

MOTIONS AND REMARKS *(In chronological order)*

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MOTION: RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION COSTS

**Legislative Assembly, 14 September 1921
Hansard p. 747**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [4.46]:

I move:-

That there be laid upon the Table of the House a return showing the cost of construction of each railway throughout the State and the profit or loss, as the case may be, of each branch during the past three years.

At the present time no one seems to know which lines are paying and which are not. I think we have a right to some information on this point. The other night the Minister for Railways pointed out that there were certain railways which it would be well to remove from their present situation and replace by a system of motor transport. I was glad to hear him make that statement, because that is the principal object I have in view in moving this motion. There are a number of railways which people say do not pay, and it would set at rest the minds of the community if a return of this description were made public. Certainly, the publication of such information could do no harm. It might be better to remove some of the existing lines and use them for development work in other parts of the country. I am asking for a return for a period of three years only, in order that it might not be opposed on the ground of expense, as it might be if I asked for figures extending over a longer period. I trust the Minister will take this point into consideration. The motor service would be infinitely better for the school children, especially for those who have to be transported to the more or less consolidated schools which it is proposed to have to a great extent in future. If we can save in one direction as well as in the other direction, surely it is a matter worthy of consideration.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

The *MINISTER FOR MINES* (Hon.J. Scaddan-Albany)-on amendment: I have tried to make the House understand that it is not possible, or at all events not practicable, to supply the information in the form set forth by the motion. We cannot tabulate profit and loss on the various sections of our railway system. However, I have no objection to the amendment, which asks for the capital cost—that information being available. As regards the remainder of the motion, I desire the insertion of the words "if practicable" because I do not wish to be instructed by the Chamber to furnish information which cannot be obtained. I really suggested the amendment out of the goodness of my heart, out of a desire that the member for West Perth should carry the first motion that she moves in this Chamber. Very frequently a Minister, when opposing a motion of this character, is accused of opposing it not because the information cannot be supplied, but because he wants to prevent hon. members from securing information. The insertion of the words "if practicable" would prevent

the possibility of my being charged, towards the end of the session, with refusing to supply information ordered by the Chamber. The insertion of those words would prevent my being placed in a false position; I have no desire to be accused of refusing to furnish information that has been ordered.

Mrs Cowan: That is as good answer; but the information should be available.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question put and negatived

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MOTION: SPEAKER'S GALLERY PRIVILEGES TO WOMEN

Legislative Assembly, 28 September 1921
Hansard p. 1000-1007.

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [4.35] I move-

That in the opinion of this House the privilege of admission to the Speaker's gallery should be extended to women as well as men.

The Constitution of the House has altered since the last elections and women are now admitted into this Chamber, as members, if they can get here. It is somewhat anomalous to find that there are two galleries for men and only one for women. A member is able to extend the privileges to male members of the community, but is unable to extend any privileges whatever to women. It seems to me that it is hardly what was intended; nor is it quite a fair thing to women that we should not be able to show them that distinct attention-which is supposed to be-of giving them the privilege of sitting in the Speaker's gallery on occasions. I do not think the Speaker's gallery will be overcrowded because, of the two, the public gallery is probably more comfortable. It is the mere fact that women are not admitted that makes them wish to have the stigma removed. It seems rather absurd position in some ways to most of us. To-day in discussing the position with a gentleman, it was explained to me that the Almighty never intended women to be put in the position that I was in to-day. I was obliged to remind that not only did the Bible tell us that it was not a good thing for man to be alone, but that "male and female created He them [sic] and gave them dominion over all things". I do not think He intended that special privileges should be granted to one section of the community which could not reasonably be granted to the other. I understand that in New South Wales women are admitted there. In the Commonwealth Parliament women are admitted to the galleries. I do not think other members of the house will rush the privilege at once and fill the gallery with women. The Premier: You never know!

