the people had not cheap and convenient means of getting into the suburbs to live in more congenial surroundings. In evidence which had been taken by a Royal Commission which was inquiring into the slums of Melbourne, it was found that the ever-grasping landlord had cut up blocks so small that in some places houses had frontages of only 15 feet, with a depth of 60 feet, and there was a four-foot verandah right on the street. Children had to live and play in the streets, which was not only inimical to their physical well-being, but was also interfering with their moral well-being. We did not desire with that example before us to perpetuate such

a condition of affairs in Western Australia, and by the nationalisation of the tramways the Government would be able to afford the people an opportunity of getting into the country and living in more congenial surroundings. He had noticed in yesterday's newspaper a statement by a South Australian gentleman that the extension of the tramways had led to an increase in the matrimonial statistics; they had enabled the people to live in the suburbs and get to and from work conveniently, and consequently there had been more marriages. Whilst on the subject of tramways he hoped the Government would see the necessity for making a permanent appointment to the office of superintendent, and that they would give some of the old servants in the Railway Department, men who had proved their worth by years of responsibility, and who had a full knowledge of men, an opportunity of getting the position. When the position was vacant the Railway Department had called for applications, and numerous applications had been sent in. Some of those applicants had never received a reply, but a traffic inspector, who had been on a salary of £285, was temporarily appointed. He contended that if there were in the service men who had served ten and fifteen years, who had worked up to a good position, had a knowledge of men and were of proved capacity, they should receive consideration. He was not saying anything against the present occupant of the position, but so far as length of service and qualifications were concerned that man was a junior compared with some of the older men he had mentioned. There were just two or three local matters he wished to refer to in connection with the tramways, and the first was the connection of the trams with the ferries. All of the public services should connect with each other. A ferry was run from South Perth at 6.40 a.m., and a tram was timed to leave the Barrack-street jetty a minute or two prior to the arrival of the ferry. Passengers from South Perth desirous of catching the 7 o'clock train to the eastern districts found the tram

gone when they landed, and had either to hire a cab or hurry to the station in order to catch the train. Often they missed it. That was very annoying. It should be a simple matter to connect up these services. The tramway conductor should be instructed to wait until the ferry arrived so that passengers could proceed to the railway station without any trouble. The hon. member for Subiaco had referred to the new cars, and the people of Victoria Park had condemned them *holus bolus*, because they were too small and cumbersome. He hoped the Government would not construct any more like them. In his suburb they were denounced because they could not carry the larger population who desired to travel. That type of car was of no use for suburban services and no more should be constructed. There was a car which ran to Victoria Park on Sundays and terminated at the Town Hall and remained there for 10 minutes, while a large number of people at the terminus who desired to go to church had to walk. That car might well be run to the terminus for the convenience of those people.

The Minister for Railways: There is more reward for the deed when they walk to church.

Mr. LEWIS: The car should be run on. He hoped the Minister would give these matters his favourable consideration, more especially the matter of the fares, which would bring in an increased revenue, and that was what we wanted.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE (Toodyay): It was only reasonable that some criticism should be levelled against the department whose vote was now under consideration. He could understand that the Minister and members supporting the Government felt somewhat anxious about this great department, particularly on realising that there would be a loss of something like £50,000 this year. The expenditure was estimated at £2,248,321 and the revenue £2,310,000, which left a profit of £61,679. Sinking fund to the amount of £111,510 had to be allowed

which left a loss on the year's operations of £49,851. This was an alarming condition of affairs, and it might be information even to the Minister; nevertheless it was true. He could quite understand members on the Government side getting a little wild occasionally because they did not like criticism—

The Minister for Railways: We do not object to your criticism. You can fire away as hard as you like.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: The hon. member for Fremantle-South waxed very warm and indulged in some extraordinary statements. In his excitement he referred to the purchase of some locomotives and implied that they were paid for out of revenue when they were really paid for out of loan funds. These misleading statements showed the knowledge which some hon. members possessed in regard to the working of this great department. The hon. member for Canning in his "first she did and then she didn't" speech got hopelessly mixed. He referred to an increase of wages to 8s. a day; he said that no increase had been granted by the Wilson Administration, and then he admitted that an increase was secured.

