

The Premier: Have you read what that Englishman said in this morning's paper about migrants?

Mr. RICHARDSON: That man was here for ten minutes, and, of course, he knows all about it!

The Minister for Railways: He came out on the boat with a batch of migrants.

Mr. Griffiths: And his remarks do not reflect credit on the people at Home who sent them out.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He knew nothing about the people here.

The Premier: But he knows something about the people on the boat.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Perhaps so, but he may not even know them.

The Premier: He was for a month with them on the boat.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I would like to touch upon another local matter. Recently a tramline running along the Perth-Fremantle-road to Claremont, was opened up. That has been a great comfort to the people in that district, but it has rather hampered people at the other end of Claremont because there is no connecting link between Nedlands and Subiaco. People may desire to come from Claremont and would like a connecting point at Broadway and the Perth-Fremantle-road. It often happens that a tram from Nedlands arrives at the intersection just before a tram has got there from Claremont. There is often a wait of 25 to 30 minutes before the next tram arrives. That difficulty should easily be overcome by the provision of a connecting point that would meet the convenience of the public. If that were done it would beneficially affect the tramway receipts, because, as it is, people are more likely to take a taxi and run right in to Subiaco. I hope these matters will receive some attention.

MR. COWAN (Leonora) [5.12]: I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words in support of the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. I regret I was not present to hear the Governor's Speech read, or to hear the speech by the Leader of the Opposition. After listening to the remarks of the Leader of the Country Party, I confess I was left with an impression that the Speech must have been a very depressing production.

Mr. Sampson: It was very uninspiring.

Mr. COWAN: Having heard the Premier in reply, however, my depression was entirely dispelled. I have just returned from my electorate, and I am pleased to announce that there is a much more optimistic feeling there than has been evidenced for years past. That applies to both the mining and the pastoral industries. I have heard the present Government discussed, and their actions criticised. I am pleased to admit, however, that the administrative ability they have shown has not been classified as within the category of those who benefit from "Dame Fortune's fickle wheel." Their work has been appreciated, and the ability displayed has been regarded as otherwise than attributable to that which was suggested by one hon. member who referred to "Lucky Collier." I am also pleased to know, from the remarks of the member for Kataanning (Mr. Thomson) that there is a certain unity of interest between the views of his party and members sitting behind the Government. We are told that the Government have put into force many things that the Country Party would have carried out had they been given time. It is very reassuring to have that from the cross-benches, for it means that we are not to expect any serious opposition from that quarter. But quite in contradiction to the remarks of his leader, were the views of the member for Toodyay, who attacked several of our policy planks, including that of the 44-hour week. Having worked in and around the gold-mining districts of Western Australia for a number of years, I hope we shall never see the reintroduction of the 48-hour week in the gold-mining industry. I am quite sure there are very few members of the House who would be prepared to work in a level anything from 1,000 feet to 4,000 feet underground a four-hour week, much less than a 44-hour week. I have no hesitation in saying that for two members, one the member for Toodyay, and the other myself, and I can assure you, Sir, that while I am a member of this House I will never advocate nor support conditions for others that I would not be prepared to accept for myself. Although I have been in the House but a little time, I regret to find we have a number of members who seem either to have forgotten or wish to forget that there still exists in the State the industry that was responsible for placing Western Australia on the industrial map, namely, the gold-mining industry. We have



here a number of members much more interested in red rust than in gold dust. I am going to try to show some comparisons which are unfair between the conditions of the man on the land and those of the man who is doing his best to develop the gold-mining industry. In and around the district I have the honour to represent we had some few years ago quite a number of prospectors working and mining their own shows with considerable success. At that time our State battery was kept working almost continuously, with the result that in my district alone there were treated 56,000 tons of ore for a return of over 62,000 ounces of gold. That was a very gratifying result, and it meant considerable prosperity not only in the immediate district, but in the State as a whole. Yet we find that during the time of war and for a few years after, owing to little or no stone being made available for crushing at State batteries, there was a general depression in prospecting activity. However, within the last year or two, when prospectors again showed themselves prepared to give the mines in the district a further trial—since justified by results—we were faced with the position that the only crushing facilities available to those men were at the Coolgardie State battery, some 200 miles distant. This state of affairs was not brought about by the present administration of the Mines Department.

Hon. G. Taylor: But it was brought about by the present Government.

The Minister for Railways: There are certain compensating advantages.