Mrs COWAN: If they do it will not be the fault of women. I understand that quite lately, since this change in our constitution occurred, one or two women have been privileged to be admitted either to the gallery of the Upper House or upon the floor of the Upper House. I do not wish to stress the matter much further, but I do think it is not quite fair to women that they should not be given equal privileges with the men in this House. They are not admitted to the bar of the House to plead on important occasions, if there happens to be anything very much affecting their interests. I think it was intended that all that should be done away with when equal citizenship rights were given to my sex, and enabled one of us to get here. I hope the motion will be carried and that the House will support me in what I am asking.

Mr J. Thomson(Claremont) [4.39]: I second the motion. I cannot understand, Sir, why you gave the ruling you did the other day. Although I should be glad to see the ladies beyond the bar of the House. Upon the Address-in-Reply there was something in particular I wanted to say and I should like to say it now, but perhaps it might be just

as well for me to refrain from doing so. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr O'LOUGHLEN (Forrest) [4.41]: I anticipate that this motion will probably be carried, but I hope that it will not be carried in the form in which it has been moved.

Mr Underwood: What other form would you suggest?

Mr O'LOUGHLEN: I will indicate it if the hon. Member will exercise a little patience. I move an amendment-
That after the word "gallery" the words "and other galleries" be inserted.

If hon members desire to extend to ladies the right and privilege of sitting in the Speaker's gallery, then I think that the men should have the right to sit in the gallery now occupied by only ladies. There is no reason why we should have a law for the segregation of either men or women into particular groups. In the Federal Parliament both sexes sit together in the Speaker's gallery and in the public galleries.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Mrs COWAN (West Perth-on amendment) [5.34]: It seems to me that the point is being lost sight of. I asked that sittings should be made equal. At present there is a public gallery open to women. Then there is the Speaker's gallery, in respect of which the privilege is extended to men coming in and sitting there, by the Speaker's permission. In moving the motion I had no desire to be in any way whatsoever discourteous to our Speaker: and indeed, His honour the Speaker has expressed himself a preference for having the matter referred to the House for decision: at least, so I understood. So long as men and women are equal in the matter of admittance here, that is all that is required. I have never heard of a woman asking that all galleries of this Chamber should be thrown open to women. All I am asking is that in respect of the Speaker's gallery-there being no Speaker's gallery for women-women as well as men should have the privilege of sitting there at any time. I should like to reply to the remarks of the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker).

Mr Speaker: The hon. member must speak to the amendment at present.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Amendment put and passed.

Question as amended put, and a division taken with the following result:-

Ayes	23
Noes	16
Majority of -	<hr/> 7

AYES

Mr Angelo Mr Carter Mr Collier Mr Corboy Mr Cowan Mr Davies Mr Heron Mr Johnston Mr Lambert Mr H K Maley Mr Mann] Mr Marshall	Mr McCallum Mr Munsie Mr Richardson Mr Scadden Mr Simons Mr A Thomson Mr Troy Mr Underwood Mr Walker Mr Willcock Mr O'Loughlen (<i>Teller</i>).
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NOES

Mr Angwin Mr Boyland Mr Chesson Mr Denton Mr Durack Mr Gibson Mr Hickmott	Mr Latham Sir James Mitchell Mr Piesse Mr Sampson Mr Stubbs Mr J Thomson Mr Mullany (<i>Teller</i>)
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Question thus passed.

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**MOTION:
SOLDIER SETTLEMENT, PYRTON AND HERNE
HILL ESTATES**

**Legislative Assembly, 12 October 1921
Hansard p. 1172-1173.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [4.46]:

I move:-

That all papers in connection with the settlement of soldiers on the Pyrton and Herne Hill estates, described in an article published in the "West Australian" of the 24th September, be laid on the Table of the House.

It would be interesting to know how that settlement is progressing, what it has cost, and any other details which may be obtainable from the papers. I do not know whether any other member read the article referred to, but it served to make me realise that apparently very fine work is going on out there. Many of us do not know the details of the scheme, or anything at all about it, and it would be a good thing if we had some knowledge of the subject.

Question put and passed.

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MOTION: UNIVERSITY FEES; AND BURSARIES

Legislative Assembly, 12 December 1921

Hansard p. 2597-2616.