The Minister for Railways: It is the best speech I have heard here for a long time.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: If mixing up matters and inconsistency constituted a good speech, it was forthcoming from the hon. member. We might well ask were the railways run in the best interests of the country?

The Minister for Railways: Whither are we drifting?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: The Minister seemed very easy in his mind about this loss, and he hoped he would have sufficient ability to explain it.

The Minister for Railways: Which is that?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: The loss of £50,000 on the year's operations. The Minister might well exercise his mind with these railway matters, although at times it seemed doubtful whether he did worry very much over them. It was an easy matter to have a Commissioner, and he would like to bring under notice a little incident that occurred recently to

show the Minister's interest in the welfare of the country. A few weeks ago he introduced to the Minister a proposition for the opening up of a big deposit of gypsum. The people concerned were prepared to expend a large sum of money on the works if the Railway Department would meet them in the matter of freights.

The Minister for Railways: I regarded it as an impudent request on the part of that gentleman.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: That was about the limit of the Minister's concern.

The Minister for Railways: Your concern is to get a concession for someone in your district, whether it is fair or not. If you like to be offensive I can be so too. Go ahead.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: It would have meant the introduction of labourers into the district. The Commissioner offered to carry the raw material for 10s. 3d. a ton, and for manufactured he asked £1 0s. 6d. a ton. The people concerned were prepared to establish works which would employ about 200 men, and construct their own tram if the department could see their way clear to carry the manufactured article for 10s. 3d. a ton. The State was not committed to any great loss in the matter. If the department had agreed to carry the material for that figure, and if the quantity anticipated was manufactured the gross loss to the State if the request had been complied with, would have amounted to about £2,000 a year, that was by conceding the rate of 10s. 3d. as against the rate of £1 0s. 6d. a ton. These people were prepared to establish the works which must have meant an increase of commercial activity and an increase in freights on that line. It was a mistake to discourage people of that class, and it was possible the electorate might have been converted into a labour one. His concern, however, was not with regard to electoral matters or to his position as member for the district, but was merely to endeavour to secure every inducement possible for the people who were prepared to proceed with the work. It was the duty of the Minister to view this matter in a broad light, and if the Commissioner decided

that the proposition would not be a payable one for the railways the Minister should interfere and say it was in the best interests of the country to extend special consideration to those who were prepared to introduce capital into the State's industries. A question which had been ventilated much in the House was that of increased wages and the assistance that farmers had received. It was proposed to increase the rate for carrying fertilisers. This was decidedly uncalled for. The people who were well established, old settled farmers would feel the increased rate very little, but new settlers would feel the extra pressure, and naturally the people on the land would resent the increase which had been granted if it were followed shortly after by an increase in the freight on fertilisers, which were so necessary to the increase of agricultural products. Even if the fertiliser was carried at the old rate the country did not lose. But for the fertiliser the crops would not be so profitable, and he questioned whether in many instances they would be worth planting. The increases granted to the lower-grade officers of the department were uncalled for. If it was the intention of the Administration to do justice, increases should also have been granted to the gangers, who filled a more important position than the fettler and the porter. The gangers had not received any increase. He did not propose to take up the time of the House at any great length other than to emphatically protest against the increase in the rates on fertilisers. Requests had been made for small matters of convenience at different railway stations. There were stations on the new lines which were not well equipped, and which were not expected to be well equipped in a day, but when requests were made for only ordinary conveniences they were turned down for want of funds. Yet he had seen men employed at Chidlow's Well burning up timber in the winter time. Money could be expended to pay for burning up dry timber, which was of no consequence as regarded the safe running of traffic, and