Mr. COWAN: I will deal with those advantages. The only one I know of is a subsidy granted for the cartage of ore from a mine situated anywhere outside a five-mile radius of the nearest railway siding. But take the position of the man whose show is situated within that radius and whose ore is worth only 10 or 12 dwts. If there were a battery in operation in the district, that man would handle his ore only once namely, from the mine into the battery bin. But under existing conditions he has to cart the ore to the siding, dump it down, have it carried to Coolgardie, where it goes through the same process again. The time lost and the increased expenditure in handling means more than the difference between profit and loss. In these circumstances we are only encouraging the men to pick the eyes out of

the mine; that is to say, to take out the rich ore and leave behind the ore that if properly handled, would be payable. It was methods such as these, followed in the earliest days of the industry, that have left us with millions of tons of ore that cannot now be handled until some cheaper form of treatment is devised. Indeed, our existing conditions relating to prospecting are just as bad as, if not worse, than they were 25 years ago.

Mr. Lindsay: You are not blaming this side of the House for that!

Mr. COWAN: No, I am sorry I cannot do that. I claim that we have in my district the only mine at present employing a large number of men between Kalgoorlie and Wiluna. I am prepared to admit that this mine is working under considerable State assistance. As member for the district, it is my duty both to the district and to the State to mention this matter in the House. The residents of that district, more particularly the workers who have built their homes and reared their families there, are very keenly appreciative of the present Government's action in granting that assistance. But apart from the justification, I am pleased to say the mine is equipped with the most modern and up-to-date plant and is very economically managed. If any members are sufficiently interested to compare the costs of that mine with those of other mines in Western Australia, they will find that those costs speak volumes for the capabilities of the management. I am also pleased to say that I hope within the near future that developments on that mine will prove that every penny of that loan money has been fully justified. It would have been nothing short of a calamity had that mine been allowed to close down and throw out of employment a large number of men—particularly when we remember how much unemployment there is in the State. But I want to point to some rather unfair conditions in the treatment of the gold mining industry as compared with that of agriculture. A steel hauling rope used for the purpose of hauling ore from underground to the surface on the Sons of Gwalia weighs about 12 tons, and the railway freight on that rope from Fremantle to Gwalia is no less than £75. That is a very big sum.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is the cost of the rope?

Mr. COWAN: I cannot say.



The Minister for Railways: We have reduced railway freights on mining requisites by 12½ per cent.

Mr. COWAN: And still the freight on such a rope from Fremantle to Gwalia is £75. Yet the Railway Department is prepared to carry the same tonnage over the same rail-age in agricultural areas—I refer to fencing wire, wire netting or superphosphate—for a very much lower rate than it is prepared to carry anything for the mining industry. It is very poor encouragement for those prepared to endeavour to carry on in the industry to which, as I have already said, quite a number of our other industries owe their very existence.

Mr. Thomson: You have our sympathy. We have always supported any encouragement for the gold mining industry.

Mr. COWAN: I am glad to hear it. It supports my contention that, after all, there is very little difference between our policy and that of the Country Party. There is another matter related to mining, and in this I am quite sure I will have the sympathy of all members of the Assembly. I have already referred to the bad conditions that prevailed in the earlier days of gold mining in Western Australia. We now find a great number of the men who worked in the industry in its infancy, inmates of the Wooroloo Sanatorium. This is a deplorable reflection. A number of those men are personal acquaintances of mine, and I say it is the duty of all members to see that our future conditions are such that those prepared to work in the industry will have an assurance that they will be able to live out their declining years under happier conditions. Whereas at one time we had to rely exclusively on the gold-mining industry for our existence, we now have an industry of more recent growth in this State and which is certainly prosperous. I refer to the sheep and cattle raising industry. A number of our early pioneers took up considerable tracts of country in my district and proved that that country would carry stock. But those men were not in a position to develop it. Nevertheless they were the means of bringing in interested pastoralists from the Eastern States who have since invested tens of thousands of pounds in the development of millions of acres of country which we in our early-day ignorance considered worthless. Those men have developed their places very systematically. They seem to be quite satisfied with the laws