Hon. P. Collier (Boulder) [7.35]: I move-

That Statute No. 19 of the University of Western Australia establishing fees and bursaries for attendance of students at the lectures and classes of the University, and laid upon the Table of the House on Thursday, 24th November, in accordance with the provisions of Section 33 of The University of Western Australia Act, 1911, ought to be annulled.

In view of the motion which I am submitting for the approval of the House, it is interesting to recall the brief history of our little University.

Mr Underwood: It is very small.

Hon. P. Collier: It is an infant today, but as years go on, and generations succeed generations, we hope and feel sure that it will grow to fruitful and lusty manhood.

Mr Underwood: It will be different from other universities if it does.

Hon. P. Collier: I know that the hon. member is hostile to the University as an institution at all. The hon. member holds certain views regarding the facilities that should, or might be provided for the higher training of our youth. If I interpret his views aright, he believes that the university of the world or of the bush is the best. The Member for Pilbara (Mr Underwood) is entitled to his views on that question, but I venture to say that he stands in splendid isolation.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [10.19]: I will support the motion. Just before the member for Pilbara (Mr Underwood) rose to speak so strongly on the subject of education, I told him I believed in having education for everybody, whereupon he remarked that I had not had a university education. In reply I said, "No, more is the pity." I think perhaps we all feel it is a pity we were not able to attend a university, that had it been free in our day it would have made a great difference to our culture generally and perhaps the whole community. Because I always believe that what is good comes down from above to below. We do not require to take up the attitude of that hon. member, who reminds me of Oliver Wendell Holmes who in "The Professor at the Breakfast Table" says what a splendid thing it is to be a self-made man. We are all self-made in that sense of the word. He explains how interesting it is to see the Irishman's house on the marsh. He built it absolutely with his own hands. It is a little wavy here, a little out of plumb there, and a little wrong somewhere else; it certainly has not an artistic effect, but he admires it, because, as he says "Better to

be made that way than not at all.” When listening to the member for Pilbara I realised what a fine leader he might have been, and what things he might have done if he had had that very education we are all needing so badly. He himself is a splendid illustration of the need for that very thing which he says we should not have. I do not think we have given the system of free education a fair trial, because we have not provided the money necessary to its proper development. I do not like this pauperising idea in regard to bursaries. There is a terrible humiliation in being asked intimate and personal questions as to one's means. It hurts. When one realises, as I have done, what it means to the women who have to submit to having their personal affairs pried into when they require help from the Charities Department, it is easy to realise what it will mean when people who desire a university education for their children are subjected to the same ordeal. I am in favour of the amendment proposed by the member for Sussex (Mr Pickering) and I should like to see something of the sort done as soon as possible. There is another reason why we should not refuse what is needed in this way: On a practically unanimous vote it was decided to provide an additional £8,000 per annum for increases in members' salaries. If we can do that, we ought to be able to find the small amount extra required by the University. During the next few sittings of the House, when we have the Licensing Bill before us, the Leader of the Opposition will have a fine opportunity to help get in additional revenue. The revenue to be derived under that Bill should help greatly to provide these funds-

Mr Speaker: I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss the Licensing Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: I will consider the suggestion.

Mrs COWAN: I will support the motion.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Question put and passed.

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MOTION: RETIREMENT OF H.C. KESSELL.

Legislative Assembly, 15 December 1921
Hansard p. 2467.

To inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 16th November on the following motion by Captain Carter-

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the retirement from the Government services of H.C. Kessell.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [10.4]: I support the motion. It would be a good thing if this case could be settled satisfactorily. I endorse the remarks of the member for Coolgardie. It is sometimes extremely hard for a civil servant to get justice done, and the public generally would be better satisfied if a select committee were appointed so that Kessell would get what he himself calls a fair deal.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Question put, and division taken with the following result:-

Ayes	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	<u>20</u>
		Majority against		<u>4</u>

Ayes

Mr Carter	Mr Latham
Mrs Cowan	Mr McCallum
Mr Davies	Mr Richardson
Mr Denton	Mr Sampson
Mr Gibson	Mr Scaddan
Mr Heron	Mr J M Smith
Mr Johnston	Mr Wilson
Mr Lambert	Mr Willcock
	(Teller)

Noes

Mr Angelo Mr Angwin Mr Chesson Mr Clydesdale Mr Collier Mr Durack Mr George Mr Harrison Mr Hickmott Mr C C Maley	Mr H K Maley Sir James Mitchell Mr Mullany Mr Pickering Mr Piesse Mr J H Smith Mr J Thomas Mr Underwood Mr Corboy (Teller)
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Question thus negatived.