yet ordinary conveniences at stations were denied the people out back. Better facilities were certainly needed. The railway question was an important one, and he sincerely hoped business in freights would increase and that this loss which was certainly showing, according to the figures here, would disappear and a profit take its place.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly): It was his intention to make a few references to the branch lines. A great deal had been said in regard to the decrease in the profits made in this very important department, and a lot of it had been attributed to the branch lines recently constructed in agricultural districts. He found, however, that the Coolgardie-Norseman line was in this list, also the Mount Magnet-Sandstone line, and the Southern Cross-Bullfinch line, so that all the losses could not be attributed to agricultural spur lines. The Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe line was another which showed a decrease, and so did the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway. These were all goldfields lines, and the loss on them could not be attributed to agricultural districts. It was quite impossible to expect that new agricultural lines would pay from the commencement. Such a thing had not been expected, and, therefore, the matter need not be taken as a very serious one. On these spur lines the freight and traffic would increase as time went on. Much had been said about wages in the Railway Department and the increase given by the present Government. While he was an advocate of paying people of merit good wages when they earned it, he strongly resented a wholesale gift off £107,000 to those in the Railway Department. The question was whether the Government at that stage had been warranted in so doing. He had gone into the matter a good deal and had heard a man in charge of a station, one in particular whose opinion he regarded with a good deal of confidence, say that some of the men, if he was employing them in a private capacity, were not worth 2s. 6d. a day, while there were some men underpaid. It was a bad feature of the department and a policy of the Government gen-

erally that people of merit were not recognised. It was all very well to make a wholesale and sweeping increase of 1s. a day, but many of these people were, perhaps, only learning the rudiments of railway work, and to disperse the money in such an indiscriminate way was an injustice to the State. Financial stringency since the present Government had been in power was very great, and we were paying a great deal of interest for money borrowed. The last million borrowed had cost £4 7s. per cent., and at the end of the term we had to pay £75,000 away, the equivalent of which we had never received, and that brought the interest to over 5 per cent. Western Australia could not afford to go on as we were doing. Things were practically drifting at the present time, and no one knew where we were going to land. He had heard the hon. member for Northam criticised as a pessimist, but if that were true as applied to the hon. member, he (Mr. Harper) believed it was more so in his own case. During the last two years we had borrowed six or seven millions of money and the revenue at the present time was inflated owing to the fact that we were packing the country with sovereigns borrowed from other parts of the world, and building up a legacy for those who would come after us, so that in the immediate future further borrowing would be impossible. He had listened to the remarks of the hon. member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs). He (Mr. Harper) also believed in high wages if we could afford them, but in the instance in question the Government should have been just before they were generous, and they were unjust in giving the increase without making proper investigations as to those whose work merited that increase. He would not advocate a reduction of freights for the farmer if the latter could afford to pay them, but such a large percentage of the farmers were in a very precarious position, and it was our duty to try and give them some opportunity to continue the operations upon which the State depended so much. It was idle piffle for members on the other side to talk as they did about extravagant wages and little work. It

seemed to be a popular cry, but would they give away all the public money?

Mr. TURVEY: Do you not think the working man is worth 9s. a day?

Mr. HARPER: Yes, if he was a good man, but hundreds were kept on who were not worth 5s. a day.

Mr. TURVEY: That is a reflection on the officers.

Mr. GREEN: You will not get railway votes.

Mr. HARPER: While here he was going to speak his mind regardless of voters or anyone else, and if the people did not think he was fit for the position, they could vote for someone else who would cringe and crawl to them, give them all they asked for, and help bring the country to ruin. We were borrowing money now at a very high rate of interest.

The Minister for Railways: What has that to do with these Estimates?

Mr. HARPER: It had a lot to do with the buying of the Perth trams and the building and construction of railways.

The Minister for Railways: This is revenue expenditure.

Mr. HARPER: The cost of money we had to borrow had a lot to do with the construction of railways, and, therefore, a lot to do with the revenue of the railways. If we could build our railways £1,000 per mile cheaper—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The construction of future railways was a matter which the hon. member could not go into now. We were considering at present the railways that had been constructed.

Mr. HARPER: The cost of the construction of the railways had a lot to do with the revenue of the railways.

The CHAIRMAN: These Estimates only dealt with the revenue of the railways; what the hon. member was discussing would come under the Loan Estimates and the Estimates of the Minister for Works.