of the land, and they have spent many thousands of pounds on fencing, sinking wells, erecting windmills, and stocking up with the very best class of stock. I am pleased to say they have not asked the Government for very much. However, there is one thing they do ask for, indeed have been asking for since a time before I took my seat in this House. The member for Pingelly last evening thanked the Government for having provided suitable trucking facilities in a portion of his electorate. I claim that in point of trucking stock Leonora is one of the most important places in Western Australia at the present time. The stations up there are stocked with both sheep and cattle. Some members may think we are fortunate in having one set of trucking yards. But there is a disadvantage in that. We have at present yards suitable only for the trucking of cattle. In all probability in the near future we shall have 400 or 500 head of fat cattle periodically coming down to the market. The owners will have to charter a special train for the removal of those cattle. That train probably will come along about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, which means that the cattle will be yarded at sundown that evening. At about 8 o'clock that same evening our 5-mile-an-hour speed-hog of an express will put in its appearance and pass very close to the trucking yards, filled with 400 or 500 fat cattle. On that incoming train there will be probably two trucks of stud sheep from South Australia. Those sheep will have to be unloaded that night in the same yard as the 400 or 500 head of cattle. Those cattle have not seen many white men, and certainly they have not been hand-fed and stall-tended. It is only a matter of time before those cattle will rush that yard. Then there will be considerable loss of valuable stock, and indeed it will be fortunate if there is not also loss of human life. A request was made for the erection of a yard for the handling of sheep. The district contains hundreds of thousands of sheep, and markets many tons of wool. It will thus be realised that this request is only fair. When four or five hundred cattle take it into their heads to make a rush in the yard, nothing will stop them, and many of them will be injured. The remainder will go into the bush, and months will elapse before they are mustered, and before they can be sent in to be trucked again. Who will be responsible for the payment for the special



train that may have to wait to load the missing cattle? No doubt the man who ordered the train will be regarded as responsible. When this sort of thing happens it will be necessary to build two yards, a cattle yard and a sheep yard. Why wait until it does happen? Why not give the people the yard they have asked for, so that the sheep may be properly handled? I am a little Scotch. I think it is better to build one yard now than to go to the expense later on of building two yards. Pastoralists have turned this portion of the back country to profitable account. Some of us were misguided enough to look upon that part of the State as useless, but these men have turned it to account and are surely worthy of a little consideration.

The Minister for Railways: They will get it, too.

Mr. COWAN: I am sorry my remarks are directed so much at the Minister for Railways.

The Minister for Railways: You have never mentioned this before.

Mr. Latham: We are enjoying it.

Mr. COWAN: Shortly after taking my seat in the House, I asked some questions with regard to one through train a week to Leonora. We are only 500 miles from Perth, and yet, in order to reach Leonora on Friday night, we have to leave Perth at 5 o'clock on Wednesday evening. We have two trains a week. One leaves Kalgoorlie on Monday morning and returns on Tuesday, and the other leaves on Friday and returns on Saturday. There is no connecting train between Perth and Leonora. Is it any wonder that those who can afford to do so avail themselves, when possible, of motor transport? I am not so much concerned about those who use motors as I am about the business people and the residents, who have to rely upon the railway service for their supplies, and those who are obliged to make use of the railway passenger service. Let me instance a woman with a young family. She leaves Perth on Wednesday and reaches Kalgoorlie on Thursday. She then has to leave the train and seek accommodation in the town for herself and her children. Fortunately for her she receives greater consideration from hotelkeepers and boardinghouse proprietors than she would if placed in similar circumstances in Perth. If a woman with three or four young Australians sought accommodation in Perth, she would walk the

streets from morning till night before finding any. I have had personal experience of that sort of thing.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is peculiar to all the cities in Australia.

Mr. COWAN: Our young Australians are not thought as much of when their mothers are looking for accommodation as they were in 1914, when they were in great demand. To-day a young Australian is not wanted by those who manage hotels and lodging houses. Apart from the inconvenience caused to the woman, she has to catch a train on Friday morning and does not reach Leonora until 8 o'clock at night. Probably she has to leave by motor car at daylight next morning and travel between 50 and 150 miles. That is a big journey for a woman with a young family to undertake. Many of these women are the wives of men who are working outback. I have had experience of these places. Men do not get such high rates of pay that their wives can afford to throw away money in unnecessary expenditure. Apparently, we can offer wonderful conveniences to travellers who are going out of the State. There are no vexatious delays for people who go by the Great Western Railway. If we can make these arrangements for people who are leaving the State, surely we should be prepared to do likewise for those travelling within it, developing it, and opening up the industries in the back country. These people are entitled to consideration. I trust the Minister for Railways will see that we get a through service to Leonora. A particular measure was dealt with last session. Its importance will bear political fruit in the near future. I sincerely hope that whatever alteration is brought about in the personnel of the House, through the passing of that Bill, it will be for the benefit of the State as a whole, and not for any one section of the community. As a newcomer in this Chamber, I wish to thank members for extending to me so uninterrupted a hearing.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [5.37]: On the Address-in-reply members are allowed to ramble over the fields of thought.

The Premier: I hope not too many.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Premier's sigh makes one assume that he wants the debate to conclude.

The Premier: I hope you will not go too far afield.