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MOTION: PENSION RIGHTS OF J.B. CONNOLLY

Legislative Assembly, 3 October 1923

Hansard p. 982-983.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from 12th September on the motion by Mr Hughes -

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the pension rights under the provisions of the Superannuation Act, 1871, of John Bede Connolly, formerly clerk in the Railway Department.

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [8.56]: I intend to support the motion. I have listened with great attention to the remarks of the Minister for Railways. I had hoped he would have offered some more satisfactory explanation of all that has gone before. In this case a young man entered the service in 1897, and the pension rights were only abolished in 1904. If, therefore, anyone is entitled to a pension this particular man is. There appears to be an attempt to throw doubt on these pension rights always when it comes to the point of having to grant them. At all events we know that this man joined the service as a boy as far back as 1897; and continued in it until 1915. According to the Minister's explanation I should imagine that he might easily have been charged in 1915 with inefficiency, and with something that appears to be in the nature of wrong doing. Apparently his action was not such as to cause the department to feel that it had any legal right to take steps to get rid of him. He was, therefore, allowed to go on for another seven years. In the circumstances, therefore, it seems hardly fair that he should have been dismissed without any pension rights, seeing that when he joined the service he was entitled to expect that he would receive a pension upon retiring. It is all very well to talk about appealing to an outside court. All civil servants know what it is to attempt to have their cases so tried, how impossible the position is for them, and what a tangle has been made for them of the whole business. They have to get permission after permission in various directions, and they may die before their cases are heard. Therefore they generally decide upon some compromise, or to fight for their rights in any way possible. For these reasons I am prepared to support the motion for the appointment of a select committee. Our civil servants do not always get as fair a deal as they might in many ways, because the Act governing them is so complicated. It prevents them from getting the full measure of justice to which they are entitled. If Connolly was unfit for his position, he should have been dismissed long before. Apparently, however, this was not done and his unfitness was overlooked. I do not know the man or anything about him except what has been stated here, but I am prepared to support the motion for the reasons I have given.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Question put and a division taken with the following result:-

Ayes	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	15

		—	
Majority for	..	<u>4</u>	

Ayes

Mr Angelo	Mr Lutey
Mr Angwin	Mr Mann
Mr Chesson	Mr Marshall
Mr Collier	Mr McCallum
Mr Corboy	Mr Stubbs
Mrs Cowan	Mr Teesdale
Mr Cunningham	Mr Walker
Mr Heron	Mr Wilson
Mr Hughes	Mr Munsie
Mr Lambert	(Teller)

Noes

Mr Broun	Mr Pickering
Mr Carter	Mr Piesse
Mr George	Mr Sampson
Mr Hickmott	Mr Scaddan
Mr Latham	Mr A Thomson
Mr H K Maley	Mr Underwood
Sir James Mitchell	Mr Mullany
Mr Lambert	(Teller)

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COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS: CHRISTMAS ADJOURNMENT.

Legislative Assembly, 22 December 1921
***Hansard* p. 2618.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [10.38]: May I be allowed to thank the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and other members for the consideration they have extended to me during the time I have been in the House. It has been a little trying sometimes I must admit, but one expects to get a little opposition when coming into a body such as this, and one accepts it, I hope, in the right spirit. I thank those who have been so kind and considerate to me and reciprocate the good wishes. I thank you, Mr Speaker and all other members of the House for the spirit in which they have received the only woman member. It must be sometimes extremely trying for them to have a woman amongst them, but I have done my best to make it as little trying as possible and I think they too have done their best in the same way. I wish all a happy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

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