Mr. HARPER: Some remarks which had been made by the Commissioner had been read with a good deal of interest. The Commissioner wrote—

Continuous pressure is exerted in opposite directions. Our customers are

constant in urging upon the department increased expense in the shape of train mileage and facilities, and on the other hand demands for lower freights and reduced fares are equally constant. Labour organisations press for ever-improved conditions of employment, shorter hours, and other concessions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Both parties are alike there.

Mr. HARPER: Yes, but for the past 20 years conditions had been piling up against the producer. Every time we increased the wages of railway employees, or wharf labourers, or the wages of many other sections, we placed a higher burden on the producer and the more we did that, the less would be produced. It was useless building railways unless we could see that we were going to have the necessary freight to make those railways pay. We should, therefore, encourage the producer, and the mine-owner was also a producer, and was as much entitled to encouragement as the man on the land. We had a big interest bill to meet annually amounting now to £1,300,000 and what we wanted now was population.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They are coming in now a thousand at a time.

Mr. HARPER: And it was to be hoped that they would continue at that rate, and that employment would be found for all of them. Borrowing money at the rates of interest we were paying and carrying out work departmentally was tantamount to burning the candle at both ends. We were only getting 50 per cent. of work for 100 per cent. of payment.

The CHAIRMAN: This discussion could not be allowed; it was entirely foreign to the Railway Estimates.

Mr. HARPER: Everything was being done for everyone in the State except the primary producer and that policy would retard the progress of the State. We knew that it was not always of benefit to the worker to give him an increase in wages because the workers did not always put their money to the best use.

Mr. Foley: It is their own money and they can spend it as they like.

Mr. HARPER: Of course, but at the same time he would like to see them more provident.

Mr. Foley: They do not spend it at the Palace Hotel.

The Minister for Railways: What on earth has all this got to do with the Railway Estimates?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member would have to confine his remarks to these Estimates.

Mr. HARPER: With regard to passenger fares, those in force in Western Australia were the highest of any place he had ever been in. He had travelled in America, where in first class carriages, running over a broad gauge, the charges were only 1d. per mile, while in Western Australia 1½d. was imposed.

Mr. Green: What about the difference in the population?

Mr. HARPER: There were places in America which were not thickly populated, for instance, Oklahoma and Kansas.

Mr. Green: They have ten times our population.

Mr. HARPER: Nothing of the kind. The rates in Western Australia were the highest to be found anywhere and the accommodation on some of our lines was a disgrace. Passengers were compelled to travel like blackfellows. On the gold-fields line dining cars were provided and the conditions were not so bad, but on the Great Southern line passengers travelled with discomfort. Moreover, the railway carriages were not kept clean, there was no water provided in the bottles and often there were no glasses to drink out of and when they were there they were filthy. The railway station at Pingelly, which was a very important centre, was more in the nature of a dog box and was not at all in keeping with the importance of the district. Perhaps that was not within the scope of the discussion.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was within his rights.

Mr. HARPER: Some 200,000 bags of wheat had gone away from that place. There was no accommodation there for people who had to catch a train at 3



o'clock in the morning, nothing beyond two little wooden shanties; and certainly those people ought to have some consideration in the way of an improved railway station. It was very hard to keep freights down, and it was probably a matter of grave concern to the Minister to make ends meet. The question had been allowed to drift, not only by this, but by previous Governments, and conditions had been built up against the producer, who was the mainstay of the country and so was deserving of every encouragement. No country could go on as we were doing, content to receive less than value for money expended, whether from loan or revenue. If we were to compete in the world's markets we must be able to produce on equal terms with other people in other parts of the world who had more economical conditions of production. Not only this State, but all Australia had been drifting far too much in this respect. While not agreeing with all that had been said in the course of the debate, he appreciated some of the remarks made by the member for Canning (Mr. Lewis) and for South Fremantle (Mr. Bolton), both of whom had made some telling points.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora): After having listened to the Minister and to those participating in the debate he had concluded that if the difficulties under which the Railways were labouring were half what members said they were, the time had arrived when we should place the Railways under direct Ministerial control. He was glad that the House would have an opportunity at a future date of considering the proposed increase of salary to the Commissioner of Railways. When that time arrived the whole question of whether or not we should have a Commissioner of Railways would be gone into, and hon. members would then be able to determine whether the country would not be better off with direct Ministerial control of the Railways.

The Minister for Railways: I hope somebody else will be Minister when that happens.

Mr. FOLEY: The question had been raised by Opposition members of whether

the construction of rolling stock by day labour under Government supervision had been successful. If the system had not been a success it was certainly not the fault of the men engaged on that construction. No hon. member had suggested that the personnel of the supervision was any different from what it had been under the previous Administration; therefore if the day labour had proved faulty and costly it was up to the Government to get rid of the supervisors of the system in the workshops, where the system was necessary. One hon. member had declared that much of the money earned at Midland went into the Midland hotels. There was no occasion for the Committee to trouble about that. The same hon. member had said that much of the wages paid was not earned. If that were so something was wrong. If there was disruption among the men, if there was cliques and it was working to the detriment of the department, then it was up to the Government to go into the question and place on tramp the men causing the disruption. If that were done the day labour system would have a better chance. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) had declared that much of the expenditure was caused by the system of day labour under which public works were being constructed. In the Estimates appeared an item of £25,000, which the Government had had to pay on the Dowerin-Merredin line after the line was constructed by labour other than departmental. Whether a work was constructed by day labour or by contract the point the Government would have to consider was, how best to construct it with a view to saving money. If it was a question of supervision he trusted the supervisors would be kept up to the mark so as to give the best possible results. Some of the supervisors were not in favour of day labour, and that fact was militating against the good work the Government would like to see the day labour system do. The member for Katanning had referred to the carriage of gypsum and said that the carriage of that commodity might mean a great deal, perhaps bring into existence a new indus-

try. The hon. member had said that commercial activity would be caused and therefore more freights would come to the Government, but if gypsum was being carried at a cheaper rate the people in the district would be as much entitled to the lower rate as the people for whom the gypsum was carried. On the goldfields a previous Administration in this State had charged on the railway 2s. 6d. per ton for the carriage of ore which miners in the back country were sending to Kalgoorlie, and the higher that ore went in value when crushed the more freight the miner had to pay, but white stone used for monumental and other purposes was carried at tenpence per mile. That was one feature of the differential rates on the railways that the Commissioner should take into consideration, and if reduced rates were going to act well in one direction they would act well in another. In regard to the carriage of superphosphates, he did not wish to see farming blocked in any way. He wished to see the industry carried on legitimately, and every assistance given to the man battling on the land, but he contended that by the carriage of superphosphates at the prices which the Government were now charging the settlers were not being assisted. If every individual case was brought before the Commissioner or the Minister, as was done in the case of deserving mining propositions on the goldfields, and the struggling settler could show to the department that the carriage of superphosphates at a special rate would help him over a difficulty, the Minister would no doubt give consideration to his case, whilst the farmer who was in affluent circumstances would still be paying a higher rate as he could afford to do, and as members of the Opposition said he would be willing to do. That was a thing he would like to see the Minister take into consideration, with the intention of helping the struggling settlers, whilst compelling those who could afford to pay a fair rate for the carriage of their superphosphates to do so. If that were done, he would guarantee that there would not be the £27,000 loss on the carriage of super-

phosphates that the present Estimates showed. The member for Northam had said that the Railway Department's policy should be the opening up of land by railways before settlement took place. Having listened to the arguments on many Bills, he was satisfied that there was only one way to do it, and that was by the regulations proposed by the Minister for Lands being brought into operation, so that it would not be possible for anyone to dummy land and keep it unoccupied and unworked.

The CHAIRMAN: What has that to do with the Railway Estimates?

Mr. FOLEY: If this matter had nothing to do with the Railway Estimates now, it had nothing to do with the Railway Estimates when the member for Northam mentioned it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could proceed if he wished to illustrate a point. If the member for Northam had dealt with this matter on the Railway Estimates, his remarks had not been noticed.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth): At this late hour he desired only to make a few remarks in regard to the tramways. He was one who had opposed the purchase of the trams by the Government, believing that they should belong to the municipality, but at the same time he had been satisfied to see the trams nationalised, providing they could be bought at a reasonable price. From the report of the Commissioner of Railways he gleaned that the Commissioner predicted just what he (Mr. Allen) had forecasted when the question of purchase was under consideration. The Commissioner referred to the condition of the overhead gear, which he said required extensive renewal, and an order for nine miles of copper trolley wire of the most up-to-date section had been placed. That was just one item in connection with the tramways, which the Minister would be obliged to face in the near future, if he was not already faced with it. He was quite satisfied that the price which the Government had paid for the system was far in excess of its real commercial value. The price had been something like £475.

000, and when the cost of raising the loan with which to pay for the trams was added the total cost would be nearly £500,000. It was to be regretted that the Government did not reserve to themselves the option to give the tramway company either bonds or cash. Unfortunately for Western Australia the option was given to the company, and they naturally had elected to take cash. Therefore, the trams had cost something like £500,000, and there was no doubt that a considerable sum of money would have to be expended on the system to bring it up to date. What the cost would be he would not venture to say, but his fear was that the capital which would be invested in the concern would be so great that it would be almost impossible to make it a paying proposition. There was not the slightest doubt that the people hoped, when the Government took over the trams, that they would get a better service. He did not blame the Minister, because he did not think any Minister in power would have had an opportunity in so short a time of making many improvements, but there was no doubt that the tramways system in Perth was a very poor one. Certainly it was no better than before the Government acquired it, and the Government had recognised that, but they had not sufficient power to run more trams and so improve the service. They would be faced with that problem for a long time to come.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Twelve months.

Mr. ALLEN: Twelve months or longer. When the people in the metropolitan and suburban areas had realised that the trams were to be purchased by the Government they had favoured nationalisation in the hope and belief that they would have a better and cheaper service. But he ventured the opinion that it would be a long long way in the future before we would have a cheaper service.

The Minister for Railways: Twelve months.

Mr. ALLEN: Twelve months would not see the introduction of a cheaper ser-

vice. With the money which would have to be expended on top of the capital cost he feared it would be impossible to make the service any cheaper. He hoped the Government would be able to make it a paying proposition, but he failed to see how that could be brought about.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): We want more people to travel to cheapen the service.

Mr. ALLEN: There were thousands of people who would travel if penny sections were introduced, but he doubted whether the Government would adopt them. He did not wish to impute motives, but he considered that the abolition of the sale of tickets on cars and the necessity for people to go here, there and everywhere to buy them, the inconvenience of going to railway stations, or other places, led many to pay their three penny bit which meant that the Government were getting an increased revenue, and that this increased revenue was being taken out of the pockets of the people. In his opinion the Government would not be able to give a cheaper service in 12 months or two years. He urged the Minister at the earliest possible moment to revert to the old system whereby it was possible to purchase tickets on the cars. Take those residents who lived at the extreme end of Subiaco near the King's Park gates, if they wanted to purchase tram tickets they had to walk to the Subiaco railway station, and rather than do it they would pay the 3d. fare, which meant an increased revenue for the Government. It was not fair to the travelling public, and the Minister as soon as possible should revert to the system of having tickets sold on the cars. The Perth City Council he understood had given the Government notice to quit from the town hall buildings.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The Government have secured another place.

Mr. ALLEN: The office in the town hall buildings was in a central position.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The other place is equally central; it is in the old police court buildings next door.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why did they give the Government notice?

Mr. ALLEN: It was intended to erect much needed conveniences for ladies there. He had noticed by a newspaper advertisement that tram tickets could be purchased at certain shops in the metropolitan area. If it was not possible to revert to the system of selling the tickets on the cars, the Minister should make it possible to buy them at various shops at short distances apart in the different areas through which the cars ran. It was unfair to ask the travelling public to walk a considerable distance in order to purchase tram tickets. Without using the term offensively it was simply robbing the public. The Minister had not said anything as regarded the introduction of penny sections. The people of Perth and the suburbs believed that when the Government took over the system penny sections would be brought into operation. These penny sections meant a great deal to the travelling public, particularly during the day time. A passenger joining a car at the town hall could ride to King-street for a penny ticket, but if he desired to go on to Milligan-street he had to pay a 3d. fare or 2½d. by using a ticket, and if he joined a car at the town hall to go to Subiaco the fare was still 3d. Complaints were previously made about the tramway company bleeding the people, and he hoped the Government would not continue the practice. He felt sure the Minister did not desire to do so, and he did not want to unduly or unfairly criticise him. The Minister had not had sufficient time to bring about the reforms which he desired to institute, but as soon as possible penny sections should be introduced. The Minister had brought about one alteration which was detrimental to the travelling public by abolishing the sale of tickets on the cars. That was a retrograde step, and he ought to see his way clear to retrace it. The hon. member for Subiaco had complained about the inability of workmen to purchase tickets from conductors early in the morning, but not only workmen but others of the travelling public should have these facilities restored to them.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: I dealt with them, too.

Mr. ALLEN: With the hon. member he was in sympathy, though it did not often happen that he was. This was the particular item he wished to discuss because he had been totally opposed to the nationalisation of the trams, believing in municipalisation, but he preferred to see the cars owned by the Government than continued by the company. The Government, however, had paid too much for them, and there was no telling what additional outlay would be involved to renew the cables and repair the tracks. When the Government commenced negotiations for the purchase of the cars the market value of the shares was 13s. or 14s. As the negotiations progressed the shares rose to 27s. Had it been possible for the Government to have purchased the trams on the market value of the shares, 13s., what would they have cost?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): What would you have said if the Government had purchased them without first coming to the House?

Mr. ALLEN: The same as he had said in regard to the purchase of State steamers, that the transaction was illegal and improper. It would have been illegal to have purchased the trams without consulting the House, but that was merely a red herring across the track.

The Minister for Railways: The matter of the purchase of the trams does not come under the Estimates.

Mr. ALLEN: No; but the cars had cost the Government practically £500,000, and what would be required to bring them up to date would probably mean another quarter of a million or a total of £750,000. He had always contended that the Government paid too much for the trams, although the leader of the Opposition was in accord with the Government in paying that price for them. He hoped the Government would find the trams a paying proposition, but he feared they would not be so because the capital cost would be far in excess of what they imagined.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Take their valuation and that of Fremantle, how do you compare them?

The CHAIRMAN: The management was all that could be dealt with under the Estimates.

The Minister for Railways: Let us not discuss the payment over and over again.

Mr. ALLEN: With the capital which had been invested in the tramway system, it would not prove to be the paying proposition which the Government imagined. It had been his desire to speak particularly in regard to tickets and sections, and he hoped the Minister would see his way clear to give effect to his suggestions. This was not a party question. All the travelling public found it a great inconvenience to have to go here, there and everywhere to purchase tram tickets.

Mr. Turvey: Do not you think they will revert to the old system when they find that the present one is inconvenient?

Mr. ALLEN: It was his hope that they would, but when the Government or anyone else found that they were getting a big revenue by abolishing such a system they would be rather loth to revert to it.

Mr. Turvey: Not the present Government.

Mr. ALLEN: The present Government were no different from any other. On one occasion when speaking with regard to the trams he had expressed the hope that the Government would run them better than the railways were run, because, as a matter of fact, the train service in the metropolitan-suburban area was capable of great improvement. Very frequently between Fremantle and Perth on Saturdays and Sunday afternoons a great many passengers, particularly those getting in at Subiaco and West Leederville, had to stand. That was not as it ought to be, as, when passengers paid their fares they had a right to expect to be provided with proper accommodation. What did the Minister propose to do with regard to an overhead bridge at Melbourne-road, which was a very important and necessary convenience? It was a matter which affected the electorate he represented and for many years had been a burning question. Commercial people had to put up with great inconvenience

in having the old-fashioned gates there at the present time. An overhead bridge was an urgent requirement and was part and parcel of the policy of railway improvement which would have to be carried out between East Perth and West Perth.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Railways and Tramways Department.

Progress reported.

## BILL—CITY OF PERTH IMPROVEMENT.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 11.25 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 18th November, 1913.*

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

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Report of Commissioner of Police for year ended 30th June, 1913. 2, Mining Development Act, 1902, Regulations 1-9, *re* extension of subsidy for production of mica. 3, Gingin Roads Board by-laws.